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Motivating additional language learners: Can we truly make them learn?

Additional language (AL) learning can be an individual phenomenon. Since the researchers of motivation advocated (e.g., Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Kozaki & Ross, 2011; Ushioda, 2009), it has been supported that the study of individual elements in AL learning should view idiosyncrasies of learning performances because each learner may exhibit different learning behaviours under the same learning context. Among the individual factors, motivation has been researched extensively in applied linguistics and is regarded to have complex impacts on AL learning. One of the significant impacts that motivation may produce is to help learners persist in learning; however, motivation is frequently influenced by various internal and external factors and, thus, changes continuously in its intensity and types. The causes of the changes can be attributed to how learners perceive every learning event and related factors, including learning experiences, learning context, important others (e.g. parents, peers, teachers), learning materials and the teaching method the teacher employs. Furthermore, the learner's perception of the motivational factors is affected by their knowledge of languages and language studies, ages, educational culture and previous learning experiences. Due to the complexity of each learner's perception and judgement, it seems unrealistic to employ a universal strategy to motivate every learner in a given teaching environment. Instead, teachers may need to know the characteristics of each learner and treat them as independent learners to develop learner autonomy and help them find their reasons and goals for learning a target language.

Biography:

Dr. Masanori Matsumoto has been teaching in Japan and Australia for over thirty years. He completed his Doctoral Degree at University of South Australia and is currently an Assistant Professor of Applied Linguistics at Bond University, lecturing for a post-graduate teacher training program of TESOL (Teaching English for Speakers of Other Languages). His research interests include second language (L2) learner motivation, individual learner differences, and L2 program and material design. He has presented papers at a number of domestic and international conferences, and published books and articles in globally renowned journals.