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12-6-2012

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Recommended Citation
Masanori Matsumoto. (2012) "Motivational changes and their affecting factors among students from different cultural backgrounds" CLaSIC 2012: The Fifth CLS International conference. Singapore.Dec. 2012.

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MOTIVATIONAL CHANGES AND THEIR AFFECTING FACTORS AMONG STUDENTS FROM DIFFERENT CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS

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Abstract

University students (*N* = 140) learning second or foreign languages in Australia were investigated to find whether their learning experience in a 12-week course changes their motivational intensity and their perceptions of classroom factors affecting their motivation. The study also attempted to detect any differences among the students from four different cultural/regional backgrounds; Europe & North America, North East Asia including China, Taiwan, Korea & Japan, Australia & New Zealand, and the rest. Questionnaire surveys were conducted twice, at the beginning and the end of the courses on the students learning English, French, Spanish, Chinese, and Japanese to observe how their learning experiences affect their motivations and if they come to perceive the affecting factors differently. Results showed some significant differences in motivational intensity among the groups and also after the learning experience. The results identified the learning experience has either beneficial or detrimental influences on motivation and can alter the students' perceptions of affecting factors. The study claims that students' cultural and/or regional backgrounds can be an important factor to validate the discussion about motivation and also the learning experience may affect learners' perceptions in different ways, depending on where the learners come from, where they learn what target languages.

Introduction

Since the introduction of Dörnyei and Otto's Process Model (1998), fluctuate nature of language learners' motivation has attracted more researchers' attention, and possible factors that may cause changes in motivation either positively or negatively have been extensively studied (e.g. Gardner, Masgoret, Tennant & Mihic, 2004; Koizumi & Matsuo, 1993; Matsumoto, 2011; William, Burden & Lanvers 2002). Since the early days of the study of second language (L2) learners' motivation, it has been noted that formal L2 study under classroom instructions may have some detrimental effects on learners' motivation (see Bartley, 1970; Gardner, Masgoret, Tennant & Mihic, 2004; Gardner, Smythe, Clement & Gliksman, 1976; Tachibana, Matsuoka & Zhong, 1996). That is, when learners experience actual L2 study in classrooms, then their motivation is likely to deteriorate. In the formal L2 education, there seems to be a number of factors that may influence L2 learners' motivation and researchers (e.g. Chambers, 1999; Dörnyei, 1994a; Kozaki & Ross, 2011; Tanaka, 2005)

have studied these in various contexts. These studies suggest that aspects of the learning contexts, including teachers, teaching methods, teaching and learning environments have some important relationship with learners' alteration of motivation. At the same time, learners' cultural backgrounds have especially been regarded as a factor which has a close relationship with their motivation (e.g. Chizwick & Miller, 2005; Matsumoto, 2009; Tachibana, Matsuoka & Zhong, 1996; Wen, 1997). On the basis of these findings, the current study examines some motivational changes that have occurred among university students learning second/foreign languages, and the differences in their perceptions of the factors affecting their motivation depending on their different cultural backgrounds.

Research backgrounds

In the recent studies of motivation, one of the most conspicuous research agendas is the fluctuation of the state of motivation during long process of learning an L2. Dörnyei (1998, 2000) introduced the concept of 'change' of motivation in his Process Model of motivation, and stated about motivational fluctuation as:

> During the lengthy process of mastering certain subject matters, motivation does not maintain constant but is associated with a dynamically changing and evolving mental process, characterised by constant (re)appraisal and balancing of the various internal and external influences that the individual is exposed to. (Dörnyei, 2000. p.523)

Among the factors affecting motivation, teachers have commonly been regarded as one of the most significant determinants of L2 learners' motivation. Many researchers, then, have investigated what teacher factors positively (or negatively) affect learner motivation in what way (e.g. Chambers, 1999; Dörnyei, 2001a; Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998; Jacques, 2001; Kikuchi 2009; Matsumoto, 2011; Sakai & Kikuchi, 2008; Shoaib & Dörnyei, 2004; Tanaka, 2005). Matsumoto (2011) investigated teachers as a factor, and found that the effect of teachers' motivational strategies has some correlation with students' level of proficiency. Shoaib and Dörnyei (2004) identified in their longitudinal studies that teachers and methodology may have both beneficial and harmful effects on 'motivational transformation', the change of the nature and the intensity of learners' motivation. Chambers (1999) also found the similar result regarding the positive/negative influence that teachers have on learners' motivation. In his longitudinal study on 13 and 15 year old high school pupils in Leeds learning German as a foreign language, the pupils were found to perceive their teachers either positively or negatively, and positive perception results in further development of interest in the study of German, and negative perception, losing interest. He stated that "the teacher is a factor which permeates almost every issue investigated in the survey relating to pupils' feelings about learning German and in-school issues" (p. 137).

Among the studies on the alteration of motivation, there is also a general tendency of the decline of the strength of motivation after a certain period of the actual study of a target language. Tachibana et al., (1996) investigated high school students' motivation to study English both in China and Japan. They found that though the Chinese students show more interest in English than the Japanese counterparts, there is a decline of motivation in the both students from junior to senior high schools. Koizumi and Matsuo (1993) also studied Japanese 7th grade high school students learning English longitudinally to find their motivational changes. They conducted questionnaire survey four times in three months interval on the same students and found that the students' motivation and attitudes index decreases

continuously from the beginning towards the third survey in seven months and after this period, their motivation is stabilized. Gardner et al., (2004) investigated university students learning French at intermediate to higher-intermediate levels focusing primarily on reading and writing skills. They intended to find the effects of instruction on learners' attitudes, motivation and anxiety during one academic year. They found that all the students show some decrease in motivation, decline of positive attitudes and increased anxiety towards the language course after the experience of study, and the greatest change was found in 'attitudes towards the learning situation'. They stated that these changes are more attributable to classroom related factors rather than general variables. The results of these studies all show that the actual experience of language study seems to have some detrimental effect on learners' motivation, and teachers and their related factors, such as the use of certain materials and teaching methods may be a contributor to the learners' deteriorating attitudes towards and diminishing motivation in learning L2.

In the study of SLA, L2 learners' cultural backgrounds have also been regarded as an important factor for the success in learning. Immigrants' success in acquiring their host languages was accounted for by Schumann's Acculturation Model (1986) which claims that the social factors between the learners' and target cultures play an important role to determine the level of L2 acquisition. Chizwick and Miller (2005) also investigated immigrants' ultimate level of English acquisition in the US context, and found that the distance between the American culture and the immigrants' predicts the level of success/failure in acquiring English proficiency. Identification of a type of motivation has been affected by culture as well. Warden and Lin (2000) insisted that Asian culture should have an influence on learners of English as a foreign language, since English is one of the required subjects for high school and university entrance examinations. According to their study, besides conventional integrative and instrumental orientations, the students' strong orientation towards the needs of learning English which they labelled 'required' is a prominent motivator for high school students learning English, because English is a school subject which is a part of entrance examination to higher educational institutes. Hawkins (1998) stated that there is a large discrepancy in what is expected in education between Western and Eastern cultures, and Rao (2002) claimed that because of the different educational philosophies between Western societies and China, Chinese students are less motivated to engage in 'communicative activities', thus their learning performance is more likely to be assessed poorly in a Western educational environment. Matsumoto (2009) investigated university students learning Japanese as a foreign language in Australia in order to find any relationship between their motivation and continuation/discontinuation of their study from the viewpoint of the students' different cultural/linguistic backgrounds. He found that the cultural distance between the students' and the target languages is a factor affecting their motivation; however, its effect is much more complex than it had been assumed. Especially overseas students learning in a foreign educational context have a dual cultural distance; one in relation to the target language culture and the other in relation to the educational culture; therefore, even if the distance from the target culture is small, the learners may find the study difficult when the distance from the educational culture is large. He also claimed that learners who appear to be close to the target culture may develop unrealistically high self-efficacy beliefs which result in an unexpected realisation of the difficulty in learning the target study once they start learning, and this then demotivates the learners.

All the studies above have identified that L2 classroom factors as playing an important and influential roles for learners' engagement and persistence in the long process of L2 acquisition. However, the effect of these factors in (de)motivating students may depend on

students' perception of them and their perception is closely related to their cultural backgrounds. That is, how L2 learners view the different classroom factors appears to be an important issue in identifying the real nature of L2 learner motivation. Based on the above views and discussions in the study of L2 learners' motivation, the current study will examine three major points in terms of motivational changes and affecting factors; learners' perception of L2 classroom variables which affect their motivation, learners' cultural backgrounds which may affect their perceptions of affecting variables, and possible change of learners' motivation and their perceptions before and after their learning of languages. Then, the following four research questions were established.

1) Is there a difference in learners' motivation and confidence after the study of a target language?
2) Is there a difference in motivation and confidence among learners from different cultural backgrounds?
3) Is there a difference in learners' perceptions of the factors affecting their motivation in the classroom environment after the study of a target language?
4) Is there a difference in the perceptions of the factors affecting motivation for learners from different cultural backgrounds?

Research method

In order to collect valid data, a questionnaire was developed (see appendix). The questionnaire contained three questions regarding 1) learners' current level of motivational intensity in seven-point Likert scale, 2) the level of confidence in learning a target language in five-point Likert scale, and 3) their perceived level of importance as variables affecting their motivation to learn their target languages in also five-point Likert scale. The third question included seven classroom factors; teachers' personality, teaching style/skills, encouragement from teachers, materials/textbooks, assessment/test results, learners' own learning performance in the class, and peer students and their levels of performance which were selected based on External Factors from Williams and Burden's (1997) framework of motivation and Matsumoto's (2009) study. The questionnaire was administered twice, at the beginning (within two weeks from the start of the course) and at the end (within two weeks before the end of the course) of 12-week language courses at Bond University to find any changes occurring to the learners' motivation and perceptions of affecting variables. In order to group the learners into separate cultural regions, the questionnaire required the learners to provide information about the geographical region from which they come. Nine regions are given to choose from, including Europe, Africa, Middle East, North East Asia (China, Taiwan, Korea and Japan), Other Asian Regions, South/Middle America (non-English speaking countries), Pacific region, North America (USA and Canada), and Australia/New Zealand.

The questionnaire was distributed by the researcher to students learning English, Japanese, French, Spanish and Chinese at university language courses. There were 140 students who responded to the both questionnaires; however, some regions have a quite small number of respondents. Therefore, the cells were collapsed and students were re-categorised into four regions: Europe/North America representing European culture (EUA), North East Asia representing Confucian-based culture (NEA), Australia/New Zealand representing Euro-Oceanic culture (ANZ) which is the host region where the target language learning occurs, and the rest of the world (RST). The numbers of students in each group were 35 in EUA, 38 in NEA, 51 in ANZ, and 16 in RST.

The results were statistically analysed using PASW Statistics 18. The results based on the four regions were in a normal distribution (within ±2 Standard Error of Skewness and ±2 Standard Error of Kurtosis), so parametric analyses were conducted to find any significance of the results. The minimum level of significance in statistics was set to $p \leqq 0.05$.

Results and Discussion

As for the first research question, the overall results have no statistical significance in either learners' motivational intensity or for the level of confidence (N = 140), though both show slight drops between the surveys at the beginning and the end of the study (see Paired Samples T-test in Tables 1 and 2). The experience of actual study in the language courses might have a negative impact on learners' motivation (drop by 0.13 from 5.17 at the beginning to 5.04 at the end of the study) and their confidence in learning languages (i.e. the level of self-efficacy) (drop by 0.07 from 3.81 to 3.74), but the impairment could not be detected as statistically significant in the current study when the data were analysed for the total number of learners.

Table 1. Motivational intensity at the beginning & the end of semester and between groups comparisons (ANOVA)

Region					Paired Samples T-test	
		Beginning	End	Difference	t	Sig.
EUA	Mean	**5.29**	**5.43**	**+0.14**	-1.537	.134
	N	35	35	0		
	Std. Deviation	0.860	0.979	+0.119		
NEA	Mean	**4.61**	**4.66**	**+0.05**	-.349	.729
	N	38	38	0		
	Std. Deviation	0.887	0.878	-0.009		
ANZ	Mean	**5.53**	5.00	**-0.53**	3.614	**.001
	N	51	51	0		
	Std. deviation	0.833	1.249	+0.416		
RST	Mean	5.13	5.25	+0.12	-.620	.544
	N	16	16	0		
	Std. Deviation	1.088	1.183	+0.095		
Total	Mean	5.17	5.04	-0.13	1.639	.103
	N	140	140	0		
	Std. Deviation	0.952	1.112	+0.16		
ANOVA	F	8.163	3.289	5.161		
	Sig.	**.000	*.023	**.002		

Maximum M = 7.00, * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$

A comparison of motivational intensity among the regional groups, however, showed a substantial drop in motivation for a group (see also Table 1). Students from ANZ who represent and study foreign languages in the local culture and educational context had a prominent deterioration in motivation after actual study by 0.53 points from 5.53 to 5.00. The repeated measure of the difference (Paired Samples T-test) was statistically significant (t = 3.614, p = 0.01). All other groups' motivations intensified after the period of study, but only the local learner group had a large drop in motivation. A number of other researchers' studies (e.g. Chambers, 1999; Gardner et al., 2004; Koizumi & Matsuo, 1993) have also reported some decline of motivational intensity among learners after the experience of actual study in

language courses, and the current study similarly shows a slight drop in the total. However, the decline relates only to the local students while all other foreign students' groups strengthened their motivation after their study. This seems to support Matsumoto's (2009) claim that a foreign environment for learning L2 needs to be considered as a third component which may affect the learners' motivational traits besides the two major factors; target language culture and the learners' own.

Table 2. Level of confidence at the beginning & the end of semester and between groups comparisons (ANOVA)

Region					Paired Samples T-test	
		Beginning	End	Difference	t	Sig.
EUA	Mean	3.89	3.89	0	.000	1.000
	N	35	35	0		
	Std. Deviation	.676	.758			
NEA	Mean	3.61	3.55	-0.06	.467	.644
	N	38	38	0		
	Std. Deviation	.679	.602			
ANZ	Mean	3.88	3.73	-0.15	1.592	.118
	N	51	51	0		
	Std. deviation	.791	.850			
RST	Mean	3.94	3.94	0	.000	1.000
	N	16	16	0		
	Std. Deviation	.574	.929			
Total	Mean	3.81	3.74	-0.07	1.197	.233
	N	140	140	0		
	Std. Deviation	.716	.781			
ANOVA	F	1.526	1.498	1.830		
	Sig.	.211	.218	.145		

Maximum M = 5.00

The results for the research question 2 about the comparisons among the learner groups also had some significant differences. The leaners' motivational intensity at both the beginning and the end of their study were considerably different among the learner groups. The changes of their motivation between the surveys were also analysed and indicate a significant result (see Table 1). At the beginning of study, the comparison of the motivational intensity among the groups showed that the NEA students' motivational intensity was the lowest (M = 4.61) and the ANOVA results showed that the difference among the groups was significant (F = 8.163, p = .000). Post Hoc Tests of multiple comparisons demonstrated that the Asian students' motivation is significantly lower than EUA (M = 5.29, Mean Difference = .680, p < .01) and ANZ (M = 5.53, Mean Difference = .924, p = .000). At the end of their study, the between-group-differences were also significant (F = 3.289, p < .05). Although NEA students slightly strengthened their motivation, still it was the lowest among the groups (M = 4.66), but this time the multiple comparisons signified that it was only significantly different from EUA group (M = 5.43, Mean Difference = .771, p < .01), because of ANZ students' considerable deterioration of motivation. That is, ANZ students who learn foreign languages in their own educational environment lose their motivation substantially and this coincides with the results of other research (e.g. Gardner et al., 2004; Koizumi & Matsuo, 1993; Tachibana et al., 1996). Other learner groups who learn a second or foreign language in a foreign educational context, gained in motivational intensity after the period of study. These results seem to indicate that

L2 learners' motivation is multi-faceted and may be affected by three cultural factors involved in general L2 acquisition: the learners' own L1 culture, the target L2 culture, and the educational culture in which they study the target languages.

While motivation is strongly affected by the experience of actual study, learners' confidence in learning L2 does not seem to be influenced immediately or intensely by actual study. This may be because the executive type of motivation which was claimed in the Process Model (Dörnyei & Otto, 1998) to affect L2 learners' on-going learning performances is a more vulnerable trait and is continuously affected by daily learning experiences, whereas the learners' confidence may be more durable and/or there may be a delayed effect from the learners' appraisal of their learning experiences. Gardner et al. (2004) have stated that L2 learners' motivational changes are more associated with class-room related factors rather than general variables (p. 28). This claim seems to support only the current study result that motivation in learning the target language in a language course may be continuously appraised by each learner based on their perception of every learning event occurring in the language classes. However, L2 learners' state motivation (i.e. self-efficacy and perceived confidence in his/her capability of L2 learning) was little affected by the learners' classroom experiences.

Table 3. Motivational affecting factors at the beginning & the end of semester in total

Affecting Factors					Paired Sample T-test	
		Beginning	End	Difference	t	Sig.
Teacher's Personality	Mean	4.14	4.24	+0.10	-1.297	.197
	N	140	140			
	Std. Deviation	.715	.716			
Teacher's Teaching Skills	Mean	4.26	4.35	+0.09	-1.400	.164
	N	140	140			
	Std. Deviation	.674	.599			
Teachers' Encourage	Mean	4.29	4.30	+0.01	-.109	.913
	N	140	140			
	Std. Deviation	.673	.665			
Textbooks Materials	Mean	3.83	3.95	+0.12	-1.739	.084
	N	140	140			
	Std. Deviation	.777	.790			
Test Results	Mean	3.76	4.01	+0.25	-2.808	**.006
	N	140	140			
	Std. Deviation	.870	.759			
Self Performance	Mean	4.08	4.16	+0.08	-1.255	.211
	N	140	140			
	Std. Deviation	.565	.674			
Peers' Performance	Mean	3.50	3.60	+0.10	-1.168	.245
	N	140	140			
	Std. Deviation	.951	.961			

Maximum M = 5.00, ** $p < 0.01$

The results regarding the research question 3 also displayed some noteworthy findings. In the overall results, the means of students' perceptions of the all variables increased at the end of the course (see Table 3). The experience of actual study in language courses seems to have either a positive or negative influence on learners' motivation. The reason for this seems to be that L2 learners come to view language classroom factors as more important, and they may be

likely to perceive each factor more intensely, and this affects their motivation to learn the languages as they study them more. Therefore, if they appraise their experiences positively, their motivation may be enhanced, while a negative appraisal may diminish motivation.

Among the seven classroom variables, only 'test results' showed a significant change, and increased by 0.25 points from 3.76 at the beginning to 4.01 at the end of the course ($t = -2.808$, $p = .006$). Because the learners are university students, one of their major concerns is likely to be successful attainment of a credit in the subject in which they enrol. It is reasonable; therefore, that they would become more anxious about the results of assessment as the course approaches the end of semester, and they acknowledge that good or poor results affect their motivation for learning the languages.

Finally, there is also some statistical significance for the research question 4 which compares the students' views of factors affecting their motivation depending on their different cultural backgrounds (see Table 4). First, although the overall results for the question 3 showed that the learners more strongly acknowledged all the variables as factors at the end of the course, each group of learners did not uniformly increase the mean scores for each factor. For example, in 'teaching skills', all groups except EUA increased the mean after the study, while EUA students decreased. Similarly only NEA students decreased in the importance of 'self-performance', while the other three groups increased their means. An examination using a repeated measure (Paired Sample T-test) for each variable for each group did not detect these differences between the two surveys as a significant change, but it might be speculated that the learners' cultural backgrounds may have some effect on their perceptions of the classroom variables and how importantly they affect their motivations.

Second, the comparisons of different perceptions between groups for each variable found six significant results (see ANOVA in Table 4). Among them, the significant results in 'teachers' encouragement' and 'textbooks & materials' were obtained because of the marked difference between RST group and the other groups. Because RST is a mixture of a small number of students with various cultural backgrounds, a discussion based on the students' different cultural backgrounds may not be validated; therefore, the current study will refrain from discussing these results.

Besides the above two variables, major significance was obtained for 'teacher's personality' and 'peer performance'. For the former variable, multiple comparisons of means among the groups between the two surveys found the differences were significant ($F = 3.124$, $p = .028$). Post Hoc Tests of multiple comparisons of differences of the mean between groups (Table 5) identified that NEA and ANZ had significant differences in their views of the variable (Mean difference = .33, $t = .110$, $p = .020$). The Asian students placed more importance on their teachers' personality as a factor affecting their motivation. This may suggest that learners studying in a foreign educational environment may become more dependent on instructors as a motivator when they spend time in the classroom. In other words, the learners may be more sensitive to the nature of their teachers who are the learners' immediate authority in the classroom. European and American students may not be affected by this variable as they do not view the Australian educational environment as alien to them. Similarly, the Asian students also viewed 'peer students' performance' more strongly as a motivator when they experienced study in a course ($M = 4.03$), and this was prominently higher than for other groups ($F = 4.292$, $p = .006$). Post Hoc Tests identified that NEA's mean was significantly different from both EUA ($M = 3.41$, Mean difference = .51, $t = .181$, $p = .037$), and ANZ ($M = 3.37$, Mean difference = .55, $t = .161$, $p = .006$).

Table 4. Between group comparisons & repeated measures of motivational affecting factors

			EUA	NEA	ANZ	RST	ANOVA F	Sig.
		N	35	38	51	16		
Teacher Personality	Begin	Mean	4.26	3.89	4.27	4.06	2.547	.059
		Std. Dev.	.701	.559	.827	.574		
	End	Mean	4.26	4.11	4.39	4.00	1.855	.140
		Std. Dev.	.780	.689	.635	.816		
	Difference		0	+0.22	+0.12	-0.06	**3.124**	***.028**
	Paired Sample	T-test Sig.	1.000	.173	.293	.751		
Teaching Skills	Begin	Mean	4.34	4.24	4.31	4.00	1.092	.355
		Std. Dev.	.639	.542	.787	.632		
	End	Mean	4.29	4.39	4.45	4.06	1.957	.123
		Std. Dev.	.458	.595	.610	.772		
	Difference		-0.05	+0.15	+0.14	+0.06	1.862	.139
	Paired Sample	T-test Sig.	.644	.225	.128	.774		
Teachers' Encourage	Begin	Mean	4.37	4.42	4.27	3.88	2.789	*.043
		Std. Dev.	.690	.552	.695	.719		
	End	Mean	4.34	4.34	4.37	3.88	2.567	.057
		Std. Dev.	.591	.627	.599	.957		
	Difference		-0.03	-0.08	+0.10	0	3.900	*.010
	Paired Sample	T-test Sig.	.822	.556	.341	1.000		
Textbooks Materials	Begin	Mean	3.74	3.89	3.86	3.75	.317	.813
		Std. Dev.	.741	.727	.849	.775		
	End	Mean	3.86	3.97	4.00	3.94	.238	.870
		Std. Dev.	.648	.822	.800	.998		
	Difference		+0.12	+0.08	+0.14	+0.19	3.900	*.010
	Paired Sample	T-test Sig.	.524	.446	.212	.423		
Test Results	Begin	Mean	3.54	3.84	3.90	3.63	1.433	.239
		Std. Dev.	1.039	.886	.755	.719		
	End	Mean	3.91	3.97	4.12	4.00	.551	.648
		Std. Dev.	.781	.753	.739	.816		
	Difference		+0.37	+0.13	+0.22	+0.37	1.519	.212
	Paired Sample	T-test Sig.	.068	.500	.102	.111		
Self Performance	Begin	Mean	3.97	4.16	4.13	4.00	.897	.445
		Std. Dev.	.568	.495	.590	.632		
	End	Mean	4.23	4.08	4.22	4.06	.524	.667
		Std. Dev.	.598	.632	.730	.772		
	Difference		+0.26	-0.08	+0.09	+0.06	.381	.767
	Paired Sample	T-test Sig.	.059	.373	.478	.774		
Peers' Performance	Begin	Mean	3.35	3.76	3.31	3.75	2.327	.077
		Std. Dev.	1.012	.998	.905	.683		
	End	Mean	**3.41**	**4.03**	**3.37**	**3.69**	**4.295**	****.006**
		Std. Dev.	.914	.716	1.038	1.014		
	Difference		+0.06	+0.27	+0.06	-0.06	**4.431**	****.005**
	Paired Sample	T-test Sig.	.721	.151	.659	.835		

Maximum M = 5.00, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

Table 5. Post Hoc Tests of multiple comparisons of the difference of means between cultural groups

Variable	Region	Region	Mean Difference	Std. Error t	Significance
Teachers' personality	EUA	NEA	.26	.122	.213
		ANZ	.08	.133	.994
		RST	.23	.179	.769
	NEA	ANZ	.33	*.110	.020
		RST	.03	.163	1.000
	ANZ	RST	.30	.171	.431
Peers' Performance	EUA	NEA	.51	*.181	.037
		ANZ	.04	.188	1.000
		RST	.34	.214	.550
	NEA	ANZ	.55	**.161	.006
		RST	.18	.192	.935
	ANZ	RST	.38	.198	.337

*p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01

These results seem to suggest that in the Australian educational context, North East Asian students, including China, Taiwan, Korea and Japan, have unique motivational traits that are different from the students from Western cultural backgrounds. Because of the relatively larger differences in educational philosophy between the Western and the Asian cultures as Hawkins (1998) and Rao (2002) claim, Asian students may perceive their teachers and peer learners behaving differently from those in their own educational contexts in their countries. Due to their different styles of teaching and learning in a foreign environment, Asian students may be more likely to perceive their teachers and classmates as factors strongly influencing their motivation to study in the classrooms. However, this was not the focus of this study, and further investigation would be needed to clarify the reasons why L2 learners in a different educational culture show different views on classroom factors as a motivator.

Conclusion

L2 learners' cultural backgrounds and their possible effects on their motivation have been investigated in the current study. The results show that the culture of the educational environment where L2 learning occurs has some effect whether positive or negative, on learners' motivation. It has been argued in the prior research such as Chizwick and Miller (2005) and Schumann (1986) that closer cultural (and psychological) distance between learners' own and the target language works positively for successful L2 learning. However, in the present study, the relationship between learners' cultural backgrounds and their motivational traits has been found to be more complex than has been believed, as is the influence of actual learning experiences in formal language courses at university on the learners' motivation. Students' motivational intensity can be enhanced or weakened depending on how learners perceive daily learning events and which variables in a learning context they stress as motivators. Their perceptions, then, seem to have a close relationship with their cultural/educational backgrounds. That is, L2 learners' motivation has a triple cultural facet, including the learners' own culture, that of L2, and that of learning context. Further research needs to focus on how these three elements act on learners' motivation, and the reasons for this complex mechanism.

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Appendix

QUESTIONNAIRE
(Beginning of semester)

Please tick an appropriate blank

The language you study: ( ) Pathways English ( ) English academic skills
( ) French ( ) Spanish ( ) Chinese ( ) Japanese

Date of birth: _____ (Only the date and month)

Region you are from: ( ) Europe ( ) Africa
( ) North East Asia (China, Taiwan, Korea, Japan)
( ) Middle East ( ) Other Asian region
( ) South/middle America ( ) Pacific region
( ) North America ( ) Australia / New Zealand

1. How do you rate your current level of motivation for learning the language? Please circle an appropriate number in the scale below.

Extremely low	Very low	Low	Moderate	High	Very high	Extremely high
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. Do you think you can learn the language well? How confident are you now in learning the language?

Not confident	A little confidence	So so	Confident	Very confident
1	2	3	4	5

3. Do following factors affect your motivation to study the language? Please circle an appropriate number depending on your level of agreement.

3-1 **Teacher's personality and attitudes towards students**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

3-2 **Teacher's teaching style/skills**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

3-3 **Teacher's encouragement**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

3-4 **Teaching materials and textbooks**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

3-5 **Assessments and test results**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

3-6 **Your own learning performance in the class**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

3-7 **Classmates and/or their level of performances**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

That is all. Thank you very much for your participation.

BUREC Protocol No, RO-1168
Principle researcher: Dr Masanori Matsumoto, Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences

QUESTIONNAIRE
(End of semester)

Please tick an appropriate blank

The language you study: ( ) Pathways English ( ) English academic skills
( ) French ( ) Spanish ( ) Chinese ( ) Japanese

Date of birth: Date_____ Month_____ (Only the date and month)

Region you are from: ( ) Europe ( ) Africa
( ) North East Asia (China, Taiwan, Korea, Japan)
( ) Middle East ( ) Other Asian region
( ) South/middle America ( ) Pacific region
( ) Canada/U.S.A. ( ) Australia / New Zealand

1. How do you rate your current level of motivation for learning the language? Please circle an appropriate number in the scale below.

Extremely low	Very low	Low	Moderate	High	Very high	Extremely high
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. Do you think you can learn the language well? How confident are you now in learning the language after this semester?

Not confident	A little confidence	So so	Confident	Very confident
1	2	3	4	5

3. Do following factors affect your motivation to study the language? Please circle an appropriate number depending on your level of agreement.

3-1 **Teacher's personality and attitudes towards students**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

3-2 **Teacher's teaching style/skills**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

3-3 **Teacher's encouragement**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

3-4 **Teaching materials and textbooks**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

3-5 **Assessments and test results**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

3-6 **Your own learning performance in the class**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

3-7 **Classmates and/o r their level of performances**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

That is all. Thank you very much for your participation.

BUREC Protocol No, RO-1168
Principle researcher: Dr Masanori Matsumoto, Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences