

Individual Paper Session 10
Motivation/Learner Strategy
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12:15-12:45pm

The motivational fluctuations of Japanese EFL learners over 8 years of formal instruction

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Enticed by the process model of motivation (Dörnyei & Ottó, 1998) and the longitudinal research of Ushioda (1994), L2 researchers have begun to search earnestly for the principles contributing to the dynamic nature of L2 motivation. The present study attempts to confirm and extend the findings of Koizumi and colleagues (1992, 1993) and Irie (2003) concerning the reduction in motivation over time by Japanese junior high school students. It also serves to illuminate the degree of generalizability of Gardner et al.'s (2004) findings concerning the relative amenability to change of various affective variables as well as the relationship between motivational change and course achievement.

Through stimulated recall techniques, retrospective Likert-scale and narrative data were elicited from 75 third-year Japanese university students concerning their L2 motivation at 24 salient points of time from the beginning of their English study until the present. Quantitative data confirmed the earlier finding that motivation was highest in anticipation of initial L2 study, but also showed that motivation increases immediately before important turning points, *i.e.* the end of junior high, high school, and university English programs.

On the other hand, qualitative data highlighted the intriguing individual differences in motivation among learners, including dramatically contrasting reactions to the similar events, such as failure in the previous course or perceived unreasonable treatment by a teacher. Implications for curriculum priorities at different grade levels and instructor motivational strategies will be discussed.