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Reient, Oleksandr: The influence of contact with English speakers on EFL motivation in Ukrainian secondary schools
Alkalmazott Nyelvtudomány, Különszám, 2023/3. szám, 19–34.
doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.18460/ANY.K.2023.3.002>

The influence of contact with English speakers on EFL motivation in Ukrainian secondary schools

The main objective of the present quantitative study was to assess the influence which direct and indirect contact has on secondary school students' motivation to learn English. The study involved 172 students (13-14 years old) split into two subsamples (i.e., general secondary and specialized school students), each consisting of 86 students. The research instrument included eight scales: three related to motivation and five related to contact. The results showed that in both subsamples the perceived importance of contact had a positive effect on motivated learning behavior. However, a more pronounced effect of the contact scale on the three motivational scales was observed among general secondary school students compared to those in specialized schools. In addition, the cultural interest of students in both categories was influenced by the indirect contact scale. Moreover, it was revealed that the cultural interest of the advanced language learners was strongly influenced by the use of mass media, whereas attitudes towards language learning among the general secondary school students were affected by direct spoken contact. All in all, the findings provided sufficient evidence to claim that there is a strong relationship between contact and English language learning motivation.

Keywords: English language learning motivation, direct contact, indirect contact, motivated learning behavior, perceived importance of contact

1. Introduction

Communication has been shown to be one of the most important factors affecting English language learning motivation, and interaction with English speakers, in particular, appears to raise students' confidence and increase their interest in the overall learning process (Wu et al., 2011). Many learners benefit from interactive activities in the English classroom. These benefits may arise as a result of clear language learning goals, which learners can develop through engaging in meaningful communication (Omar et al., 2020).

Direct contact with English speakers and indirect contact (e.g., with cultural products) provide a foundation for increasing the motivation to learn English. Kormos and Csizér (2008) assert that a range of variables related to contact, such as the perceived importance of contact and English language cultural products, influence secondary school students' motivation to learn English.

Regarding motivation, it should be noted that extensive research on the topic has been carried out in the Ukrainian context. These studies have examined the impact of various factors on motivation, including the use of information and

communication technologies (Savchuk et al., 2019), and the classroom atmosphere (Antoshkina, 2021), among other. However, regardless of the increasing importance of English worldwide (Smotrova, 2009), and the recent modernization of the country's educational policy (Kovalenko et al., 2010), little research exists on the impact which contact with English speakers has on English language learning motivation in Ukrainian secondary schools. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the influence of contact variables on English language learning motivation among Ukrainian secondary school students by replicating Kormos and Csizér's (2008) study in the Ukrainian context. In addition, Toptsi's (2018) updated cultural interest scale is also included, taking students' English digital media use into consideration. This updated scale is valuable to the present study as it is in line with the current English language curriculum in Ukraine.

There is relatively little contact with English speaking people and their cultural products in the Ukrainian context. Thus, it remains uncertain as to what extent the perceived importance of contact and indirect contact opportunities affects students' motivation to learn English. According to Khyzhniak and Viktorenko, (2021) some EFL teachers in Ukraine continue to rely on outdated methods of teaching English as a foreign language, with a tendency to dictate the learning process and leaving little room for the development of student's autonomy. That said, there is also a constant push for the development of more effective teaching and learning methods among EFL teachers in Ukraine (Antoshkina, 2021). It is hoped that the current study can act as a useful guide for teachers who want to increase their students' interest in the English language and its speakers.

2. Literature review

A wealth of research exists related to the motivation to learn English. In accordance with Dörnyei and Ottó (1998), motivation is conceptualized as the dynamic, excited state of an individual that drives, directs, coordinates, reinforces, halts, and appraises both cognitive and motor actions through selecting, prioritizing, operationalizing, and operating on the basis of aspirations and desires (p. 46). In other words, motivation is the process which prompts, guides, and facilitates goal-oriented behavior; this definition is adopted in the present study.

The motivation to learn English and particular learning behaviors vary based on the linguistic and national contexts which learners are situated in (Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005). In some countries (e.g., the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand), English is considered a native language (i.e., inner circle) (Bhatt, 2001, p. 530), in others (e.g., India, Kenya, Nigeria, etc.), it is seen as a second language introduced into all areas of personal and social life (i.e., outer circle). Outside the mentioned circles, English is not widely spoken and is only used in educational institutions (i.e., the expanding circle) (Bhatt, 2001, p. 530). In this circle, English is considered a foreign language (EFL), and both Hungary and Ukraine belong to it (Kachru, 1985). This implies that people in both countries lack contact with English speakers.

2.1 EFL motivation and contact experiences

Due to the prevalence of English in today's world, there is a great deal of interest in foreign language motivation. Motivation is viewed as a critical asset for learners, helping them to make decisions related to the learning process or deciding with whom to communicate; furthermore, it supports the determination to learn a language through encouraging perseverance and effort (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011).

According to Gardner and Lambert (1972), two orientations have a profound effect on language learning. One is integrative orientation, which refers primarily to the learner's positive attitudes toward the target language as well as toward the target culture and community. For Gardner (1985), integrative orientation is associated with the desire to grow closer to, or perhaps even become a member of, the community associated with the studied language. Gardner and Lambert also proposed instrumental orientation, which refers to attitudes regarding the usefulness of the given language, and learners' understanding of how it can benefit them (e.g., leading to a better salary, or enabling them to successfully graduate). It was Schumann (1986) who later developed and explained what is now known as acculturation theory, proposing that second languages tend to be learned most effectively through immersion with the target language and culture. In the case of English, the theory suggests that learners' interaction with English speakers would offer a better learning experience compared to those without such interaction.

Recent motivational theories focus heavily on the sociodynamic nature of motivation, which assumes that student interaction has a noticeable impact on language learning. Sociodynamic theories of language learning motivation revolve around three principal approaches. The first, referred to as "*Person in Context*" (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009, p. 220), views learners as "*real persons*", with their own individual goals and drives (p. 220). The second is the L2 motivational self system, which includes 1) the ideal L2 self, which represents the traits the learner wants to acquire, 2) the ought-to L2 self, representing the qualities the student has to acquire to avoid negative consequences, and 3) the L2 learning experiences related to the language learning process and properties of the learning environment (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). The third approach, complex dynamic systems theory, focuses on the significance of individual differences in English learning motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009). Drawing from these theories, the concepts of interaction, engagement, and attitude can be considered central to the study of English learning motivation.

A study by Kormos et al. (2011) in the Chilean context shows that students' motivation is directly related to their desire to use English as a means of joining a global community. The researchers found that adolescent learners' main goal for learning English was to engage with their peers through information technology. As such, a more comprehensive theoretical model of motivation also needs to include socio-contextual determinants which influence students' motivation to learn the language. The research produced a four-factor model of English

motivation including goals, attitudes, self-management, and self-efficacy beliefs, each of which showed association with motivated learning behavior (p. 495). Accordingly, students with high levels of motivated behavior are prone to invest more energy into English language learning.

A related study examined the effect of intercultural contact on English learning motivation (Aubrey & Nowlan, 2013). The study made use of the notion of intercultural contact (IC). According to Clément (1980), IC represents interaction between two distinct cultural groups. It has been shown that repeated and pleasant intercultural contact has an indirect positive effect on learners' motivation (Clément & Kruidenier, 1983).

In their study, Aubrey and Nowlan (2013) examined students regularly engaged in cross-cultural contact and those without such experiences. The findings suggest that the former group of participants, through multiple interactions with other international students, developed positive attitudes toward the community of the studied language, establishing a correlation between contact and attitude. Students who made frequent contact with international students exhibited five times more interest in learning English by communicating with their peers than those who only interacted with speakers of their own community. The results also showed that students' cross-cultural attitudes had a direct impact on motivated learning behavior.

A similar study by Aubrey and Philpott (2019) regarding the impact of cross-cultural contact in Japanese classrooms demonstrated that cross-cultural contact contributed to improved motivational self-systems and L2 learning experiences. They also found that students who participated in intracultural communication experienced no change in their attitudes toward the international community.

Csizér and Kormos' (2008) research served as a basis for the present study. Their research provided evidence of a relationship between intercultural contact and foreign language motivation in the Hungarian context. They examined variables measuring motivation, contact, and motivated behavior factors in learners of English and German. Their findings indicated a positive correlation between students' motivation and intercultural contact. It was also found that English language learners, as opposed to those learning German, showed more positive attitudes toward English speakers, more confidence in using the language, more effort invested in language learning, more frequent engagement in direct contact with English speakers, and more regular use of English media products. It was also revealed that students with higher levels of motivation were more likely to engage in intercultural communication than less motivated students. Another key finding revealed that English students with higher levels of motivation tend to use English media products, while students with intermediate levels of motivation prefer to engage in direct written contact.

2.2 The description of the Ukrainian context

Insight into the state of English learning motivation in Ukraine can be gained from the Ukrainian Country Report (2010), published by the Ministry of Education of Ukraine. It contains a comprehensive review of the situation related to the teaching and learning of English, an overview of the state standards and the national curriculum, an analysis of language competencies, and a discussion of the main educational goals related to the communicative approach to language teaching in secondary schools. An important point to take away from this is that Ukrainian educational institutions encourage plurilingualism by promoting the introduction of English into everyday language use (Kovalenko et al., 2010).

As Smotrova (2009) argues, Ukraine's integration into the European community reinforces the role of English for Ukrainians as the language of intercultural communication. The author claims that collaboration with the British Council will make English language learning in the country more effective by providing teachers with the opportunity to enhance their professional skills and, consequently, provide them with contemporary means of encouraging students to participate in language learning in the classroom environment.

There is a national program dedicated to designing Ukrainian school curricula which addresses the requirements for both the teaching and learning of general and advanced levels of English in secondary schools (UNFLPFSS, 2017). The Ukrainian National Foreign Language Program for Secondary Schools (2017) emphasizes the integrative aspect of English instruction and provides evidence of a contact-orientated approach to foreign language learning (UNFLPFSS, 2017). The program illustrates that the current Ukrainian approaches to English learning highlight the importance of authentic intercultural contact. The document also stresses the significance of contextual learning and offers effective methods for acquiring the skills needed for each grade level.

Issues related to contact and motivation have been covered separately in different Ukrainian studies. However, as mentioned in the introduction, there is a lack of research on the impact of contact on foreign language learning motivation in Ukrainian secondary schools. The current study aims to address this research niche through an investigation of the previously mentioned motivational variables including attitudes towards English learning, motivated learning behavior, cultural interest, and contact variables such as media use, perceived importance of contact, and direct and indirect spoken and written contact.

3. Research methods

A quantitative approach (Dörnyei, 2007) was employed in this study to collect the data needed to answer the following research questions:

1. What characterizes Ukrainian secondary school students' contact experiences and English language learning motivation?

2. What is the relationship between contact with English speakers and English language learning motivation?
3. To what extent does contact with English speakers influence English language learning motivation?

With these questions, the study aims to investigate a relationship which has not yet been explored in the context of Ukrainian secondary schools. The mentioned approach is used to measure the extent to which the perceived importance of contact and indirect contact opportunities contributes to students' motivation to learn English.

3.1 Participants

The present study's population represents Ukrainian secondary school students in Grades 7 through 9, ranging in age from 12 to 16 years. The participants were selected using the convenience sampling method (Dörnyei, 2007).

The study includes 172 students from the above-mentioned grades who attend general secondary schools ($n = 86$) and schools offering advanced English language learning ($n = 86$). The first subsample includes 45 males (52.3%) and 41 females (47.7%). 64 students in this subsample (74.4%) do not study any other languages besides English. Other languages the students study besides English include French (7 students; 8.1%), German ($n = 7$, 8.1%), Polish ($n = 4$ participants, 4.7%), and four other languages (4.7%). The second subsample is comprised of 86 students from specialized schools which offer more intensive English language learning. This subsample includes 52 male (60.5%) and 34 female students (39.5%). The subsample contains a higher number of learners studying other foreign languages besides English. 31 students study French (36%), 9 study German (10%), and 16 study Spanish (19%), or other languages.

3.2 Research instrument

To fulfil the aims of this study, a questionnaire was used for data collection. The questionnaire employed by Csizér and Kormos (2008) comprised motivational scales including integrative motivation, instrumental motivation, motivated learning behavior, and contact scales consisting of direct spoken contact, direct written contact, indirect contact, use of foreign media, and perceived importance of contact. Their instrument was adapted for the present research with some modifications. Cultural interest and digital media use scales were drawn from a more recent study by Toptsi (2018) examining the impact of digital media use on the L2 motivational self system. A total of eight scales were finally included in the questionnaire, with three motivational variables and five contact variables.

The questionnaire was translated to improve the participants' understanding of the questions and, more importantly, to reduce the measurement errors which might have arisen due to comprehension issues among the respondents regarding the instrument's items.

The translation of the questionnaire involved the following steps:

1. English-Ukrainian translation: a faithful translation was carried out to adjust the questionnaire to Ukrainian linguistic norms.
2. Ukrainian-English back translation was performed by a Ukrainian English teacher, who also holds a degree in Ukrainian philology.
3. A comparison was made to identify inconsistencies and discrepancies, showing that the two versions of the questionnaire are almost identical.

The questionnaire consists of two sections. There are 43 items in total, with Section 1 containing 28 items representing the five contact scales and employing a 12-point Likert scale (from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*). Section 2 contains 15 items representing the three motivational scales and employs a 12-point Likert scale (ranging from *not at all* to *very often*). A 12-point scale was primarily selected because students in secondary schools in Ukraine are familiar with a 12-point grading scale. Students' familiarity with the scale may produce more reliable results than the frequently used five- or seven-point Likert scales.

As previously mentioned, the survey consists of three motivational variables:

1. Cultural interest (5 items): measures the student's engagement with English cultural products (e.g., movies, podcasts, magazines, etc.). Example: I often read English language magazines or newspapers published in English.
2. Attitudes toward language learning (4 items): measures the learner's perceptions of the value of learning English. Example: Learning English is one of the most important aspects of my life.
3. Motivated learning behavior (6 items): refers to the engagement, persistence, and effort that students manifest in their desire to learn English. Example: I always look forward to our English classes.

In addition, there are five variables related to contact:

4. Digital media use (7 items): the extent to which students engage with English language digital content. Example: I often play video games in English.
5. Perceived importance of contact (7 items): learners' perceptions regarding the role of contact for improving language skills or reducing anxiety. Example: I think it is useful to communicate with foreigners because I can increase my confidence.
6. Direct spoken contact (7 items): the frequency of using English in communication with English speakers. Example: How often do you speak English when you travel abroad?
7. Direct written contact (3 items): the frequency of using English in written communication with English speakers on the Internet via various platforms. Example: How often do you communicate in English online?

8. Indirect contact involving (4 items): the frequency with which students are exposed to English culture. Example: How often does your teacher talk about the English-speaking community?

3.3 Data collection, ethical considerations, and data analysis

A Google form was developed for the present study, which included a consent form. Each participant was told that their participation was optional, their personal information would not be disclosed, and that their data would only be used for the purposes of this study. Furthermore, the questionnaire contained six open-ended questions for which the participants were asked to indicate their gender and age among other biographical questions.

The data collected was analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS version 25). Four procedures were involved in the analysis phase of the study. Firstly, reliability analysis was carried out to assess the extent to which the items from each scale questionnaire relate to each other, measuring the internal consistency. Secondly, scale analysis was carried out to determine if there was a significant difference between the averages of the two subsamples. Next, correlation analysis was conducted to identify relationships between the scales. The last step involved measuring the linear regression between the contact and motivation scales.

4. Results

The internal reliability analysis of the data showed fairly high coefficients for the scales, with the lowest being .74. Having such reliability coefficients implies that the instrument employed in the study provides consistent and reliable results, suggesting that the collected data can be trusted to make valid conclusions.

An independent sample *t*-test was then conducted to examine the differences between the mean values of the two subsamples (see Table 1).

The data show that students in specialized schools, like those in comprehensive schools, consider contact (i.e., the perceived importance of contact) as the most influential factor, since it is here that the difference in mean values is the smallest, with the lowest $t = -6.27$, $p < .001$; a significant negative value usually indicates a directional change in the influence of the variables. The difference is slightly larger in regard to the DWC variable with $t = -6.65$, $p < .001$. Students in both subsamples report that they do not often write letters or emails to their foreign friends. On the other hand, they showed a preference for social media platforms, like Facebook, to keep in touch with their friends from abroad.

Table 1. Independent Samples *t*-test

Name of variable	Group	N _o	Mean	SD	t	p
1. Cultural interest (CI)	1	86	6.37	2.05	-10.95	< .001
	2	86	9.46	1.63		
2. Language learning attitudes (LLA)	1	86	7.28	2.74	-7.22	< .001
	2	86	9.90	1.97		
3. Motivated learning behavior (MLB)	1	86	7.37	2.46	-8.16	< .001
	2	86	9.98	1.66		
4. Digital media usage (DMU)	1	86	5.07	2.00	-11.53	< .001
	2	86	8.44	1.83		
5. Perceived importance of contact (PIC)	1	86	8.19	2.27	-6.27	< .001
	2	86	10.05	1.53		
6. Direct spoken contact (DSC)	1	86	4.71	2.29	-9.98	< .001
	2	86	8.04	2.08		
7. Direct written contact (DWC)	1	86	5.14	2.53	-6.65	< .001
	2	86	7.66	2.43		
8. Indirect contact (IC)	1	86	5.48	2.06	-9.70	< .001
	2	86	8.37	1.84		

Note: *** $p < .001$; group 1 includes comprehensive school students; group 2 includes students from specialized schools with in-depth English language learning program

The results for the LLA scale ranked third in terms of the observable difference between the two groups, with $t = -7.22$, $p < .001$. This suggests that students in both types of schools consider English to be an important aspect of their lives. Despite the difference, the data suggests an overall enjoyment of the English learning process among the participants. There was a larger difference between the two groups regarding MLB, with $t = -8.16$, $p < .001$. The advanced students appear to enjoy English classes more and are more willing to work hard to acquire second language skills. In contrast, general secondary school students reported expending moderate efforts to learn English.

The scales with the greatest differences in values between the two groups are as follows: IC with $t = -9.70$, $p < .001$, DSC with $t = -9.98$, $p < .001$, CI with $t = -10.95$, $p < .001$, and DMU with $t = -11.53$, $p < .001$. As the results show, advanced language learners are more likely to make use of digital platforms to learn English, tend to read and watch more English content, and have more contact with their neighbours and friends. However, despite these differences, students in both groups scored highly on the cultural interest, attitudes toward language learning, and motivated learning behavior scales (see Table 1).

To analyse how the contact and motivation scales correlated with one another in each subsample, a correlation analysis was performed (see Table 2 and Table 3). The strength of the correlations between the variables was calculated.

As can be seen in Table 2, there is a strong correlation between the motivational and contact variables in subsample 1. According to the results, the PIC and MLB scales ($r = .894, p < .001$) as well as the PIC and LLA scales ($r = .857, p < .001$) have the highest correlation. The CI and DMU scales ($r = .795, p < .001$), and the CI and DSC scales ($r = .783, p < .001$) also showed strong relationships. In general, PIC showed the highest rates of compatibility with the motivational scales, and IC produced the lowest rates of correlation. For example, IC and LLA ($r = .460, p < .001$) as well as IC and PIC ($r = .504, p < .001$), although significant, represent the weakest correlations among the pairs. A strong relationship exists, however, between MLB and LLA ($r = .941, p < .001$), which are both motivational scales. Similarly, strong correlations can be seen in combinations of the contact scales, such as DWC and DSC ($r = .849, p < .001$), DSC and DMU ($r = .846, p < .001$), IC and DWC ($r = .787, p < .001$), or IC and DSC ($r = .785, p < .001$).

Table 2. Correlation Matrix subsample 1

		CI	LLA	MLB	DMU	PIC	DSC	DWC	IC
LLA	Pearson's r	.650	-						
	p-value	<.001	-						
MLB	Pearson's r	.684	.941	-					
	p-value	<.001	<.001	-					
DMU	Pearson's r	.755	.664	.703	-				
	p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	-				
PIC	Pearson's r	.684	.857	.894	.633	-			
	p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	-			
DSC	Pearson's r	.783	.701	.710	.846	.593	-		
	p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	-		
DWC	Pearson's r	.704	.593	.587	.788	.496	.849	-	
	p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	-	
IC	Pearson's r	.729	.460	.522	.708	.504	.785	.787	-
	p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	-

Note: *** $p < .001$; $N = 85$

Correlation analysis was also conducted to see what kind of relationships exist between the scales in subsample 2 (see Table 3). Similarly to subsample 1, MLB and LLA ($r = .931, p < .001$) have the strongest relationship in subsample 2. According to the analysis, the following are the strongest pairs of the contact and motivation scales: PIC and MLB ($r = .888, p < .001$), PIC and LLA ($r = .860, p < .001$), DMU and CI ($r = .853, p < .001$), PIC and CI ($r = .833, p < .001$), DMU and MLB ($r = .814, p < .001$), DSC and CI ($r = .814, p < .001$). The weakest relationships can be seen between the following pairs: IC and LLA ($r = .663, p < .001$), as well as IC and MLB ($r = .665, p < .001$). As the table below shows, in

general there is a high correlation between the PIC scale and all motivational scales; DMU and DSC are also strongly correlated with the motivational scales.

Table 3. Correlation Matrix subsample 2

		CI	LLA	MLB	DMU	PIC	DSC	DWC	IC
LLA	Pearson's r	0.849	-						
	p-value	<.001	-						
MLB	Pearson's r	0.886	0.931	-					
	p-value	<.001	<.001	-					
DMU	Pearson's r	0.853	0.764	0.819	-				
	p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	-				
PIC	Pearson's r	0.833	0.860	0.888	0.817	-			
	p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	-			
DSC	Pearson's r	0.814	0.759	0.785	0.804	0.732	-		
	p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	-		
DWC	Pearson's r	0.725	0.682	0.677	0.699	0.665	0.892	-	
	p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	-	
IC	Pearson's r	0.757	0.663	0.665	0.656	0.609	0.893	0.868	-
	p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	-

Note: *** $p < .001$; $N = 85$

The differences in pairs of scales between both subsamples are presented in the table below (see Table 4). Using the Fisher's r-to-z transformation, it is possible to determine whether the differences in contact-motivation relationships between the two subsamples are significant. Table 4 shows that the only significant difference is between CI and PIC with $z = -2.33$ ($p = .0198$).

Table 4. Comparison of correlation coefficients in both subsamples

Scale pairs (motivation + contact)	Subsample 1 (r-value)	Subsample 2 (r-value)	z-value	p-value
MLB and PIC	0.894	0.888	0.19	0.8493
LLA and PIC	0.857	0.860	-0.07	0.9442
CI and DSC	0.783	0.814	-0.55	0.5823
CI and DMU	0.755	0.853	-1.82	0.0688
CI and IC	0.729	0.757	-0.4	0.6892
MLB and DSC	0.710	0.785	-1.1	0.2713
CI and DWC	0.704	0.725	-0.28	0.7795
MLB and DMU	0.703	0.819	-1.81	0.0703
LLA and DSC	0.701	0.759	-0.8	0.4237
CI and PIC	0.684	0.833	-2.33	0.0198*
LLA and DMU	0.664	0.764	-1.33	0.1835
LLA and DWC	0.593	0.682	-0.97	0.332
MLB and DWC	0.587	0.677	-0.97	0.332
MLB and IC	0.522	0.665	-1.43	0.1527
LLA and IC	0.460	0.663	-1.94	0.0524

Note: *p=.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

4.1 Linear regression analysis

To establish the direction of the influence and thus the extent to which contact and indirect contact opportunities affect students' English motivation, a linear regression analysis was conducted for each subsample. Table 5 shows the results of the analysis of the influence of contact variables (both direct and indirect) on the motivational variables in both groups. Both the advanced language learners and the students with two to three English classes per week find communicating with foreigners important, since it can help them improve in various ways. The results show that the perceived importance of contact significantly affects all the motivation scales in both subsamples of students (with a higher value for subsample 1). Also, DSC and IC with English speakers and their cultures affect motivated behavior in both groups. Even though students in the general secondary school programs do not often speak English in and outside the classroom, this variable was still shown to have a significant effect for subsample 1.

In the case of subsample 1, a strong influence of DSC on LLA was observed, whereas in subsample 2, a strong influence of DMU on CI could be seen. In addition, a negative effect was found between IC and LLA, IC and MLB in subsample 1. This indicates that if the values of the independent (influencing) scale increase, the mean values of the dependent (influenced) scale decrease (see Table 5).

Table 5. The influence of contact scales on motivational scales

Variable pairs (motivation + contact)	β_1	t1	p1	β_2	t2	p2
DMU and CI	.156	1.262	.210	.35	4.735	<.001
DMU and LLA	-.1	-.779	.438	.03	.254	.800
DMU and MLB	-.052	.493	.624	.12	1.441	.153
PIC and CI	.265	3.769	<.001	.38	4.486	<.001
PIC and LLA	.867	11.998	<.001	.84	6.918	<.001
PIC and MLB	.793	13.356	<.001	.67	7.665	<.001
DSC and CI	.25	1.987	.050	-.002	-.005	.996
DSC and LLA	.547	4.228	<.001	.2	1.273	.207
DSC and MLB	.383	3.598	<.001	.25	2.139	.036
DWC and CI	.004	.0399	.968	-.09	-1.213	.229
DWC and LLA	.2	1.933	.057	-.04	-.370	.713
DWC and MLB	.03	.357	.722	-.11	-1.480	.143
IC and CI	.247	2.411	.018	.35	3.583	<.001
IC and LLA	-.473	-4.481	<.001	.1	.742	.460
IC and MLB	-.22	-2.505	.014	.05	.549	.584

Note: * p =.05, ** p <.01, *** p <.001; β_1 (beta value), t1, p1 – values for subsample 1; β_2 , t2, p2 – values for subsample 2

5. Discussion

Overall, similar to the results obtained by Kormos et al. (2011), students in the present study consider communication with foreigners important because it can help them to improve themselves in various aspects. As in the Chilean (Kormos et al., 2011), the Hungarian (Csizér & Kormos, 2008), that served as the basis for this study, or the Japanese (Aubrey & Philpott, 2019) study, the present research provides evidence of the positive relationship between contact and motivation. The results show that the perceived importance of contact significantly influences the motivational scales in both subsamples (with a higher value in subsample 1). Moreover, as in the study of Csizér and Kormos' (2008), in the present research the motivated learning behavior of both groups of learners was influenced by direct spoken contact, as well as indirect contact with speakers and their culture, thus affecting their cultural interests.

Even though students often feel reluctant to speak English outside the classroom, DSC still has a large impact on secondary school students in Ukraine (Honcharova, 2019). There is a strong influence of DSC on LLA in subsample 1, whereas in subsample 2 there is a strong effect of DMU on cultural interest. The results of this study prove the usefulness of the implementation of The Ukrainian

National Foreign Language Program for Secondary Schools (2017), and its effectiveness in introducing direct and indirect contact practices necessary to improve EFL motivation in secondary school learners in Ukraine.

6. Conclusion

The main purpose of this questionnaire study was to investigate the influence of contact, both direct and through cultural products, on students' English learning motivation. A Google form (in English) was developed and translated into Ukrainian to obtain more reliable results. The sample included in this study included 172 secondary school students from Grade 7 to 9. Two subsamples were selected for the study: students in general secondary schools with two to three English lessons per week and students in specialized schools with advanced English language instruction.

The analysis conducted provided answers to the above research questions. Using an independent sample *t*-test, the answer to the first research question was obtained (i.e., *What characterizes Ukrainian secondary school students' contact experiences and English language learning motivation?*). The main similarities and distinctions between the motivation and contact scales for general secondary school students and advanced English language learners were identified. Based on the analysis, it appears that both categories of Ukrainian students consider contact with English speakers as an important factor in their learning process. However, major differences were found in regard to the IC, DSC, CI, and DMU scales. This shows that students who have five or more English lessons per week have significantly more contact experiences than those with fewer classes a week. Moreover, it also shows that students in specialized schools have more interest invested in English culture compared to students in general secondary schools.

Correlation analysis was used to answer the second research question (i.e., *What is the relationship between contact with English speakers and English language learning motivation?*). According to the results, strong relationships exist between the contact and motivation scales in both student groups. PIC, by and large, exhibited the highest compatibility scores with the motivational scales, while IC was shown to have the lowest compatibility scores.

Linear regression analysis provided the answer to the third research question (i.e., *To what extent does contact with English speakers influence English language learning motivation?*). The analysis suggests that for both general and specialized school students, the perceived importance of contact influences motivation. In both groups of Ukrainian students, MLB is affected by the DSC, while CI is affected by IC. Results further indicated that students in specialized schools use media tools more often, which affects their cultural interest, while the attitudes of students in general secondary schools towards language learning are influenced by DSC.

To conclude, the results of the study offer important insights which can help teachers in Ukraine create a fruitful learning environment for different groups of

students. In addition, the results might highlight the importance of introducing contact experiences into the English learning process. A qualitative study on the same subject could lead to an even deeper understanding of the topic. Such a study could involve both students and teachers and would likely yield more information on the issue of cultural interest.

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