

## Motivational Strategies in Language Instruction: The Case of EFL Teaching in Japan

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The purpose of the study is to investigate English teachers' perceptions of motivation strategies as to how important they think the strategies are, how frequently they actually use them in class, and what strategies are underutilized. Research on teachers' perceptions of motivation strategies is scarce. Moreover, whereas students' motivation itself is frequently discussed by teachers, the concept of motivational strategies is rarely speculated on.

The debate over students' declining motivation to study has been highlighted recently, almost always discussed along with shortened study hours at home and the downturn in academic ability. The reason for this trend tends to be attributed to affluence in Japanese society as well as *yutori kyouiku* (relaxed / pressure-free education), which was introduced in 2002, leading to a 30% reduction in textbook study at school. Whatever the reasons for the decreasing levels of motivation, schools have been facing a serious situation caused by this decline. English classes are no exception to this trend.

This study attempts to provide a foundation for what can be done in English classrooms to facilitate students' motivation to study English by probing English teachers' perceptions of motivation and examining their use of motivational strategies.

Chapter 1 examines the theoretical background through the discussion of previous studies and arguments. First, past motivation studies are addressed, through which the importance of research for concrete motivational strategies for Japanese English classes is stated. Then, Dörnyei and Csizér (1998), Dörnyei's (2001) seminal book on motivational strategies, and Cheng and Dörnyei (2007) are summarized.

Chapter 2 explains how the research was conducted, detailing two preliminary studies, a pilot study, the main study, and how the data were analyzed. All the studies were conducted through questionnaires with the participation of 64 junior high school teachers (JHSTs hereafter) and senior high school teachers (SHSTs hereafter) in the first preliminary study, 115 JHSTs and SHSTs in the second preliminary study, 209

JHSTs and SHSTs in the pilot study, and 762 JHSTs and SHSTs in the main study.

In Chapter 3, collected data is analyzed and discussed. The results are compared to previous studies in Hungary and Taiwan, followed by a comparison of JHSTs and SHSTs results. The first finding is that English teachers in Japan perceive 'proper teacher behavior' as the most important, followed by 'present tasks properly', 'promote students' self-confidence', 'make the learning tasks stimulating', 'help students form study habits', 'meet a demand for individual differences', 'promote learner autonomy', 'recognize students' effort', 'create a pleasant classroom climate', 'promote group cohesiveness and group norms', 'increase students' goal-orientedness', and 'familiarize students with L2-related values'.

The comparison of results from Japan, Hungary, and Taiwan shows that all three nationalities perceive 'proper teacher behavior' as the most important macrostrategy. The differences between the countries centers on the perception of tasks, classroom atmosphere, and autonomy. Japanese teachers placed 'make the learning tasks stimulating' and 'promote learner autonomy' at a higher rank and 'create a pleasant and relaxed atmosphere in the classroom' at a lower rank than the other two countries.

The most underutilized macrostrategies by Japanese teachers are 'make the learning tasks stimulating' and 'meet a

demand for individual differences'. The macrostrategies also warranting attention are those perceived as less important *and* that are used infrequently. These are 'increase students' goal-orientedness', 'promote group cohesiveness and group norms', and 'familiarize students with L2-related values'.

Regarding the comparison of JHSTs and SHSTs, JHSTs' rank order is almost the same as SHSTs, but JHSTs are found to be more strategy-conscious and more frequent users of strategies than SHSTs. A non-parametric procedure revealed that JHSTs are much more conscious of 'classroom climate', 'group cohesiveness and group norms', 'effort', and 'stimulating tasks', and much more frequent users of the strategies relating to 'classroom climate', 'group cohesiveness and group norms' and 'effort' than SHSTs.

A comparison of individual strategies indicates that JHSTs are more conscious of and more frequent users of strategies relating to students' affect than SHSTs, whereas SHSTs seem to believe in and use more cognitive, study, and use-oriented strategies than JHSTs.

Chapter 4 finishes the study by detailing answers to all the research questions, touching on the limitations of this research, and suggesting future research directions.

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