

LEADERS' LANGUAGE USE AND PERCEIVED TRUST IN LEADER: A QUANTITATIVE STUDY IN AN INTERNATIONAL CENTRAL EUROPEAN NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

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ABSTRACT

The empirical study of trust in leader has manifested its intuitively appealing role as a fundamental characteristic of effective leaders. Thus, the phenomenon and its antecedents have been a salient topic in recent management studies. The aim of this paper is to examine the relation between trust and its one of the most cited antecedent- communication satisfaction (CS). Delimited by the Motivating Language Theory, the paper reveals the mechanism between the phenomena via conventional and SEM analyses in an Int'l sample. Empirical results confirms the significantly positive relation between leaders' language use and trust in leader as mediated by CS.

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KEY WORDS

communication satisfaction, international Central European, motivating language theory, non-profit organization, structural equation modeling, trust in leader.

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Introduction

Due to the increasing demands of complex competitive environments, organizations are looking to collaboration and leveraged effectiveness as means of resolving challenges, both large and small, across levels of analysis and cultural contexts (Boies et al. 2015; Schoorman et al. 2007). One key component in ensuring effective functioning which acts as a lubricant for collaboration (Seppanen et al. 2014) is trust among individuals. Pertinently, meta-analyses and reviews have all highlighted

leadership and communication satisfaction as two of the most notable determinants of trust (Dirks, Ferrin 2002; Colquitt et al. 2007).

On the other hand, leaders have been argued to play a key role in determining organizational effectiveness and key components in a leader's ability to be effective within such environments are the degree to which followers trust him/her and how they perceive his/her communicating skills. Therefore, it is not surprising that research-

ers and practitioners are interested in identifying the mechanisms through which trust in leader can be developed (Burke et al. 2007). In a similar vein, prevailing interest in leadership communication and its relation with trust in leader phenomenon is substantially salient. It is commonly stated that high quality communication builds trust between the followers and the leader (Winska 2013).

Literally, communication is the lifeblood of organizations and "conversations are the work of a leader and the workhorses of an organization" (Scott, 2002 as cited by Holmes 2012: xix). More succinctly, the key to successful leadership is effective communication skills (Conger 1991). However, on the contrary to the consensus in leadership literature concerning the importance of communication, it is not easy to maintain that adequate interest was shown to the phenomenon of language use by either communication or leadership researchers (Conger 1991; Sharbrough et al. 2006; Mayfield, Mayfield 2009, 2015). In a large portion of recent studies in the field, while the importance of communication implicitly is highlighted, studies questioning the impact of the language use on organizational outcomes are rather limited (Sharbrough et al. 2006). Leadership theories have been asserted to be notoriously general in their treatment of communication (Holmes 2012). Theories of motivation all imply, but do not recognize explicitly a central role for communication (Mayfield, Mayfield 2015).

Additionally, the majority of these researches are based on the assumption that the leaders are using the same component of language with all subordinates which is addressing the goal to reduce the uncertainty (Sullivan 1988; Mayfield, Mayfield 2012). Being an answer to this inadequacy, Motivating Language Theory (MLT) employs a more comprehensive approach

to the leaders language use. In exploring and researching leader language use, the researcher's line of inquiry thus, based on MLT. MLT was identified as a leadership communication theory focused on the strategic application of leader talk to improve individual worker performance and organizational outcomes. In there, MLT is a viable theory to explore non-profit organization leaders' language use and examine its effect on trust in leader. This stance is also aligned with the call for further researches by Holmes and Parker (2017).

One restriction with MLT is that the theory is mainly grounded on U.S. research or studies conducted in Western European cultures. Most of the literature has been largely confined to English speaking nations and it is unclear what role national culture may play in model linkages, and therefore, MLT generalizability to global settings is restricted (Mayfield, Mayfield 2016). Hence, MLT investigations in diverse national cultural settings are presumed to advance this body of research.

The purpose of the study is to examine the language use of leaders in five different Central European countries aiming to find statistically significant relations between leader's talk and perceived trust by followers as delimited by MLT. The level of the analysis for this study is designated to be individual. Thus, the study focuses on the relation between the leader and follower dyads. The research questions guiding this study are: a) if there is a relation between the motivating language used by leaders and trust, communication satisfaction as measured by follower survey in five different cultural contexts? b) if communication satisfaction mediates this relation? and c) if all three dimensions of Motivating language contribute to this relation?

Nevertheless, there is no clear understanding in the literature on how MLT and

trust are related (Seppanen et al. 2014). To the best knowledge of the author, the only study known investigating this particular relation is the paper by the above authors. In this paper, the main limitation was that the focus group data which was very few in numbers and was collected for several purposes, and the interview moderators did not ask any communication specific follow-up questions. Therefore, the authors were calling for exploring and measuring the relationship of the three dimensions of the motivating language theory and trust in more detail. By this study, these calls have been addressed. Similarly, Holmes' assertion "what this means for leaders of organizations big or small is it behooves leaders entering organizations to take the time to go slow to go fast, ensure their BI (Behavioral Integrity) and Credibility are in place and trust is high (or rising) so that they can strategically utilize the power of MLT to successfully accomplish both employee and organizational outcomes" (Holmes 2016: 15) has also been verified.

The rest of this study is structured as follows. Firstly, the key theoretical background of MLT, interpersonal trust and leadership communication are discussed. Secondly, the data collection and analysis methods are introduced. Following this section, the results of the study are presented. Finally, conclusions, limitations, and implications practical circa and suggestions for further research are delivered.

1. Theoretical background

1.1. Motivating language theory

The theory, originally presented by Sullivan (1988), and later tested and proven by Mayfield et al. (1995, 1998), is one of the managerial communication theories that builds on motivation and path-goal theories. The basic tenet of the MLT is that leaders' use of three dimensions of oral

language has a positive impact on follower productivity and job satisfaction.

MLT was initially conceptualized as an oral communication alternative to the prevailing focus on uncertainty reduction in organizational leadership studies. Sullivan (1988) asserted that all of the prevailing theories then require supervisors to use language in a restrictive manner. MLT calls for the opposite; all functions of language are combined in a coherent discourse in order to have the greatest impact on follower motivation (Sullivan 1988: 113). Sullivan also maintained that at organizational, team, and dyadic levels of analysis, leaders could improve follower motivation by strategically using all three major forms of linguistic speech acts (see Searle, 1969 for speech act taxonomy) in their oral messages.

Combining speech acts and motivation, MLT focuses on three types of speech acts being applied as deliberate/strategic leader communication (Mayfield, Mayfield 2016): (a) direction-giving (perlocutionary) language that reduces uncertainty and clarifies goals and rewards of followers through decreased ambiguity, (b) empathetic (illocutionary) language that takes place when leaders express compassion and other humanistic emotions with followers creating personal bonds between the leader and follower and higher levels of follower buy-in, and (c) meaning-making (locutionary) language that occurs when a leader clarifies organizational culture, norms, values, rules and expected behaviors that characterize the uniqueness of the organization reinforcing organizational culture.

MLT predicts that the purposeful and strategic use of leader talk can positively impact follower behaviors and outcomes (Mayfield, Mayfield 2007; Mayfield et al. 1998; Sullivan, 1988). Mayfield and May-

field (2009: 9) wrote: “To date, studies report that high levels of Motivating Language [in leader talk] are significantly associated with improvements in follower performance (up to 17%), attendance (up to 28%), job satisfaction (up to 70%), retention (intention-to-stay, up to 5%), and innovation (up to 20%)”. However, there is an inadequacy in the literature concerning the trust and MLT association.

Further, MLT has three key assumptions: (a) that leader communication is one-way from leader to follower, (b) the majority of leader talk is comprised three dimensions of language with all three dimensions of leader talk present in some combination, and (c) that a leader’s talk and actions are congruent (Mayfield, Mayfield 2007, 2009).

1.2. Perceived trust in leader

Similar to MLT, trust has been associated with organizational outcomes such as behavioral and performance outcomes, job attitudes and intentions. These include but not limited to organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) and job performance, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, intent to quit, goal commitment (Dirks, Ferrin 2002; see also Colquitt et al. 2007 for a meta-analysis of 132 samples).

Even if there is no consensus in the literature, trust is most commonly defined as “a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another” (Rousseau et al. 1998: 395). These expectations are based upon a set of beliefs about other party’s trustworthiness. What follows the ‘intention to accept the vulnerability’ is a risk taking act with respect to trusted party, such as relying on them to do something on our behalf, or the disclosure of sensitive information (Seppanen et al. 2014). Similarly, Mayer et al. (1995: 712) conceptualize trust as em-

bodying risk and vulnerability, and see it as a willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on expectation that the other party will perform a particular action important to trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party. This study adopts Mayer et al. (1995) conceptual framework for interpersonal trust.

Importance of trust in organizations has been asserted to be a factor which actually enables, and leads to cooperation within and between the boundaries of organizations (Mayer et al. 1995; Seppanen et al. 2014). As the world is changing, former “command and control” strategies and hierarchies do not apply any more, and therefore organizations need new ways to motivate subordinates to cooperate. Hence, trust has been seen as a substitute for control. Current pressures are forcing organizations towards, flat, team-oriented structures in which subordinates have the autonomy to make decisions. Thus, competitive advantage is gained via flexibility, increased cooperation within the organization and reduced resistance to change.

In the current study, interpersonal trust and specifically followers’ trust in leaders is a focal point. In the Mayer et al. (1995) model; interpersonal trust is based on the competence, benevolence or integrity of the other party. By definition, competence-based trust refers to a trust in the other party’s skills, abilities and characteristics (Burke et al. 2007; Mayer et al. 1995; Schoorman et al. 2007). Benevolence-based trust refers to a particular assumption that a trusted party wants to be good; to act benevolently without ego-centric or opportunistic behavior. Trust in another party reflects an expectation that the other party has good intentions and demonstrates concern for the welfare of others (Burke et al. 2007; Mayer et al. 1995;

Schoorman et al. 2007). Reliability-based trust refers to the set of principles that the trustor finds acceptable; one can rely upon the other party's actions and words. Trust in reliability also implies an expectation that the other party will tell the truth and keep promises (Burke et al. 2007; Mayer et al. 1995; Schoorman et al. 2007).

1.3. Communication satisfaction

The literature shows that the quality of communication has a significant impact on follower and workplace outcomes; whilst, some researchers focused merely on the examination of the managerial communication and indicated the relations between its quality (Winska 2013). Madlock (2008) found a strong link between job and communication satisfaction (CS). CS is an organizational outcome that has been shown to be associated with increases in the use of Motivating language (ML) (Mayfield et al. 1995; 1998; Sharbrough et al. 2006).

Follower CS is a measure on how "available information fulfills the individual's requests for information pertaining to the task-role or for simply being informed about organizational activities" (Putti et al. 1990: 45). The same authors demonstrated that an organizational member's satisfaction with the amount of information available to them may enhance their commitment to the organization. Seppanen et al. (2014) maintained that researchers consistently find a positive relationship between communication skills on one hand, and the success of their followers on the other. Mayfield and Mayfield (2010: 407) emphasized, "Consistently and over time, studies tell us that leader communication quality has a profound impact on such critical organizational outcomes as job satisfaction, innovation, attendance, retention, loyalty, and performance".

1.4. Communication and perceived trust in leader

Based on social exchange theory, when leaders engage in communication and share information with subordinates, the subordinates are likely to reciprocate by communicating more often and openly with superiors on a variety of topics. However, sharing information often brings up a feeling of vulnerability and followers are more likely to share vital information making them vulnerable when trust is present in a relationship (Burke et al. 2007).

It is also discussed in the literature that leadership does not affect organizational outcomes directly but, rather, through intervening mechanisms. Effective leadership stimulates communication among pairs, and that, through increased communication, pairs are able to acquire important information about another party, such as personal competence. This, in turn, leads followers to form judgements about his/her trustworthiness. Thus, the information contained in the communication among pairs forms the basis for trust to develop. This then leads to greater organizational outcomes (Boies et al. 2015).

Communication has a greater influence on trust building in the workplace (Mayer et al. 1995; Schoorman et al. 2007). Previous research has suggested that interpersonal communication and information and knowledge sharing are all essential factors, being both antecedents and consequences in trust-building processes (Boies et al. 2015). Trust – and trustworthiness – is linked with communication via three factors: information accuracy, explanations for decisions and openness (Whitener et al. 1998). Leaders are seen as trustworthy by followers when their communication is perceived as accurate and having value (Colquitt et al. 2007). When leader's explanations are perceived as adequate and feedback is seen

as being timely, there is an increase in trust (Dirks, Ferrin 2002). Open communication, or mental accessibility, where thoughts and ideas are exchanged freely and willingly between leaders and followers, is also seen to increase trust (Dirks, Ferrin 2002; Boies et al. 2015). All similar studies in literature including the meta-analysis provide insight about the relationship between communication and trust from a trust research perspective, and apparently lack the communication theory perspective and its corresponding implications. In this study, it is attempted to explore the linkage between communication satisfaction and perceived trust in leader by employing Motivating language theory to explore the intervening mechanisms.

Gleaning from the aforementioned arguments, hypotheses for the study are as follows:

H1: Motivating language quality explains significant and unique variance in both communication satisfaction and perceived trust in leader.

H2: The relation between motivating language quality and perceived trust in leader is mediated by communication satisfaction of followers.

2. Data collection and methodology

This study is a quantitative method design focused on understanding relations of the phenomena in five different cultural contexts. While choosing the source of the information, the researcher's information access possibilities were also taken into consideration. Having access to an international security organization, numeric data was collected from an organization whose staff was from five¹ different units located in particular countries.

¹ The actual number of units was six. However, one unit was excluded from this research as national regulations didn't permit the unit to attend in the survey.

Having the Headquarters (HQ) in Poland and its subunits in Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Lithuania and Hungary, sample demonstrated a remarkable answer to the calls for employing MLT (i.e. Mayfield, Mayfield 2015; Winska 2013) to different cultural contexts. Investigating the relations within the organization, whole population of the external subunits of the organization was involved in the survey conduct. The external subunits' structures were identical and their staff – which was approximately 50² – were provided by hosting nations obtaining that each subunit staff have only one particular nationality whose business language was English. The population consisted of five of these external sub-units and approximately 130 personnel posted in the HQ location including one support unit of approximately 90 staff. Hence, total population was consisting of 380 personnel. Representative sample size was determined as per Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) formulation.

In the prior phases of scale development, initial Delphi sessions were made between the researcher and two independent researchers. After the initial form of the scale was constituted, the pre-pilot study was conducted on MBA students of one of the researchers, in December 2015. Assessing the feedback from the pre-pilot test and amending it accordingly, pilot test was conducted in the HQ in February 2016. The pilot test specifically addressed the particular nationalities within the HQ – each were represented by three individuals – aligned with the subunit figures as mentioned above. Following the pilot and adapting the feedbacks and the follow on preliminary analysis, the final form of the survey tool was obtained. Finally, the conduct of the main survey in a form of an on-

² Precise information concerning the unit locations, personnel numbers is not given due to confidentiality reasons.

line survey³ was concluded in May 2016.

The main survey instrument contained the Motivating Language Scale (MLS), Perceived Trust in Leader Scale (TLS) and Communication Satisfaction Scale (CSS). MLT has so far been investigated through the development and implementation of a highly reliable and valid scale (Mayfield, Mayfield 2016). To measure the Motivating language use, nine-item (3 dimensions) condensed-MLS which had been initially administrated by Mayfield and Mayfield (2002), was employed. A score of 0.96 Cronbach's α was previously found by Sharbrough et al. (2006) for the original ML scale.

To measure perceived trust in the leader, Roberts and O'Reilly's (1974) three-item TLS was used. But, to correspond to the study's overall focus on the leader, the word "leader" was substituted for "superior". A score of 0.92 Cronbach's α was previously found by the study of Moorman et al (2013) for the TLS. Followers' communication satisfaction was measured by nine-item that asked followers to rate their particular leaders in areas such as integrity, honesty, praise, understanding of the followers' job needs. Previous research reported scale reliability of 0.95 (Mayfield et al. 1995) and 0.93 (Sharbrough et al. 2006).

In the result of the survey, 199 responses were gathered. Following the screening of the data and excluding the respondents that stated the familiarity with the leader negatively, total of 174 responses were found eligible for the further analysis which yielded 46% response rate. Higher response rate was considered as being the result of suggested cash incentive.

In the analysis of the data, initially conventional means of investigating (i.e. descriptive statistics, linear multiple regres-

sions and ANOVA tests)⁴ were employed. As for the validation of the proposed model, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis was further conducted. To perform the aforementioned analyses, SPSS-20 and AMOS 18.0 software were utilized.

3. Results

This section starts with introduction of the descriptive analysis of all of the variables in the research, then the reliability measures of the scales, followed by a correlation matrix showing the bivariate correlations of all variables. Subsequently, a two-step approach SEM is presented. In the first step, estimation of the hybrid model is shown as a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) model with correlations among all the factors. The follow on second step contributes to examining the problems with the structural portion of the model, which estimates the best fitting measurement model (Schumacker, Lomax 2016).

3.1. Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics for the study are presented in two parts (i.e. control variables and latent variables). Table 1 and 2 depict the full figures for the descriptive statistics for control variables (categorical and continuous, respectively). Control variables are simply the demographic characteristics of the sample.

3.1.1. Descriptive analysis for control variables

The sample was predominantly male with 94,8 percent male and 5,2 percent female

³ The actual survey link is provided below for the convenience: <https://Motivating-leadership.typeform.com/to/Yez6MX>

⁴ The reliability of each scale employed with the current research was analyzed through computing Cronbach's alpha. An alpha value of 0.7+ has been accepted as a threshold value indicating acceptable reliability (Nunnally 1978). The chance of rejecting the null hypothesis when it is true was set as 0.05 in this study, which means the findings and decisions are at the 95 percent confident level. Cut-off rule of Malthouse (2001: 81) "the magnitude of the factor loading must be at least 0.30" was adopted.

ratio. However, this proportion also reflects the ratio of the population of relevant security organizations in the Central European settings (SIPRI 2016). The sample almost equally consisted of Czech (20,1%), Hungarian (20,1%), Lithuanian (19,5%), Polish (21,8%) and Slovakian (18,4) Nationalities.

The education level of the sample clustered around the High School graduation and bachelor's degree, 59,9%, and 27,0% respectively. Consistent with the responders' gender, the gender of the leader was predominantly male (98,9%) (Table 1).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for control variables (categorical)

Variables (Categorical)		Frequency	Percentage
1 Gender			
	1 Male	165	94,8
	2 Female	9	5,2
2 Nationality			
	1 Czech	35	20,1
	2 Hungarian	35	20,1
	3 Lithuanian	34	19,5
	4 Polish	38	21,8
	5 Slovakian	32	18,4
3 Academic Degree			
	1 Less than high school graduate	1	,6
	2 High school graduate	99	56,9
	3 Bachelor's degree	47	27,0
	4 Master's degree	19	10,9
	5 Other	8	4,6
5 Leader Gender			
	1 Male	172	98,9
	2 Female	2	1,1

Source: Own elaboration.

As for the descriptive statistics for continuous control variables; starting with age of the respondents, the youngest respondent was 23 years old while the oldest one was 49 years old; the sample average was 35,4 years (Median=35; SD=5,41). The sample might be interpreted as consisted of middle-aged individuals. The minimum schooling year for the respondents was eight years, while the maximum was 19 years. The mean of the sample regarding schooling was 14,57 years (Median=14;

SD= 2,42). Thus, the sample might be defined to be relatively well educated. The mean of the professional working life of the individuals is approximately 14 years (Median=13; SD= 5,92), which might be interpreted as the sample consisted of relatively experienced professionals. Current tenure in present organization ranged from 1 year to 11 years with a 3,91 years average (Median=4; SD= 1,7). Leader tenure ranged from 0 years to 20 years with 3,52 years (Median=3; SD= 2,44) (Table 2).

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for control variables (continuous)

	Variables (Continuous)	Mean	Median	SD
1	Age	35,4	35	5,41
2	Schooling	14,57	14	2,42
3	Professional Working Life	13,73	13	5,92
4	Current tenure	3,91	4	1,7
5	Leader Tenure	3,52	3	2,44

Source: Own elaboration.

3.1.2. Descriptive statistics for the latent variables

Descriptive statistics of the latent variables are presented in Table 3. The dependent variable in this study is the perceived trust in leader. This variable was constructed with three questions. The respondents in this sample were, on average, somewhat trusting in their leaders (means on individual items clustered around on 4,65 on a 7 point Likert Scale).

First independent variable; ML is a second-order variable. It consists of three

sub-variables: direction giving language, emphatic language, meaning-making language and all of which have three questions (each are 5 point Likert Scales). For all but one item means clustered on moderately high levels. Corresponding with the previous studies, this single item's mean (i.e. meaning making language ML-MM-3) was found relatively low. As for the last latent variable; communication satisfaction (5 point Likert Scale) which consists also of nine questions means were found to be moderately high (Table 3).

Table 3. Descriptive statistics for latent variables

	Variables (Independent/Dependent)	Mean	Median	Mode
PERCEIVED TRUST IN LEADER				
1	Trust in Leader-TLS1	4,64	5	6
	Trust in Leader-TLS2	4,64	5	6
	Trust in Leader-TLS3	4,65	5	6
MOTIVATING LANGUAGE				
2	Direction Giving Language-ML_DG1	3,6	4	4
	Direction Giving Language-ML_DG2	3,5	4	4
	Direction Giving Language-ML_DG3	3,5	4	4
	Emphatic Language-ML_EL-1	3,47	4	4
	Emphatic Language-ML_EL-2	3,39	4	4
	Emphatic Language-ML_EL-3	3,45	4	4
	Meaning Making Language-ML_MM-1	3,24	3	4
	Meaning Making Language-ML_MM-2	3,2	3	3
	Meaning Making Language-ML_MM-3	2,5	3	3
COMMUNICATION SATISFACTION				
3	Communication Satisfaction- CSS-1	3,63	4	4
	Communication Satisfaction- CSS-2	3,59	4	4
	Communication Satisfaction- CSS-3	3,51	4	4
	Communication Satisfaction- CSS-4	3,42	3	3
	Communication Satisfaction- CSS-5	3,65	4	4
	Communication Satisfaction- CSS-6	3,35	3	3

	Communication Satisfaction- CSS-7	3,68	4	4
3	Communication Satisfaction- CSS-8	3,61	4	4
	Communication Satisfaction- CSS-9	3,66	4	4

Source: Own elaboration.

3.2. Bivariate correlations

As can be seen below (Table 4), TLS was positively and significantly correlated with MLS and CSS scales ($r = 0.813$, $p = 0.01$ ($r = 0.820$, $p = 0.01$). Similarly, MLS yielded

a positive and significant relationship with CSS ($r = 0.831$, $p = 0.01$). While motivating language increased, the communication satisfaction also increased.

Table 4. Correlation matrix

			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	TLS	r	1								
2	MLS	r	,813**	1							
3	CSS	r	,820**	,831**	1						
4	AGE	r	-,023	-,012	-,027	1					
5	ACDMCDGR	r	-,269	-,255	-,219	,021	1				
6	SCHLNG	r	-,116	-,099	-,078	,128	,329**	1			
7	PRFWRKNG	r	-,004	,013	,019	,919**	-,013	,099	1		
8	CRNTTNR	r	-,003	,066	,103	,243**	-,258**	-,041	,210**	1	
9	LDRTNR	r	-,095	,058	,001	,275**	-,084	-,076	,256**	,368**	1

* TLS: Perceived Trust in Leader Scale, MLS: Motivating Language Scale, CSS: Communication Satisfaction Scale, ACDMCDGR: Academic Degree, SCHLNG: Schooling in years, PRFWRKNG: Professional Working tenure, CRNTTNR: Tenure in the current organization, LDRTNR: Tenure with scored Leader.

Source: Own elaboration.

It was of note that a negative and meaningful correlation found between trust in the leader and academic degree ($r = -0.269$, $p = 0.01$). While the academic degree increased, the trust in leader apparently decreased. In other words, the more respondents had an academic degree, the less trust they had in the leader. Similar to TLS; MLS and CCS were negatively and significantly correlated with the academic degree ($r = -0.255$, $p = 0.01$ and $r = -0.219$, $p = 0.01$ respectively). This indicated that the more respondents had an academic degree, the less they scored their leaders ML usage for the relevant sample.

3.3. Reliability of the scales

The reliability analysis for TLS yielded a Cronbach alpha of $\alpha = 0.923$ for the par-

ticular latent variable. It was accepted reliable based on Nunnally threshold. The Cronbach's alpha for CSS indicated $\alpha = 0.954$ reliability which was also found to be well over the threshold.

The Cronbach's alpha for the direction giving language (ML_DG) sub-latent construct of MLS indicated $\alpha = 0.937$ reliability. Empathic language (ML_EM) sub-latent construct has a constant Cronbach's alpha level of $\alpha = 0.918$. The reliability analysis score for Meaning making (ML_MM) sub-latent construct is $\alpha = 0.786$. After analyzing all of the sub-scales of Motivating Language latent variable, these subscales were computed within factors. After creating these subscales, the consistency analysis of the second order Motivating Language latent variable was subsequent-

ly analyzed. The reliability analysis yielded a Cronbach's alpha level of $\alpha=0.935$. This score also manifested a higher consistency and accepted reliable based on the threshold.

3.4. Confirmatory factor analysis

To examine the hypothesized factor structure of the variables of the study, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)⁵ was conducted using the data described above (N=174). Certain goodness of fit statistics thresholds⁶ were adopted. Sets of errors were allowed to covary within the same factor, but not between the factors to allow for covariance caused by high potential content overlap, similar wording, and potential sub facets. AMOS 18 statistical software was utilized to validate the measurement model of the variables construct.

In the CFA model for the perceived trust in leader latent variable, all of the standardized factor loadings were above the

Malthouse's (2001) 0.3 cut-off value (TLS Factor-1: 0,85; Factor-2: 0,93; Factor-3: 0,90). Each of the regression coefficients were statistically significant at $p \leq 0.001$ level. In a similar vein, all the goodness of fit statistics⁷ yielded a good fit for this particular CFA model. Thus, analysis indicated a statistically significant factor structure ($p \leq 0.05$).

Initially measurement errors were not correlated in CS model. However, the goodness of fit statistics showed weak fit for the generic model. Therefore, the modification indices were used to identify paths to improve model fit (Kenny 2011). Measurement error terms are allowed to be correlated within factor. At each step, one part of error terms that indicated the largest improvement in model fit is allowed to covary. This process was repeated until reaching a strong model fit. Subsequently, all the goodness of fit statistics⁸ for the model indicates substantially good fit of the measurement model to the data. Factor loadings from each indicator to communication satisfaction construct were higher than the 0,3 threshold (CSS Factor-1: 0,90; Factor-2: 0,87; Factor-3: 0,92 Factor-4: 0,61; Factor-5: 0,82; Factor-6: 0,74; Factor-7: 0,84; Factor-8: 0,86; Factor-9: 0,91). Thus, analysis indicated a statistically significant factor structure ($p \leq 0.05$).

MLS was constructed as a second order variable. To assess the hypothesized factor structure of the three dimension measure of ML, a second-order confirmatory factor analysis was conducted using the data

5 CFA models visuals are deliberately not given for the sake of brevity. However, factor loading figures for each variable can be seen in the respective paragraphs elaborated with the relevant footnotes. Similar values can also be seen on the final SEM below.

6 The Chi-square (χ^2) is sensitive to sample size; however, it is widely used as an indicator for the model fit. It should be low for a better fit. The larger the Chi-square, the poorer the fit. Degrees of freedom should be ≥ 0 . Estimated probability should be ≥ 0.05 . The ratio of the chi-square to degrees of freedom (df) (χ^2/df) or likelihood ratio is another important measure for model fit. This ratio should be 3 or less. Comparative Fit Index (CFI) evaluate the improvement in fit between the null model of independence and the proposed model. The threshold value for CFI should be 0.90 or greater for a better fit. Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) should be 0.90 or greater for a good fit. Normed Fit Index (NFI) evaluate the improvement in fit between the null model of independence and the proposed model. The threshold value for NFI should be 0.90 or greater for a better fit. The root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA) should be 0.05 or smaller. Hoelter Index or Critical N / CN should be at least 200 for a better model fit. Values of less than 75 indicate indigent model fit. (Kenny 2015).

7 The goodness of fit statistics for TLS were: Chi-square (χ^2): 9.603; Degrees of Freedom (df): 8; Estimated Probability: .294; Likelihood Ratio (χ^2/df): 1.2; CFI: .997; TLI: .995; NFI: .984; RMSEA: .034; CN: 362.

8 The goodness of fit statistics for CSS were: Chi-square (χ^2): 32.194; Degrees of Freedom (df): 22; Estimated Probability: .074; Likelihood Ratio (χ^2/df): 1.46; CFI: .993; TLI: .989; NFI: .979; RMSEA: .052; CN: 217.

described before (N=174). The first order latent variables that construct the second order ML variable are direction-giving language, empathic language and meaning-making language. These three first order latent variables had three indicators each.

All the goodness of fit statistics⁹ yielded a good fit for this particular CFA model. Thus, it indicates statistically significant factor structure at the 5 percent level ($p \leq 0.05$). The model fitted substantially good to the data without modification indices. Factor loadings for the first order factors were above cutoff threshold (MLS Factor-1: 0,91; Factor-2: 0,89; Factor-3: 0,86 Factor-4: 0,88; Factor-5: 0,92; Factor-6: 0,48; Factor-7: 0,88; Factor-8: 0,88; Factor-9: 0,91). Thus, analysis indicated a statistically significant factor structure ($p \leq 0.05$).

3.5. Convergent validity

Convergent validity is a major component of construct validity. It requires that the indicators of a specific latent construct should converge or share a high proportion of variance. Convergent validity can be proved when all factor loadings of the same construct are higher than 0,7, and SMC of an observed variable should be 0,5 or higher (Holmes-Smith et al. 2005).

In the CFA model for Motivating Language, the SMC values (ML_DG=,940; ML_EL=,952; ML_MM=,737) represent the extent to which a measured variable's variance is explained by a latent construct. All of these SMC values were well above the threshold.

3.6. ANOVA analysis

The sample of this study includes five nationalities (i.e. Czech, Hungarian, Lithuanian, Polish and Slovakian). MLS, CCS, TLS scores of the respondents were compared based on their Nationalities. First, these scales were created by computing their averages. Subsequently, one-way ANOVA analysis was employed to compare the means of the scale scores based on the Nationality groups. All of the three scales yielded significant results. To determine the significant differences, the post hoc tests were conducted. Based on the Levene's homogeneity of variance tests, Games-Howell post hoc tests were computed for all the scales. Of interest, TLS results are presented below in Table 5. Based on the results, there was at least one statistically significant difference on the perceived trust in leader scores between the Nationalities ($F_{4/169}=6,679$, $p<0,001$).

Table 5. ANOVA results for perceived trust in leader

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	F	df	p
1 Czech	35	4,7905	1,31628	6,679	4/169	0,000
2 Hungarian	35	4,2857	1,34831			
3 Lithuanian	34	5,3333	,77416			
4 Polish	38	3,8070	1,87545			
5 Slovakian	32	5,1354	1,46857			

⁹ The goodness of fit statistics for MLS were: (Chi-square (x2): 59.482; Degrees of Freedom (df): 50; Estimated Probability: .169; Likelihood Ratio (x2 /df): 1.190; CFI: .995; TLI: .994; NFI: .972; RMSEA: .033; CN: 222.

Post Hoc Tests: Games-Howell

			Mean Difference	p
2 Hungarian	...	3 Lithuanian	-1,04762*	0,002
3 Lithuanian	...	4 Polish	1,52632*	0,000
4 Polish	...	5 Slovakian	-1,32840*	0,012

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Source: Own elaboration.

Lithuanian respondents had the highest trust in leader score among the groups, whereas, the Polish respondents appeared to have the lowest trust in leader score among the group. The post hoc test results showed that one of the statistically significant difference is between the Hungarian ($X=4,285$) and Lithuanian ($X=5,333$) respondents. The Lithuanian respondents trust their leaders more than the Hungarian respondent's trust in their leader (Mean Difference = $-1,04762$, $p=0,002$). Lithuanian respondents ($X=5,333$) trust their leader more than the Polish respondents ($X=3,807$) trust in their leaders. This mean difference ($1,52632$) is statistically significant ($p<0,000$). There was also another statistically significant difference between the Polish respondents ($X=3,807$) trust in leader score and Slovakian respondents ($X=5,135$) trust in leader score. Polish respondents appeared to trust their leader less than the Slovakian respondents.

3.7. Structural equation model (SEM)

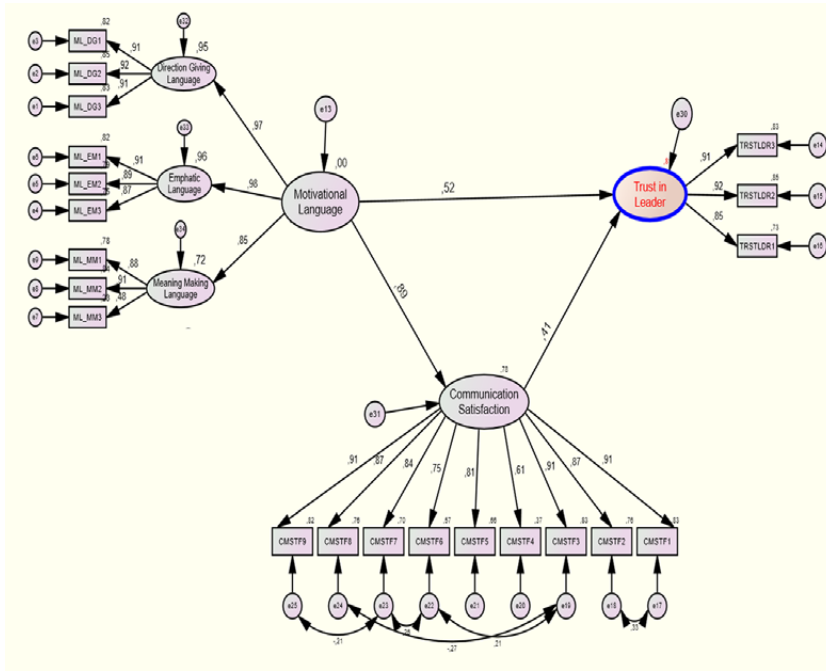
After confirming the measurement models of the latent variables at the first step, the hypothesized SEM was developed. Two independent latent variables: CS and ML, and a dependent variable; perceived trust in leader were used to establish a generic SEM. This generic model also included five control variables which were continuous variables; age, schooling, professional working experience, current tenure, leader tenure.

The initial SEM analysis for generic model yielded all of the control variables insignificant. Therefore these insignificant control variables were excluded from the model one at a time until all variables had p -values below 0,05. The exclusion process of insignificant control variables developed the model fit at each step. At the final step, all critical ratios were significant at $p<0,05$ level for the remaining items in the revised model. Proposed model fitted to the data reasonably good⁹. There were also various model attempts after the exclusions of the irrelevant control variables. Replacing the latent variables in the model between each other or combining the latent variables in all possible variation did not yield better model fit.

Figure 1 demonstrates that ML and CS manifested a statistically significant relationship with the dependent variable ($\beta=0,516$, $p \leq .05$ and $\beta=0,409$, $p \leq .05$ respectively). While motivating language increases 0,516 standard deviation, trust in leader also increases one standard deviation. Likewise, while communication satisfaction increases 0,409 standard deviation, trust in leader increases one standard deviation. Based on these, it is concluded that the effects of ML on CS and perceived trust in leader are substantially significant. Hence, it is concluded that hypothesis-1 has been statistically proven.

⁹ The goodness of fit statistics for the revised SEM model were as follows: Chi-square (χ^2): 567,698; Degrees of Freedom (df): 359; Estimated Probability: .05; Likelihood Ratio (χ^2 /df): 1,581; CFI: .957; TLI: .951; NFI: .892; RMSEA: .058; CN: 120.

Figure 1. Revised SEM model estimates



* ML_DG: Motivating Language_Direction Giving, ML_EL: Motivating Language_Emphatic Language, ML_MM: Motivating Language_Meaning Making, TRSTLDR: Perceived Trust in Leader, CMSTF: Communication Satisfaction. Abbreviations stand for the respective factors of the latent variable.

Source: Own elaboration.

3.8. Mediation analysis

To test the direct, indirect and total effects of the latent variable Motivating language through communication satisfaction as the mediator, Preacher and Hayes' (2008) conditional indirect effect testing was employed. With this approach, significance test of each indirect effect are performed via bootstrapping procedures. Bootstrapping procedures (based on 1000 bootstrap samples) were employed to test the significance of each indirect effect. Confidence intervals (95% bootstrapped confidence intervals) that do not include zero reflect significant indirect effect (Preacher, Hayes 2008). Table 6 provides the direct, indirect and total effects of each variable in the model on the dependent variable.

If an independent variable has significant direct and indirect effects on the dependent variable, it is concluded that the effect of this variable on the dependent variable is partially mediated through the mediator variable. If the independent variable has no direct effect, but significant indirect and total effects on the dependent variable, then the effect of this variable is fully mediated through the mediator variable (Kenny 2015).

Table 6. Direct, indirect and total effects of all variables over trust in leader

VARIABLE	DIRECT β	INDIRECT β	TOTAL β	TYPE
Communication Satisfaction	,409**	0	,409**	Direct effect
Motivating Language	,516	,362**	,878**	Fully mediated

** 0,05

Source: Own elaboration.

Communication satisfaction as a mediator variable in this study had direct, significant and positive effect on the dependent variable. The other latent variable, Motivating language had a direct, but insignificant and positive effect on trust in leader. On the contrary, it has also significant and positive indirect effect on trust in leader. However, the total effect of Motivating language on the dependent variable was found substantially high. The effect was statistically significant and positive. Based on these, it is concluded that the effect of Motivating language on perceived trust in leader is fully mediated through the mediator variable, communication satisfaction. Hence, it is concluded that hypothesis-2 has been statistically proven.

Discussion and conclusions

This study contributes to the growing body of literature on the role of trust in the interpersonal relationships context. The study has primarily contributed to the literature by applying motivating language theory in explaining trust within interpersonal relationships. To date, research on interpersonal trust has not analyzed the relation between the phenomenon and the language use and its role in a comprehensive manner. MLT is a research-based theory that examines the language used by leaders and can yield significant insight into the communication effectiveness of leaders. By applying MLT to the germane relation, the link between leader language use, communication and trust can be studied more thoroughly.

In prevailing literature, certain communication practices for building trust (e.g. accurate information, openness, showing caring) have been identified. However, there has been no attribution or connection of those antecedents to a larger framework theory. The mechanism underlying this link, has not been well understood. To identify the intervening processes inherent in this relationship, the relation has been quantitatively examined in MLT framework. The results of the study provide evidence for a sequential mediation model where leadership quality influences perceived trust in leader through communication satisfaction which is delimited with MLT and its three dimensions.

In this study, it has been succeeded to link these phenomena -trust to language in the MLT framework and classify different practices under the three dimensions of the theory. The study have verified that all three dimensions of leader language use, accordingly with MLT tenets, are crucial elements in both building and maintaining trust within an organization. By employing MLT, its original outcomes, such as of job satisfaction and productivity, has been extended to trust in leader. Having contributed substantial new insights into the emergent processes of MLT-Trust relation, this study is, thus, a major contribution to the MLT.

The study should also be regarded as an answer to the calls for having a non-US setting in the inquiry of MLT associations. Having collected the data from an international Central European organization, it has

provided some useful insight to the theory. As statistically proven by the analyses, it is of importance that similar mechanism in similar relation between MLT and worker/workplace outcomes applies also for the Central European context. The study of leader motivating language use across different cultures and different settings such as an international non-profit organization, may also advance the understanding of how effective leader communicate. Similarly, having employed the theory in examining the particular relations in a security organization is also unique. All of these contributions may offer a benchmark with the previous studies in terms of cultural and/or organizational setting differences.

There are various noteworthy implications for research and practice that can be gleaned from the study. The implications from this study are applicable for both practitioners and scholars in the field. Essentially, this study underlines the importance of leader oral communication on followers trust. Given the importance attributed to the phenomenon of trust in both academic and practical circa, strategic and deliberate use of motivating language use may prove to be substantially beneficial in obtaining the desired level of trust between the organizational leaders and followers.

From the practical perspective, the findings may guide to shape the HRM praxis in an effort to bolster trust between the leaders and organizational followers. As for the acquisition of the new personnel, selection from the recruitment pool of prospective candidates may inclusively inquire about the communication skills of individuals in the light of motivational language dimensions. That practice might prove to be useful in accurately acquiring potentially trustworthy/high trust propensity individuals. Similar for the another function of the HRM, performance appraisal systems may also

be modified to incorporate the language skills in an effort to reinforce the trust within the organization. In a parallel vein, it is obvious that if an organization aims to nurture trust between its personnel, development and/or training programs may contain the language use skills focus and probe into ML. In terms of maintaining and motivating the occupant personnel, appropriate and deliberate usage of the language in light of MLT tenets, may result in higher trust between the organizational leaders and their followers which may contribute to lower turnover and longer tenure.

From the research perspective, it is fair enough to assert that the findings of the study sheds light into the intervening mechanism between leaders' language use and trust as it has revealed the relation between language use quality, communication satisfaction and perceived trust in leader, to an extent. Instead of focusing on the broader terms of communication, findings offer to examine these relations from the MLT perspective via utilizing its dimensional approach of speech acts. Examining each of this dimensions and their impact on the worker/workplace outcomes such as perceived trust in leader is considerably promising and suggests new grounds to be explored.

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations. Firstly, it employs a cross-sectional approach and it is clear that a longitudinal setting would serve for better collect and confirm of the findings yielded from the study. Potentially, a cross-sectional setting could blur the nonlinear and reciprocal communication flows which unfold over time. Even though the expectation of a linear relationship -a constant relationship between increases in ML and changes in related variables- would be a useful starting point for the analyses, this type of relation seems unlikely if there are feedback loops between variables.

Secondly, the study employs an individual level of analysis in a relatively large organization. However, ML phenomenon has been claimed to be fractal across all the level of analysis. Given this, there is no reason why the model is not applicable to subsets of an organization or an entire organization.

Thirdly, another limitation of the paper is that all of the respondents were the service members of an international security organization. As a result, it is plausible that the exclusive use of a military organization sample limits the generalizability to non-military samples (On the other hand, this might also be interpreted as a significant contribution to the relevant literature that the current paper is presumed to be the first study examining this particular relation in such kind of context).

Lastly, this study takes into account the sheer oral communication practices of leaders. It is reasonable that extending the scope of the future research to incorporate the multiple media usage, especially into the written communication would also be potentially beneficial. All of these limitations may also be regarded as a call for further study. Starting from the longitudinal setting examinations to fractal use of MLT and different communication media focuses; future research may more benefit from the extensions of the motivating language theory to the perceived trust in leader phenomenon. So that, it may expand our knowledge towards the potentially promising fields where we could find supplementary means of leveraged effectiveness and collaboration in addressing challenges of today's complex environments.

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