Out of the plethora of identified individual learner variables (e.g. Altman 1980; Skehan 1989; Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991), motivation remains one the most powerful factors in successful L2 acquisition. In this paper I will discuss this complex matter / phenomenon in relation to a past teaching experience. After briefly describing the teaching context, this study will examine SLA research into motivation, and from the often contradictory insights and assertions, it will identify the hypothesis which was relevant to my own context. Finally I will consider the research which supports such a hypothesis in greater detail, and discuss its influence on my teaching methodology.

1. The Teaching Context & the Learners Involved

For this study, I have drawn on my experience teaching Oral Communication Classes (herein abbreviated to OCM) at a two-year business college ('senmon gakko') in central Tokyo. The college offered a range of vocational subjects, all of which were taught in the L1. However, compulsory OCM classes were a chief component of all courses and a student's timetable would consist of at least five hours of OCM a week. The college was co-educational, with the majority of students aged between 18 and 20 years, and with few exceptions the first year intake would have just completed their High School education. With a 'catchment area' for enrollment which included many rural areas in central Japan, for some of the students, their OCM class would be their first 'real' contact with a member of the L2 community.

For the learners involved, their past learning experience strongly influenced their expectations on how languages should be 'learned'. Middle and High School students were generally taught the L2 for approximately 4 hours per week, of which 3 hours would be devoted to 'passive' skills, grammar and vocabulary, and 1 hour to 'speaking'. With theories from the Behaviorist schools of psychology still a strong influence on teaching methodologies in Japan, the Grammar Translation and Audiolingual Methods of language learning and teaching were widespread. For the 'passive' skills this generally involved tedious exercises memorizing long lists of lexical items and grammatical rules, while in the 'speaking' class there was a heavy emphasis on pattern practice. As a result of such methodology the learners were used to adopting a passive role in the classroom with teacher fronted activities the norm.

Since the mid 1980's there has been an increase in interest towards a 'communicative approach' and the government sponsored 'AET (Assistant English Teacher's) Program' saw the introduction of native speakers to the state school system. Unfortunately the native teachers' impact has been minimal, with many 'Assistants' describing their roles as little more than 'tape recorders' and their contact with each class frequently restricted to only one hour a week.

The learners' culture is another significant background factor which must be acknowledged. In one respect, the strong emphasis in Japan of a 'group mentality' was advantageous. As once the learners' had
overcome their initial apprehension to communicative activities, they found the opportunity to work within a group particularly appealing. However, a major disadvantage was the Japanese concept of 'loss of face'. For my learners' making mistakes was regarded as shameful and in order to avoid this, risk taking was generally evaded. Additionally, in a country which tends to value modesty, (at least in its outward manifestations), it was not uncommon for 'stronger' students who knew the answer to a question, to remain silent! This was partly out of a reluctance to demonstrate their superiority and partly in deference to their peers. Naturally such cultural values made elicitation extremely difficult as L2 teachers could frequently find themselves facing 'a wall of silence.'

Finally, Japan's almost uniquely homogeneous society could also be counterproductive to the learning process. With the virtual absence of the target language community, many learners were unfamiliar with Western mannerisms and initially felt unease in the presence of the L2 teacher.

### 2. Motivation

In this context, motivation was a formidable problem and myself and many of my colleagues quoted it as the most powerful excuse for L2 learning failure. However in certain situations, when faced with particular tasks, the learners did appear to display all the behavioral manifestations of motivation. As SLA research in this area has proven; 'motivation is clearly a highly complex phenomenon' (Ellis 1997:76), concerned with several different overlapping dimensions. In this chapter I will briefly consider some of the research findings documented by Ellis (1994), and identify the research and hypothesis which I feel are relevant to my own context.

The extensive studies of Gardner et al; Gardner & Lambert (1972); Gardner (1975); Gardner & MacIntyre (1991) proposed two aspects of motivation which have been particularly influential, namely *The Integrative / Instrumental Orientation Dichotomy*. Firstly, **integrative motivation**, or what Skehan (1989) calls the **Internal Cause Hypothesis**. Essentially, this hypothesis asserts that the learner will be motivated if they have an interest in the people and culture of the L2 and as such, integrative motivation is strongly related to L2 learning. Other researchers; Oller et al (1977,1978); Clement et al (1983,1985,1986,1994), have questioned the pre-eminence of integrative motivation in many different contexts and Crookes and Schmidt (1991), have criticised Gardner and Gardner influenced work for their heavy reliance on questionnaire data. However, the sheer number of studies in support of Gardner and particularly the research on classroom behavior by Gliksman, Gardner and Smythe (1982), it can be concluded that in a formal context, integrative motivation is strongly associated with L2 learning. Unfortunately, in my own formal classroom setting, the number of students with an interest in the target language and culture was minimal and as such, integrative motivation was negligible.

**Instrumental motivation** or the **Carrot and Stick Hypothesis** (Skehan 1989), sees motivation as arising out of a need to learn the L2 for functional or external reasons; for example, to pass an exam which will open up educational or career opportunities. As Ellis (1994) observed, early research on the effect of instrumental orientation on L2 learning has produced conflicting results; Lukmani's (1972) study of female learners in India and Gardner and Lambert's (1972) Philippine research, found instrumental orientation to be a more powerful factor in learning than integrative orientation. The results of Gardner
and Lambert's studies, particularly their Canadian research (1972), found integrative orientation to be more significant. The conflicting data would appear to reflect the different learning contexts (echoing the questions raised by Oller, Clement et al), with instrumental orientations more powerful in second language (SL) settings as opposed to foreign Language (FL) ones. In my own FL context, the students had very little instrumental orientation. Although they had to pass all their courses to graduate from the college, this usually translated into a minimal level of performance in continually assessed work.

The 'Integrative / Instrumental Orientation Dichotomy', has been criticized in many quarters for focussing too heavily on only the causal aspects of motivation, when it is in fact possible for motivation to also be the result of learning. This is Herman's (1980) and Skehan's (1989) Resultative Hypothesis. Such resultative motivation contends, basically, that learners' who do well persevere, perceive success and maintain or increase motivation. However the converse is also possible, and those who don't succeed become discouraged and gain less success. In such circumstances a vicious circle can evolve, with low motivation resulting in low achievement which translates into lower motivation and so on. A major problem is that it is difficult to know if motivation is the cause or the result of successful L2 learning! Does motivation produce successful learning or is it successful learning that enhances motivation? Or is it a combination of both?

Spolsky's (1989) review of research in this field does not support the idea that successful achievement necessarily leads to better learning. Ellis (1994: 515) quotes Spolsky as claiming that:

'...While greater motivation and attitudes lead to better learning, the converse is not true.'

Spolsky (1989: 153)

On the other hand, Savignon's (1972) and Burstall's (1975) studies of students learning French, Strong's (1983,1984) investigation of Spanish speaking kindergarten children learning English, Herman's (1980) work on children's' attitudes and success in L2 learning, and the experiments of Berwick and Ross (1989) on Japanese university students, would support the argument that success contributes to motivation. In my own context I regard the learners' perception of success - or failure - in the learning process, to be crucial to motivation and in Chapter 3 I will explore the significance of this in greater detail.

Finally, motivation may also derive from an inherent interest in the tasks themselves. This is Skein's (1989) Intrinsic Hypothesis. Such intrinsic motivation;

'.....Involves the arousal and maintenance of curiosity and can ebb and flow as a result of such factors as learners' particular interests and the extent to which they feel personally involved in learning activities.'

(Ellis:1997: 76)

Such a hypothesis is particularly significant. As it serves to remind us that motivation is not merely a given – you either have it or you don't – as Gardner et al would have us believe, but that motivation is dynamic in nature and can vary from moment to moment depending on the learning context or task. In Chapter 3 I will examine the Intrinsic Hypothesis in more detail and discuss its pedagogical implications for my own context.
In summary, this chapter has briefly examined different aspects of motivation and identified the aspects which are of relevance to my own setting. However it must be noted the difficulties involved in conceptualizing what motivation is, as different researchers have different operational definitions. Lightbown and Spada (1993) have focussed on the different research methods used to investigate motivation. Their studies showed that as with many other learner characteristics and behavioral traits, it is difficult to directly observe and measure motivation. As they acknowledge;

'...Research on individual differences often permits multiple interpretations.'

Lightbown & Spada (1993: 36)

Additionally, the classifying of motivation into four separate areas can be an oversimplification and rather than being seen as distinct from one another, these different kinds of motivation should be regarded as complimentary and overlapping. Thus for example, in another context, it could be possible for a learner to be both say integratively and instrumentally motivated at the same time.

3. Intrinsic Motivation

As observed in Chapter 2, with the learners in my context perceiving no immediate use for the L2, they had very little instrumental or integrative motivation. Compounding their negative attitudes were cultural factors and the learners expectations of how languages should be 'learnt'. To motivate my learners it was essential to break down these barriers or affective filter to learning. This involved altering the students' perceptions towards the learning process. My position as teacher, wasn't to teach them how to 'learn' the L2, but help them to acquire it, by providing activities and materials which they would find intrinsically interesting.

The many theories and assertions from the Cognitive School of Psychology, have clearly been particularly influential in research into motivation in the L2 classroom. Ausubel et al (1978) saw the learner as a thinking being, as a more active processor of information, who would learn by actively thinking about and trying to make sense of data which they hear, see and feel. This is the rationale for the provision of task based activities in the classroom. Keller (1983), saw the interest and personal relevance of the learning task itself as key causal factors in motivation. Keller also focussed on features of motivation, which were linked to the outcomes of the task or activity. Whilst Maehr and Archer (1987), saw motivation in respect to behavioural features. In this Chapter I will draw from pedagogic literature influenced by such theories as I examine the methodologies I employed to intrinsically motivate the learners. Turning first to interest, Crookes and Schmidt, saw interest as being;

'...closely related to curiosity, and ....developing curiosity means using less orthodox teaching techniques and / or materials.'

Crookes & Schmidt (1991: 488-489)

To stimulate interest, I would frequently deviate form the core text and use unorthodox supplementary materials, many of which were authentic. Little, Devitt and Singleton (1989), argued that authentic texts
brought learners closer to the culture of the target language, unfortunately this wasn't entirely the case with my own learners! As they showed little interest in the L2 culture, I found more success with authentic materials which they could associate with the L1 culture. Advertisements and classifieds, plucked from local English language magazines and newspapers proved particularly successful, and topical articles which dealt with the 'glamorous' world of fashion, sport and entertainment were also immensely popular with the learners.

The use of authentic material to arouse interest and thus ostensibly increase student motivation is hardly revolutionary. However, the recent research of Peacock (1997) has argued that the relationship between interest and motivation may not be as strong as is generally assumed! Although Peacock's subjects displayed all the behavioral features of motivation while using the material, in a self-report questionnaire completed at the end of the study the;

'...learners reported authentic materials to be significantly less interesting than artificial materials.'

(Peacock: 1997: 153)

Peacock's results may shake the convictions of many language teachers, but it must be noted his conclusions were drawn from only one study and clearly more research needs to be taken in this area.

In my own context, it was assumed that the learners did find the authentic materials interesting, as on most occasions they would have provided the materials themselves. I found giving the students input into the choice of materials encouraged them to take greater responsibility for their learning. An approach, which I felt could only lead to greater motivation. However, it must be acknowledged that such an assumption was based only on informal feedback from the learners and not from any hard data derived from a student questionnaire.

The concept of learner involvement in decision making in the classroom is not a new one. Holec (1980/1987), investigated learners as 'managers' of their own learning experiences and Dickenson (1987) examined the effects of 'self-direction', with learners able to determine their own objectives, learning style and evaluate their own progress. Unfortunately, the low maturity level of my learners' confined any decision making to the area of content choice alone.

Turning attention to the classroom situation itself. Learning a foreign language is, as much an emotional, as a rational or cognitive experience and as such the learners' affective states must be taken into consideration. Scovell (1978) and Kleinmann (1977), indicated that a certain degree of anxiety my actually facilitate the learning process. However in most cases it would appear that anxiety is a serious impediment. Gardner and MacIntyre assert;

'...That anxious students will have lower levels of verbal production, will have difficulty in basic learning and production, will be less likely to volunteer answers in class, and will be reluctant to express personally relevant information in a second language conversation.'

(Gardner & MacIntyre: 1993: 6)
Such behavior was standard in my context and judging from the letters in local teaching journals, it would appear that tension, apprehension and nervousness, when learning English with a foreign teacher (particularly for the first time), was common in many Japanese L2 classrooms.

**Self-confidence** is another affective variable which merits consideration. Clement, Donyei and Noels (1994) regarded linguistic self-confidence as a major component of L2 motivation and that it;

'...influence[d] L2 proficiency both directly and indirectly through the students' attitude toward and effort expanded on learning English.'

(Clement, Dornyei & Noels: 1994:441)

Unfortunately my learners customarily displayed an extreme lack of self-confidence which was clearly an inhibiting factor. Generally speaking, due to their monocultural background, the learners appeared to lack confidence around foreign members of staff. Such a feeling was almost certainly compounded by the fact that the majority of learners had failed university exams of one kind or another.

Finally, the students' self-evaluation of their success in the learning process was also a detriment. Even after six years of L2 instruction, the learners had only acquired the most elementary of speaking skills. Sadly the learners would *attribute* such failure to their own inability, when in fact the previous teaching style must take the lion's share of responsibility. With the learners' accustomed to failure, it was perhaps understandable for them to expect little success in future learning situations.

To combat such negative perceptions and affective variables I employed a number of techniques and activities. To dispel the anxiety which the learners displayed towards both myself and in using the L2, my first priority was to create a good rapport and a friendly atmosphere in the classroom. Secondly, I would gradually inform them about my own culture and wherever possible relate it to their own. I felt such a practice helped to dismantle the preconceptions they held about Westerners and their 'alien' culture. Thirdly, in an attempt to alleviate any sense of helplessness and to give the learners a purpose, every Monday I would inform them of the 'goals' of the week. I would always board such 'framing' remarks and leave them on a corner of the whiteboard for the remainder of the week. It was essential to proceed slowly and cautiously, and I would always ensure that the goals they were expected to reach would never be so great that they wouldn't achieve them. Fourthly and most importantly, I would focus as little attention as possible on the individual. This invariably involved a heavy emphasis on group-work—a chief characteristic of the communicative approach. However simply placing the learners into groups wasn't enough and the make-up of personalities within the group also had to be considered. Porter Ladhouse, a strong supporter of social interaction in the classroom, stresses the importance of forming groups which create 'anxiety free relationships and situations' (1982:34). It was thus important to prevent dominance or intimidation by placing learners with compatible personalities in the same group.

In my classes, I always strove to provide group activities which were not only interesting to the students in their choice of topic, but would also develop a sense of empathy, trust and confidence within the group. With the learners aiming for group excellence, they would discover that such tasks served their personal needs for affiliation, power and achievement. Keller (1983), saw such personal *relevance* and *interest* as...
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key causal factors in motivation. Additionally, I would encourage the learners to exploit activities which use cooperative as opposed to competitive goal structures. With the learners having to exploit information-sharing tasks which involved the persistence, effort and collaboration of the entire group, enjoyment would be derived not only from getting meanings across, but also the completion of the task itself. 'Persistence', 'effort' and 'enjoyment' are characteristic behavioral features of motivation which Maehr and Archer (1987) saw as important, while the completion of the task itself can be related to Keller's (1983) outcomes.

As Ames (1984: 182) has argued, by completing a task through the collaboration of the entire group, there will be no individual feeling of failure and only one of success, thus motivation will be enhanced. However as the Attribution Theorists such as Weiner (1992) have asserted, it is fundamentally important that the learners attribute this success not to external factors such as the ease of the task or pure luck, but on actions which are within the learners themselves, within their locus of control for example; hard work, persistence and ability. If the learners can attribute their success to such factors as these, they will gain in self-confidence and attain a feeling of pride which will in turn, result in enhanced motivation. As many of the learners were unfamiliar with such tasks, there was initial trepidation towards them, however in a remarkably short period of time (which could be measured in days), they quickly warmed to such activities and saw them as a chief component of their lessons.

It was essential to maintain such intrinsic motivation by building upon the learners' newly acquired self-confidence. Due to the cultural values discussed earlier, any negative evaluation of an individual would be disastrous! As it was, almost all feedback was positive, praising the students' hard work and ability and addressed to the entire group or class. If, in the monitoring phase I became aware of a major error being continually repeated, I would only bring it to the attention of the class after I had first given positive feedback on other aspects of their performance.

As with other subjects, to pass the OCM course the students were continually assessed. As Crookes and Schmidt (1991) have argued, in some contexts an emphasis on grades can be counterproductive. For the majority of my students it only succeeded in raising anxiety levels, which resulted in a reluctance to participate in tasks out of fear of making mistakes. As such, I played down the significance of such assessments and gave a generous 'overall' grade for continual hard work and effort, at the end of each term.

Finally, in my classes I tried to avoid a too regular pattern of instruction by ensuring there was never an over-reliance on any one particular text or activity. With the learners unable to predict the pattern of their lessons, it was much easier to attract and maintain their attention at the beginning of each class.

Conclusion

In this paper I have discussed the complex phenomenon of motivation and identified an aspect and field of research, which in retrospect, has been extremely influential on my own teaching methodology. As researchers such as Crookes and Schmidt (1991); and Clement, Dornyei and Noels (1994) have asserted, it is possible to combat negative affective variables and the learners' perceived futility of the learning process, and provide lessons which the initially unmotivated student will find intrinsically interesting and enjoyable. As I witnessed in my own context, such an intrinsic appeal to the learners did result in motivation, and over
the course of the academic year there was a gradual improvement in the learners’ oral communication in the L2.

Bibliography
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