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POSSIBILITIES OF DEVELOPING STUDENTS` INTRINSIC MOTIVATION IN BLENDED LEARNING OF ENGLISH

Summary. The study describes the results of the research whose objective was to highlight the possibilities of enhancing students' intrinsic motivation with the help of the tools and methods employed by the teacher in a blended course. The research participants were English B1 and B2 level students (n=57). A quantitative research method was applied, using a questionnaire composed on the basis of a SEVAQ+ instrument. The questionnaire involves the following areas: ICT and learning system in the e-learning environment (Moodle), e-learning activities and teacher's support as well as learners' motivation to study more efficiently. The block of questions related to ICT and learning system involves the quality in an e-learning course delivery. In the section of e-learning activities, the aspects covered are compliance of the course methods with the students' learning style, possibility of self-evaluation, the general course efficiency and teachers' support. The final block of questions refers to the learner's self-promotion to study more effectively. According to the research results, employment of the e-learning environment, online learning tools and materials as well as online collaboration with the teacher and peers in the blended learning of English provides broad possibilities for the development of learners' intrinsic motivation.

Keywords: internal motivation for learning, information and communication technology, e. learning, blended learning, virtual learning environment (Moodle).

Santrauka. Motyvacija yra vienas iš pagrindinių mokymąsi skatinančių veiksnių. Dėl šios priežasties mokslininkai ir praktikai nuolat ieško naujų būdų ir galimybių skatinti ir palaikyti besimokančiųjų motyvaciją mokytis. Straipsnio autorės daro prielaidą, kad mokymo(si) proceso papildymas informacinėmis ir komunikacinėmis technologijomis bei virtualių mokymosi aplinkų naudojimas mokantis anglų kaip užsienio kalbos gali būti viena iš galimybių, skatinančių besimokančiųjų vidinę motyvaciją. Šio straipsnio tikslas – atskleisti vidinės motyvacijos skatinimo galimybes mokantis anglų kaip užsienio kalbos iš dalies nuotoliniu (mišriuoju) būdu. Tyrimo tikslui pasiekti buvo stengiamasi išsiaiškinti, kaip besimokantieji vertina dėstytojo parinktus ir taikomus mokymo(si) metodus, papildytus informacinėmis ir komunikacinėmis technologijomis, skirtus vidinei motyvacijai skatinti; nustatyti, ar dėstytojo taikomi mokymo(si) metodai, papildyti informacinėmis ir komunikacinėmis technologijomis, yra, besimokančiųjų nuomone, svarbūs, skatinant jų vidinę mokymosi motyvaciją; atskleisti, besimokančiųjų nuomone, tobulintinas kurso įgyvendinimo sritis motyvacijos skatinimo aspektu. Atliekant tyrimą, buvo naudojamas tarptautinio projekto SEVAQ+ metu (2005–2011) sukurtas daugiafunkcinis elektroninis įrankis, skirtas technologijomis papildyto mokymo(si) kokybei įvertinti. Tyrimo rezultatai atskleidė, kad dauguma studentų (63 %) dėstytojo taikomus mokymosi motyvaciją skatinančius metodus įvertino teigiamai („gerai" arba „puikiai"). Daugumos tyrimo dalyvių (60 %) nuomone, dėstytojo kurse taikomi mokymo(si) metodai, priemonės ir kt. yra svarbūs mokymosi motyvacijos skatinimui. Besimokančiųjų

nuomone, siekiant skatinti studentų motyvaciją, labiausiai reikia tobulinti tokias kurso sritis kaip dėstytojo pagalbos prieinamumas, mokymosi šaltinių ir medžiagos prieinamumas, besimokančiųjų bendradarbiavimas ir kt. Apibendrinant tyrimo rezultatus, daroma prielaida, kad mokymo(si) proceso papildymas informacinėmis ir komunikacinėmis technologijomis bei virtualių mokymosi aplinkų naudojimas, mokantis anglų kaip užsienio kalbos, gali būti viena iš galimybių, skatinančių besimokančiųjų vidinę motyvaciją ir turinčių įtakos anglų kaip užsienio kalbos mokymosi sėkmei.

Pagrindinės sąvokos: vidinė mokymosi motyvacija, informacinės ir komunikacinės technologijos, e. mokymasis, mišrus mokymasis, virtuali mokymosi aplinka Moodle.

Introduction

It is generally acknowledged in most fields of learning that motivation is essential to success: the learner has to want to do something to succeed at it. Without such motivation one will almost certainly fail to make the necessary effort. "At its most basic level, motivation is some kind of internal drive which pushes someone to do things in order to achieve something" (Harmer, 2001, p. 51). Therefore, methodologists and teachers have been continuously searching for the way of developing and sustaining learners' motivation. There is a commonly accepted distinction between **extrinsic** and **intrinsic motivation**, that is, motivation which comes from outside and from inside (Harmer, 2001, p. 51). According to Deci and Ryan, intrinsic motivation is defined as "motivation to engage in an activity because that activity is enjoyable and satisfying to do" (Deci & Ryan, 1985, p. 39), whereas extrinsic motivation refers to "actions carried out to achieve some instrumental end such as earning a reward or avoiding a punishment" (Deci & Ryan, 1985, p. 39).

As J. Harmer points out (2001, p. 51), **extrinsic motivation** is caused by any number of outside factors, for example, the need to pass an exam, the hope of financial reward, or the possibility of future travel. **Intrinsic motivation**, by contrast, comes from within the individual. Thus a person might be motivated by the enjoyment of the learning process or by a desire to make themselves feel better (Harmer, 2001, p. 51). Some scholars (Combs, 1982; Purkey & Stanley, 1991) claim that there is only a single kind of intrinsic motivation, which can be described as a motivation to engage in activities that enhance or maintain a person's self-concept (Combs, 1982, p. 494 - 497; Purkey & Stanley, 1991, p. 56). Other theorists, however, (e.g., Malone & Lepper, 1987) define the term much wider (Malone & Lepper, 1987, p. 230 - 242). They distinguish between individual motivations (involving one person), such as *challenge*, *curiosity*, *control*, and *fantasy*, and interpersonal motivations which depend on other people (i.e., *competition*, *cooperation*, and *recognition*) (Malone & Lepper, 1987, p. 230 - 242). Most researchers believe that intrinsic motivation is especially important for encouraging success. The primary and main reason for taking up a foreign language course may be extrinsic, e.g. to become more competitive in a job market. However, the chances of success will greatly increase if the learners enjoy the learning process itself.

Involvement of Information and Communications Technology (further on - ICT) and e-learning environment (distance classes) in the process of learning a foreign language may be viewed as one of the possible means of enhancing students' intrinsic motivation. It is common and natural that in the present age of state-of-the-art technologies, learners are getting more and more accustomed to the use of ICT in language classes. Learners increasingly expect language schools to integrate technology into teaching (Dudeney and Hockly, 2008, p. 8). Technology, especially the Internet, presents new opportunities for authentic tasks and materials. Using a range of ICT tools can give learners exposure to and practice in all four main language skills – speaking, listening, writing and reading. Consequently, the use of ICT and distance learning may lead to a greater enjoyment of the learning process, as this is a way to bring the outside world into the classroom.

The authors of the present research attempted to examine the students' attitudes towards the teacher chosen tools and methods in the e-learning environment (Moodle) of English and whether the relevant means of learning in distance classes combined with face-to-face course delivery help them foster their motivational perception. **The aim of the research** was to highlight the possibilities of enhancing students' intrinsic motivation with the help of the tools and methods selected and applied by the teacher in the blended course of English as a foreign language.

The research objectives were as follows:
1. To determine how the research participants assess the teaching/learning methods enriched with ICT, chosen and applied by the teacher, in fostering learners' intrinsic motivation.
2. To determine whether the research participants find the teaching/learning methods enriched with ICT, selected and applied by the teacher, important in developing their motivational awareness.
3. To disclose the research participants' opinion about the fields and aspects of course realisation that need further improvement.

Research on posibilities of developing students' intrinsic motivation in blended learning of English

To reach the set aim, quantitative research methodology was chosen. As methods, the relevant scientific literature sources and a questionnaire survey were employed**.** The realisation of the investigation was carried out with the help of a multifunctional, dynamic online tool *SEVAQ+*, which was initially created in the pilot Leonardo Da Vinci project (2005-2007) and further developed during the European Commission Lifelong Learning Programme (2009-2011). *SEVAQ+* is a shared evaluation tool and approach for evaluating the quality of technology-enhanced learning. The tool is intended for easy generation of shared evaluation

questionnaires to gather high-quality feedback from learners. It is based on an innovative combination of the Kirkpatrick evaluation model for learning and the EFQM (the European Foundation for Quality Management) excellence model designed for all those implementing e-learning and ICT in higher education or vocational education and training. *SEVAQ+* tool offers both a core of questions and customised evaluation possibilities. The evaluation results are available in real time and in a variety of forms, from radar graphs giving an instant picture to raw data for importing into other applications.

Questionnaire design. A questionnaire of 45 questions was composed using a *SEVAQ+* tool.

The research participants (n = 57) were English Level B1 and B2 (according to the European Framework of Reference for Languages) students, who have regular distance classes combined with classroom lectures. The questionnaire designers selected the preferred evaluation aspects, such as motivation to learn effectively, ICT and learning system, e-learning activities involving self-study, collaboration with the teacher and other learners as well as learners' motivation to learn.

Research results on possibilities of developing students' intrinsic motivation in blended learning of English

The first set of the parameters in the questionnaire were designed to determine how the research participants assess the teaching/learning methods enriched with ICT, chosen and applied by the teacher, in fostering learners' intrinsic motivation.

The results show positive evaluation of the teacher selected learning tools, online facilities, e-learning environment and the availability of the resources and materials. The respondents placed emphasis mostly on the online learning tools which are easy to use and they had no difficulty in motivating themselves to study in the e-learning environment. The number of "good" or "excellent" responses fluctuates from 43 % to 61 % (Figure 1a).
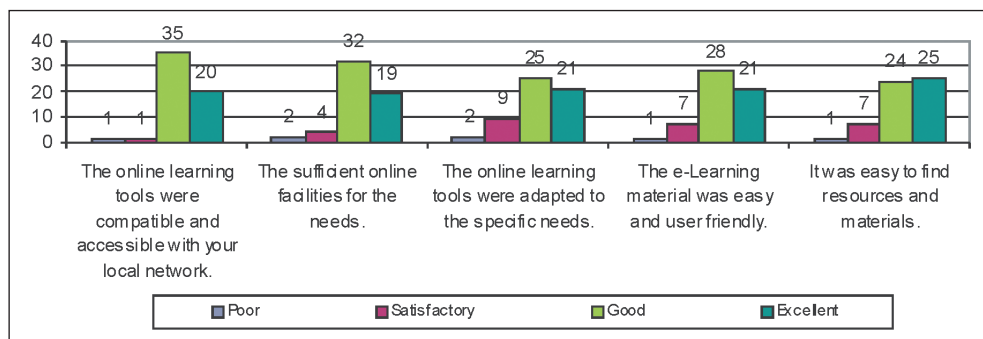

Figure 1a. **Respondents' assessment of the components of e-learning environment, ICT and the learning system**

A slightly different picture is observed in regard to the e-learning activities dealing with collaboration and self-study. Here, several aspects, such as the role of the collaborative working online with respect to the management of learning, the effectiveness of online collaboration for learning were assessed as "satisfactory" by a significant number of the respondents (43 % and 35 % respectively). Similarly, the use of knowledge learned online in collaborative work in groups received a considerable quantity of "satisfactory" evaluations (31 %). Thus, the aspects of online collaboration and consolidation of the acquired knowledge in collaborative work can be viewed as requiring further consideration. The overall picture in this category, however, shows favourable assessment of the teacher selected and proposed online activities related to collaboration and self-study. The positive answers range from 40 % to 47 % (Figure 1b).
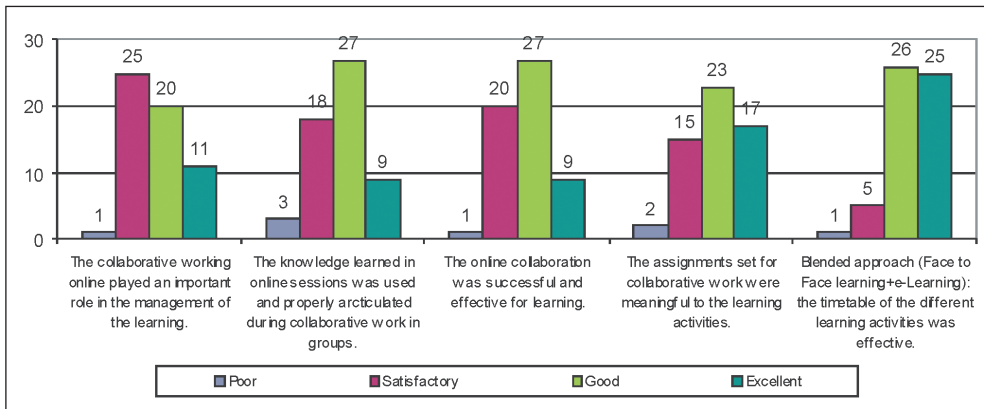

Figure 1b. **Respondents' assessment of the components of e-learning activities**

The obtained data in the category of the components of motivation to learn indicate learning preferences which highlight high or very high evaluation of such aspects as the increase of understanding which activities and learning tools best match personal learning (49 % of excellent evaluation), the positive impact of self-evaluation on self-motivation (49 %) and the use of the learned course knowledge resulting in the increase of self-motivation (45 % of excellent evaluation). Other aspects were also graded favourably (Figure 1c).

Likewise, the data of the assessment of other components of self-motivation, again, revealed positive results and only several respondents indicated other preferences in regard to the listed components (Figure 1d). 50% of the respondents evaluatedf the objectives regarding what to achieve by following the course by choosing the variant "good", 49 % noted easy access to the ways of maintaining motivation during the course, 45% and 42% indicated respectively "good" and "excellent" evaluating the realisation of individual goals with the help of the course (Figure 1d).
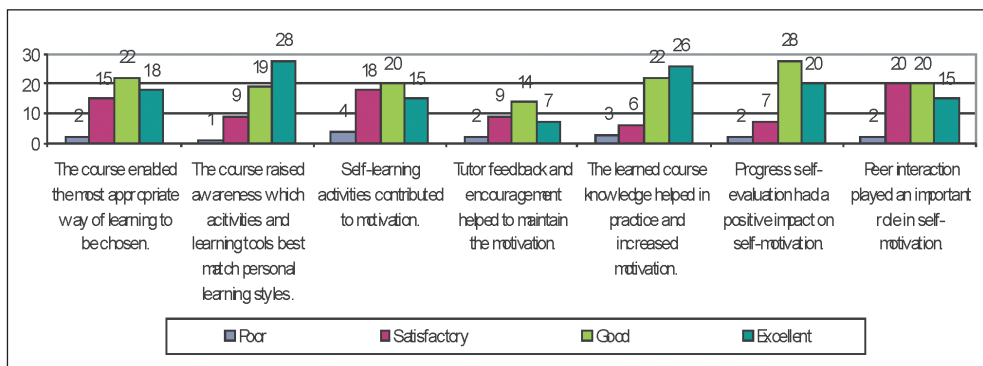
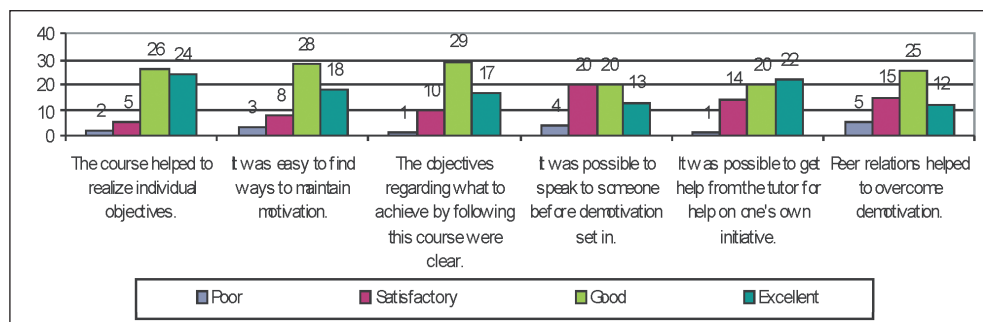Figure 1c. **Respondents' assessment of the components of motivation to learn: learning preferences**

Figure 1d. **Respondents' assessment of the components of self-motivation**

Another set of the parameters in the questionnaire were designed to disclose whether the research participants find the teaching/learning methods enriched with ICT, chosen and applied by the teacher, important in developing their motivational awareness. The respondents' opinion indicated the most important factors which help to increase their motivation to study: resources, processes of e-learning activities, factors developing motivation to learn effectively and factors developing self-motivation.

Concerning the online learning means and materials employed by the teacher in the teaching process, the received data showed that the majority of the respondents regarded these aspects as important or very important. It might be inferred that these sources which help to strengthen students' motivation were used efficiently by the teachers. Favourable opinions range from 52% to 61% (Figure 2a).

Regarding the e-learning activities, involving collaboration and self-study, the predominant number of the respondents emphasised the significance of the online collaboration, which fosters the learning itself making it more successful and effective (Figure 2b). However, the online collaboration played the least part (5 %) in the management of the learning process.
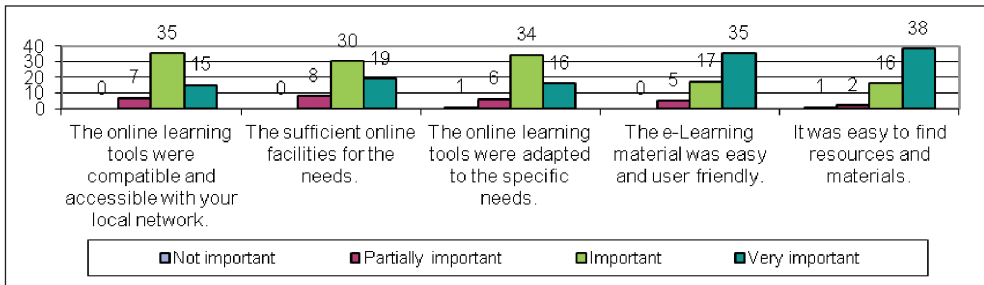
Figure 2a. **Respondents' opinion of the resources: e-learning environment, ICT and learning system**
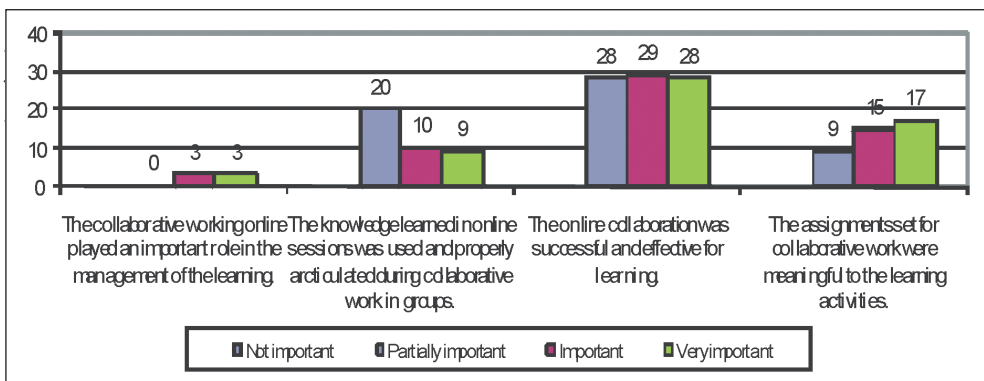

Figure 2b. **Respondents' opinion of the processes of e-learning activities: collaboration and self-study**

contributed factors to the respondents' self-motivation, such as self-learning, the learned course and progress self-evaluation, possibly helped them to be aware of the present and future learning styles (Figure 2c).

Similar results can be observed with respect to self-motivation. The majority of the respondents (47 % - 67 %) indicated the importance of all aspects meant to enhance learners' self-motivation. Only 5 % of the respondents would like some factors, such as individual objectives, ways to maintain motivation or peers' relations, to be changed or improved (Figure 2d).

The final set of the questionnaire parameters referred to the question whether the discussed above teacher chosen aspects of the blended course needed further improvement. Regarding the components of the e-learning environment, ICT and learning system, the data revealed a curious picture.

As seen in Figure 3a, the prevalent majority of the respondents pointed out that all the given aspects demanded improvement. Such answers ranged from 64 % to 73 %. The number of the respondents which reached 70 % indicated the need to improve the e-learning environment material, easy access to the resources, the sufficient online facilities, the online learning tools adapted to the specific needs, etc. (Figure 3a).
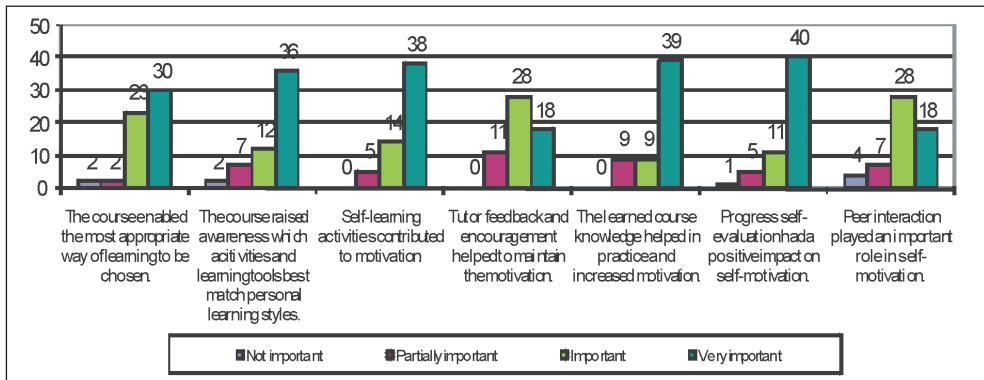
Figure 2c. **Respondents' opinion of the factors developing motivation to learn effectively: awareness of learning preferences**
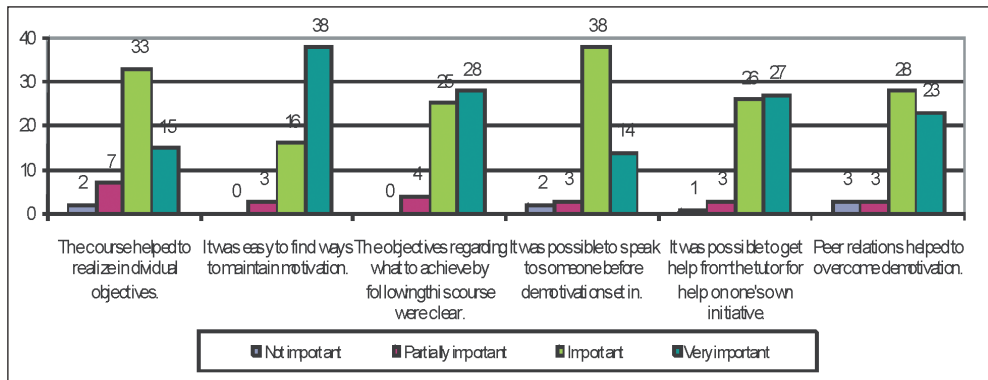

Figure 2d. **Respondents' opinion of the factors developing self-motivation**
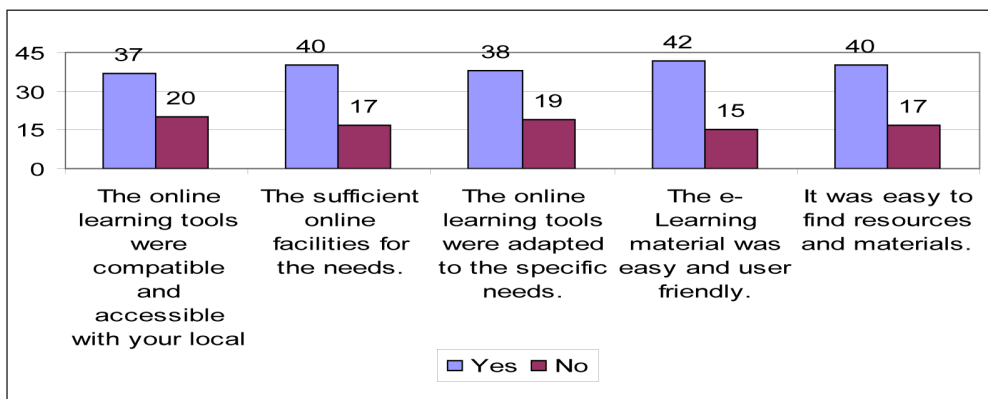

Figure 3a. **Do the given aspects of the e-learning environment require improvement? (Respondents' opinion)**

collaboration in working online, the knowledge learned in online sessions, the set assessments and the timetable for blended studies were successful and effective for studying. Another group of the respondents (about 30%), pointed out the sufficient quality and efficiency of e-learning activities (Figure 3b).

According to the respondents' answers, which range from 60 % to 84 %, it was clearly shown that the improvement of the learning preferences was highly needed to enhance their self-motivation. Most respondents (84 %) expressed a considerable need to have better peer interaction whereas a great number of them, that is 60 %, claimed that this blended learning helped them to find the most appropriate way of learning. One third of the respondents (about 30 %) were satisfied with the learning preferences (Figure 3c).

Figure 3d presents the aspects of self-motivation which need to be developed. Approximately 85 % of the respondents feel the necessity for a better possibility to get help from the tutor on their own initiative. Regarding the students' answers
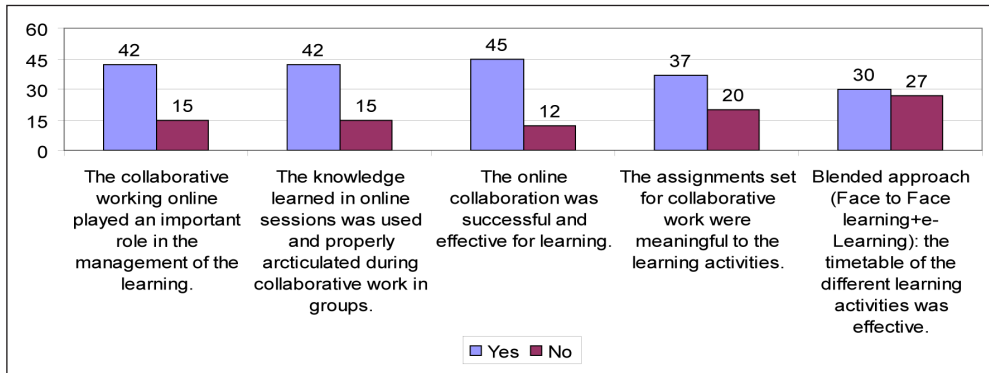

Figure 3b. **Do the given aspects of e-learning activities require improvement? (Respondents' opinion)**
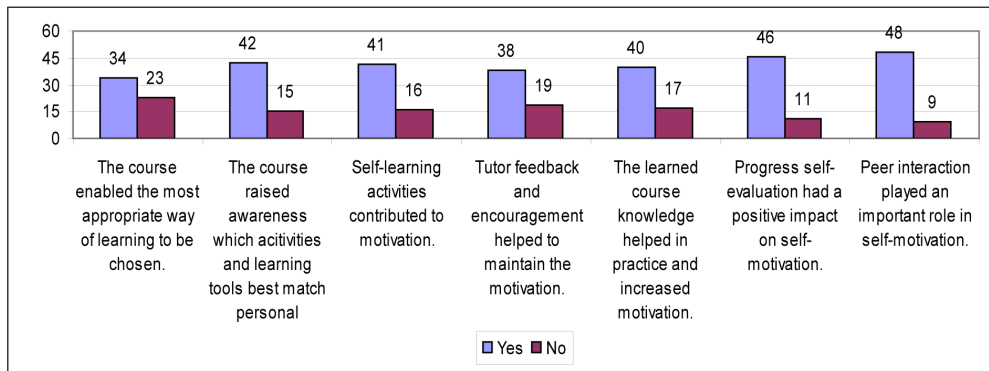

Figure 3c. **Do the given aspects of learning preferences require improvement? (Respondents' opinion)**

which amounted from about 60 % to 70 %, the course objectives or finding the ways to maintain self-motivation can be improved in a different way. The realisation and achievement of individual objectives (around 35 %) do not require so much improvement (Figure 3d).
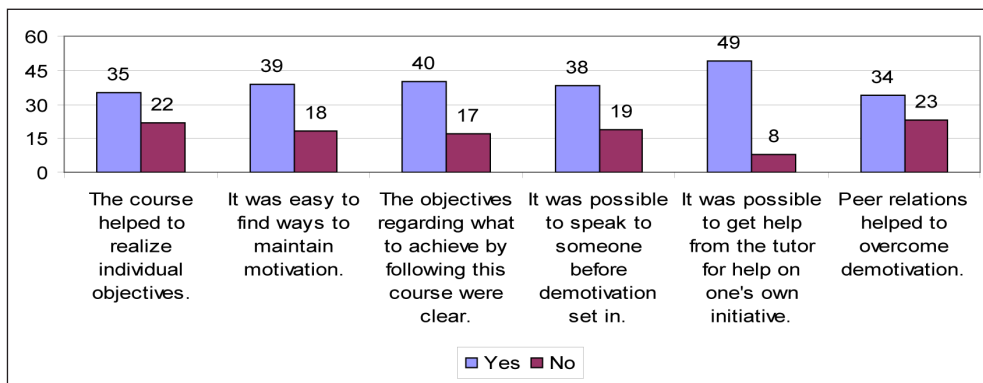

Figure 3d. **Do the given aspects of self-motivation require improvement? (Respondents' opinion)**

As seen in Figure 3a, the prevalent majority of the respondents pointed out that all the given aspects demanded improvement. Such answers ranged from 64 % to 73 %. Interestingly, the same components received high assessment from the respondents (see Figure 2a). The data in the other three categories (e-learning activities: collaboration and self-study, motivation to learn: learning preferences and self-motivation) resembles the above discussed figure. Most of the respondents indicated that the teacher chosen currently analysed aspects required further perfection (Figs. 3b, 3c and 3d). Likewise, the general evaluation of the same aspects in these categories was positive or very positive (see Figs. 2b, 2c and 2d). The reasons for such contradictory results need to be examined in future research.

Conclusions

The research results showed that the majority of the respondents (63 %) assessed the teacher chosen and applied teaching/learning methods, enriched with ICT, positively ("good" or "excellent"). Thus, it can be stated that the learning methods and tools employed by the teacher help in fostering learners' motivation.

According to the prevalent number of the respondents (60 %), the teacher chosen learning components in the blended course of English as a foreign language are important and topical in the process of developing learners' intrinsic motivation. The respondents pointed out the aspects that are essential in terms of the development of their motivation while learning with the help of the e-learning system. Firstly, compatibility and accessibility of the provided learning tools with the students' local network along with the sufficient online facilities for their needs was emphasised. Secondly, it

was remarked that online collaboration was successful and effective for learning. The respondents underlined the fact that the course experience raised awareness as to which activities and learning tools best matched different personal learning styles.

Concerning self-motivation, it was indicated that a positive impact in this respect was due to the possibility of self-evaluation of progress during the course. Besides, the students observed that it was easy to find ways how to maintain motivation. Finally, they pointed out that the objectives regarding what to achieve by following the course were clear.

In addition to the above listed positive opinions of certain facets in the current blended course, the research participants specified the ones that require further improvement. It was noted that the e-learning material should be easier and user friendlier. The relevant sources and materials should be easier to find. It was also emphasised that the knowledge learned online should be used and properly articulated during collaborative work in groups, while the assignments set for such collaborative work should be meaningful to learning activities. Peer relationships should be fostered more to prevent demotivation. Lastly, in the respondents' opinion, teacher's help should be more accessible.

To sum up, in accordance with the research objectives, it can be concluded that employment of the e-learning environment, online learning tools and materials as well as online collaboration with the teacher and peers in the blended learning of English provides broad possibilities for the development of learners' intrinsic motivation, which subsequently leads to a greater success in foreign language acquisition in general.

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