

# **1. Introduction**

The aim of this chapter is to set the background for the justification of this study, introduce the aims of the thesis, provide an introduction to the context, and offer an outline of the thesis structure. I therefore begin by setting the scene of the research problem and offering justifications for this study. I continue by presenting a summary of the aims of this research. In Section 1.2, I briefly discuss language learning education in the context of Japan before concluding the chapter with an outline of the thesis in Section 1.3.

## **1.1 An introduction to the research problem, justifications, and the research aims**

There has been a considerable amount of research carried out over a prolonged period of time into the incredibly complex human characteristic termed ‘motivation’. In essence, this research has attempted to discover why people decide to do something, how long they are prepared to persist, and how much effort they are willing to exert (Dörnyei, 2001). The literature generated by this pursuit has offered an abundance of theories and theoretical models. It has stimulated discussions, deliberations and disagreements amongst academics, and has “produced few clear straightforward answers” (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 3).

Likewise, in the field of second language (L2) acquisition, research into language learning motivation has seen a wealth of literature produced since the seminal work of the social psychologists Gardner and Lambert (1959) in the late 1950’s. Over the years, L2 motivational research has drawn from mainstream psychological approaches and “evolved into a rich and largely independent research field” (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 39) within its own right. Dörnyei (2005)

identified several distinct phrases over this period, and throughout each stage, there have been a multitude of academic papers published. Furthermore, over the last few years there has been a profusion of L2 motivation studies leading to what Ushioda (2013) describes as a “vibrant research field” (p. 2). In Section 2 below, it will be shown that there has been some excellent research conducted into language learning motivation highlighting this active and dynamic field. However, before doing so, I would like to demonstrate that there is an area in this field that has not been thoroughly examined and state the case for a qualitative research study into motivation from a temporal perspective in the Japanese context.

From a personal perspective, I first became interested in research into language learning motivation after being introduced by a colleague to Dörnyei’s (2001) *Motivational Strategies in the Classroom*. At that time, I could see a wide range of motivated behaviour amongst the learners I was teaching. As an example, I had one class of highly motivated and hard-working students. Yet at the same time, I also had a class of learners who were repeating the course because they had failed in previous semesters. Some of these learners had failed multiple times and my impression as a teacher who was relatively unfamiliar with the research in the field of language learning motivation was they had lost their way. This particular class was a struggle for both the learners and for me, the teacher. However, after employing some of the motivational strategies Dörnyei (2001) recommended to help to initially create, generate, and then maintain motivation, I started to notice the class respond. Not everyone did to the same extent, but the more I persevered, the more I became convinced that motivation is the key to both success and failure in language learning. The more I continued applying and adapting strategies, the more I enjoyed being in the class. In addition, judging from my student evaluations, the learners also

appreciated and enjoyed what I was doing. As I did this, I started to read more theory, and when I made the decision to undertake a doctoral degree, there was only one field I considering doing it in. I was certain that at the very least, it would be a wonderful opportunity to professionally develop and be able to help current and future language learners. After this personal account of where my interest in the study of motivation stems from, I will now turn to the rationale of this particular study.

First, as reported in Section 2.10 below, there have been several longitudinal studies conducted with Japanese university students that have attempted to measure motivational change (e.g. Berwick & Ross, 1989; Hayashi, 2005; Miura, 2010; Sawyer, 2007), but the number of qualitative studies of motivational fluctuations conducted in Japan has been very limited and several of these have been retrospective studies. A longitudinal qualitative study could allow the researcher to gain a greater and deeper understanding of learners' perceptions of their own motivation, and how their feelings, attitudes and motivational actions, change over time. In other words, it could offer a different perspective to the longitudinal quantitative studies that have been conducted in this particular context.

Secondly, a small-scale qualitative study could provide a more detailed and diverse account of fluxes in learning motivation of Japanese L2 university learners. It could allow the researcher to gain a greater understanding of turning points and possible defining moments (Neale & Flowerdew 2003 cited in Dörnyei, 2007, p. 86) in the changing L2 learning motivation of different individuals. One such turning point, revealed by quantitative studies in the field (Hayashi, 2005; Sawyer, 2007), is that once learners enter university, motivation to learn English starts to decline. However, no studies have yet been conducted to discover whether there are other

defining moments. Neither have there been studies conducted in Japan which have viewed context “not in static terms but as a developing process” (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 77). During an academic year of a student’s life at university, there could be multiple defining moments, or changes in context that might have a subtle or major impact on L2 learning motivation. This has yet to be thoroughly investigated.

A third reason why this study is worthwhile is there have been no qualitative studies conducted which have measured temporal changes in L2 learning motivation across different age groups. Ushioda (2009) argues we should take a relational viewpoint and see learners as real people with a unique history and background whose system of social relations is changing all the time. As young adults, students are constantly changing and developing throughout their time at university as is the context they live in. It would appear beneficial to investigate temporal changes in L2 learning motivation with learners who are at different stages in their personal and academic lives.

The final justification for this study is related to the above point. When students enter their third year of study at a Japanese university, they are expected to devote a great deal of time and energy in the job-hunting process. This practice has been cited as reason for a lack of motivation to study English (Strong, Dujmovich, Mclaughlin & O’Dowd, 2012), and as a reason for the decreasing number of students willing to study abroad (Yoshikata, 2011). It is my understanding that no detailed studies have attempted to see how this process influences L2 language learning motivation. My hope is that this study helps to shed more light on this area and perhaps encourage future studies to investigate this more closely.

In sum, this study will attempt to understand the temporal changes of the motivational thinking of three groups (first year, second year and third year) of Japanese university students. It will aim to discover what learners believe influences their motivation at different stages of their academic and social lives. The findings from this research should be able to yield new insights into what happens to learners' L2 motivation at these different stages. It could offer a different perspective to the longitudinal quantitative studies in the field, provide a more detailed and diverse account of fluxes in L2 learning motivation, and show temporal changes in L2 learning motivation with different age groups.

The overall purpose of this longitudinal qualitative study is to explore the fluctuations in motivation of three different age groups of Japanese university learners. In other words, the study attempts to discover Japanese language learners' own conceptions of their motivation and examines the temporal progression of how these conceptions evolve over an academic year. In addition, this study aims to shed light on how participants' feelings towards learning English, their attitudes towards learning English, and how their motivational actions fluctuate during the period of an academic year. The final aim of the study is to examine the qualitative content of interviews and diaries of these English language learners with the hope of identifying different thought patterns and belief structures that shape their engagement in the language learning process (Ushioda, 2001) and to see how this fluctuates over the period of an academic year. More specifically, this research thesis attempts to answer the questions posed in Section 2.13. In essence, by offering my outlook of the participants' perspectives of their language learning motivation, I intend to do more than offer a general overview of motivation in Japan. Through this small-scale qualitative study that adopts an interpretivist approach, I aspire to "elucidate the

particular, the specific” (Creswell, 2013 p. 157) to discover what makes a motivated language learner in this context. This will hopefully inform research on English language learning motivation in Japan and beyond, and have the potential to inform pedagogical practices and assist those who are engaged in language learning in similar contexts.

## **1.2 Background to English education in Japan**

The context of this study is Japan, and English language education has been a contentious issue in Japan. Indeed, Japan has faced problems and challenges in its English education system since the end of World War II when Japanese policymakers and Allied planners decided that English was to be taught as a compulsory subject in public schools for at least three years at the high school level. Nowadays, English is taught in high schools and junior high schools and the majority of Japanese students have learned English for a total of six years when they graduate from high school. However, English language education in public schools has been heavily criticized for its failure to produce successful communicative language learners. Ryan and Makarova (2004) attribute this to the emphasis placed on school and university entrance examinations, which are generally focused on reading, grammar, and translation. Ushioda (2013) provides an apt and succinct description of the issues in the English educational system when she describes “dissonances and tensions between ‘English for exams’ and ‘English for communication’ at different stages of education” (p. 9).

Two ideas are thought to have shaped and possibly hindered English education in Japan. The first is known as *nihonjinron*. This has been used to describe a general assumption regarding the uniqueness of Japan, but is also used to define a genre of texts that focus on Japanese national and cultural identity. The second is *kokusaika*,

which can be considered a form of internationalization. It has been suggested that both of these ideas work together to reinforce national cohesion while at the same time persuading orientations towards the international community (Seargeant, 2009). This is despite the fact that in 2002, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) in Japan expressed a desire for Japanese to obtain what they described as essential English skills in order for Japan to compete economically in a globalized economy and society.

English language education in Japan has not only been widely criticized for its perceived inability to produce learners who can communicate in English, but also for performances on international standardized tests of English (Hosoki, 2011). In the 2015 report on TOEIC test takers worldwide, Japan ranked 39 out of 46 on their average scores for the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC). In addition, according to the official TOEFL test and score data (2015), Japan ranked bottom of all the countries in Asia on the Internet Based Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL iBT). It should be noted that these raw scores might not tell the whole story, as they do not take into consideration factors such as the number of participants, their context, whether the test was taken voluntarily or not, or the age at which they took the test. All of these could influence overall average test scores of a nation.

Despite these issues, the English educational system is not in complete disarray. In 2013, the Japan Times reported that according to a MEXT blueprint for educational reform, junior high school English teachers would be asked to conduct classes exclusively in English. In addition, informal English instruction will start in the third grade of elementary school from 2020 with more formal education beginning in the fifth grade. However, according to a report in the Japan Times, issues of scale

and financing continue to be a challenge to this goal. At the moment, English is generally offered once a week from elementary fifth-grade children, and this increases to four times a week in junior high. Furthermore, in 2012 MEXT announced two programs aimed at encouraging more Japanese learners to study abroad and enticing more foreign university students to study in Japan. The first of these was called the "Re-Inventing Japan Project". This project aimed to support collaboration in programs in the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Universities. The second program, named the Global 30 initiative, had the objective to attract 300,000 tertiary level international students to 30 universities by 2020. Although the latter program was scaled down, the two programs are signs of MEXT's intent to develop to meet global needs in English education.

On a final note, Japan has a total of 778 universities and junior colleges and more than 60 % of high school graduates attend one of these. The majority of these offer English courses, which means a large amount of young adults in Japan, will learn English at the tertiary level (Ikegashira, Matsumoto, & Morita, 2004). Given this, it is important to bear in mind the advice of Ushioda (2013). She states,

if we want to avoid culturist and essentialist assumptions about learners of English in Japan and their foreign language motivation, values and identities, it is important that we seek to understand what English and learning English mean for them as uniquely individual people, with particular personal histories, located in particular contexts, rather than as learners necessarily defined by their Japanese cultural, historical and psychological legacies (p. 11)

In response to this call, it is my aim to concentrate on understanding the perceptions of language learning motivation for individual learners throughout this thesis.



### **1.3 An overview of the thesis**

In order to guide the reader through this thesis, this section presents an overview of the following chapters and sections. Chapter 2 offers a review of the research pertinent to language learning motivation. This begins by reviewing various descriptions of language learning motivation and presents a definition most suitable for this research. In the subsequent sections, relevant theories and concepts are examined beginning with the literature relating to language learning goals. The chapter continues with a discussion of research conducted in the fields of self-determination theory, autonomy, and expectancy-value theories. Following this, the chapter offers a summary of language learning motivation from a temporal perspective, motivation and context, before presenting research in language learning motivation from a sociocultural perspective. Subsequently, the discussion moves on to work done in the areas of demotivation, anxiety and the notion of Willingness to Communicate (WTC). Furthermore, in order to provide information relating to the context, the chapter turns to research on language learning motivation in Japan and concepts relevant to this study in modern Japanese culture. The chapter ends with a discussion on the literature on intercultural contact before presenting the research questions.

Chapter 3 outlines the methodology of the study. This begins with a look at methodological issues and considerations, which arose during the course of this study before turning to research, conducted into qualitative research, grounded theory, interviews, and diary studies. The following section offers justifications and limitations of the approach to the study including an overview of the approach, the reasons why it was chosen and the limitations it has. The subsequent section provides a rich description of the context of the study including information regarding the research site, sampling procedures, participants, and myself the researcher. The

section concludes with a discussion of the research design and the data collection methods. This includes a description of the motivational features identified and the validation and reliability strategies.

In Chapters 4, 5, and 6, the findings of this study are presented and discussed. Chapter 4 describes the data collected from the initial interview at the beginning of the first semester and discusses the participants' initial perceptions of their language learning motivation at the start of the study. The aim of this chapter is to offer responses to the first two research questions presented in Section 2.13 below. In Chapter 5, the data from the second set of interviews conducted during the middle of the academic year is described and discussed. Furthermore, tentative answers to the first two research questions are offered along with possible temporal fluctuations of the participants' perceptions of their language learning motivation. Finally, in Chapter 6, the final data set is analyzed and discussed. The aim of this chapter is to respond to all three research questions posed in Section 2.13.

The concluding chapter begins with a review of the aims and of the findings before offering an autobiographical reflection and potential pedagogical implications for teachers and policy makers in this and similar contexts. The chapter subsequently moves on to a review of the limitations of the study before briefly highlighting potential future research areas emanating from this study. The study closes with some concise concluding thoughts.

## 2. A review of the literature

### 2.1 What is motivation?

Described in simple terms, motivation determines the extent of a persons' desire to do an activity. In other words, the state of being motivated is to have a strong reason to accomplish something. In psychology, motivation is conceived as the process that starts, guides, and maintains goal-oriented behaviors. However, further extrapolations of this complex concept have proved difficult, and despite the enormous amount of research conducted in and around the field, no single consensus has been reached and few concrete answers have been given (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Indeed, the concept of motivation is a hugely complicated one, which has divided researchers' opinions and cannot be simplified into a single definition for all learners and contexts.

In recent times, it has become widely accepted that motivation is one of the main determinants in the success of second language (L2) learners. Motivation has the potential to have a direct influence on how frequently students use L2 learning strategies, the amount of target language input they are likely to receive, test performance, proficiency, how much interaction with native speakers they have, and how long they continue learning the L2 after their language study is complete (Oxford & Shearin, 1994). It appears evident that motivation is a major factor in terms of language learning achievement, and for this reason, a considerable amount of research has been conducted into discovering why people make the decision to study a language, and engage and persist in learning it.

One of the most commonly cited definitions of language learning motivation is provided by Dörnyei (2001). He states, "motivation explains *why* people decide to do something, *how hard* they are going to pursue it and *how long* they are willing to

sustain the activity” (p. 7). In addition, Dörnyei and Ottó (1998) comprehensively define second language motivation as "dynamically changing cumulative arousal in a person that initiates, directs, coordinates, amplifies, terminates, and evaluates the cognitive and motor processes whereby initial wishes and desires are selected, prioritised, operationalised, and (successfully or unsuccessfully) acted out" (p. 64).

Furthermore, as more studies are conducted, concepts and definitions in the field of language learning motivation research continue to evolve. Since the early work and theories developed by Gardner and Lambert, (1959; 1972), there has been a multitude of language motivation concepts that have been developed. There has been a plethora of work done in cognitive psychology, which adopted a situated analysis of motivation. Then, there was the process-oriented period which investigated temporal dimensions of motivation, and more recently attention has turned to language learning motivation analyzing the dynamic interrelationships between internal, social and contextual factors (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011), and these are discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Given the qualitative nature of this study, I chose to adapt Ushioda’s (2001) definition of motivation which she sees as not “a measurable cause or product of particular learning experiences and outcomes, but as an ongoing complex of processes shaping and sustaining learner involvement in learning” (p. 94). I consider the interaction between the sociocultural context and the values and goals in the data in this study as reciprocal with the participants actively contributing to the development of their context. Furthermore, these goals and values should not be regarded as individual constructs, which have just been created by the sociocultural and historical influences, but are to be considered to work in a more responsive relationship with the contexts.

This chapter begins with an overview of theories relating to L2 learning goals. It then turns to studies that attempt to explain how learners' motivated decisions to engage, perform, and persist in tasks can be attributed to the extent they value the potential achievements, which are commonly known as expectancy-value theories. The review moves on to examine research conducted in the field of self-determination theory and autonomous learning before exploring theories, which perceive L2 motivation from a temporal outlook. Following this, the chapter analyzes literature relating to how context influences on language learning motivation. The next section in this review of the literature summarizes studies, which have adopted a sociocultural perspective. The subsequent two sections consider the work conducted in the fields of demotivation and language learning anxiety. In addition to this, the chapter subsequently reviews concepts in Japanese contemporary culture relating to language learning motivation. More specifically, it provides an overview of current research on motivation in Japan, and analyzes concepts relevant to communication styles, social hierarchies, and group consciousness. Finally, the chapter will end with an examination of intercultural contact theory before presenting the research questions this study aims to provide answers to.

## **2.2 Theories and concepts relating to language learning goals**

Given the prominence of goals and values in the analytic categories in this study, the section begins by reviewing literature, which has sought to discover the stimulus and guidance of motivated action – theories relating to goals. There have been several key cognitive goal theories proposed, but before discussing these, the review turns to research conducted within social psychology.

Gardner (1985; Gardner & Lambert, 1959; 1972) identified two goals, or orientations, which functioned to stimulate and guide motivation. The first are

*instrumental goals* and the second *integrative goals*. According to Gardner, instrumental goals reflect when a language is learned for pragmatic gains, and integrative goals represent a positive disposition towards the L2 community. Gardner's *integrative motive*, which is defined as, "motivation to learn a second language because of positive feelings towards the community that speaks the language" (Gardner, 1985, p. 82-3) was, at the time, widely accepted. However, research has cast doubt on whether the concept of integrative motivation is applicable to certain language learning groups, and whether it fully took into account learners in English as foreign language situations (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; Dörnyei, 1994; Oxford & Shearin, 1994; Tremblay & Gardner, 1995).

Considering the context of this study, the notion of learners integrating with a target language community appears to have limited relevance. The literature offers three explanations why the work of Gardner and Lambert is not applicable to 21<sup>st</sup> century Japan. First, globalization over the past 50 years has made the world a very different place. English is no longer spoken primarily by American or British people, but is now shared with groups of non-native speakers (Warschauer, 2000), and has become an international language acting as a lingua franca (Jenkins, 2007). Unlike Canada in the 1950s, there is no distinct target language community for Japanese learners of English to integrate into. In addition to this, it may no longer be appropriate to ask if the goal of learners in Japan is to have a favorable attitude towards English-speaking cultures. Lamb (2004) argues that, in the Indonesian context, aspirations to meet westerners, use computers, understand pop songs, or study and travel abroad, are interlinked with English and have become "an integral part of the globalization processes" (p. 13). In the context of Japan - which is a technically advanced country - the proliferation of social networking sites, content sharing sites,

and other online communities has led to “physical geographical boundaries separating communities of language users [to] become dissolved” (Ushioda, 2013, p. 3). The final point to consider is the role of English in Japan as an essential educational skill (Ushioda, 2013). In 2002, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) in Japan stated that skills in English were *essential* due to the need for Japan to remain economically strong in a globalized economy and society. These three points highlight the huge differences between the two contexts and therefore the lack of relevance regarding the concept of integrative motivation.

For the purpose of this thesis, the work of Yashima (2000, 2002) is more applicable. Yashima (2000) investigated Japanese EFL college students’ reasons for learning English, and discovered that they viewed English as a lingua franca and that the learners did not identify with any particular community. In addition, a study of Japanese university students by Yashima (2002) proposed a new language learning goal called *international posture*. This concept addressed integrative and instrumental goals and included “interest in foreign or international affairs, willingness to go overseas to stay or work, readiness to interact with intercultural partners ... and (an) openness or a non-ethnocentric attitude towards different cultures” (p. 57). Considering the context, it seems more appropriate to use the concept of *international posture* to consider “both friendship and vocational interests” collectively in this study (p. 57).

The review now offers a brief overview of prominent cognitive goal theories and related motivation theories from the field of psychology. The first of these is Locke and Latham’s (1990) goal setting theory that attempts to explain variations in performance in relation to differences in goal attributes. Goals that are more specific and reasonably challenging are the most effective providing there is commitment to

the goal. This commitment is accomplished when the learner perceives the goal as important and achievable (Locke, 1996). Continuing with goal-theories, Ames' (1992) goal-orientation theory highlights mastery and performance orientations. The former being where the learner is focused on gaining understanding of the content and the latter is when the learner is more concerned with their performance in terms of displaying their abilities and achieving success in the classroom. Mastery orientations are considered preferable, as they are associated with an intrinsic interest and a positive attitude towards learning. Traditionally, extrinsic motivation has been seen as an undermining influence on intrinsic motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). However, Deci and Ryan's (1985) self-determination theory shows how extrinsic motivation can be placed on a continuum to represent the degree to which these extrinsic goals are internalized. This is discussed further in the following section.

### **2.3 Self-determination theory and autonomy**

There has been a great deal of research into the concepts of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation is described as when one is motivated to perform a behavior or engage in an activity to earn an extrinsic reward or avoid punishment, and intrinsic motivation deals with engaging in a behavior because it offers personal rewards or satisfaction. Learners who are intrinsically motivated tend to attribute their educational successes to elements under their own control, believe they have the necessary skills to be effective agents in reaching their goals, known as self-efficacy beliefs, and are not just interested in mastering a subject to achieve good grades. Extrinsic motivation has been traditionally seen as detrimental to intrinsic motivation. However, the work of Deci and Ryan (1985) in their self-determination theory have seen less importance being placed on this intrinsic/extrinsic dichotomy with extrinsic motivation being seen as falling along a continuum of internalization. Deci and Ryan



(1985) identified four types of extrinsic motivation with the least self-determined being described as *external regulation*. Here the learner's motivation comes exclusively through external sources. Next along the continuum is *introjected regulation* where external regulations are accepted as the norm by the learner. Following this is *identified regulation* when the learner identifies with outside rules placed on him or her and sees their values. Finally, *integrated regulation* is seen as the most autonomous kind of extrinsic motivation with regulations being fully assimilated and included in a person's self-evaluation and personal needs. Furthermore, the more the extrinsic motivation is internalized, the more autonomous the person will be when executing their behaviors. According to Deci and Ryan, there are three psychological needs required to motivate a learner to initiate behavior and which are necessary for the well-being of an individual. The first is competence in the sense of having a perception of accomplishment. The second is autonomy and represents the desire to be the causal agents of one's own life. Finally, there is relatedness, which equates to feeling connected to other individuals.

Given that this study is related to autonomous learning, a brief review of the literature in autonomy in language learning is necessary. Benson and Lor (1998) define autonomy as "active involvement in the learning process, responsibility for its control over factors such as frequency, pace, settings, methods of learning, and critical awareness of purposes of goals" (p. 3). Above all, autonomy is taking control over ones' own learning. Little (2007) adds to this by stating that learner autonomy is not just a case of learners' doing something by themselves, but should also be considered learners doing something for themselves. In a review of the literature, Dickinson (1995) illustrated evidence from cognitive motivational studies to justify the promotion of autonomy in language learning. Adding that learners who take

responsibility and control of their own learning and who understand that failures and successes are related to their own efforts are more likely to be successful and motivated language learners. More recently, this individualistic approach to autonomy has started to be questioned with Esch (2009) stating that we should consider that “our ability to learn is dependent upon our participation in social life and our membership of communities of learning” (p. 34). To put it another way, autonomy is not only related to the individual, but it is interlinked with communities and social situations. In addition, Benson (2010) identified five approaches to develop autonomy; classroom-based, learner-based, resource-based, curriculum -based, and technology-based.

## **2.4 Expectancy-values**

Other areas of research that are linked to this thesis are studies relating to expectancy-value theories. Atkinson and Raynor (1974) demonstrated how achievement motivation is determined by the expectancy of success, the value of the incentive, and the need for achievement, all of which are countered by the fear of failure. Taking this further, a learner’s need for success is determined by the need to succeed or need for achievement, their likelihood of success, and the incentive for success. In addition, the motive to avoid failure is determined by the need to avoid failure, the learner’s estimation of the probability of failure, the incentive for success with the probability of failure on that task, or how unpleasant it would be to fail (Atkinson, 1966).

Bandura’s (1997) self-efficacy theory helps to explain how a person’s judgment of their own abilities or capabilities can determine whether goals are placed into action. According to Bandura (1994), “Perceived self-efficacy is defined as people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives” (p.2). This in turn, dictates

how people think, feel, and their motivated behaviour. Furthermore, these beliefs generate cognitive, motivational, affective, and selection processes. People with a high self-efficacy will approach threatening situations with more self-confidence whereas those with a low self-efficacy are more likely to view difficult tasks as a personal threat. Bandura (2001) adds, “Unless people believe that they can produce desired results and forestall detrimental ones by their actions, they have little incentive to act or persevere in the face of difficulties” (p. 10).

Weiner’s (1974, 1986) attribution theory reveals how past successes and failures can impact on a person’s motivation to institute future action. Weiner highlighted ability, effort, task difficulty, and luck, mood, family background, and help or hindrance from others as crucial factors affecting attributions for achievement. Weiner classifies these attributions along three causal dimensions: locus of control, stability, and controllability. The locus of control dimension includes internal versus external locus of control. The stability dimension indicates temporal changes. For example, ability could be classified as a stable, internal cause, and effort classified as unstable and internal. Controllability contrasts the causes learners can control, for example, skill, with causes they cannot control, such as luck, aptitude, mood, and others' actions. Therefore, learners with a higher rating of self-esteem and with a higher learning achievement would attribute success to internal, stable, uncontrollable factors such as ability. In contrast, they would assign any failure to either internal, unstable, controllable aspects like effort, or external, uncontrollable elements such as task difficulty.

Self-worth theory assumes that people are motivated to find a sense of self-acceptance and a person’s efforts are linked to their perceptions of themselves. According to Covington, the majority of people will attempt to protect their sense of

worth or self-value even if this imposes on the outcome of their achievement (Covington, 1984, 1992). The response mechanism in the face of failure varies. For some learners the prospect of failure will cause them to engage in self-defeating behaviors in order to allow failure to be attributed to effort rather than ability. There are four main components to Covington's model; ability, effort, performance, and self-worth. These are arranged in a causal structure in which ability, performance, and effort are connected to self-worth and ability and effort are components of performance. Covington (1984) argues that multiple factors influence learners' sense of self-worth, which depends on their own accomplishments. However, self-worth might also be derived from the learner's perception of his or her own ability or effort.

## **2.5 Language learning motivation from a temporal perspective**

The literature review continues with research that was conducted during what has been termed the *process-oriented* period of research into language learning motivation (Dörnyei, 2005). This period saw research, which sought to analyze motivational processes over time. One of the first studies that had this temporal focus was carried out by Williams and Burden (1997). They distinguished between initiating motivation and sustaining motivation, and argued that the two stages should be seen differently from both theoretical and pedagogical perspectives. In this respect, "motivation is more than simply arousing interest. It also involves sustaining interest, and investing time and energy into putting the necessary effort to achieve certain goals" (p. 121). In addition, Williams and Burden developed a social constructivist model with an emphasis on the importance of the social context. In this way, learning is essentially viewed as "a social process that occurs within a social context through interactions with others" (Williams & Burden, 1999, p. 193). They argued that people are all motivated differently through their cultural context, their social situation, and

interactions with people in these situations, which all play a role in their motivations (1997).

In addition to the process-oriented framework adopted by Williams and Burden, Dörnyei and Ottó (1998) developed a comprehensive process model of L2 motivation, which separated motivational behaviour into three distinct phases. The first stage was called the preactional phase where goal setting, intention formation, and initiation of intention enactment occur. The second phase they termed the actional phase wherein the learner begins a task (joining a language course for example) and implements the plan from the preactional phase. During this phase, the learner is going through a process of appraisal and action control. The final stage was labeled the post-actional phase which is a period of retrospection, evaluation, and where further plans are developed.

During this period, when the attention was on the temporal organization of motivation, there were also calls for a shift in approaches to motivational study. It was argued that the then popular cognitive approaches to motivation, which predominately used quantitative research methods, did “not lend themselves easily to investigating the dynamic processes of motivational evolution within an individual person’s learning experience” (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p.62). Ushioda led the calls for qualitative research approaches (1994, 1996), and it was she who carried out a longitudinal interview study to “focus on the qualitative content of language learners’ motivational thinking” (Ushioda, 2001, p. 94) in order to investigate the dynamic processes of motivational change during their learning experience. Ushioda conducted two rounds of individual interviews separated by 15-16 months. From this study, Ushioda developed a theoretical framework of motivation from a temporal perspective. This showed that learners with successful learning experiences (a good

academic record or a good language ability for instance) “may tend to emphasize the motivational impetus of a positive learning history” (Ushioda, 2001, p. 119) with goal directed patterns playing a minor role whereas other learners may use goals and incentives to channel their language learning motivation. Ushioda also argued that this second scenario might represent a later stage of the successful learners’ motivational thinking as goals become more apparent.

## **2.6 Motivation and context**

The discussion now turns to research conducted related to students’ environment. Both sociocultural influences and features of the instructional context have been identified as having an influence on language learning motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011).

In terms of sociocultural influences, family and parental influences have been shown to be important. In particular, the importance of the effect of parental support and praise for a learner’s motivated behavior on language learning has been known for many years (Gardner & Lambert 1959; Gardner 1985). Ginsberg and Bronstein (1993) discovered that parental encouragement to grades learners received helped to foster an intrinsic motivational orientation, and supportive family styles were linked with intrinsic motivation and a better academic performance. Indeed, there has been a great deal of research conducted relating to parental encouragement (Csizér & Dörnyei 2005; Csizér & Kormos 2009; Kormos & Csizér 2008; Ryan 2009; Taguchi et al. 2009). Eccles et al. (1998) identified four parenting influences on learner motivation; placing appropriate demands or pressure, having confidence in their ability, being supportive, and being a motivated role model. Finally, the influences of the family have incorporated in several models of motivation (Noels 2001; Williams & Burden 1997).

In addition to family and parental influences, teachers, instructional materials, and peers have also been shown to impact the motivational learning process both in a positive and negative manner. The discussion will turn to positive influences on motivation from the school environment with negative influences discussed in Section 2.9 on demotivation below.

The role of the teacher on language learning motivation appears to be a complicated one with attitude, personality, knowledge, skills, classroom management, and enthusiasm all potentially influencing learner motivation. Dörnyei (2001) offers a series of techniques that can be employed by teachers in order to improve the levels of motivation in their classes. This includes a model for motivational L2 teaching practice consisting of four main aspects; creating the basic motivational conditions, generating initial motivation, maintaining and protecting motivation, and encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation.

A further impact on learner motivation is relating to the instructional context and peer groups along with materials and task design. Research has been conducted into what kinds of tasks and materials create interest and challenge learners to improve (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). In addition, dating back many years there have been calls for more authentic materials (Crystal & Davy 1975; Morrow 1981; Schmidt & Richards 1980). Research also suggests that materials can play an important role in L2 language learning. Indeed, discussions about the role materials play appear in most course design textbooks (Nunan, 1991). With regard to peer groups, research has shown that peers can have both a positive and negative influence on motivation. Indeed, a learner's social competence with their peers has been shown to be correlated though not causally related to academic outcomes. It has been hypothesized that positive behavioral styles and self-regulatory processes of peers have the potential to

lead to successful learning outcomes (Wigfield & Wagner, 2007). In addition, Wigfield and Wagner (2007) also indicate that similar learners are often drawn towards each other, and when they display positive motivational orientations, the learning outcome can be positive.

## **2.7 Language learning motivation from a sociocultural perspective**

Around the same time as calls for qualitative research approaches, the emerging literature suggested language learning should be seen more as a sociocultural and sociohistorical process rather than a predominantly cognitive one. In a study with five adult immigrant women in Canada, Norton (1995) raised the issue that the field was lacking a “comprehensive theory of social identity that integrates the language learner and the language learning context” (p. 12) thus questioning the conceptualization of the language learner as ‘ahistorical’ and one-dimensional. Norton argued that each learner should be thought of as a person with a complex social history and diverse desires. Norton (1995) adopted a poststructuralist depiction of the individual as “diverse, contradictory, and dynamic; multiple rather than unitary, decentered rather than centered” (p. 15). She also questioned the conceptions of instrumental and integrative motivation arguing these concepts “do not capture the complex relationship between relations of power, identity, and language learning” (p.17). Since the work of Norton (1995), several other studies suggested language learning is a sociocultural and sociohistorical process (Norton, 2000; Seidlhofer, 2003), and stemming from this came a call to move away from linear models of motivation which focus on a small number of variables to a relational view of motivation (Ushioda, 2009). The review of the literature now turns to research conducted with a relational perspective in what has been coined the *socio-dynamic* phase.



Ushioda's work on language learning motivation is of particular relevance to this study. Her person-in-context relational view sees "motivation as emergent from relations between real persons, with particular social identities, and the unfolding cultural context of activity" (Ushioda, 2009 p. 215). Ushioda argues that researchers should understand learners as real people rather than focus on "individual differences in an abstract theoretical sense" (p. 216). This stance supports the viewpoint of Norton (2000), and from this perspective, participants in any given study would be considered not only as language learners, but also as having multiple identities. Ushioda also argues that context should not be considered as an external, pre-existing, independent background variable which is located outside the person, but the relationship between the context and the person should be seen as dynamic and complicated (p. 218). Finally, Ushioda questions the effectiveness of linear cause and effect models in understanding the feelings of an individual language learner. She argues that such models only allow the researcher to make generalizable predictions and reduce language learning to broad commonalities, which "cannot do justice to idiosyncrasies of personal meaning-making in social context" (p. 219). The discussion now moves on to research conducted in the field of demotivation.

## **2.8 Demotivation**

Demotivation has been defined as "specific external forces that reduce or diminish the motivational basis of a behavioural intention or an ongoing action" (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 139). Only in the last few decades has research in second language learning begun to examine this potentially important concept. The first studies to examine the issue of demotivation were conducted in the field of instructional communication. In one of these early studies, Gorham and Christophel (1992) attempted to ascertain what factors were perceived as demotives by college students in

introductory communication classes. They discovered that teacher-related factors accounted for the vast majority of the learners' responses. Amongst these were comments relating to a sense of dissatisfaction with grades, assignments, teaching materials, and the subject area. Furthermore, references relating directly to the teacher's teaching style in terms of the teacher being boring or not being fully prepared and the teacher's perceived character or behaviour in class. These findings were confirmed in a follow-up study (Christophel & Gorham, 1995) with a separate group of college students studying communication. However, in these studies, it is unclear as to whether the learners might already have been demotivated before entering their college class. In order to discover more regarding teachers' perceptions on learner demotives, Gorham and Millette (1997) conducted a study with teachers and discovered that both learners and teachers agreed on factors that are relevant to demotivation.

It was only around the turn of the century that research into demotivation was first conducted in the L2 field. In a content analysis of essays written by high school and university students, Oxford (1998) identified teachers' personal relationships, attitude towards the course, the types of classroom activities, and conflicts in teaching styles as four broad themes. In her study with French learners in Ireland, Ushioda (1998) found demotivation predominately came from the institutionalized learning frameworks including teaching methods and tasks. Based on a small scale interview study, Dörnyei (2001) identified nine categories of demotives and reported that 40% of the occurrences were in a teacher related category based on the teachers' personality, perceived commitment, competence, and methods. In addition, in a study conducted with Arabic learners of English in Israel, Keblawi (2005) revealed that teachers were mentioned by approximately 50% of learners as a demotivating

influence. However, difficulties in learning English were found to be the most demotivating factor in a study among Korean learners of English (Kim, 2009).

In recent years, there have been multiple studies conducted with regard to demotivation in Japan. Kikuchi (2009) identified five demotivating influences in Japanese university learners who had completed six years of compulsory English classes in junior high and high school. First was the teachers' behaviour, then the use of grammar translation methods. Third were university entrance examinations, and then the focus on reading and vocabulary in classes. The final demotive was the dissatisfaction with school textbook or reference book. The work of Falout et al. (2009) uncovered six external and internal factors and three reactive factors with grammar translation appearing to be the biggest demotivator. Research has suggested differences in demotives in learners with higher and lower level proficiencies too with lower level learners attributing a lack of self-confidence as the biggest demotivation (Falout & Maruyama, 2004). Tsuchiya (2004a, 2004b) found nine demotivating influences including teachers and methods of instruction. In a follow-up study (2006), Tsuchiya also discovered lower-level proficiency learners were more demotivated on all of the factors in comparison to more proficient learners. Finally, in a summary of demotivation studies, Kikuchi (2013) highlighted six common factors for demotivation including; teachers, characteristics of classes, experiences of failure, class environment, class materials, and a lack of goals or interests.

## **2.9 Anxiety and the notion of Willingness to Communicate**

Another line of research that has relevance to this study is second or foreign language learning anxiety. Defined by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) as “a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process”

(p.128). Many scholars have noted how anxiety has a significant impact on L2 acquisition (Horwitz, 2001; Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Horwitz & Young, 1991; Macintyre & Gardner, 1989; Macintyre & Gardner, 1991). Horwitz and associates (1986) identify three components to foreign language anxiety: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. All three are potential sources of anxiety highlighted in this study. Communication apprehension refers to a person's fear of real or anticipated communication with someone resulting in a reluctance to get involved in social interactions, and fear of negative evaluation is defined as "an apprehension about others' evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations, and the expectation that others would evaluate oneself negatively" (Watson & Friend, 1969, cited in Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986, p. 128). Gardner and Macintyre (1993) showed how language anxiety corresponds with learners' self-ratings of proficiency with anxious students more likely to underestimate their own ability (Macintyre, Noels & Clément, 1997).

With regards to the Japanese context, there have been several studies conducted in recent years, which have examined anxiety with university students. In a replication of the study conducted by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1991), Burden (2004) discovered that approximately 50 percent of Japanese university students taking English communication classes suffered with some form of language learning anxiety. Studies have also shown that students with intercultural contact experiences through English speaking foreign friends or travel abroad, and those with a history of greater success on standardized achievement tests were less likely to demonstrate signs of language learning anxiety (Tajima, 2002). Kondo and Yang (2003) found that fear of negative evaluation, a lower proficiency level, and speaking activities in class were three of the most prominent determinants of language learning anxiety.

However, Osboe, Fujmura, and Hirschel (2007) stated that the use of small group activities helped to keep anxiety low in English communication classes. Research has also shown that anxiety is most often associated with the process and output stages of the learning process and that the language teacher is often perceived as one of the greatest causes of stress (Williams & Andrade, 2008). In a study conducted with Japanese learners of English, Hashimoto (2002) discovered “L2 anxiety was found to exert a strong and direct negative influence on perceived competence” (p. 57) and affected the students’ willingness to communicate in the L2.

The notion of Willingness to Communicate (WTC) was first developed by McCroskey and Richmond (1987) to account for communication in a first language. The concept refers to the probability or tendency of an individual to engage in communication when an opportunity arises, and includes the willingness to engage in written communication (McCroskey, 1992; McCroskey & Richmond, 1987). MacIntyre and Charos (1996) applied the theory to L2 communication and developed a WTC path model showing how perceived communication confidence and communication anxiety impacted on WTC, which predicted frequency of communication in the L2. This model was expanded by MacIntyre, Clement, Dörnyei and Noels (1998) to create a heuristic model, which contains twelve variables, organized in a layered pyramid. Yashima (2002), using this model as a framework, investigated the relationship amongst variables relating to WTC in the Japanese context and discovered how attitudes (international posture) influence L2 learning motivation which directly predicts WTC. In her model, learning motivation in the L2 also influences L2 proficiency and L2 communication confidence, which in turn leads directly to WTC. In addition, the results show international posture also has a direct influence on WTC in the L2. In other words, in the Japanese context, attitudes toward

the international community and confidence using English could be the key to promoting learning and communicating in English. In a later study, Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide and Shimizu (2004) show how WTC predicts the frequency of self-initiated communication in English both in and outside of the classroom.

## 2.10 Research on motivation in Japan

This section begins by offering key studies related to research on motivation in the context of Japan. Following this, the section continues by offering a more detailed account of studies conducted in the field of language learning motivation relevant to this thesis.

Author(s)	Title	A brief summary
Yashima (2000)	Orientations and motivation in foreign language learning: A study of Japanese college students	In an investigation into Japanese EFL college students' reasons for learning English, Yashima discovered that learners viewed English as an international language with them not identifying with any particular community.
Yashima (2002)	Willingness to communicate in a second language: The Japanese EFL context	Yashima proposed a new language-learning goal for Japanese learners called international posture as an alternative to integrative and instrumental goals, which included interest in international affairs, eagerness to travel or work abroad and interact with foreign partners, and non-ethnocentric attitudes towards foreign cultures.
Hayashi (2005)	Identifying different motivational transitions of Japanese ESL learners using cluster analysis: Self-determination perspectives	Using a retrospective questionnaire to investigate patterns of motivational change with students over a period of nine years, Hayashi showed a decline in motivation from junior high school to university marked with increases in motivation before high school and university entrance exams.
Sakui (2004)	Wearing two pairs of shoes: Language teaching in Japan	Sakui used longitudinal interviews, observations and artifacts to explore how Japanese school English teachers implemented communicative language teaching (CLT), and suggested teachers have difficulties integrating CLT and form-based instruction.
Nakata (2006)	Motivation and experience in foreign language learning	In this study, Nakata administered a large-scale survey to 288 freshmen university students, and followed this up with a small-scale longitudinal qualitative study and concluded that the learning environment affects motivation and offered suggestions to help learners motivate themselves.

Sawyer (2007)	Motivation to learn a foreign language: Where does it come from, where does it go?	Using a retrospective survey with high English learners, Sawyer reported motivational fluctuations over eight years and discovered a decrease in motivation after entering university with university students displaying the lowest levels of motivation.
Miura (2010)	A retrospective survey of L2 learning motivational changes	Using a retrospective questionnaire to investigate motivational fluctuations of learners from junior high school to university, Miura ascribed the flux in the levels of motivation over the period due, in large part, to entrance exams.
Johnson (2013)	A longitudinal perspective on EFL learning motivation in Japanese engineering students	Johnson analyzed interviews with Japanese university engineering students to ascertain temporal changes in motivation during their freshman year discovering that students had much higher motivation at the start of the study than in their second year.
Takahashi (2013)	Language learning, gender and desire: Japanese women on the move	Using ethnographic data, Takahashi explored Japanese women's desire for learning English describing their identity and desires in terms of their race, sex, and linguistic policy.
Kikuchi and Sakai (2016)	Factors on changes of English learning motivation: A content analysis of motivating and demotivating experiences	In their study on motivational fluctuations among Japanese learners of English during their six years at school, Kikuchi and Sakai stated high school and university entrance exams were motivators for many Japanese learners of English.

*Table 1: A summary of the key studies on motivation in Japan relating to this thesis*

The majority of the early research conducted in Japan from the 1990s was focused on identifying the fundamental structures of L2 motivation in Japanese EFL contexts. Furthermore, the methods used in the Japanese context commonly followed the methods used in ESL settings employing factor analysis. In these early studies, instrumental and integrative motivation along with goal orientation theories such as mastery and performance orientations were the main concepts used in research in Japan (Irie, 2003). There were several studies, which showed Japanese university students were interested in intercultural contact with English speakers and an orientation to travel but not integrate into foreign cultures. In other words, they had strong instrumental orientations but lower integrative orientations (Benson, 1991; Johnson, 1996; McClelland, 2000; McGuire, 2000). Yashima (2000) questioned whether the term instrumental orientation was suitable for the Japanese context as she

identified a new language-learning goal, which she termed international posture (see Section 2.2 above).

There have been several longitudinal studies attempting to measure motivational change over time, which have used quantitative research methods. Berwick and Ross (1989) used a pre- and post-test survey to measure motivational changes of Japanese university students before and after their first year of study. They concluded that overall motivation over the period was low. They argued that once learners have studied enough to pass the English portion of the university entrance tests, there is less motivation to learn a foreign language. They directly attributed this to the university entrance examinations with learners having to seriously compete for positions at universities. They state that the intensity of language learning motivation “hits a peak in the last year of high school” (p. 206). They attributed this to the focus on these examinations being on grammar and translation.

Hayashi (2005) used a retrospective questionnaire to investigate patterns of motivational change with Japanese college students over a period of nine years. The results of this study showed a general decline in motivation from junior high school to university marked with increases in motivation before high school and university entrance exams. The study also showed four motivational patterns that occurred in the learners over the nine years (high-high, low-low, high-low, low-high). In addition, Hayashi reported a relatively sharp decline in levels of motivation after entering university. Hayashi hypothesized that language learning will be successful when intrinsic motivation becomes internalized.

Sawyer (2007) conducted a retrospective survey, which contained both Likert scale and open-ended questions with high proficiency English learners to discover motivational fluctuations over a period of eight years. Sawyer also noted a decrease in



language learning motivation once entering university and university students displayed the lowest levels of motivation. Furthermore, he stated that negative motivational fluctuations could lead to permanent demotivation as proposed by Falout and Maruyama (2004).

Miura (2010) used a retrospective questionnaire to investigate motivational fluctuations of learners from junior high school to university. Miura described a flux in the levels of motivation over the period due in large part to entrance exams. In addition, Johnson (2013) analyzed interviews with Japanese university engineering students in an attempt to discover temporal changes in motivation during their first year. Johnson discovered that students were “much more highly motivated” (p. 200) at the start of the study than during the first semester of their sophomore year.

Given the amount of data collected relating to institutional pressures and high-stakes examinations, the discussion will offer a brief overview to research conducted in this area in Japan. In the main, the Japanese English education system is centered on high-stakes examinations. These include entrance examinations, standardized tests, and standard proficiency tests (SPIs) (Barry, 2004; Gunning, 2009; Sato, 2009). As referred to in the literature above, it appears that pre-test motivation and effort are high, but there is a decline in motivation after the tests have been taken. In addition, many of these standardized tests such as TOEIC, TOEFL, and Eiken, test listening, reading, grammar, and vocabulary, therefore do not require language production (Lee, 2015) with TOEFL iBT, and later stages of the Eiken test being exceptions.

Researchers have argued that the institutionalized focus on English as a test creates a disposable approach to English from students and teachers (Barry, 2004). In other words, there is a concentration on learning English for tests purposes rather for a long-term proficiency. Furthermore, Seargeant (2009) suggests that there is preference for

native speaker-modeled English and this is widespread throughout Japan. In addition, there is a lack of authenticity in English schools and other language learning environments. Seargeant (2009) argues that foreign languages are somewhat domesticated but still remain “forever foreign” in these “purpose-built enclaves” (p. 104).

In recent years, language-learning motivation research has become a major research area in Japan and a major factor in this is the issues in the Japanese educational context referred to above. Ushioda (2013) informs us that the majority of empirical research into demotivation in foreign language learning is conducted in Japan. However, this is “fostering a rich and active wave of research in Japan” and therefore helping to make a worthwhile contribution to the language learning motivation field in general (p. 5). She continues to highlight three of the most prominent areas of research in the Japanese context. The first of these is the issue of demotivation and its causal attributions and effects. Second is motivation from a temporal perspective, which again possibly stems from the education system in Japan, and finally the value of English to Japanese learners “in terms of their sense of self, identities, goals and values” (p. 6).

A study that has relevance to the discussion below is that of Nakata (2006). Nakata’s (2006) study was concerning the developmental process of intrinsic motivation and autonomy. It also examined the lack of motivation to learn and use English amongst Japanese university learners, and how this is connected to their previous learning experiences. In addition, it also explored how learners become more intrinsically motivated and more motivated to use English when given a greater share of the responsibility for their learning. Nakata administered a large-scale quantitative study to 288 freshmen university students and followed this up with a small-scale

longitudinal qualitative study. Nakata concludes that motivation is affected by the learning environment and offers suggestions for helping learners motivate themselves.

Ushioda (2013) argues that the field of language learning motivation in Japan is particularly strong because of its educational grounding and applied focus. Indeed, Ushioda (2013) states that “this educationally grounded and problem-focused locally driven research agenda is nowhere more apparent than in Japan” (p. 12). This is evident in several recent publications. In one such study, Noels (2013) suggests that language learning motivation can be promoted by developing learners’ sense of “autonomy, competence and relatedness in the language learning process” (p. 15). Noels highlights facets of self-determination theory that could be useful in English as a foreign language and discusses cultural issues that need to be taken into consideration when applying the theory in different cultural settings. Recent research conducted by Aubrey and Nowlan (2013) also has relevance to this study. Using a mixed-method research design, they compared the effect of intercultural contact on language learning motivation at an international university and a non-international university in Japan. They discovered intercultural contact played a significant role in affecting motivation at the international university, but not at the non-international university. They added that intercultural contact only significantly affected international posture at the international university.

More recently, Kikuchi and Sakai (2016) conducted a study aimed at developing understanding of the motivational fluctuations among Japanese learners of English during their six years at junior high and high school. General patterns of motivational changes were investigated amongst 199 college students studying English. They concluded that levels of motivation decreased from the end of the first year of junior high school to the beginning of the second year, from the end of the

third year to the first year of high school, and from the beginning of the first year to the end of the year. However, the level of motivation increased from the end of the second year and from the beginning to the end of the final year at high school. They cited success on high school and university entrance exams as “reasonable motivators for many Japanese learners of English” (p. 120).

## **2.11 Relevant concepts in Japanese contemporary culture**

Considering that the macro-social context of this study is Japan, the review of the literature will now turn to concepts and values that are relevant to this context. More specifically, this section will review literature that pertains to how Japanese people communicate and socially interact. There is a degree of sociocultural variation amongst communication styles in all different cultures, and Japan has many cultural assumptions, behaviors, and patterns that either contrast with other cultures, or are unique. A review of these Japanese approaches to communication and social behaviour would therefore be useful. In addition, these concepts emerge in the data analysis and are used for the explanation of the findings, and a review will most certainly help the reader foster a greater understanding of my interpretations of the data set. This, in turn, should allow a better understanding of the impact these concepts have on the participants’ motivation to learn English.

Japanese society has developed around a strict vertical hierarchy, which is thought to have developed from the teachings of Confucianism. This system is clearly defined in Japanese educational, corporate, and governmental systems. In any given organization, an individual is likely to be ranked according to age, the time they entered the organization, or the time they have spent continuously serving the organization. Within the educational system in Japan, this becomes ubiquitous after children graduate from elementary school. Indeed, it becomes a hugely important

facet of the Japanese educational system. This vertical hierarchy impacts Japanese society, language, and communication in numerous ways. The review of concepts stemming from this vertical hierarchy begins by examining literature relating to the complex Japanese honorific system or *keigo*.

Japan has one of the most complex honorific systems of any language. The use of these is determined by context, and in particular, by interpersonal differences (Okamoto, 1999). This system is incredibly complicated and it is beyond the scope of this chapter to provide a detailed description of the different uses. Instead, it will provide an overview of the basic system. Essentially, there are three types of *keigo*. The first of these is called *teineigo*. This is used in both regular and polite conversations. The second is known as *sonkeigo*. This is commonly used to describe the actions of someone considered as superior. *Kenjoogo*, or humble forms of Japanese, are generally used when describing one's own actions to a superior. As referred to above, honorifics are "used in reference to the relevant individual who is perceived as distant from the speaker" (Okamoto, 1999, p. 53). These distinctions can be classified as interpersonal distances, such as a status, intimacy, or social group differences (Shibatani 1990; Suple 1994; Tokunaga 1992; Wetzel 1994). These are not the only situations that can determine honorific use though. The method of communication, the context, gender, the topic, or combinations of the above have also been identified as determining factors (Ide 1989; Matsumoto 1988; Minami 1987). The literature suggests that there is a wide variation in usage of honorifics in Japan. There are a wide number of published guides on how to use honorifics (Miller, 1989). In addition, attitudes towards honorifics widely vary amongst individuals (Okamoto, 1999). Finally, although the use of *keigo* is prevalent on a daily basis throughout Japanese society, it is not necessarily used to express true emotions. As Davies and

Ikino (2002) explain, an individual uses keigo “whether or not they feel any respect for the other on a personal level. As such, the use of keigo is a matter of form, regardless of one’s actual feelings” (p. 146).

An additional way in which the vertical social hierarchical system can be observed is in the style of communication. One component of this is the use of ambiguous language (*aimaino kotoba*). Davies and Ikino (2002) state that “the Japanese language puts more emphasis on ambiguity than most, for to express oneself ambiguously and indirectly is expected in Japanese society” (p. 9). The use of ambiguous language is a way of maintaining harmony. It is also said to “protect people...and is regarded as socially positive because it is a kind of lubricant in communication” (p. 10). Another form of ambiguity is the use of silence (*chinmoku*) in communication, and silence is also used to maintain harmony and avoid conflict (Naotsuka, 1996). It is considered impolite to stress one’s own thoughts and feelings to a group before a consensus has been reached. It is also thought of as rude for someone of a lower social standing to question or speak out against a superior. This can also be seen in the Japanese educational system. Kobayashi (1989) reports that silence is seen as a virtue in most educational settings. She states that students in Japan are “expected to listen to lectures respectfully without expressing disagreement” (p. 27). In an earlier article, Condon (1979) explained that learners are expected to keep quiet during class even when they have an opinion about the topic being taught.

In addition to the use of ambiguous language and silence in communication, superficial language (*tatema*) is also used on frequent basis in communication amongst Japanese. This is often contrasted with language to describe one’s actual feelings (*honne*). Lee (2015) describes these as a “dichotomy contrasting genuinely-held personal feelings and opinions from those that are socially controlled” (p.163).

The use of superficial language is actually considered a virtue as it is another method of maintaining harmony and preventing others from feeling offended. It is often stated that *honne* is best suited to use in one's own personal space, but *tatemae* is more suitable for public social situations. These concepts are closely linked to the different private (*uchi*) and public (*soto*) stances taken in Japan, which the review will move on to next.

The concepts of *uchi* (inside) and *soto* (outside) are notions that can help us understand the nature of Japanese communication and behaviour. In Japan, large distinctions are made between inside and outside. These concepts are prevalent in all aspects of Japanese society, and in daily life people generally distinguish between insider members of a group from those outside the group. This is “fundamental and widespread in Japan, where the dual concept of *uchi/soto* has had a great influence on Japanese society, especially in terms of human relations” (Davies & Ikino, 2002, p.217). Distinguishing between groups and group members is not a fixed state as “they change over time and can therefore be used as useful indices of communication behaviour” (Dissanayake, 2003, p. 21). Condon (1984) explains the importance that Japanese place on group consciousness (*shuudan ishiki*) when he states how Japanese “are encouraged to think first about being part of the group”. He continues, “One is never fully independent; one always must be conscious of others” (p. 9). There are numerous interdependent groups throughout all aspects of Japanese society and each group “has its own common consciousness and tacit understandings, which are conveyed without words. People who share these understandings are involved in *uchi*, and those who cannot are treated as *soto*” (Davies & Ikino, 2002, p.196).

The age based hierarchy system called the *sempai/kōhai* system is another concept that has relevance to this study. Children become familiar with this system

during middle and high school, and it plays an important role in society and within the educational system. This is often exemplified in school clubs and circles. According to Rohlen (1991), the role of the senior (sempai) is to “advise, console, teach, and discipline”. In contrast, the junior (kōhai) is expected to “confide in, listen to, depend on, follow, and respect” their senior (p.23). Learners are expected to act in accordance with these guides to behaviour throughout their school life. Although this concept might be expected to alter slightly during university, due to the variety of ages in classes, they are still very prevalent. In a study reporting on peer to peer advising, Ishikawa (2012) found that a university student felt much more comfortable with peers her own age. Okazaki (1989) explains that there is little resistance to the seniority rules because even though a junior might not enjoy their role, they will eventually become a senior and their status will change. The discussion now moves on to work conducted in the field of intercultural contact.

## **2.12 Contact theory – Intercultural contact**

The research related to intercultural contact is an area that is relevant to this study.

The theoretical background to intercultural contact comes from the Contact Hypothesis which was developed from the work of Allport (1954). The theory states that contact between groups and individuals can lead to changes in attitudes and behaviors, which in turn can lead to further contact. For favorable changes in attitudes and behaviors to occur Allport (1954) argued that equal status between the groups, sharing common goals, cooperation or no competition, and institutional support were required. Pettigrew (1998) developed these findings into a comprehensive theory, and a review of more than 500 studies by Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) confirmed that more intercultural contact leads to less intergroup prejudice. In this study, Pettigrew and Tropp discovered that inter-group anxiety was a major predictor of frequency of



contact, and that anxiety and uncertainty are reduced as one becomes more familiar with another group.

Regarding contact in the field of L2 acquisition, Clément and his associates argued that the quality and quantity of contact between different members of a multilingual community influence linguistic self-confidence and the desire to learn the other community's language. Clément, Dörnyei and Noels (1994) highlighted the role that L2 cultural products play in foreign language learning situations with little direct contact to the L2 community. In such a monolingual learning environment, contact with the L2 through media products plays an important role in influencing attitudes. Dörnyei and Csizér (2005) argue that intercultural contact should be considered an important issue because, first, one of the main goals of becoming proficient in a second language is to be able to communicate with members of different ethno-linguistic communities. In addition, interaction with these communities "creates opportunities for developing language skills and acts as a powerful influence shaping the learners' attitudinal/motivational disposition, thereby promoting motivated learning behavior" (2005, p. 328). Therefore, intercultural contact can be both a reason for studying and an outcome of studying a language, or as Dörnyei and Csizér state, "intercultural contact is both a means and an end in L2 studies" (2005, p. 328).

Kormos and Csizér's study (2008) confirmed the existence of two major types of intercultural contact situations; direct and indirect contact. Direct contact can take the form of spoken or written interaction, and indirect contact is where students learn about the L2 community through exposure to cultural products and artifacts such as movies, books and magazines, and music. In their paper exploring the effects of direct and indirect intercultural contact on the attitude and motivated behavior of Hungarian school children, Csizér and Kormos (2009) found motivated behavior was only

affected by “two latent concepts: language-related attitudes and perceived importance of contact” (p. 176). In addition, contact through media products held a more important position in their model than both direct and indirect contact. Csizér and Kormos conclude by adding, in a monolingual setting such as Hungary, increasing the amount of cultural products with which students interact can have a positive effect on attitudes towards English, its speakers and culture. These findings are relevant to the situation in Japan where monocultural and monolingual aspects of Japanese society have contributed to a restricted sociolinguistic space for English in the society” (Stanlaw 2004, p. vii).

### **2.13 Research questions**

As can be seen in these sections of the literature review above, the sheer amount of research conducted on the concept of language learning motivation is both huge, wide ranging, and in a state of flux. Furthermore, as reported in Section 2.10, there is now a developing and vibrant research field in Japan into language learning motivation, which also covers a wide range of topics. Through this research, we are starting to understand what motivates Japanese university L2 learners to learn English. As reported above, there have also been various longitudinal studies conducted with Japanese university students that have attempted to measure motivational change. Once more, we are just starting uncover how motivation fluctuates over time. However, it appears that qualitative research into motivation from a temporal perspective has not been thoroughly examined. Indeed, the number of small-scale qualitative studies of motivational change conducted in Japan has been very limited. Little is known about the possible fluctuations in perceived motivation over the course of an academic year in the life of a Japanese university student, and even less has been

uncovered into the differences in these perceptions between different age groups at the tertiary level. Therefore, this study attempts to respond to the three research questions below. More specifically, questions one and two will be addressed at the end of Chapter 4, and answers will be offered to questions one, two and three at the end of Chapters 5 and 6.

- 1) From the perspective of Japanese university L2 learners, what motivates them to learn English?
- 2) What differences in these perceptions can be seen between first grade, second grade, and third grade Japanese L2 learners?
- 3) How do Japanese university L2 learners' perceived feelings and attitudes towards English, and their motivational actions, fluctuate over the period of an academic year?

## **3. Methodology**

### **3.1 Methodological issues and considerations**

This chapter presents methodological issues and considerations within the field of qualitative research before moving on to examine potential concerns using interviews and diary studies in qualitative research. Following this, the relevant work conducted on grounded theory research is discussed then the justifications and limitations of the approach to the study are presented along with a description of the context of the study. This section includes information about the research site, sampling procedures, the participants, and background information about me the researcher. In the following section of this chapter, the research design and the data collection methods are described. Finally, the data analysis procedures and the motivational features identified in this study are outlined.

#### **3.1.1 Qualitative research**

Over the past 20 years, the use of qualitative research in the field of applied linguistics has become more widespread (Duff, 2008). One of the reasons for this is that there is a “growing recognition that almost every aspect of language acquisition and use is determined or significantly shaped by social, cultural, and situational factors” (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 36). The exploratory nature of qualitative research offers the potential for investigating new areas. It also gives the opportunity for a re-examination of constructs and a broader understanding of them in a different light. In other words, this method of research allows for possible interpretations rather than a single correct interpretation (Duff, 2008). Qualitative research also gives the researcher the capability to make sense of very complex situations and provide in-depth understanding of highly complicated human behavior. It is also useful for

understanding temporal changes and sequential patterns, which is particularly important when considering the dynamic nature of the field of applied linguistics (Dörnyei, 2007).

There have been several criticisms leveled at qualitative research. One of the main criticisms of qualitative-type studies is that the typically small sample sizes make it difficult to generalize findings. Qualitative researchers have responded to this criticism by stating that greater meaning can be found by examining the particular, rather than understanding generalities (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007). Some quantitative researchers have also criticized qualitative research for its lack of scientific rigor, and there have been many attempts by qualitative researchers to develop methods and apply terminology to improve the validity and reliability of qualitative research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) introduced qualitative terms that were considered suitable to naturalistic research. To improve the validity, or *trustworthiness* of qualitative-type studies, they proposed four constructs. The first of these is *credibility*, which is the qualitative alternative to internal validity. To establish credibility, they suggest techniques such as triangulation of data collection, methods, and investigators. The second is *transferability*, which relates to how the findings can be applied to other contexts. To ensure the findings are transferable, it is suggested that a thick description of the context and researcher is provided. This is the qualitative alternative to external validity. Next is *dependability*, which is comparable to reliability in quantitative research, and it involves questioning the context and methods used to collect data. Finally, there is *confirmability*, which involves making data available for the reader and showing how this data has been represented. This is often compared to replicability in quantitative studies. There have been many other attempts to improve validation in qualitative studies (Angen, 2000; Whittemore, Chase & Mandle, 2001;

Eisner, 1991; Lather, 1993; Maxwell, 1992), and there has been a proliferation of terminology, so for the purposes of clarity and simplicity, I will be referring to validity as trustworthiness, and use Lincoln and Guba's (1985) four concepts of validity to test the trustworthiness of this study.

In recent years, there has been a great deal of research into the concept of reliability (Dörnyei, 2007). Reliability is considered to be the "degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observers on different occasions" (Silverman, 2005, p. 224). In other words, reliable qualitative-type studies need to apply consistency checks over time and between researchers (when there is a research team). Creswell (2013) argues that there has not been enough research conducted into how to successfully conduct intercoder agreement checks. He continues to advise researchers that there should be some flexibility and they should develop a system appropriate for the resources and time available. The section now moves on to describe the data collection method, interviews.

### **3.1.2 Interviews**

One of the most popular methods of inquiry in qualitative research is interviews. Interviews are often categorized into either single session or multiple session interviews. There are also several kinds of interviews available for the researcher to choose from. The three main types are structured, semi-structured, and unstructured interviews. Interviews are seen as an acceptable way of collecting information, but recent literature has suggested issues that researchers should be aware of. In an attempt to measure the quality of qualitative research conducted in the language teaching field, Richards (2009) analyzed qualitative research papers published in 15 journals between 2000 and 2007. In this study, Richards discussed quality issues

relating to the four standards mentioned above, along with the concept of transparency. Richards concluded “there is still work to be done to encourage yet deeper engagement with methodological issues, especially where interviews are concerned” (p. 168). Richards called for more attention to be paid to the developments in interviewing in academic fields other than language teaching, and highlights the importance of considering interviews as interactional and co-constructed events. He also reminds authors to contemplate the challenges concerning misrepresentation and participants’ ability to recall information. He continues by adding that researchers should strive to include more details of methodological procedures and stated, “it would be satisfying to see the demise of summaries amounting to no more than a couple of sentences or a short paragraph” (p. 168).

In addition to the work conducted by Richards, Talmy (2010) reminds us how prevalent interviews have become as a methodological tool in research in applied linguistics, and states “there is considerable need for heightened reflexivity about the interview methods that applied linguistic researchers use in their studies” (p. 143). Talmy offers evidence which suggests, “the neglect of the role the researcher/interviewer in coconstructing interview data” (p. 137) in some studies which use interviews as a research tool. He advises against portraying interview data as a participant ‘report’, and calls for clarity in the role the interviewer plays in producing the data. Talmy also cautions on the complicated power relations that take place during the interview and how the interview data “are entextualized, decontextualized, and subsequently recontextualized” (p. 138). He also urges caution when considering the interview provides a voice to participants.

There have been many other studies, which have stressed the importance of the relationship that exists between the interviewer and the interviewee (Kvale &

Brinkmann, 2009; Nunkoosing, 2005; Weis & Fine, 2000). Similar to the work of Talmy above, Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) discuss the unequal power dynamic between the two parties, and argued that the interview is ruled by the interviewer. They suggest collaborative interviewing as an alternative. Here, the interviewer and interviewee would work together in the questioning process and in the interpretation and reporting of the data.

### **3.1.3 Concepts in Japanese contemporary culture relevant to conducting interviews**

Unfortunately, there appears little research relating to conducting interviews with Japanese learners of English. Interviews in Japan are not as common as in other contexts; in fact, learners at a tertiary level would have probably never participated in any kind of interview (Kopp, 2011). Even job interviews follow a very different format to those in other countries. In Japan, recruitment only takes place only at set times and prospective employees are not recruited for specific posts, but rather are recruited to join the company as a whole. The process is also managed by the human resources (HR) department, and the interviews are conducted by HR department staff members. In addition, given the power relations and cultural and communication styles discussed in Chapter 2 above, it appears that there is the potential of other unforeseen issues such as the use of ambiguous language reported in Chapter 4 below. Certainly, more research to discover successful methods of conducting interviews in a Japanese context would be welcome.

Considering the macro-social context of this study is Japan, the review now turns to overlapping concepts in contemporary Japanese culture relevant to interviews as a methodological option in this study. The first set of concepts relating to this study



includes the concepts of *chinmoku* (silence in communication) and *enryo-sasshi* (reserve and restraint or intuitive sensitivity). Davies and Ikeno (2002) cite historical factors and group consciousness as reasons for silence in social interactions adding that Japanese people often treat “silence as a kind of virtue similar to truthfulness” (p. 51-52). According to Davies and Ikeno, in Japanese society, an intuitive sensitivity often in the form of silence is required to prevent misunderstandings or cause trouble. This can lead to negative forms of communication being generally avoided, which often results in people leaving “their true intentions unspoken” (p. 53) even when they have something to say. They continue by adding that this type of communication strategy is also related to Japanese social hierarchy and when talking to someone it is imperative to consider the status of the person with whom one is communicating. In Japanese society, it is “considered rude for a subordinate to speak out openly against a person of higher rank” (p. 53).

*Enryo-sasshi* and *chinmoku* both therefore appear to have relevance to this study and take on greater significance especially when considering Kvale’s (2006) overview of the power dynamics in interviews for research purposes. Listed below are the five examples Kvale (2006) offers where the research interview can result in “a hierarchical relationship with an asymmetrical power distribution” between the interviewer and the interviewee (p. 484).

- The interviewer rules the interview
- The interview is a one-way dialogue
- The interview is an instrumental dialogue
- The interview maybe a manipulative dialogue
- The interviewer’s monopoly of interpretation

Kvale states that the term *interview dialogue* is confusing as it offers the impression of the interview offering something mutually beneficial to each party, whereas in fact, it “takes place for the purpose of just the one part – the interviewer” (p. 483). Kvale continues by adding that power dynamics in research interviews are often omitted from qualitative research papers.

The second consideration relating to Japanese culture relevant to this study is the concept of *Kenkyo* (the virtue of modesty). According to Davies and Ikeno (2002), modesty and humility are considered important aspects of good behavior in Japan. They add that it is important to “modulate the personal display of talent, knowledge, or wealth in an appropriate manner” (p. 143). They continue,

Self-assertiveness is more or less discouraged, while consideration for others is encouraged. This attitude is illustrated in a famous Japanese proverb “The nail that sticks up gets hammered down” (*Deru kui wa utareru*), which means that those who display their abilities too openly run the risk of being crushed by others (p. 143).

This has implications for the current study and its method of data collection. There is the potential that self-depreciation or self-effacement caused by modesty or humility might impact responses given in an interview situation, especially in interviews where participants are asked to reflect on their language ability or past academic records.

The final concept relevant to this study is the use of *amaina kotoba* (ambiguous language). Although to be *amaina* is often translated as *to be ambiguous*, the term has a large array of meanings, which include “vague, obscure, equivocal, dubious, doubtful, [and] questionable” (Oe, 1995, p.187). Japanese people are often considered shy and reserved which means foreign people often find it difficult to

understand what they are thinking. Often though, people may be behaving politely according to their own customs. Peng Hei (1990) states, “the Japanese hesitate to assert themselves and like to express themselves ambiguously” (p.167). This prevalent use of vague language is something which needs to be taken into consideration when conducting interviews and analyzing interview data.

Finally, I would like to outline my own personal outlook on the interview process in order that the reader fully understands the interview process which took place in this study. Holstein and Gubrium inform us that an interview conversation has often been viewed as a “potential source of bias, error, misunderstanding, or misdirection” (2011, p. 150), and that these possible flaws should be minimized. They continue by adding that in order to reduce these biases it has often been seen essential for the interviewer to ask “questions properly”, ensure the “interview situation is propitious” and only then will the interviewee “convey undistorted information” (2011, p. 150). Holstein and Gubrium (2011) call into question the possibility of “collecting knowledge within the traditional model” (p. 151). They argue that interview data is socially constructed and the interview setting is a social encounter where knowledge is formed. They add that the participants “are not so much elicitors and repositories of experiential knowledge, as they are constructors of experiential information” (p. 151). I am inclined to agree with Holstein and Gubrium, and in the discussion section below, I refer to the participants’ perceptions. In doing so, I am referring to this *experiential information, which* has been constructed during the interview process.

### **3.1.4 Diaries**

Diaries have been used by researchers as a data collection method in the field of applied linguistics for approximately the past 35 years. As Bolger, Davis, and Rafaeli

(2003) inform us, diaries are a useful method for exploring the daily social and psychological processes of participants in a study. By having participants record their thoughts and feelings regarding their daily lives and experiences, diary studies allow the researcher to tap into information that might not be available through other qualitative methods (Bolger, Davis, & Rafaeli, 2003). There are three commonly used diary study designs. The first is when the participant is asked to record their diary at regular intervals throughout the study. This is known as an interval diary study. The second design is when the participant records their diary after a particular event, and the third is when the participant is asked to write their diary after a certain prompt. These are known as event diary studies and signal diary studies respectively.

Several advantages of using diaries in qualitative research have been reported in the literature. By asking a participant to write a diary, the researcher gives the participant some control over how they word their own thoughts and feelings. For a L2 learner, it also gives the participant the time to carefully consider how they want to express themselves. It also allows the participant to contemplate on their experiences, and perhaps share information they would not have thought of without this reflection time. In other words, the researcher has the potential to discover data that would have been unattainable through other methods. Diary studies are also a good method of collecting data over a prolonged period of time making them suitable for longitudinal studies.

To add some balance, there are several potential issues of using diaries too. One of the main disadvantages of using diaries as a method of data collection is the demands it places on the participants. Bolger, Davis, and Rafaeli (2003) state that to regularly write a high quality diary entry, the participants need to devote a great deal of time and effort. Another potential source of weakness comes from the fact that

participants in a study are only human. They simply might forget to complete the diary, or find it difficult to recall their experiences, or simply may not be that skillful at articulating what has happened to them. Furthermore, depending on the context, the participants might simply not be able to devote the time if they have other commitments. For these reasons, it has often been reported that the quality of diary entries can vary enormously amongst any particular group of participants.

### **3.1.5 Grounded theory**

Grounded theory is a qualitative research method developed by Glaser and Strauss in 1967. Despite its name, grounded theory is not actually a theory, but is commonly used as a specific mode of data analysis. More particularly, it is used as a series of guidelines to facilitate researchers to organize their data collection and develop theories “through successive levels of data analysis and conceptual development” (Charmaz, 2005, p. 507). One of the most well-known features of grounded theory is the three-level system of coding. The initial phase is known as *open coding*. During this stage, the data is divided into chunks and assigned to a conceptual category. These categories are not considered to be descriptive in nature but rather conceptual in order to assist in generating additional ideas. The following stage is known as *theoretical* or *axis coding*. Here the researcher would attempt to identify connections between the categories in the interest of discovering “causal conditions, consequences, and similarities as well as contextual, procedural or strategic independence” (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 261). The final phase in grounded theory is commonly referred to as *selective coding*. The aim here is to establish an explanatory concept (Richards, 2003). In other words, the researcher attempts to identify a central theme which encompasses all the identified categories. Although, in theory, this appears to be a neat and organized method of coding, Dörnyei reminds us that this is not always the situation when he

notes, “given the iterative nature of qualitative research it should come as no surprise that the three phases occur recursively” (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 262).

### **3.2 Justifications and limitations of the approach to the study**

This section begins with a brief overview of the approach chosen for this research project, and discusses the reasons why it was chosen and the limitations it has. The approach adopted in this research is rooted in my philosophical assumptions. I am in agreement with Wlodkowski (1986) when he describes the concept of motivation as “a bit of beast” (p. 44). As mentioned at the start of the second chapter, motivation is a hugely important characteristic and is incredibly complicated. Taking this into consideration, motivation should be considered as a dynamic construct that is not stable. In this sense, social, cognitive, and contextual factors in a globalized world are all part of the L2 motivation process (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011, p. 72). Language learning goals, values and interests should be seen as socially constructed, emerging and developing from social interactions. Furthermore, in this thesis I have adopted a sociocultural theorist viewpoint seeing people as “not just products but also active producers of their own social and cultural environments” (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 34).

Over the years, quantitative research has produced “reliable and replicable data... generalisable to other contexts” (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 203). This research has led to great insights into what motivates people to learn a foreign language. In doing so, it has used, “systematic, rigorous, focused and tightly controlled” (p. 203) methods of enquiry. I do, however, agree with Dörnyei & Ushioda (2011) when they suggest it would be valuable if there were a more widespread adoption of qualitative research methods. As mentioned above, motivation is a very complex construct. In this study, I adopted a qualitative approach because

qualitative research methods are useful for obtaining a greater understanding of complex situations (Dörnyei, 2007). As stated above, the use of qualitative methods allows the researcher to view the same phenomenon or event from different perspectives leading to a broadening of understanding (Duff 2007). It is my hope that the approach to this study will yield a deeper understanding of L2 motivation in Japan. According to Ritchie and Lewis (2003), this interpretivist approach recognizes how “the researcher and the social world impact on each other” (as cited in Duff, 2008, p. 29), and it is appropriate for my study because “the social world is not governed by law-like regularities but is mediated through meaning and human agency” (p. 29).

The role of the researcher as a collector and analyzer of data is often contested. To prevent personal bias on the part of the researcher, Creswell and Miller (2000) compiled validation strategies frequently used by researchers. One of these is to clarify the researcher bias so the reader has a clear understanding of “past experiences, biases, prejudices, and orientations that have likely shaped the interpretation and approach to the study” (Creswell, 2013, p. 251). I have attempted to do this later in this section. As referred to earlier in this chapter, another of the major criticisms concerns “the idiosyncratic nature of the small participant samples” (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 41) many studies investigate. Having a small sample size means that it is not always possible to generalize, but as Creswell (2013) reminds us, the aim is not to generalize but to “elucidate the particular, the specific” (p. 157). In Chapters 4, 5 and 6 below I aim to do just this.

In sum, although I firmly believe the use of quantitative methods in the field of motivation has revealed a wealth of invaluable constructs and theories, a small scale qualitative study which adopts an interpretivist approach has the potential to yield interesting and previously unknown perspectives in the field of L2 motivation in

Japan. My aim is therefore to shed light on the particular and therefore hopefully add to this vibrant research field.

### **3.3 The context of the study**

In order to provide “a sufficiently rich description” (Richards, 2009, p. 161) of the research, this section now continues by offering an insight into the context of the study. This includes a description of the research site, the sampling strategies, participant information, and the background to me the researcher.

#### **3.3.1 The research site**

The research site for this project was a Japanese prefectural public university (managed by the local government) located on a southern island in Japan. This university is similar to other universities in Japan in that there is moderate competition to enter, and the university offers a range of elective and compulsory English classes to students. However, it is smaller than, and not as prestigious as, many of the national public universities where entrance is highly competitive. In addition to this, there were only a limited number of English speaking international students at the university when this study was conducted. To offer some further context, Japan has a total of 778 universities, and 95 of these are local public universities founded by the prefecture with approximately 125,500 students studying at the undergraduate level in these institutions (MEXT, 2010). Like other local and national universities, the institution where this research was conducted provides a four-year educational program leading to a bachelor’s degree upon successful completion of credits. Approximately 35 per cent of this university’s 1000 students were studying in the department of international communication<sup>1</sup>. These students were taking required and elective English classes and

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<sup>1</sup> The name of the department and the names of the students in this thesis are pseudonyms.



needed to reach a TOEIC score of over 450 as part of their graduation requirements. Finally, the research site in this study was located on the outskirts of a city which was relatively popular as a tourist destination.

### **3.3.2 Sampling**

Before describing the sampling procedures, a brief caveat is required to make salient the reasons behind this process. There were two main factors that played a part in the decision to include only motivated learners in this study. The first is the obvious one that my main aim is to discover what motivates Japanese students to learn English. By selecting students who had displayed motivated behaviour as described above, my presumption was that they would be willing to discuss actually what they perceived as their motivations for learning English. It was considered that students who were not motivated would not necessarily have these insights. In addition, the students selected could be expected to talk in more detail about their language learning experiences than less motivated peers because English is more enjoyable and could be considered a more important aspect of their lives.

There were 23 participants selected from the population following the principle of purposeful sampling. For a full list of the participants, see Table 2 below. There were seven freshmen, seven second grade, and nine third grade learners in this study. As this study was focusing on the learners' own conceptions of their motivation, it was considered appropriate to select students who had displayed motivated behavior in the form of; a higher than average TOEIC score, good attendance records in English classes, willingness to participate in extracurricular English activities, and a positive verbal report from their English teachers in the department. In addition, in order to maximize the variation amongst the participants, I also attempted to recruit participants from a variety of different areas throughout

Japan, who had a variety of social activities, and belonged to different university clubs or circles<sup>2</sup>. Although a maximum variation sampling strategy was used in principle, and the participants were selected based on the criteria above, the sampling strategy was also based on convenience. Finally, senior (fourth grade) students were not selected for this study due to the time consuming demands of the job hunting system in Japan, and because it is common for senior students to have completed all their English credits before their final year of study begins and therefore rarely be on or around campus.

### **3.3.3 The participants**

As can be seen in Table 2 below, there were a total of 23 participants in this study. Of the 23 students who participated in the study, seven were first grade students who had recently entered the university. These students came from a wide variety of geographical locations across Japan. Two participants came from within the prefecture, two from other prefectures on the same island, one from western Honshu, one from Tokyo, and the final participant came from the northern island of Hokkaido. As they were new to the university, these students had not selected club or circle activities, but in a self-introduction sheet administered prior to the study they reported interests including; talking with foreigners, watching English dramas, traveling to other countries, listening to western music, and studying English. Included in this group were six female students and one male student. Their TOEIC scores ranged from 385 to 590, which were above averages<sup>3</sup> within their age group in the department.

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<sup>2</sup> In Japan, clubs and circles are student groups centered on hobbies, activities, music, or sports. They are considered very important for students because they are the focal point of student life on campus.

<sup>3</sup> The average TOEIC score for students in the department was approximately 460

All but one of the students had registered to one of my required or elective English classes two weeks prior to being invited to the research project.

Name	Gender	Age	Region	TOEIC test score
Rina	Female	19	Kyushu	545
Koyo	Male	18	Kyushu	505
Yuki	Female	18	Kyushu	550
Miki	Female	18	Kyushu	385
Kyoko	Female	18	Kanto	590
Natsumi	Female	18	Hokkaido	570
Eimi	Female	18	Chugoku	465
Mai	Female	19	Kyushu	650
Tomo	Male	19	Kyushu	685
Mika	Female	20	Kyushu	620
Kimio	Male	19	Kyushu	470
Kana	Female	19	Kyushu	860
Saori	Female	19	Kyushu	580
Yumi	Female	19	Kyushu	630
Kazahiro	Male	20	Kyushu	520
Keiko	Female	20	Kyushu	705
Mana	Female	20	Kyushu	485
Ayano	Female	20	Kyushu	495
Nana	Female	20	Kyushu	620
Yoshi	Male	20	Kyushu	810
Shiori	Female	20	Kyushu	545
Yuka	Female	20	Kyushu	885
Kie	Female	20	Kyushu	715

*Table 2: A full list of the participants in the study including their pseudonym name, gender, age at the start of the study, place of birth, and TOEIC test score prior to the commencement of the study*

Seven of the participants were in the second year of their university education. Included in this group were five female and two male students. All the second grade students came from in or around the prefecture where the study took place, and had all taken English classes during their first year. Four of the seven were known to me because they had taken an English class with me in previous semesters, but I had not taught the remaining three students in this age group. The self-introduction sheet administered to the students prior to the study indicated that the students belonged to a variety of clubs and circles including; sports clubs, culture clubs, local community

circles, and international friendship and assistance circles. Their TOEIC scores ranged from 470 to 860, which meant the participants' scores, were above average within their age group in the department.

The final group of students was composed of seven female and two male students in their third year of study. Two of the students had taken one of my English classes in the previous academic year, but the remaining seven I did not know. Five of the group either had participated in a short-term study abroad program or had traveled overseas independently. Similar to the group of second year students, they belonged to a variety of clubs and circles. Their TOEIC scores ranged from 485 to 885, which were above average scores within their cohorts. This group contained two extra members because of a concern regarding attrition. In Japan, at the time the data was collected<sup>4</sup>, students starting their third year begin preliminary research into career options, and the job hunting process begins proper in the fall semester. This is a lengthy and time consuming process therefore two extra participants were recruited in case of attrition occurring.

### **3.3.4 The researcher**

As the sole researcher and author of this thesis, it is important to provide some background information about myself in order to address potential researcher bias, and to show I am aware of “the biases, values, and experiences” (Creswell, 2013, p. 300) that I bring to this research project.

The first point I would like to make relates to my history as an English teacher. At the time the data was collected, I had been teaching English at the tertiary level for over five years, and had been working as a lecturer in the department of international

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<sup>4</sup> This has subsequently changed, and at the time of writing, the official process begins at the start of the final year.

communication for one year prior to the commencement of the study. As a teacher, I had been heavily influenced by the work of Dörnyei, and in particular his writings on motivational strategies (Dörnyei, 2001). My initial experiences working in the Japanese tertiary educational system reflected the “motivational wasteland” (p. 206) Berwick and Ross (1989) described almost 25 years previously. By the same token, my feelings echoed those of Dörnyei (2001) when he wrote that without sufficient motivation “even the brightest learners are unlikely to persist long enough to attain any really useful language” (p. 5). I therefore began to employ and develop motivational strategies in my classrooms. The reader should therefore be aware that I began to study motivation at this level in order to gain a deeper understanding of what motivates Japanese learners of English. It is therefore possible that, as a researcher, my desire to discover concepts relating to motivation in the Japanese context have shaped the “findings, the conclusions, and the interpretations” (Creswell, 2013, p. 216) of this study. To address this potential issue, I conducted peer debriefing sessions with a colleague who majored in English literature and had little experience in the field of motivation. This was a valuable exercise as these discussions brought about alterations to the categories during the coding process.

A second point which is also important to consider, is my dual role of both a teacher and a researcher in this study. In previous semesters, I had taught six of the 23 students. In addition, at the time of the interviews, 10 of the 23 participants had registered to one of my courses. This led to the distinct possibility of social desirability bias, in that, the participants might have tried to meet my expectations as a teacher and “over report desirable attitudes and behaviors while underreporting those that are socially not respected” (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 54). In order to negate this bias, the participants were offered complete confidentiality, and I ensured no crossover

occurred between classwork and the research project. Another potential source of bias to consider is that my background knowledge of the participants could impact on my interpretations of their accounts during the analysis. To prevent this from occurring I attempted to only focus on the data whilst coding and analyzing. I first assigned a pseudonym to each participant. Then during the data analysis, I employed a cognitive strategy where I would attempt to concentrate only on the data and use this data to develop a profile of the participant as their alias.

Another possibility is that my subjectivity as a producer and product of this thesis has biased the writing. As the sole researcher, I selected the participants, created the interview questions, arranged and conducted the interviews, transcribed, analyzed and interpreted the data. Throughout this process I attempted to ensure the procedures were transparent so that the reader can assess the how appropriate my choices were (Holliday, 2004, p. 732). In addition, I held regular discussions and meetings with my supervisor who offered complementary or alternative explanations and suggestions for categories as a complete outsider to the context. Unfortunately, as the sole researcher, it was not possible to have several investigators collecting and interpreting the data. In other words, there was no investigator triangulation.

A final potential source of researcher bias comes from my own language learning background. At the time the research was conducted, I had been living in Japan for approximately ten years. During this time, I had experienced the long and arduous process of learning a second language. This might have led to the potential that my own learning experiences might impact on how I interpret the data collected in this study. To put it another way, the accounts offered by the participants might have been analyzed through my eyes as a language learner. Therefore, in order to improve the credibility of the data I conducted member checks. In order to do this, I

first developed motivational profiles of each participant (see Appendix C for an example). These profiles were then sent to each participant, and the participants were asked to read the profile then meet me to discuss the accuracy of these accounts. This proved to be a very useful exercise because following these member checks several categories, labels and definitions were amended. A transcript of one of the member checking sessions can be seen in Appendix D.

### **3.4 Research design – The data collection methods**

This section provides information about the data collection methods and procedures. It begins by discussing the three sets of interviews conducted and moves on to report on the diary study component of the research.

#### **3.4.1 The interviews**

The method of inquiry used to collect data in this study was semi-structured interviews. Although this type of interview runs the risk that both the quality and quantity of data collected will vary, it was considered necessary that the participants “should not be initially primed with motivational concepts and ideas” (Ushioda, 2001, p.98). The first sets of interviews were structured minimally in order to discover the participant’s own working conceptions of their motivations for learning English. The second and third sets of interviews were more structured. The questions prepared for these interviews were organized into three sections. The initial questions were designed to give the participant the opportunity to express why they were learning English and what their motivations for learning English were. The second section of interviews two and three contained questions which were based on what the participant said during the previous interview(s), and in the final section, the questions were based on what the participant had written in their diaries.

Prior to the initial set of interviews, group meetings were held which were intended to be an opportunity to break the ice and develop rapport (Dörnyei, 2007, p.135) while also introducing the research project, expectations, and the timeline for future interviews. The participants were provided with food and drink during this initial meeting and given the opportunity to relax and interact with me and other participants in their age group. This was deemed important because as Dörnyei (2007) reminds us, “for an unstructured interview to be successful it is indispensable that interviewer establishes very good rapport with the interviewee” (p. 136). At this stage, the participants were given an information sheet (in English and Japanese) which included; the researcher’s contact details, the purpose of the study, the reason for being invited to join the project, requirements, and potential benefits. The students were also given a self-introduction sheet which had questions relating to basic personal information, and their academic and university lives.

All three sets of interviews were conducted by myself and followed a one-on-one format. The first sets were held several weeks into the start of the spring semester (and academic year in Japan), the second sets were conducted at the end of that semester in June and July, and the final sets were held towards the end of the fall semester (and academic year in Japan) in January. They all took place in my office on campus and first set of interviews lasted approximately 20 minutes, the second sets between 30 to 40 minutes, and the final sets between 40 to 60 minutes. The interviews were recorded and later transcribed by myself. All the interviews were conducted in English (the learners’ L2), but at the start of each interview the participants were told they could use both English and Japanese, and in the event of me not being able to understand, anything they said in Japanese would be translated into English at a later date. The opening questions to the first interview had been piloted with three students



from the population who were not going to participate in the study. After piloting, the wording of the initial question was amended slightly to help elicit more detail of the participants' own perceptions of their language learning motivation. The interviews began with an exchange of pleasantries and a summary of the information was given to each participant in the information sheet. This was followed by confirmation that the interview data was confidential, would not be used for any purpose other than research, and therefore would not impact on the students' records or grades at the university.

Each interview proper began with me asking the participants about their motivations for learning English. The students were then prompted to expand on points raised and encouraged to recall any other motivations. When this line of enquiry came to an end, students were asked to consider other motivational conditions. These questions were derived from the findings in Ushioda's (2001) qualitative study. At the end of the initial interviews, the participants were given an honorarium of five thousand yen (approximately fifty US dollars) for their participation in the study. It was decided that this would be culturally sensitive given the custom of gift giving (*zoto*) and the idea of social obligation (*giri*) which are both prevalent in Japanese society.

At this stage, a thicker description of the contextual information where the interviews took place to provide a sense of what it was like to have been in the research setting is probably required. As mentioned above, the interviews took place in my office at the university. Prior to the students arriving, I prepared drinks and snacks for the participants and we would sit face to face across a table. Recognizing that the first few minutes of the interview are very important (Dörnyei 2001 p.139-140), I would exchange small talk before each interview proper, and I would attempt

to minimize the anxiety by being friendly and approachable. At the start of every interview, I noticed a little anxiety and apprehension (especially at the start of the initial interviews) in the students and in myself, but as each interview progressed, both the participants and I relaxed. In the vast majority of cases, the interview seemed to be enjoyable for both parties. The interviews were usually punctuated with laughter, and I seemed to be able to develop a rapport with the participants. After the interview was completed, many of the participants would stay in my office to talk and ask for study advice. My impression overall was that the participants enjoyed the experience. Perhaps this relaxed and less formal atmosphere helped to create a richer data set, but added to the students' perceptions that taking part in this study was beneficial, and therefore influenced their motivation towards learning English. In the discussion chapters below, I offer examples and possible explanations for this, but at this point the reader should be aware that by conducting this study I might have inadvertently influenced the participants' motivation to learn English.

### **3.4.2 The diaries**

The participants in this study were asked to keep a solicited diary throughout the period of investigation. The diary study component of this research was an interval-contingent design with the participants asked to record their thoughts and feelings seven times over a period of one academic year at approximately one-month intervals. Each diary was composed of a series of questions designed to encourage the participant to reflect on their thoughts and feelings relating to their daily lives and experiences both in and out of the L2 classroom. The diaries were sent electronically to the participants and they were asked to return their written or recorded answers to each question approximately one week later. The participants were given the option of doing this in English or Japanese.

There were several issues when conducting the diary studies. Initially, several of the participants reported not feeling completely confident completing the diary. The main reason given for this was they simply did not know what to write. Prior to sending out the initial diary I held a training session with each age group to ensure they understood what writing the diary involved and the manner and timing in which I wanted it submitting. However, to prevent bias I did not provide any sample entries during this training session. I also conducted the training session in English, so there is the possibility that the participants did not fully understand what was being asked of them. After giving advice to the concerned students, all the participants submitted their diary. Nevertheless, there was a disparity in the quality of the data collected with some students writing several paragraphs for each prompt, and others only writing a sentence. I therefore translated all the instructions into Japanese and sent them electronically to the participants. The result was a much richer data set for the second set of diary entries. Another issue with the diary studies was the quality of entries varied depending on when they were administered. During final exam preparation and other busy events, the quality of data collected declined. Many of the participants also chose to write their entries in Japanese at these times whereas their previous entries had been in English.

After consulting with my supervisor prior to the second set of interviews, it was decided that diaries entries would best be suited used as prompts or follow-up questions during the interviews. Therefore, before the second rounds of interviews were conducted, the diary entries were analyzed and interview questions were made to elicit more detailed and further discussion.

## 3.5 Data analysis

### 3.5.1 Coding and analysis

Before discussing the coding and analysis I would like to offer a brief caveat regarding terminology. First, Creswell (2013) uses the terms *codes* and *categories* “interchangeably” (p. 184) whereas Saldana (2012) describes them as “two separate components of data analysis” (p. 8). In essence, Saldana argues that codes capture essential elements, and only “when clustered together according to similarity and regularity – a pattern – they actively facilitate the development of categories” (p. 8). For the purpose of this study, and for clarity, I only use the term *code* to refer to the words or a short phrase applied to describe sections of the data during the initial read and re-reads. Once I had developed these codes, I started the process of amending and grouping them, and I use the term *category* to describe these groups of codes. It should be noted however, that some initial codes (for example *cultural interest*) were used as labels for sub-categories and categories. Secondly, when I refer to *coding* I am following the advice of Saldana (2012) by treating it as “a method that enables you to organize and group similarly coded data into categories” (p. 8). In other words, both the process of identifying codes and organizing these codes into categories is referred to as coding. Finally, I am following Basit’s (2003) viewpoint that coding and analysis are not synonymous (as cited in Saldana, 2012). In this study, I predominately used Creswell’s (2013) data analysis spiral to engage “in the process of moving in analytical circles” (p. 182) therefore coding and analyzing often occurred simultaneously.

For the coding process, I followed the principles discussed above in grounded theory. These series of guidelines enabled me to organize my data collection and

develop theories through three levels of data analysis and conceptual development (Charmaz, 2005). The coding process began by organizing the transcribed data into files and storing the data securely. The data were then read and re-read several times in order to obtain an understanding of the whole dataset. During this phase I added comments and descriptions. These comments were used to develop codes. In the chapters below, I refer to individually coded comments as *coded units*. For purposes of clarity, a coded unit could be a phrase, a sentence, or a series of sentences relating to a certain category or sub-category. Take the following comment as an example. “In junior high school...yeah I got high scores on English tests. I was number one! The teacher told me...I got 98% so I was happy and then when I got that [score] I thought I want to learn more English” (R1Y1Q16). This comment was coded in the Positive Learning Experiences sub-category and constitutes one coded unit in the tables displaying the total number of coded units.

Following this, I developed a series of categories and sub-categories and labeled and defined each of these. At this stage, I produced a visualization of the categories in an attempt to show relationships between categories (See Figure 1 below). Although I was confident that the categories and sub-categories reflected the data, the temporal distinction of the broad categories appeared to misrepresent the data.

### **3.5.2 A socio-dynamic approach**

I initially analyzed the data from a temporal perspective conceptually distinguishing between origins of motivation, current motivations and desires and goals for the future. Leaning on the work of Williams and Burden (1997), I attempted to analyze the data in process stages along a continuum. Unfortunately, this method of analysis did not clearly identify the contextual factors which appeared to be “in dynamic

interplay with motivation” (Ushioda, 1996, p. 241) in the data. In other words, this conceptualization failed to represent the “complexity of the L2 motivational process and its organic development and dynamic interaction with multiplicity of internal, social and contextual factors” (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011, p. 72) which was evident in the data set. As can be seen below, many of the categories and sub-categories represented sociocultural and historical influences, but having a temporal differentiation meant these were not clustered effectively. In addition to this, having this temporal distinction meant distinguishing between past and ongoing social influences, yet it was clear that many of these began in the past but were ongoing. Take this comment from Saori as an example. When asked how she felt about English when she first arrived at university, she stated, “The people around me all spoke English well. I felt I must study hard to learn English...a little pressure...I have the same feeling now” (S1Y2Q12)<sup>5</sup>. In the chapters below this type of utterance is referred to as a coded unit.

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<sup>5</sup> S=Initial of the student’s pseudonym name. 1=1<sup>st</sup> interview. Y2=Year of study. Q12=Quotation number in Atlas.ti.

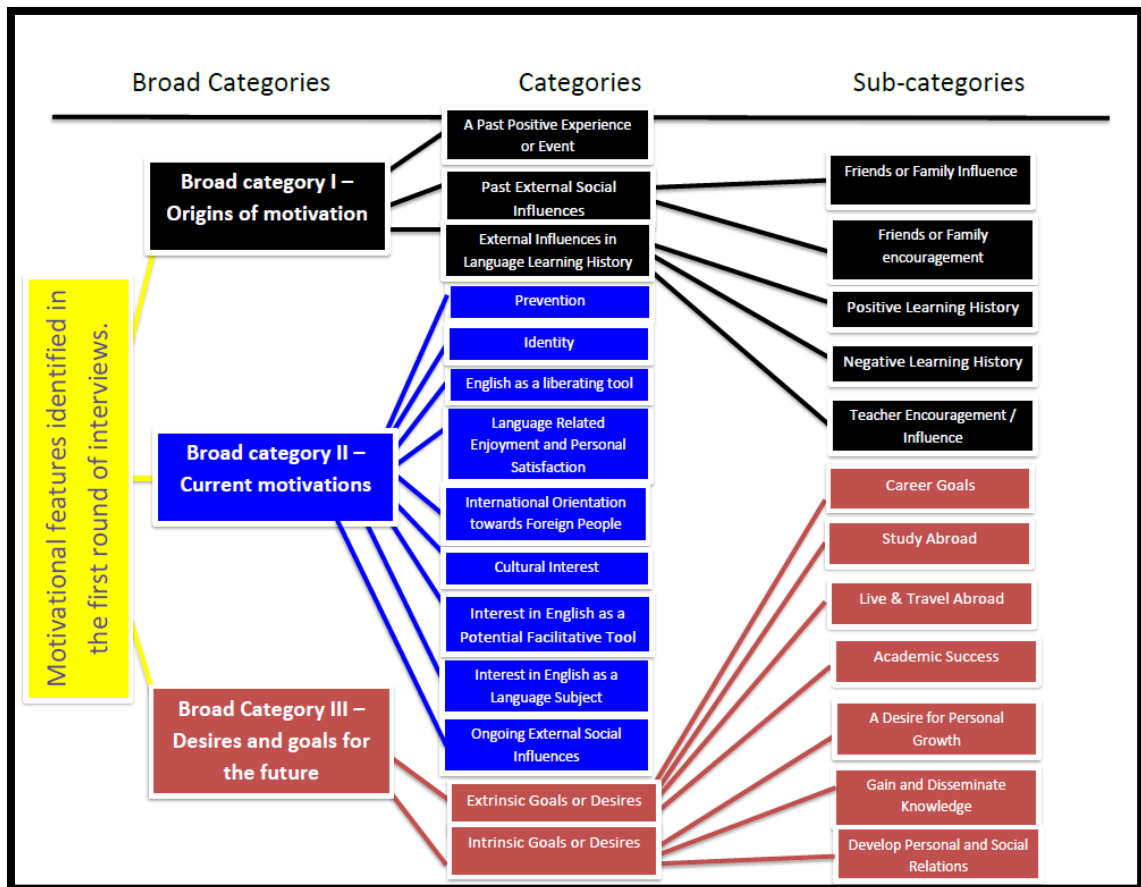


Figure 1 – Initial categorizations of the data set

I therefore followed the advice of Ushioda (2009) and adopted a socio-dynamic approach taking a relational viewpoint of the contextual elements discovered in the data, and viewed “motivation as an organic process that emerges through this complex system of interrelations” (p. 220). Adopting a relational view led to the creation of broad themes, categories and sub-categories which can be seen in Figure 2 below. To put it another way, these categories reflect the concepts portrayed in a socio-dynamic approach.

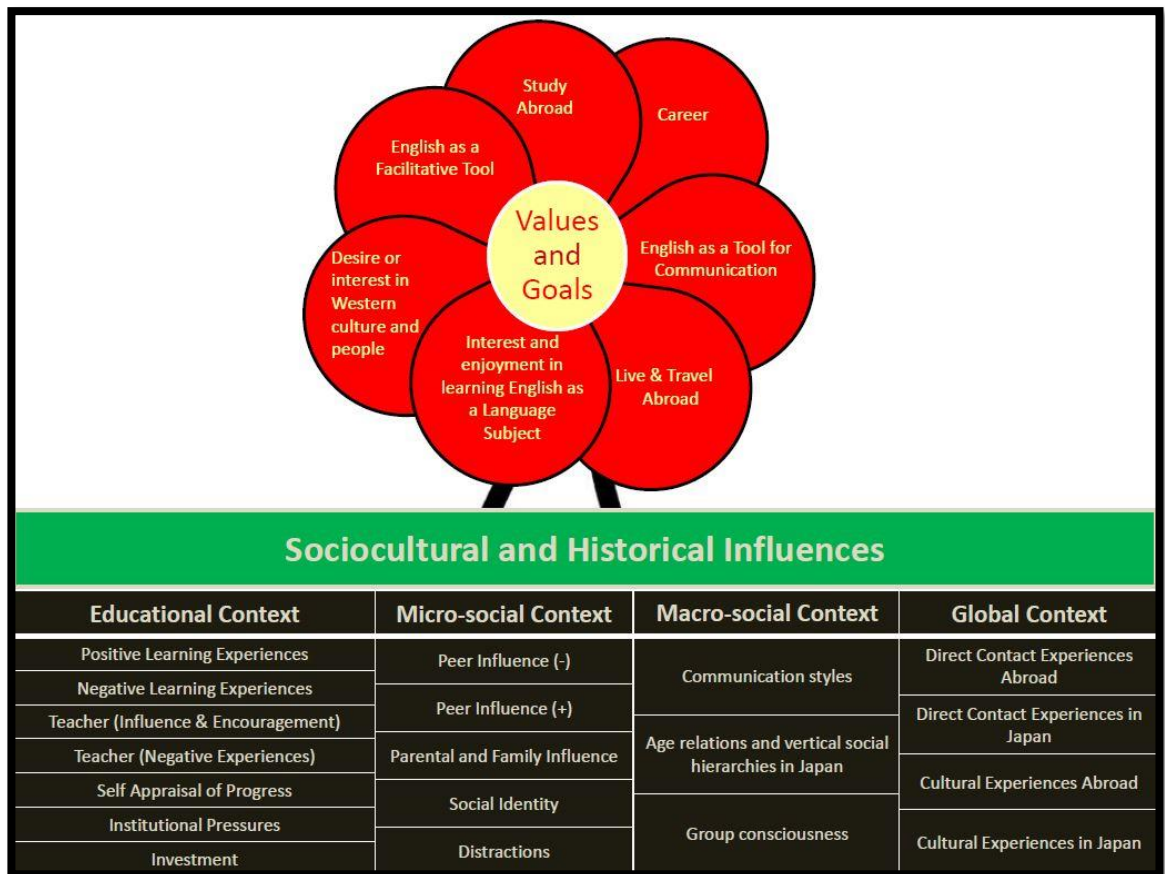


Figure 2: Subsequent categorizations of the data set

Furthermore, on several occasions, whilst analyzing my data in order to find the most suitable ways of writing my findings and discussion section of the thesis, I realized that my interpretations of certain sections of the data set had changed since I originally coded the sets of data. To be more specific, I had altered titles and definitions of several categories and sub-categories. I therefore made the decision to recode all the three sets of interviews. I then compared these with the ones I had done previously. Although this was time consuming, it was beneficial. There was actually very little difference between the original coding and the new coding (less than 10%) except for the amended categories. This certainly helped to clarify the definitions of each category in my mind and potentially added a level of intra-rater reliability to my study.



In Chapters 4, 5 and 6 below, this visualization is adapted to show the temporal fluctuations of perceived language learning motivation at each stage of the study. This is done in the form of a word cloud and offers a visual representation of the frequency of comments coded into each category. McNaught, and Lam argue that to a certain degree word clouds provide an accessible understanding of the composition of frequently used words which “allows viewers to have an overview of the main topics and the main themes in a text, and may illustrate the main standpoints held by the writer of the text” (2010, p. 630). Furthermore, using them as a tool for comparison could “quickly reveal the differences between the ideas contained in these texts” (p. 631). Three word clouds have been used in the discussion to show the fluctuations in the number of coded units during each interview in order to give the reader a simple overview of the data.

### **3.5.3 A description of the motivational features identified**

The coding and analysis led to the emergence of two broad themes, 11 categories, and 19 sub-categories. The following section will offer descriptions of these.

### **3.5.4 Broad theme 1 – Sociocultural and historical influences**

References in this first broad theme (BT1) relate to the participants’ perceived sociocultural and historical contexts, and show how the participants’ motivation has been shaped by their sociocultural and historical contexts. Within this broad theme there are four more specific categories. The first includes discussions relating to the participants’ English education, the second relates to their own micro-social and historical context, and the third relates to specific Japanese social concepts. This has been entitled the macro-social context. The comments in the final category relate to how the participants view themselves within the international context. This reflects

how non-Japanese culture and people have influenced students' motivation to learn English. These categories are described in more detail below.

#### ***3.5.4.1 Category A – Educational context***

Comments in this category relate to the participants' past educational history and ongoing context. In other words, how their life as a student learning English and their experiences (both positive and negative) within the classroom has, and currently is, influencing their motivation to study English. The first sub-category here is relating to positive learning experiences. Coded units here give an account of changes in motivation ascribed to an English language learning experience in the classroom. Examples contained in this sub-category include a positive experience in the classroom, a positive feeling derived from studying in an English class, or reports of a good academic record. The second sub-category consists of comments relating to a negative experience learning English. References included in this sub-category include a negative experience in the classroom, a negative feeling derived from studying in an English class, or a poor academic record. In the third sub-category are quotations regarding an interest in learning English and a positive affect or emotional feeling due to the influence or encouragement of an English teacher. Included in the next sub-category are statements relating to a lack of interest in learning English and a negative affect or emotional feeling due to the actions of an English teacher. Included are references where the learner has been criticized by the teacher or dissatisfaction with a teacher's methods or abilities. The fifth sub-category includes quotations by the participant appraising their own progress. Both positive remarks and those relating to the participant's perceived lack of improvement in their English ability compared with their perceived expectations were placed in this category. Comments placed in the next category relate to perceived pressures placed on the participants by a teacher or

the institution. The discourse placed in the final sub-category relate to Norton's concept of identity (Norton Peirce, 1995; Norton, 2000, 2013). These demonstrate how the student has engaged or persevered in a task in order to "acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources, which will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital and social power" (Darvin & Norton, 2015, p. 2).

#### ***3.5.4.2 Category B – Micro-social context***

Discourse in this category pertains to the participants' micro-social context. In other words, the comments describe how events and interactions in their lives as a family member, a friend, or as a peer have, and currently are, influencing their motivation to study English. The responses in the first sub-category detail peer influences which appear to have led to a negative impact on motivational orientations. These have been broken down into four separate sections and data placed in sections a, b and c appear to represent a form of low sense of self-efficacy. Included in this sub-category are:

- a) Social comparisons (A feeling that peers have a superior English skill)
- b) A development of self-conscious emotions (Feelings of insecurity and inferiority in comparison with peers)
- c) Feelings of underachievement (A feeling that they are not doing well enough in comparison with their peers)
- d) A feeling of disaffection towards peers (A feeling of dissatisfaction or alienation from peers because of either the peer's perceived lack of effort or a falling out with a peer)

Statements in the second sub- category relate to peer influences which appear to strengthen motivational orientations. Here the social influence from peers leads to a

positive outcome in terms of the participant becoming more determined to succeed or improve. Included in this category are comments relating to:

- a) A feeling of respect for peers with a good English ability
- b) A feeling of respect for peers who are focused on achievement
- c) A feeling of respect for peers / seniors who have achieved
- d) A desire to be more successful than peers
- e) Peer support and friendship

The data in the third sub-category express positive influences on motivation from family members. The comments are in regard to feelings of encouragement or active involvement in the study process on the part of the parent or family member. The coded units in the next sub-category refer to how the participant understands his or her relationship to their own personal context within their society. This data generally highlights the feeling that their English study or ability identifies them as someone different amongst peers or relatives. The final sub-category includes reports of distractions in the participants' lives. In other words, how the participant's social life is having an impact on their desire and ability to learn English.

#### ***3.5.4.3 Category C – Macro-social context***

References in this category relate to social influences which are specific to Japan.

Included in this category are three sub-categories, the first of which has been given the title of communication styles. Within this sub-category, four themes have been identified. Primarily, this data shows the impact the communication styles discussed in Chapter 2 above on language learning motivation in this particular context in Japan. The second sub-category in this section includes comments relating to the strict vertical hierarchy system in Japanese society and the Japanese educational system.

This is commonly known as the sempai/kōhai (senior/junior) system. In the final sub-category, the remarks refer to Japanese group consciousness. As with the previous two sub-categories, many of these dialogues have been dual coded elsewhere. Indeed, much of the data has been coded in more than one of these sub-categories. However, the expressions generally reveal how group consciousness impacts the participants in class.

#### ***3.5.4.4 Category D – Global context***

Data coded in this category pertain to the participants' context as a Japanese person who is a member of the international community. In general, the comments express how foreign culture and people have, and are, shaping their motivation to study English. This category includes four sub-categories. The first relates to contact with non-Japanese people abroad. More specifically, this discourse refers to a direct contact experience with a non-Japanese English speaker outside of Japan. Coded units in the second sub-category also refer to direct contact with non-Japanese people. In particular, it includes discourse relating to personal ties with non-Japanese English speakers that were created in Japan, and direct contact experiences with non-Japanese English speakers in Japan. The comments in the third sub-category have reference to contact with non-Japanese cultural products while traveling or studying abroad. To be more specific, it includes statements about indirect contact with cultural products and artifacts such as movies, television shows, books and magazines. The final sub-category relates to indirect contact experiences with foreign cultural products and artifacts whilst in Japan.

### **3.5.5 Broad theme 2 – Values and goals**

References in this second broad theme (BT2) are regarding the participants' individual values and their goals for the future. This broad theme has been created to make it easier to understand how the participants' motivation has developed, and will continue to develop, through their interaction with the contexts in BT1. The goals and values are not intended to be considered individual variables which have been shaped by the sociocultural and historical influences in BT1, but are to be considered to work in a more responsive relationship with the contexts. In other words, there is interaction between the context and the values and goals, with the individual actively contributing to the developing context. Within this broad theme there are seven more specific categories. The references in this first category relate to the desire to work using English in the future, or how useful English is for improving future job prospects. The discussions in this second category pertain to the desire to study English in another country in the future, or how a good English ability could help to facilitate this. The third category includes coded units regarding the desire to travel to or live in a country other than Japan, and how learning English would help them living and traveling abroad. The data coded in the next category refers to learning English as a tool to achieve something else. These remarks are a realization of how English could be used. It contains what might be described as intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, but all statements are to the usefulness of English. Extrinsic comments include English as an international language, regarding globalization, or the usefulness of English outside of Japan. Intrinsic references include how English could potentially be used as a tool for personal development. The fifth category includes remarks regarding an interest in English as a language subject. More specifically, the references in this category refer to a scholarly interest in the English language. The dialogues in the following category

refer to learning English as a tool for communicating with people from other countries. The final category includes coded units that refer to both the value of developing relationships with people from other countries, and the goal of developing relationships with people from other countries. Included in this category are comments which suggest relationships with foreigners are valued and wanted more than relationships with Japanese.

### **3.5.6 Validation and reliability strategies**

In order to improve the *trustworthiness* or validity of this study I applied several validation strategies. The first strategy that I employed was to provide a rich and thick description. Throughout the period when I was collecting data I kept notes and records and these have been written up in Chapter 3.5 above. Here the reader can find an overview of the research site, the sampling strategies, participant information, and information about me and my background. In this section I have also tried to identify any potential researcher biases I might have. Hopefully, this strategy makes the findings in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 below transferable and credible.

A second strategy employed to improve the credibility of the data was to conduct member checks. In order to do this, I developed motivational profiles of each participant using the categories created, but containing language which would be accessible to L2 learners. These profiles were then sent to each participant, and the participants were asked to read the profile then visit my office to discuss the accuracy of these accounts. Following these member checks the categories, labels and definitions were amended.

The third validation strategy employed was peer debriefing. The categories with definitions and examples of the data were given to a colleague who acted as a

*devil's advocate* (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and based on the feedback given the categories, labels, and definitions were again amended. This tentative list of categories was then inputted into Atlas.ti (a qualitative data analysis software), and the software was used to code the whole dataset. This process of coding became a cyclical process and was repeated many times as categories were added, removed, relabeled, and redefined.

Furthermore, in order to improve the dependability or reliability of the study I conducted peer checking sessions with a colleague, and, as reported in Section 3.5.4, I held regular discussions and meetings with my supervisor who offered complementary or alternative explanations and categories as a complete outsider to the context. As a doctoral degree is an individual research product, it was not possible to have several investigators collecting and interpreting the data. In other words, there was no investigator triangulation. Despite this, the peer checking sessions with a colleague and my supervisor potentially helped to enhance the dependability and reliability of the study. The thesis now turns to a discussion of the findings beginning with an analysis of the data collected in the first set of interviews.

Finally, in Chapters 4, 5, and 6 below, I make inferences regarding fluctuations and changes based on the number of references that relate to a particular theme or category. As referred to above, these have been termed coded units. I believe this a legitimate approach as obviously issues that are mentioned less frequently are more likely to be less prominent. However, I would like to acknowledge that this of course does not give a precise indication of how exactly the participants' feelings or thoughts change and fluctuate, but rather they indicate what is in the focus of the discussion in that particular interview at that moment in time.



## **4. Findings and discussion - The beginning of the journey**

Given that this study is a longitudinal study conducted over the period of an academic year, it seems sensible to start with the data collected from the first interview at the beginning of the spring semester. The logic behind this is to endeavor to establish the participants' initial perceptions of their language learning motivation. Furthermore, I will attempt to portray a general overview of how the participants perceive their motivation in order to make more salient the temporal discussion in Sections 5 and 6. In doing so, this should allow the reader the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of their initial perceptions and how these fluctuate in later stages of the study. In addition, this chapter will also attempt to highlight potential differences in perceptions between first grade, second grade, and third grade Japanese university L2 learners. This chapter will also offer tentative responses to the first two research questions posed in Section 2.13 above. The chapter begins by setting the scene to the findings by providing an introduction to the themes and categories identified and introduced in Section 3.5 above along with more detailed information about three participants who were chosen because their responses appeared to typify those of their cohorts. It continues with a discussion of the participants' initial perceptions of their motivations to learn English and moves on to a discussion of their English educational learning experiences. Following this is a section on parental, family, and peer influences before the discussion turns to the participants' experiences with direct and indirect contact with non-Japanese. The chapter then moves on to analyze the career aspirations of the learners in this context along with their goals to travel, study, and live abroad. The chapter continues with a discussion of the references relating to the participants' interest and enjoyment in learning English as a subject before examining comments which appear to show how they view English as a facilitative and

communicative tool. The chapter closes with a discussion of the perceived desires or interests in Western culture and people identified in this study before offering an overview of what typifies a motivated first, second, and third grade learner at the start of the study.

#### **4.1 Setting the scene - An introduction to the themes, categories, and participants**

This chapter begins with an introduction and description to the model presented in Section 3.5 above which provides an overview of the broad themes, categories, and sub-categories identified from the data set collected during the three interviews. It subsequently moves on to provide background information to the three participants and their contexts. These three learners, one from each of the three age groups, were chosen from the sample of 23 described in Section 3.3 above because their responses most typified those of their cohorts. This begins with background information about Yuki, a first grade student. It then moves on to present information about a second grade student named Saori. Finally, the discussion turns to the experiences of Nana whose responses resonate with those of a third grade student in this study. These three students were chosen because many of their comments and accounts of their motivation for learning English appear commonplace with their cohorts in this study. In other words, some of their accounts are to a degree internally generalizable (Maxwell, 1992) within their age groups, the institution, and perhaps within other similar tertiary learning environments in Japan. However, it is certainly not my intention to portray Yuki, Saori, or Nana as a stereotypical Japanese university language learner. In contrary, many of their conceptions of language learning motivation were anomalous to other participants in their age groups and within the

study as a whole. Rather, it is my aim to highlight comments from Yuki, Saori, and Nana which typify the responses of other students in their age groups and thereby be able to present what characterizes a motivated first, second and third grade learner in this context. In order to present a deeper description of the data, comments from the other 20 participants will be interspersed in this discussion.

## **4.2 A general overview of the broad themes, categories, and sub-categories**

This section commences with a synopsis of the broad themes, categories, and sub-categories identified from the data. To make this more intelligible, these were placed in a visualization seen in Figure 2 in Section 3.5 above. The coding and analysis of the data led to the emergence of two broad themes, 11 categories, and 19 sub-categories. The following section offers brief descriptions of these, and more details about the definition of each theme will be provided as each category and sub-category is discussed.

### **4.2.1 Broad theme 1 – Sociocultural and historical influences**

References in this first broad theme (BT1) relate to the participants' perceived sociocultural and historical contexts (See Figure 2 above). Within this broad theme there are four more specific categories. The first includes references relating to the participants' English education, the second relates to their own micro-social and historical context, and the third relates to specific Japanese social concepts. This has been entitled the macro-social context. The comments in the final category relate to how the participants view themselves within an international context. This reflects how non-Japanese culture and people have influenced their motivation to learn

English. A more detailed description of BT1 and its categories and sub-categories will be presented as they are discussed.

#### **4.2.2 Broad theme 2 – Values and goals**

The references in this second broad theme (BT2) relate to the participants' individual values and their goals for the future (See Figure 2 above). This broad theme has been created to make it easier to understand how the participants' motivation developed through their interaction with the contexts in BT1. Within this broad theme there are seven more specific categories. The first category relates to career goals and the value of English in improving career options. Second is the desire to study abroad and how English can facilitate this. Third, includes references to goals for living and traveling abroad and the value of English in making these goals possible. In the coded units that belong to the fourth category, participants describe how English could be used and the usefulness of English for them. The fifth category includes references to an interest in English as a language subject. The sixth has references to how English is seen as an international language and how it can be used for communication tool, and the final category contains comments about the participants' desires and interest in Western culture and people.

#### **4.3 Background information to three typical participants**

The section continues by presenting detailed background information about Yuki, Saori, and Nana taken from their information sheet submitted prior to the study, events discussed in the information meeting preceding the first interview, and from our conversations during the member checking sessions. The section then continues by highlighting the motivational features identified during the first interviews with Yuki, Saori, and Nana which typify the comments of their cohorts. In order to provide

a deeper description of the data and how it was collected, this section also attempts to highlight aspects of their behaviors during the interview which were common amongst the participants in this study. In conjunction, the section also reports on the language and communication styles used by Yuki, Saori, and Nana which again were common amongst many of the participants in this study. In other words, I will not only discuss what they said but *how* they said it. The section also draws attention to things they *did not talk about* during our interactions which could possibly be indicative of other members in the study and impact on the findings.

The student whose responses typified the freshmen participants was Yuki. When the study first began, Yuki was an 18-year-old female student studying in the department of international communication. She had completed six years of English study in middle and high school, and she had just started her required English freshman classes. These included; a communication class, a writing class, a TOEIC practice class, and a computer assisted language learning (CALL) class. Yuki had also signed up for several additional English classes including a more advanced communication class and a TOEFL iBT test preparation class. On her first attempt at the TOEIC test<sup>6</sup> a few weeks prior to the first interview, Yuki scored 550 which was one of the highest scores for a freshman student. Only two of the other participants for this age group in this study scored higher. Prior to the initial interview, I had met Yuki several times as she was enrolled in three of my classes. Yuki fit the sampling criteria as her TOEIC score was higher than the average of her peers, she displayed very motivated behavior in those initial classes with me, and her other English teachers gave her a positive verbal report stating she had displayed motivated behavior in their English classes too.

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<sup>6</sup> The TOEIC test is used as a placement test in this context.

Yuki comes from a small town within the adjacent prefecture to which the university is located. This typified her amongst the higher level students in this particular cohort as many came from outside the prefecture. However, it should be noted that the vast majority of learners in this context come from within the prefecture. Yuki described herself as an outgoing student who enjoyed talking in English. She grew up around an English speaker, as a family member was married to an Australian. During the initial participant meeting, Yuki informed me that she was very interested in foreign culture and people. Although Yuki had never studied abroad, she discussed her experiences travelling abroad to Korea and Singapore. She also had several foreign friends with whom she was in regular contact through social media and email. In addition, Yuki mentioned successful experiences learning Korean in high school. Yuki also said her high school regularly had foreign students visit, and she talked about how much she enjoyed chatting with them in English. This is perhaps less typical of learners in this particular context. Although the vast majority of high schools in Japan employ an assistant language teacher (ALT), the ratio of students to ALTs is often considerable meaning that perhaps only the more gregarious students have an opportunity for meaningful conversations. In addition, many high schools have few or no exchange programs for students to participate in making Yuki's school an exception rather than the norm.

Many of the responses from Saori typified those of the majority of second grade learners. At the time of the first interview, Saori was a 19-year-old female student registered to the department of international communication. Saori had just begun her second year of study after completing her required English freshman classes. Like Yuki above, these included; a communication class, a writing class, a TOEIC practice class, and a CALL class. On her previous attempt at the TOEIC test,

Saori had scored 580 which represented an above average score for a second grade student, but was lower than five of the other seven second grade participants. Prior to the interview, I had only met Saori once which was during the welcome meeting with participants chosen for this study. Like Yuki, Saori also fit the sampling criteria. Her latest score on the TOEIC test score was above average in comparison with her cohorts, her attendance records in her freshman English classes were impeccable, and her English teachers reported her being enthusiastic and motivated throughout her first year of English classes.

Saori comes from a small town within the same prefecture as which the university is located. This typified her amongst the population as the majority of students in this context come from within the prefecture. She chose to come to this particular university on the recommendation of her high school teacher and because her father was eager for her to study within the prefecture for financial reasons. Saori was the only student from her high school to attend this university, and Saori opted not to join any clubs or circles during her first year of study citing her shy personality and the discomfort she felt talking in front of unfamiliar people as reasons.

The third grade student whose answers most typified those of her cohorts was Nana. At the beginning of the study, Nana was 20 years old. Like the other participants, she was majoring in the department of international communication. Nana had completed all her required English classes and she was planning to take several more advanced English communication classes during her third year at university. As with Saori, Nana had never taken any of my classes. However, I had met her prior to the study at a university intensive camp which she had volunteered for and I was supervising. I first spoke with her during the welcome meeting with participants chosen for this study. Nana fit the sampling criteria as her English

teachers stated that she was a conscientious and driven student who had demonstrated motivated behavior in her English classes. In addition, like her juniors above, her TOEIC score of 620 was higher than the average of her peers. Finally, according to her English teachers, she had excellent attendance records in her English classes.

As with Saori, Nana came from within the prefecture. She grew up within the main city in the prefecture and attended a local high school. In the meeting prior to the study, Nana told me she liked English and that she had had an American-Japanese friend since elementary school. According to Nana, this friend had taught her English and she had spent a reasonable amount of time around her friend's father who was from the United States. Throughout the majority of middle school, Nana had also attended a private conversation school near her home. During the summer prior to the first interview, Nana had participated in a compulsory short-term study abroad program in which she spent four weeks in Canada. This would be typical of her cohorts because it is a part of the graduation requirements at this institution although this would vary amongst other universities.

The chapter now turns to discuss references to sociocultural and historical influences on Yuki, Saori, and Nana before focusing on some of their English related values and goals. The section on sociocultural and historical influences begins with their educational context. The reasoning behind starting with this category is that it had the largest number of coded units during the first interview. In particular, within this category, most references were related to the participants' perceived positive learning histories. Following that, the discussion moves on to influences and encouragement from Yuki, Saori, and Nana's English teachers. Again, these were regularly mentioned across all three age groups and most frequently in the first interview. Thirdly, the discussion continues with the institutional pressures the



participants conceived themselves to be under. Afterwards, findings are presented relating to the three participants' micro-context with a particular focus on positive parental, family, and peer influences. Subsequently, the following section deals with Yuki, Saori, and Nana's direct and indirect contact experiences in Japan before moving on to their values and goals. More specifically, in these final segments, references to career aspirations, goals to travel, study, and live abroad are analyzed before a discussion of their interest and enjoyment in learning English as a language subject, and how they perceive English as a tool is presented. The section concludes by considering their comments towards their desire or interest in Western culture. Again, these areas typify the responses of other students in their age groups and stand out as the most prominent themes in the first set of interviews at the start of the academic year.

#### **4.4 Feeling good - More positive than negative learning experiences**

As can be seen in Table 3, there were a total of 173 references in the category entitled *Educational context*. References in this category relate to the participants' past educational history and ongoing context; in other words, how their life as a student studying English and their experiences (both positive and negative) learning English has influenced their motivation to study English. Included in this category are seven sub-categories. The first sub-category includes references to positive learning experiences, whereas the second contains descriptions of negative learning experiences. Included in the third and fourth sub-categories respectively are positive and negative references relating to an English teacher. The subsequent category is entitled Self-appraisal of progress. There were no references to this during the first interview, and therefore this will be discussed in Chapters 5 and 6 below. The

following sub-category includes references to institutional pressures, and the final sub-category is called investment. As can be seen in Table 3, the most frequent number of references in the Educational context category were relating to past positive learning experiences. Examples included in this sub-category include a positive experience in the classroom, a positive feeling derived from learning English, or reports of a good academic record.

Category	Sub-categories	1st grade students	2nd grade students	3rd grade students	All Participants	Total
Educational context	Positive learning experiences	19	12	31	62	173
	Negative learning experiences	6	4	16	26	
	Teacher (encouragement / influence)	16	11	16	43	
	Teacher (negative experiences)	0	0	0	0	
	Self-appraisal of progress	0	0	0	0	
	Institutional pressures	2	7	23	32	
	Investment	2	2	6	10	

*Table 3: Categories showing the frequency of coded units in the educational context during the first interview*

Many of the comments from participants in this category seem to show the causal attributions of past success and failure highlighted in Weiner’s attribution theory (1986). For instance, many of the comments about learners’ perceptions when they were adolescents refer to the effort they placed on their English studies and their ability to do well in English classes and on English tests. As an example, Nana stated that she studied English intensively during middle school. More specifically, she discussed studying English outside of her regular school classes. She stated, “I went to an English conversation school when I was a junior high school student” (N1Y3Q5). She continued by adding how successful she was. “We got individual private rankings and I was right at the top of the [English] class” (N1Y3Q7). As mentioned in literature review in Chapter 2 above, Weiner argues that achievement can be attributed

to ability, effort, task difficulty, luck, mood, family background, or help/hindrance from others. In this study, there were many references to the students' ability in the past to get good grades. Indeed, there were several references in the first interview to participants' efforts being rewarded. Take this comment from Kana as an example. "I started to study English when I was in the sixth grade in elementary school. Do you know Kumon? [A cram school] I started to study English there. I enjoyed studying English there...In junior high school I only studied English in class but I could get good grades...I got to level 2 in Eiken<sup>7</sup>" (K1Y2Q10). In addition, there were several references to the difficulty of tasks. In particular, comments relating to when participants felt they could complete tasks with relatively little difficulty. Natsumi's comment highlights this when she says, "When I was an elementary school student, English was not just playing. I read some English books...very short and very easy books...I thought it is a little bit easy for me and it was fun" (N1Y1Q4). Saori and many other participants talked about activities in English classes being easy or more game-like than study. What is more, there were many references to a good atmosphere or mood in these classes. Saori recalls, "a native teacher came to my school to teach me...playing games...studying by playing games. I enjoyed English in junior high school" (S1Y2Q10). Finally, help from peers also appear to have been important in English classes. Saori talked about there being "a lot of cooperation...working in groups or with my friends" in her English classes in junior high school (S1Y2Q9). How these feelings temporally fluctuate will be discussed in more detail in Sections 5.2 and 6.2 below.

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<sup>7</sup> EIKEN is an abbreviation of Jitsuyō Eigo Ginō Kentei which means Test in Practical English Proficiency. It is a widely used English-language testing program in Japan.

The data suggests that the motivated learners in this study had more positive learning experiences than negative ones. As can be seen in Table 3, there were a great deal more references to a positive learning history than negative history in the data set of the first interviews. It is also possible that the causal attributions of past successes, especially during adolescence, had consequences on future achievement attempts. The findings in this context seem to follow the motivational rationale of learner A in Ushioda's (2001) theoretical framework of motivation from a temporal perspective which showed that learners with successful learning experiences attribute motivational importance to a positive language learning history. The impact of motivation towards future goals will be discussed in Sections 4.9 through 4.13 below.

Perhaps more surprising was Saori's response when asked about her English ability. After listening to her positive accounts of her language learning history, I asked Saori whether she considered herself good at English in school. Saori's answer was rather intriguing as she shrugged her shoulders and said "Mmm...so so" (S1Y2Q10). *So so* is a direct translation of "ma ma", a well-known example of *Aimaina Kotoba* (ambiguous language), and is often translated into English as "not so bad" (Davies & Ikeno, 2002). When encouraged to reveal her ranking (Japanese schools rank students in each subject according to test scores), Saori then revealed in almost a whisper that she was in the top English class at her school, and was in fact, the number one student. As I was not expecting such a response, my reaction was to say "Oh, you were the top student?" to which Saori responded "Mmm...I was in...the *shingaku* (a class which studies to enter university). My school had three courses... *fukushi* (a class studying welfare), an information media class, and the *shingaku* class" (S1Y2Q11). I recall feeling surprised and my impression at the time was that Saori was trying to make light of her academic achievements in English at school.

(Although this section is predominately analyzing data from the first interviews, it is important to note that this was consistent over the whole course of the study.) Upon reflection, I would like to suggest three possible reasons for Saori stating her English was “so so” based on what she talked about during all three interviews.

The first possibility for Saori devaluing her English and academic accomplishments at school is she did not see them as a special achievement. Later in the interview, Saori added, “students didn’t really study so much...it wasn’t a very academic school...most people just go to a vocational college, so most people didn’t really study that much” (S1Y2Q16).

The second possible explanation is that this was an example of *Aimaina Kotoba* used to safeguard against me from perceiving her portraying herself as arrogant or over confident. As mentioned in Section 2.11 of the literature review above, candidly displaying one’s own ability could typically lead to the listener developing a poor impression of the speaker in Japanese society. It is therefore conceivable that Saori did not wish to draw attention to herself and her English ability. This kind of modesty (the concept of *kenkyo*) was evident amongst many of the participants in the study. In a separate incident involving a second grade student, when asked to reveal her ranking in high school, the student responded by raising one finger to indicate she was number one, but she would not express this verbally. It appears that these kinds of responses highlight the potential for self-depreciation or self-effacement caused by modesty or humility and which may therefore have impacted on responses given to personal questions, and notably, when having to discuss past language learning successes and achievements.

The final feasible reason was that Saori felt anxious when using English. It was evident that at times Saori felt a degree of unease during the interview and particularly at the start of each interview. This was demonstrated by bouts of nervous laughter, and was prevalent amongst many of the participants in this age group. As mentioned in Section 2.9 of the literature review above, Gardner and Macintyre (1993) showed how language anxiety corresponds with learners' self-ratings of proficiency with anxious students more likely to underestimate their own ability (Macintyre, Noels & Clément, 1997). In addition, a study conducted with Japanese learners of English by Hashimoto (2002) showed that L2 anxiety exerts "a strong and direct negative influence on perceived competence" (p. 57). Therefore, it is conceivable that Saori's language anxiety might have impacted on her responses during the interview.

Although not as frequent, there were references to negative learning experiences in the language learning classroom by the learners in this study. The references in this sub-category relate to a change in motivation ascribed to a negative experience learning English. Examples included in this sub-category include negative experiences in the classroom, negative feelings derived from learning English, or a poor academic record. Several of the comments related to the kind of class or the course content the learners had to study. Mika was dissatisfied with the style of some of her English classes at university. She stated, "The classes taught by Japanese English teachers are a little boring" (M1Y2Q7). She continued to report that "using CALL is a little boring, and learning grammar too" (M1Y2Q7). As can be seen in Table 3, these comments were rather uncommon in the data set of the first and second grade learners, but more frequent amongst the older age group.

At this stage of the study, many of comments describing negative learning experiences were relating to language learning anxiety, and more specifically, anxiety regarding using English in the classroom. As reported in Section 2.9 above, Horwitz and colleagues (1986) identified three components to foreign language learning anxiety; communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. The data from the first interview suggests that Saori and her peers experienced communication apprehension, and there were also several references to test or examination anxiety, but at this stage references to a fear of negative evaluation were infrequent. Kyoko, a first grade student, provides an example of communication apprehension when reflecting on her first English classes at junior high school. She stated,

When I was a junior high school student, I started to learn English. I didn't like English. It was the subject I hated the most because I was very shy and I didn't like to talk to people or talk in front of the class...the students, but in English you have talk with or speak to someone or a friend...so I hated English (K1Y1Q4).

Kyoko's choice of the word 'hated' emphasizes how much apprehension she recalls from those early English classes. These comments were not exclusive to Kyoko, and they highlight how powerful a factor communication apprehension can be in this context. Shiori, a third grade student mentioned that English classes "made me a little nervous" (S1Y3Q12). She elaborated on why she felt this apprehension by adding, "I couldn't understand some sentences, but the teacher used to try to make me answer questions I couldn't answer so it made me nervous and [under] some pressure"

(S1Y3Q13). It appears evident that during adolescence many students experienced communication apprehension in classes when having to use English.

However, the majority of negative comments were relating to methods of instruction and evaluation in middle and high school. The discussion therefore turns to the comments relating to the method of instruction before continuing with how the teaching styles are impacted by evaluation methods in this context. This comment from Keiko, a third grade student, provides an example of the method of instruction she received in junior high school. She noted, “I started learning English in junior high school. In the class we had to read a lot of sentences and translate sentences into Japanese and it was boring so in junior high school I didn’t like translating into Japanese” (K1Y3Q7). Yoshi was even more explicit in his interview. He stated,

For six years in school I had to memorize grammatical rules, vocabulary and translate into English sentence by sentence...I remember well that I had to practice writing words and sentences on the back of the paper over and over again...just to pass an exam...to get a 100% score on a test. But we students seldom had a chance to use English for real communication as the class itself was completely passive...and I have to say it was excruciatingly boring...yes!

It appears that Naoki and several other participants found the method of instruction unsatisfactory. This perhaps supports the findings of Sakui (2004). As mentioned in the literature review above, despite the Ministry of Education stating that English education should aim to foster students’ abilities to understand and express themselves in English and encourage interest in foreign languages and cultures, teachers are under pressure to prepare their learners for high school and



university entrance exams. The result is that in actual classroom teaching at middle and high school, grammar instruction is the central and foregrounded method of instruction (Sakui 2004). Shiori recalled her experiences and stated, “I think at high school it was a little difficult...because the vocabulary was difficult...there were a lot of difficult words to learn and difficult tests to take...yes” (S1Y3Q15). Sakui (2004) attributes this method of instruction directly to the “grammar-skewed entrance examinations” (p. 159). The result appears to be that students continued to like English despite the method they were taught in. Take this comment from Kie, a third grade student. She said, “In junior high school, we were using a textbook...we rarely spoke to other people in the class...no communication in class...only reading and writing...it was boring (K1Y3Q15). Then she added this about her English classes in high school,

My high school was very strict about English. When I was in the third year, I had 10 English classes<sup>8</sup> in one week and we had a very strict English teacher. It was very hard. I loved English, but I didn't like English classes.

The discussion now moves on to comments coded into another sub-category within the educational context, influences and encouragement from English teachers.

#### **4.5 Influences and encouragement from English teachers**

Closely linked to these references in the first interview to a positive learning history were comments placed in the sub-category entitled teacher influence and encouragement. Accordingly, they are accounts of influence or encouragement from

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<sup>8</sup> A class is usually 50 minutes, so eight hours and 20 minutes of instruction per week.

an English teacher. All but three of the 23 participants made positive references about their English teachers with 43 references in total (See Table 3). Many of the students recalled experiences with their English speaking assistant language teacher (ALT). Tomo, a second grade male student, was explicit about his satisfaction. “I enjoyed English at elementary school. I liked speaking with the ALT” (T1Y2Q4). Taking this further, several students seemed to have been quite strongly influenced by their ALT. Consider this comment from Yuki.

When I was in junior high I made a friend with her [her high school ALT] and she was very charming and nice and I still keep in touch with her...she recommended that I go to university and study English, so I decided to enter university.” (Y1Y2Q21).

In addition, many comments coded into this sub-category referred to participants’ Japanese English teachers in middle or high school. The following is an example of this from Saori. “My English teacher in high school was very kind and taught in a kind way and a way which was easy to understand. The classes were interesting and very fun, so I liked English” (S1Y2Q3).

At this stage, I would like to offer a brief aside about something Saori did not mention whilst talking about her experiences with teachers, which was also typical of all the other participants in the first interview. Saori did not refer to any negative learning experiences with teachers, at school, or in her first year of study at university. This was in keeping with everyone during the first interview, highlighted by the fact that there were no negative comments regarding English teachers (See Table 3). Considering Saori was a relatively successful English language learner, it is

conceivable that her negative experiences with her English teachers were, in fact, minimal. Likewise, perhaps Saori felt any negative situations she might have encountered were not worth mentioning during the interview. Following this further, it may be wise to take into account Saori's ability to recall information under the stresses of an interview situation (Richards, 2009). As an illustration of this, when asked the name of her high school teacher who Saori was praising, she said, "he was a man...eh...Mr....eh...I forget" (S1Y2Q8) which was followed by a few seconds of nervous laughter. To put it another way, it is quite probable that Saori had minimal negative experiences with her English teachers, or she simply did not consider them worth mentioning, or even the tension of the occasion impacted on her recall abilities. However, I also feel it is pertinent to discuss another possibility, that is, the possibility that Saori purposefully *avoided* expressing her negative feelings.

As mentioned in Section 2.11 literature review above, negative forms of communication are generally avoided in order to preserve group harmony in Japan. This unwillingness to engage in negative forms of communication is known as *enryo-sasshi* or reserve and restraint in English (Davies & Ikino 2002). This is particularly prevalent when a person is talking to someone in a position of authority, or to someone who is considered higher in social ranking. Before speculating on other reasons for Saori not discussing negative experiences in the classroom, I would first like to suggest one possible explanation for her not talking unfavorably about teachers. It is possible that our positions within the same institution may have created some social expectations. As referred to in Section 3.3.4, I am a teacher in the same department as Saori, and although there were several participants in the other age groups who openly discussed issues with lecturers at the university, it is highly plausible that Saori would not want to talk disparagingly about faculty members

knowing they were my colleagues. This might be a form of social desirability bias.

The fact that I am a teacher at the institution where Saori studies might have created a desire for her to try to meet social expectations and therefore refrain from conveying any adverse feelings towards other teachers.

Another conceivable reason for Saori not discussing any negative classroom experiences with her English teachers could have been because she did not wish to be considered impolite. Although I can only speculate whether Saori had past negative experiences, her behavior during the interview suggested she was mindful of the difference in social standing between teacher and student which made her appear uncomfortable at certain points during the interview. Although Saori described herself as shy, her mannerisms and behavior at certain points during the interview were noticeably deferential and humble. This can be illustrated by Saori's compunctious and almost profuse apologies during the interview. These instances occurred when Saori felt she could not understand a word or phrase in English, and notably when she was unable to express herself clearly and therefore used Japanese. This can be seen in the following example. "My English teacher in high school was very interesting and very kind...teach...er...nan...yasashiku na oshiete...wakariyasuikata (S1Y2Q3) which can be translated as "and taught in a kind way and a way which was easy to understand". Given these comments, one could certainly hypothesize that Saori deliberately avoided expressing her negative feelings. The discussion now moves on to the final sub-category relating to their educational context, institutional pressures.

#### **4.6 Early semester tension - Institutional pressures**

The analysis continues with a discussion of the comments relating to institutional pressures that the participants perceived themselves to be under at the time of the first

interview in April. This sub-category is defined as an external pressure placed on the participant by an educational institution or a teacher. I first discuss the types of comments in this category and then turn to possible explanations for the variation in the total number of coded units amongst the three cohorts.

Firstly, six of the 32 references in this category relate to pressure studying English at high school, in particular, towards studying English for the university entrance examinations. Consider this comment from Nana.

In high school I learned English to enter this college...I learned English for the center test...exam English...so I didn't speak English at school...only learning grammar, writing, reading, listening...when I was a high school, student I didn't like English...it was boring...I wanted to speak English but there was no chance (N1Y3Q8).

It appears evident that Nana did not take much satisfaction from her English classes in high school. This was common amongst her cohort. Yoshi, another third grade student commented, "English is just a compulsory subject...a required subject. Every junior and high school student in Japan is supposed to study it" (Y1Y3Q1). It is interesting to note that although clearly frustrated with this system, the participants seem to accept the situation and do not attribute any of their dissatisfaction to their English teachers. Indeed, as mentioned above in the literature review, many teachers in middle and high school are aware of this situated evaluation. Sakui (2004) refers to the two forms of curriculum that are present for English school teachers in Japan. First, the documented version which advocates idealized teaching practices in the form of communicative language teaching (CLT), and the other a realized version which arose from curriculum implementation in actual classrooms and is much closer

to the grammar translation method. Indeed, perhaps these comments should not be at all surprising as issues regarding the entrance examination system in Japan have been well documented. Doyon (2001) informs us that “of all the problems inherent in the Japanese education system, probably the most unwieldy and most often criticized have been the entrance examination system and educational credentialism” (p. 462). Furthermore, Brown and Yamashita (1995) describe the time preparing for university entrance examinations as “*shiken jigoku*, or examination hell” (p. 8). On the whole, it is probably more surprising that the number of references to this situation were not greater. Perhaps one reason for the small number of references to this stressful period is because of their current context. The discussion now turns to reflect on comments relating to the participants’ prevailing situation.

Institutional pressures										
First grade participants	Rina	Koyo	Yuki	Miki	Kyoko	Natsumi	Eimi			Total
	1	0	0	0	0	0	0			1
Second grade participants	Mai	Tomo	Mika	Kimio	Kana	Saori	Yumi			Total
	1	0	0	2	2	1	1			7
Third grade participants	Kazahiro	Keiko	Mana	Ayano	Nana	Yoshi	Shiori	Yuka	Kie	Total
	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	23

Table 4: Number of coded units relating to institutional pressures

In the first interview in this study, the university entrance examination system was not the only gatekeeping system mentioned by the participants. In fact, the vast majority of the total number of coded units in this category related to the pressure to achieve a better score on the TOEIC test whilst at university. Furthermore, this is where the biggest discrepancies between numbers of coded units in each age group can be seen. Rina was the only first grade student to discuss this when she stated, “I want to get a high score on the TOEIC...700 or 800 before I graduate...because I need that score in Japan for work...I need it” (R1Y1Q25). In contrast, five of the

seven second grade students referred to this kind of tension (See Table 4). Saori, whose comments typified those of her cohorts stated, “I want to get 700 on the TOEIC test” (S1Y2Q14). The situation is further illustrated by one of Saori’s peers, Yumi. She noted, “I have to get a TOEIC score of 600, but I think I need a higher score...as high as possible” (Y1Y2Q13). Perhaps most interesting though, were the 23 comments which could be attributed to eight of the nine third grade students who took part in this study. The following example given by Nana offers us an insight into the reasons why the TOEIC test had such significance for this age group. When asked why she wanted a higher score on the TOEIC test, she responded, “For my resume...I want to find a good job...some good work...so I want to get a good TOEIC score...700 is good for a company...I can get a better job with a better salary” (N1Y3Q13). It appears participants equate getting a high score on the TOEIC test with the potential of securing better employment.

In Japan, at the time the first interview took place, students were expected to begin the job-hunting process three months after entering their third year of study at university. This job hunting process is known as *Shukatsu* or *Shushoku Katsudo* and can be very complicated and time consuming. At the time the data was collected, for the third grade students, it was due to begin in several months’ time and would last until a job was secured. However, in reality the pressure to obtain employment meant that the unofficial process actually began much earlier. The actual job hunting process involves attending guidance seminars on campus and traveling to major cities to attend presentations by various companies. There are also company exams and the potential of multiple rounds of interviews. With a high TOEIC score, the likelihood of securing a position is much greater regardless of whether the position will involve actually using any English in the workplace. This pressure should not be

underestimated as Tamura (2014) informs us that the majority of Japanese companies restrict recruitment to new graduates and “failing shukatsu means that their entire self has been rejected, and it even drives them to suicide” (p. 7).

In addition, this practice has been cited as reason for a lack of motivation to study English (Strong, Dujmovich, McLaughlin & O’Dowd, 2012), and as a reason for the decreasing number of students willing to study abroad (Yoshikata, 2011). I would postulate that the main reason for this large number of comments from the older participants is that they are more aware of the requirements and pressures of securing a job. Indeed, they are starting to feel the pressures of the strict job hunting system that they are about to enter. More than their juniors, they are aware that their TOEIC score will help determine the kind of employment they can obtain. It also appears this is not just an internal pressure the students are putting themselves under. Two of the nine third grade students reported pressure from their English teachers at university. Kazahiro noted, “Now my score is 520 but...I belong to Mr. X’s class [his major] and he said students have to get 800 on the TOEIC...It is very difficult” (K1Y3Q14). He described this as a “really hard pressure” (K1Y3Q13). He also noted that another teacher warned his class that they would get “some extra work” (K1Y3Q16) if they failed to reach a score of 600 on the TOEIC test. The temporal changes to these feelings will be covered in Chapters 5 and 6 below, but the discussion will now turn to comments categorized in the category entitled *Micro-social context*. These comments refer to positive parental and family influences and negative peer influences.



#### **4.7 Positive parental and family influences and negative peer influences and comparisons**

In addition to the educational influences reported above, Yuki, Saori, and Nana all referred to influences from their micro-social context. In other words, the comments are relating to how events and interactions in their lives as a family member, a friend, or as a peer have influenced their motivation to study English. Of particular significance in the first interview, were references to positive parental influences and peer influences and comparisons. Table 5 shows there were 24 references to family influence amongst the students. These generally related to encouragement or active involvement in the study process on the part of a family member. In Saori's case, it appeared that her father had a strong influence on her studies although she did not state explicitly that her father encouraged her to study English. Saori stated, "My father...he expected me to go to college...he said I must go to college...study more...study many things" (S1Y2Q17). Yuki's situation was more unique. As referred to in Section 4.3 above, Yuki had grown up around an English speaker because a family member was married to an Australian man. In the initial interview, Yuki reflected back to when she was in kindergarten and stated, "My mother's cousin was studying abroad in Australia and she came to us and maybe when I was about 5 with her boyfriend...we had dinner in my house and she was talking English with him and it was very cool". She then mentioned another incident when she was in elementary school. She added, "She was married with him and they had a kid and he was very cute and could speak English and Japanese, so I thought it was very cool and fantastic...I thought I wanted to study English more" (Y1Y1Q6). Nana reported her mother supporting her when she decided she wanted to learn conversational English at a private school when she was in elementary school. It is perhaps of no surprise that

this group of motivated learners mentioned the positive influence of their parents. As discussed in the literature review above, Wigfield and Eccles (2002) reported that parents who provide experiences influence their children’s self-efficacy. Bandura (1997) found that parents who encourage their young children to try a variety of activities and support their endeavors help to build their confidence to meet these challenges. In addition, Eccles, Wigfield and Schiefele (1998) reported four parental factors which shape students’ motivation. These include placing demands at the right time developmentally, displaying confidence in the child’s ability, providing a supportive family atmosphere, and being motivated role models. If we take these findings into consideration, it is of little surprise that these participants talked about positive parental influences.

Interview 1 - Parental and family influence										
First grade participants	Rina	Koyo	Yuki	Miki	Kyoko	Natsumi	Eimi			Total
	0	1	3	0	3	1	3			11
Second grade participants	Mai	Tomo	Mika	Kimio	Kana	Saori	Yumi			Total
	2	1	0	0	1	1	1			6
Third grade participants	Kazahiro	Keiko	Mana	Ayano	Nana	Yoshi	Shiori	Yuka	Kie	Total
	0	1	2	0	1	1	1	1	0	7

Table 5: Number of coded units relating to parental and family influence

Although not as numerous, there were references to peer influences and comparisons. The comments relate to feelings of encouragement or active involvement in the study process on the part of a peer or friend. In total, there were 14 references to peer influences and comparisons across all three age ranges. Only three of these mentioned a negative impact, seven related to a comparison with a peer, and seven mentioned peer influence (See Table 6). For Yuki, it appeared that she often compared herself to her friends. Consider the following comment given in response to me after asking if she has any other motivations for learning English. “My motivation

is...when I have a rival I think I need to study more...it's my motivation...if my

friend's English score is very high I think... I don't want to lose...so I study hard...I

Interview 1 - Peer influence (-) & Peer influence (+)											
First grade students		Rina	Koyo	Yuki	Miki	Kyoko	Natsumi	Eimi			Total
	Peer influence (-)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			0
	Peer influence (+)	0	0	1	0	0	0	0			1
Second grade students		Mai	Tomo	Mika	Kimio	Kana	Saori	Yumi			Total
	Peer influence (-)	0	0	0	0	0	1	0			1
	Peer influence (+)	1	0	1	0	2	0	1			5
Third grade students		Kazahiro	Keiko	Mana	Ayano	Nana	Yoshi	Shiori	Yuka	Kie	Total
	Peer influence (-)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
	Peer influence (+)	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	5

think it's my motivation...one of my motivations" (Y1Y1Q3).

Table 6: Number of coded units relating to peer influences

For Saori, and several of her cohorts, peer comparison seemed the norm. When Saori was asked to report on her feelings about English upon first entering university, she responded "the people around me all spoke English well. I felt I must study hard to learn English...to study English" (S1Y2Q12). The tone of Saori's voice changed at this point (she had previously been recounting positive memories about her English studies and teacher at high school), and she became quite serious. I then asked her if she felt under any kind of pressure and she responded assertively "Yes" but then softened her answer by adding "a little pressure". She continued "...I have the same feeling now" (S1Y2Q12). This is in turn with the findings of Lewis and Sullivan (2007) who described peer comparison and self-consciousness or embarrassment as an issue in peer groups. The discussion relating to peer influence in Japan will continue in Section 4.7 below.

In contrast with Saori, Nana seemed to be influenced by her friends. In particular, her friendship with her bilingual Japanese-American friend seemed to encourage Nana to learn English. When asked why she was learning English, Nana responded, “I like English. I have an American-Japanese friend. I studied English from her. She taught me English. When I was an elementary school student, I met her” (N1Y1Q1). Nana’s comments resonate with the findings of Wigfield and Eccles (2000) who state that peer groups can help to improve self-efficacy and increase motivation to complete tasks if they believe they can be successful. The temporal fluctuations of peer influence and comparison will be discussed in Sections 4.7 and 5.6 below. The discussion will continue with an analysis of the comments relating to direct and indirect contact experiences with non-Japanese.

#### **4.8 Out and about - Direct and indirect contact experiences**

The discussion moves on to comments placed in the category entitled *Global context*. This category includes four sub-categories. The first contains comments regarding direct contact with non-Japanese people abroad, and the second to direct contact in Japan. The third category has references in regard to contact with foreign cultural products while traveling or studying abroad, and the final category relates to contact with overseas cultural products whilst in Japan. In general, the comments illustrate how foreign culture and people have shaped, and are continuing to shape participants’ motivation to study English.

##### **4.8.1 Direct contact experiences abroad**

I begin by discussing comments relating to direct contact experiences abroad.

References in this category give an account of the participants’ context as a Japanese person who is a member of the international community. As can be seen in Table 7

below, there were a total number of 21 references to direct contact with foreign people in another country. If we analyze this in more depth, the data reveals that in fact seven out of the 23 participants in this study talked about having traveled or studied abroad and interacted with non-Japanese whilst there. Most of these comments came from Yuki and her peers in the first grade, and therefore the discussion will start with their perceptions on their direct and indirect contact experiences in other countries.

Category	Sub-category	No. of coded units	Total No. of coded units	
Global context	1st Interview-1st graders			38
	Direct contact experiences abroad	13		
	Direct contact experiences in Japan	11		
	Cultural experiences abroad	5		
	Cultural experiences in Japan	9		
	1st Interview-2nd graders			12
	Direct contact experiences abroad	6		
	Direct contact experiences in Japan	0		
	Cultural experiences abroad	0		
	Cultural experiences in Japan	6		
	1st Interview-3rd graders			20
	Direct contact experiences abroad	2		
	Direct contact experiences in Japan	4		
	Cultural experiences abroad	2		
	Cultural experiences in Japan	12		

*Table 7: Number of coded units relating to direct and indirect contact experiences*

Based on the data categorized in this section and across the study, I would like to suggest that Yuki had a rather strong international posture. As discussed in the literature review above, Yashima's (2002) findings show the concept of international posture is composed of "interest in foreign affairs, willingness to go overseas to stay or work, readiness to interact with intercultural partners, and, one hopes, openness or a non-ethnocentric attitude toward different cultures" (p. 57). As this section is related to direct and indirect contact experiences abroad, I will predominately discuss Yuki's reflections on her time abroad and her enthusiasm to interact with intercultural

partners whilst abroad. The first question posed to Yuki during the initial interview was why she was learning English. Her response was “What is my motivation? Well...I like talking with many people so...especially foreigners and if I can speak English I can speak to many people and of course people from many countries” (Y1Y1Q1). It is also interesting to note Yuki’s demeanor at this stage of the interview. She appeared excited and enthused when giving this response. Yuki’s enthusiasm for interacting with non-Japanese was evident across all three interviews. As for now, I would like to postulate that her contact experiences, her enthusiasm for foreign culture, and her desire to interact with foreign people were some of the strong driving forces behind her motivation. It appears evident that Yuki saw English as an international language. In high school, Yuki reported becoming fluent in Korean and having traveled to Korea as a representative of her prefecture. She also noted, “I’m interested in other languages but English is the most useful to speak...I study hard now...maybe it is my motivation” (Y1Y1Q1). It appears that Yuki appreciated the value in learning English to communicate with non-Japanese. This typified the comments of the other first grade students who had reported traveling and studying abroad. For example, when talking about her study abroad experiences in Australia, Rina noted,

When I was in Australia there were not only Aussie people, but there were Chinese people...Korean people, and I can’t speak Chinese or Korean but they can speak English, and I can speak English so we can communicate in English...so they are cool...and I can understand what they are thinking...and I thought it is a good way to learn English...yeah.

It certainly appears evident that these direct contact experiences abroad impacted on these first grade students’ motivation for learning English. In contrast,

there were far fewer references to indirect contact experiences abroad. In fact, there were only seven references in total from four different people. Certainly for Yuki, interacting with foreign people on her travels had had an impact on her enthusiasm for learning English and meeting foreign people. This will become more evident when the discussion turns to the participants' desire or interest in foreign culture and people in Section 4.13 below.

In contrast to Yuki, Saori, Nana and the majority of the other second and third grade students reported minimal or no direct contact experiences abroad during the initial interview. Furthermore, there were only two references to indirect contact or cultural experiences abroad and they both came from the same participant. The only references made to direct contact were made by three students who reported having studied abroad prior to the study taking place. Perhaps the most obvious explanation is simply that the majority of the second and third grade students had not traveled abroad. In sum, Saori typified the majority of second grade students because they had never been abroad and therefore never had any direct or indirect contact opportunities in another country. However, Nana's case is slightly different. As reported in Section 4.3 above, Nana had participated in a short-term study abroad program during the summer before the first interview took place. Nevertheless, she did not refer to this experience during the initial interview. Perhaps Nana did not consider her experiences worth mentioning or it may be wise to take into account her ability to recall information under the stresses of an interview situation (Richards, 2009).

Two of the participants in this study had participated in a long-term (one year) study abroad program in Australia prior to the study commencing. Rina, a first grade student, recalled positive memories with non-Japanese whilst in Australia. She appeared to particularly enjoy the interaction with multiple nationalities and

ethnicities. She talked about making friends with people from “Argentina, China, Korea, Nepal and Thailand...and Germany”, and she added “if I didn’t go to Australia I couldn’t have made...not only Aussie friends...but also friends from around the world” (R1Y1Q12). She thought communicating in English with many different nationalities was “cool” and “a good way to learn English” (R1Y1Q7). Perhaps this represents a realization that English is an international language and being able to speak it allowed her to interact with people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. As for the second student who participated in a year-long study abroad program, Mika, her experience appeared to extrinsically and intrinsically motivate her to learn English. She noted, “When I went to Australia, no-one spoke Japanese, so at first it was really difficult to make friends. I couldn’t get anything in class too”. She then added that she also studied English “because if I didn’t learn English, it [her time abroad] wouldn’t be fun” (M1Y2Q5).

The comments from the participants who participated in a short-term school trips or study abroad seem similar. Take this comment from Natsumi as an example. “I went to a Malaysian high school and we talked a lot about our culture and something else in English...I think Malaysian students also...in Malaysia I think English not the mother tongue, so they were studying English and we were studying English so to understand each other” (N1Y1Q10). There were several comments that appear to show that this short time in another country influenced their attitude towards learning English. This is shown by the realization that they could not communicate everything they wanted to and returned to Japan with a more motivated disposition. Yumi commented, “I stayed with a host family and at that time I could only answer yes and no, so I couldn’t communicate a lot but I wanted to speak about myself and I wanted to hear about the host family” (Y1Y2Q3). It could be argued that these



experiences, for both the short-term and long-term study abroad students, promoted motivated learning behavior. One indication of this is their behavior during the course of this study. All of the seven students who discussed studying or traveling abroad reported having direct contact experiences whilst back in Japan. In fact, their comments made up over 50% of the total number of coded units relating to interactions with non-Japanese back in Japan. In addition, in the following section, it is highlighted how a small number of participants actively sought out contact with non-Japanese whilst back in Japan. What is particularly interesting is that the vast majority of these comments came from students who had studied or travelled abroad. Perhaps this is an indication that for these learners, intercultural contact abroad was both a reason for studying and an outcome of studying English. Thus Dörnyei and Csizér's argument that "intercultural contact is both a means and an end in L2 studies" (2005, p. 328), is relevant in this context.

#### **4.8.2 Direct contact experiences in Japan**

Comments placed in this sub-category refer to a direct contact experience with a non-Japanese English speaker *in Japan*. As shown in Table 7 above, in the initial interview there were 11 references to direct contact experiences in Japan by freshmen students, but far fewer mentions from sophomores and juniors. The majority of the first grade students reported having foreign friends and Yuki was no exception. Yuki recalled having many opportunities during high school to meet, interact and become friends with foreign students. Take this comment as an example.

In my high school I could meet many foreigners...a lot of south Asians came to our school and we could communicate with them...I talked with people from Laos, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei, Philippines and Cambodia...maybe more...I talked in English...then I

belonged to the English conversation club and we were the hosts...working on this project and I was the interpreter...like an interpreter and I connected my friends with the international students. My friends wanted to ask...well casual talk...where are you from? And how old are you? What is school life like? It was very interesting (Y1Y1Q12).

Not only did Yuki have strong international posture, but she also displayed an open attitude toward a variety of different cultures. In addition, Yuki seems to have actively sought out contact opportunities. Joining the English conversation club at high school is an example of this and the following comment provides further support. Yuki said, “When I see a foreigner in the city, I really want to talk with them...I often try to speak to [foreign] people, and talk about many things...about their country, why they have come to Japan...I introduce about my hometown...like that” (Y1Y1Q11). As mentioned above, perhaps this is an indication that intercultural contact abroad was both a reason for studying and an outcome of studying English.

Saori typified the other second grade participants in terms of direct contact with non-Japanese in Japan. As we will see in Sections 4.8 and 5.8 below, there were numerous comments relating to meeting foreigners in Japan in the second and third interviews, but none during the initial interview. As for the third grade students, there were a total of four coded units in this category and Nana accounted for half of those and they were both references to her Japanese-American friend and her family.

### **4.8.3 Indirect contact experiences in Japan**

The references placed in this sub-category relate to indirect contact experiences with foreign cultural products and artifacts whilst in Japan. Research has shown the

important role that cultural products have played in foreign language learning situations with little direct contact to the L2 community (Clément, Dörnyei & Noels, 1994). For this particular group, there were a total of 27 references to indirect contact with cultural products. Furthermore, most of the students talked about contact experiences in Japan.

The more typical learners in this group made references to indirect contact with popular culture through media. These included references to indirect contact with pop music, movies, dramas, current affairs, and documentaries. These findings are comparable to the work of Csizér and Kormos (2009) who suggested media products held a more important position in their model of language learning motivation than both direct and indirect contact in the Hungarian EFL context. Csizér and Kormos (2009) used structural equation modelling to discover how kinds of direct and indirect contact situations (and the importance learners attributed to these inter-cultural encounters) influenced 13-14-year-old Hungarian language learners' motivated behavior. Csizér and Kormos (2009) discovered that "students who engage in inter-cultural encounters involving the L2 and those who receive information on L2 speakers and their cultures from their immediate environment seem to show more interest in the cultural products of the L2" (p. 178). The students in my research were also very keen on media products and specifically on American pop music.

Indeed, pop music appears to be perceived as a significant part of American culture, and for several of the participants, even a reason to study and travel to America. Ayano talked extensively about her love for American pop music. Consider the following account. "I like American music. I like Carly Rae Jepsen and Taylor Swift, so I want to understand their songs in English." (A1Y2Q5). Ayano, and many others, thought listening to pop music and reading the lyrics was an interesting and productive

way to improve their English. Keiko perceived pop music as way to learn improve her vocabulary. She noted “I like listening to music so I read the lyrics of English music and I try to remember the words” (K1Y3Q16).

For Saori, listening to and studying from pop songs appeared to be an anxiety-free way of learning and practicing English. When asked why she liked foreign pop music so much, she responded,

I like the rhythm and I listen to Taylor Swift...she is very beautiful. English songs are cool...this is my image...so if I can sing English songs then I will be cool...ha-ha...I like to study English using music. I try to understand the lyrics and then find out how I am wrong with the meanings...I'm usually completely wrong but it is interesting to learn. I'm practicing now singing English songs at karaoke, but I'm not a good singer...ha-ha. (S3Y2Q10)

As mentioned above, Saori appeared to act in a self-conscious and reserved fashion during many parts of the interviews. She frequently mentioned being anxious and nervous in English classes, but whilst discussing pop music, her demeanor changed quite dramatically. She gave a much longer answer than usual which was punctuated with smiles and laughter. Taking this further, she appeared more relaxed than at any other point during the interviews. It seemed clear that pop music was a very appealing alternative way for Saori to enjoy learning English. Although this excerpt shows that Saori was still showing signs of her language learning anxiety and underestimating her own ability as discussed above, she discussed pop music using very positive language.

Although it is not clear how students were accessing pop music, it appears that the ease of access and convenience was a major factor in how often the participants

listened to music. Mobile devices and smartphones have made access to music and music videos widely available, and it seems clear from comments like this that convenience is a major factor in how often the participants listen to music. If we consider this from a sociocultural perspective, it seems that ease of access to social media is allowing these learners the opportunity to produce their own social and cultural environments. Content sharing sites (CSSs) such as YouTube and social media sites (SMSs) such as Twitter are ubiquitous amongst these participants. Content sharing sites provide learners with access to much more foreign culture than previous generations and social media allows them access to communities of likeminded people. Sociocultural activity is much less restricted by the physical location with current technology. I would argue that Saori's and other learner's motivation for learning English is not simply being influenced by Western pop music available on YouTube, but that the sociocultural context is interacting with the learner's goals and values. Saori is clearly a fan of the pop artist Taylor Swift, and the ease of access is allowing her to listen to her music as often as she likes. This is then possibly giving her the confidence to bring her music into her own context at Karaoke<sup>9</sup>. Perhaps Saori is even developing her L2 identity through inter-cultural contact with pop culture through CSSs and SMS. By singing Taylor Swift songs with her friends, she is identifying herself as a fan of modern pop music. She is also showing that this is a comfortable and convenient way for her to learn English. As Lamb and Budiyo (2013) inform us, "such 'identity work' is just as much a part of successful language learning as grammar work or skill-acquisition" (p. 18).

Another form of cultural experience was contact with foreign movies, and in particular, Western or Hollywood movies. Several participants recalled watching an

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<sup>9</sup> Karaoke in Japan is typically done in a private box with groups of friends or colleagues.

English movie during their school days and reported how this impacted on their attitudes towards learning English. An illustration of this is provided by Eimi. She mentioned, “I didn’t like studying English, but after I had watched this movie [Camp Rock], it changed the way I think about English. Then I started studying English harder” (E1Y1Q19). She subsequently added, “When I watched this movie, was when I started to like English (E1Y1Q27). For Eimi, the theme of the movie encouraged her, but for Yumi, a second grade student, it was a desire to understand the language. Consider this as an example. “When I was a child, I watched English films, but I couldn’t understand so much of the English, but when I was a junior high school student, I wanted to understand the English more. It motivated me to learn English more” (Y1Y2Q4). In a similar manner, Kazuhiro added, “When I was in junior high, I watched the musical The Sound of Music. I liked movies so it was very interesting. I watched the movie in Japanese, but the scenes with music were in English, so I wanted to know what they were saying. This made me interested in English” (K1Y3Q4).

Although music and movies were mentioned more frequently than other forms of indirect contact, several participants did discuss watching TV shows, reading books, newspapers, magazines, and using the Internet. A few students even referred encountering current affairs or situations abroad through English textbooks, or through a recommendation from a peer. In particular, several participants discussed being moved by documentaries, TV shows, and current affairs. Miki recalled the moment when she believes she initially became interested in learning English.

When I was a junior high school student, I read some books about Rwanda...it was very...I was surprised...I didn’t know that was happening...the history of Africa and Rwanda. After I read this book, I was interested in many things about Africa and English and foreign

countries...and then I couldn't speak English, but in the future I wanted to work in Africa so I studied English (M1Y1Q15).

Other participants appeared to be captivated by the glamour and style of American TV shows. Nana said, "I like Gossip Girl. The actresses are very beautiful and the fashion is cool...ah" (N1Y3Q10). At the time of this comment, I noted a real sense of longing from Nana which was certainly emphasized by the sigh at the end of the sentence. She later added that it was her dream to go to New York and see the glamorous places she had witnessed on TV. Although there was the potential for direct contact with non-Japanese in this context, it appears evident that L2 cultural products played a more important role in influencing attitudes. These desires or interests in Western culture and people will be discussed in more detail in Section 4.13 below. The discussion will next turn to Yuki, Saori, and Nana's career aspirations.

#### **4.9 "I want to be a..." - Career aspirations**

The discussion now moves on to analyze the participants' comments placed in the second broad theme (BT2), Values and goals. References in this broad theme relate to the participants' values and their goals for the future. The goals and values are not intended to be considered individual instances which have been shaped by the sociocultural and historical influences in BT1, but are to be considered to work in a more responsive relationship with the contexts. In other words, the concepts in each broad theme are seen to be interacting with the individual whilst actively contributing to the developing context. This broad theme has been created to make it easier to understand how the participants' motivation has developed (and will continue to develop) through their interaction with the contexts in BT1.

This section begins by offering a discussion of the participants' career aspirations. The references in this first category relate to the desire to work using English in the future, or how useful English is for improving future job prospects. As you can see in Table 8, in total there were 38 references to potential future careers. There were 13 coded units made by first grade students, 10 by the second graders, and 15 by the third grade students. This would suggest similarities between the age groups. However, a deeper analysis reveals several differences. This section therefore begins with a discussion of the career aspirations of the first and second grade students before contrasting those findings with the career aspirations of the third grade students.

Broad category	Category	No. of coded units	Total no. of coded units
Values and goals	First grade students – Career goals	13	38
	Second grade students - Career goals	10	
	Third grade students - Career goals	15	

*Table 8: Number of coded units relating to career aspirations*

During the first interview with the first and second grade students, all 23 coded units were related to finding a job using English. If we take the case of Yuki for example, she reported wanting “to get a license to become an English guide”. She continued, “So I want to learn how to become an interpreter...I want to be an interpreter in the future. It is maybe hard so I need to study more...and in the future I want to work in Japan but I also want to work abroad for a short time...I want to work in a hotel or as a guide” (Y1Y1Q15). Saori also mentioned wanting to secure job in which she could speak English. She stated, “I want to be a teacher in a junior high school. I think English is so important, so I can tell the children English is fun, it is interesting, and useful” (S1Y2Q9). In addition to these comments, many of the



participants in these age groups reported having ambitious dreams for their future careers. Koyo stated he would like to “help refugees...like the Sudanese...I want to go to Sudan in the future” (K1Y1Q7). Miki noted, “in the future I want to work in Africa...I want to go to Rwanda” (M1Y2Q5) and Kimio mentioned, “I’d like to work as a translator for a football team to do some translation work with foreign players...yeah this kind of thing” (K1Y2Q13). These goals all seem very specific and detailed, but they could also be perceived as being rather ambitious. It could be conceived that these two groups of learners have created an *ideal-self*, at least at this stage of their development and in terms of their career aspirations. It would seem these learners have a strong vision of their desired future self-image. Furthermore, this image is adequately different from their current self. They also perceive this ideal-self as plausible, but it is not certain that they can achieve it. In addition, these images of these *ideal-selves* appear to be very clear and elaborate. However, at this stage it is unclear whether the participants have developed a plan to operationalize this vision, are working to keep the vision alive, or whether they have any counterbalance for the vision (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). These temporal fluctuations will be analyzed in Sections 4.9 and 5.9 below.

In total, there were 15 references to future career aspirations of the third grade students in this study. In contrast to the findings presented above, many of the career goals for this age group were more pragmatic. If we take Nana as an example, we can see her goals are still quite specific, but much less ambitious. She stated, “I want to be a public employee” (N1Y3Q15). She also stated she is concentrating on studying for the TOEIC test, “For my resume...I want to find a good job...some good work...so I want to get a good TOEIC score...700 is good for a company...I can get a better job with a better salary” (N1Y1Q14). A response from Ayano was similar. She said, “I

want to be an office worker in N city. I'm studying for the test. I need to study English for the test. There is a short English section on the test" (A1Y3Q15), and shortly afterwards added "as an office worker I might have to speak English" (A1Y3Q17). This is not to say that all these participants only mentioned attempting to secure a job that required a high TOEIC score or had an English test as part of the entry requirement. Take this comment from Shiori as an example. "I'd like to be a cabin attendant, so they are skills I need. I need a high TOEIC to be a cabin attendant. I want to use English in my job in the future" (S1Y3Q16). In fact, all of the third grade students referred to how English will be beneficial in securing a job in the future, and many stated they would like to use English in their job in the future. However, the references seem far more grounded than the other two age groups. Furthermore, these participants seemed to have developed a plan to operationalize their visions, and appeared to be working to keep these visions alive. This can be seen in a quote from Yuka. She stated that she would like to be an English teacher in Japan, or Japanese teacher abroad. She added, "Next year I want to take exams for graduate school. If I can pass them, I want to study English education. I think it will be difficult, but I want to go to K University...or H University because H is famous for the quality of English education" (Y1Y3Q20). Sections 4.9 and 5.9 will present an analysis of how these career aspirations fluctuate, but now the discussion moves on to goals to travel, study, and live abroad at this initial stage of the study.

#### **4.10 Goals to travel, live, and study abroad**

The references in this section have been taken from the second and third categories above (See Figure 2), Goals to study abroad or live and travel abroad. More specifically, they either relate to the desire to study English in another country in the future, or how being proficient in English would be useful for studying abroad. It also

covers participants' desires to travel to or live in a country other than Japan, and how improving their English skills would help them living and traveling abroad.

As can be seen in Table 9 below, there were a total of 36 coded units relating to living and traveling abroad in the future. In addition, the data displayed in Table 9 makes it clear that these comments were most common amongst the junior students. In addition, the vast majority of the comments were relating to traveling abroad on vacation rather than relocating and living in a foreign country. In fact, only four of the 23 participants mentioned wanting to live in another country. These can be considered to be atypical in this study.

First interview - Live and travel abroad										
First grade students	Rina	Koyo	Yuki	Miki	Kyoko	Natsumi	Eimi			Total
	1	0	1	0	2	0	0			4
Second grade students	Mai	Tomo	Mika	Kimio	Kana	Saori	Yumi			Total
	3	1	0	1	0	2	2			9
Third grade students	Kazahiro	Keiko	Mana	Ayano	Nana	Yoshi	Shiori	Yuka	Kie	Total
	1	7	3	4	1	2	1	2	2	23

Table 9: Number of coded units relating to the desire to live and travel abroad

If we take a closer look at the comments relating to traveling abroad, it reveals that there was not one particular desired destination. Rather, there were references to a desire to travel in Asia, Europe, North America, and Australasia. Many participants simply referred to wanting to go abroad. Take this comment from Yuki as an example of the typical responses. She said, “Now, I want to go to American and Australia and Canada and also Korea...now...but I want to travel around the world if I can” (Y1Y1Q16). This desire to travel abroad resonates with the findings of Yashima (2000) who investigated orientations for Japanese EFL college students and discovered the role of English as an international language meant that there was no

specified target community to identify with. Several of the participants in this study saw English as being useful on any future trip abroad. Take this comment from Rina, a first grade student. “When I go and travel around the world, it would be helpful if I could speak English” (R1Y1Q4). This will be discussed in more detail below in Section 4.12, English as a facilitative and communicative tool.

Saori reported that she would like to travel to another country in the future which was a common response amongst the majority of students in her age group. Saori did not appear to have any concrete plans to travel abroad, but noted, “I want to travel to foreign countries someday” (S1Y2Q4). Her wish to travel in the future could be linked to indirect contact experiences with foreign cultural products and artifacts whilst in Japan. An example of this is her desire to travel to America. Saori mentioned watching a TV program of her favorite artist traveling to America and she commented that she would like to visit the same place. She also recalled researching Italy on the Internet and talked about hoping to visit Italy for the cuisine and the nature.

Similar to Saori, Kazahiro, a student in the third grade, mentioned wanting to travel abroad because of his contact experiences with popular culture. He stated, “I told you I like musicals and Europe has many musical concerts so much cheaper than Japan, so I want to go there and see them.” (K1Y3Q22). Again this will be discussed in more detail in the desires or interests in Western culture section below. Although there were more references from this age group, one participant, Keiko, accounted for seven of these. Keiko’s responses were atypical to the other participants. She appeared to have a strong interest in traveling around the world. In fact, she was the only participant who reported wanted to travel independently and alone. She mentioned

that her educational context played a big part in her desire to travel and noted, “I like Napoleon and European history so I want to visit world history sites” (K1Y3Q6).

As can be seen in Table 10, there were fewer references across the age ranges expressing a desire to study abroad. Most of these comments related to the compulsory short-term study abroad program offered by the university. However, the exception came from the only third grade student to mention study abroad, Yuka. She was making plans to go on a long-term study abroad program. Furthermore, many of the comments in this section did not seem to be concrete goals. Yuki mentioned, “I think I want to study abroad next year or in two years” (Y1Y1Q14). Saori also had a vague plan to go abroad to study. She noted, “I want to kaigairyokou (travel overseas) in America and study” (S1Y2Q15).

First interview - Study abroad										
First grade students	Rina	Koyo	Yuki	Miki	Kyoko	Natsumi	Eimi			Total
	1	1	1	0	1	1	0			5
Second grade students	Mai	Tomo	Mika	Kimio	Kana	Saori	Yumi			Total
	1	2	0	0	2	1	1			7
Third grade students	Kazahiro	Keiko	Mana	Ayano	Nana	Yoshi	Shiori	Yuka	Kie	Total
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1

Table 10: Number of coded units relating to the desire to study abroad

Only two of the second grade students discussed going on a longer one-year exchange program. Perhaps the main reason for only two students stating that they would like to go a long-term study abroad program is the economic burden. Several of the students, including Kana, stated that they would like to go abroad but said they probably will not. Kana noted, “This year I want to go to a foreign country so I decided I’ll go to England. I’m thinking about studying abroad in America next year for one year, but I don’t think I will.” (K1Y1Q15). In the member checking session

after the first interview, Kana stated that the financial burden of studying abroad was the main factor preventing her from doing so. The high cost of tuition, living and travel expenses, coupled with the fact that she must continue paying tuition at her current university made it inhibitive for her and many of her peers to study abroad. This appears to be a common trend throughout Japan as the number of Japanese students who are studying abroad has been consistently decreasing over the last 10 years. According to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), there were 82,945 Japanese learners studying abroad in 2004 compared with 60,138 in 2012. The financial burden might have been a reason for only one third grade student mentioning studying abroad. However, a simple explanation might be that several of them had recently participated in a short-term study abroad program.

#### **4.11 Interest and enjoyment in learning English as a language subject**

At this stage of the study, more than 50 percent of the students in this study expressed interest and enjoyment in learning English as a language subject. The comments refer to a scholarly interest in the English language. The references in this category also refer to an intrinsic type of motivation for learning English. There were more coded units in this category from second grade learners than from first and third graders.

First interview - Interest and enjoyment in learning English as a Language Subject										
First grade students	Rina	Koyo	Yuki	Miki	Kyoko	Natsumi	Eimi			Total
	1	1	0	1	1	1	1			6
Second grade students	Mai	Tomo	Mika	Kimio	Kana	Saori	Yumi			Total
	3	1	0	1	0	2	2			9
Third grade students	Kazahiro	Keiko	Mana	Ayano	Nana	Yoshi	Shiori	Yuka	Kie	Total
	0	0	3	0	2	0	0	1	0	6

*Table 11: Number of coded units relating to an Interest and enjoyment in learning English as a language subject*

The comments in this section from 14 of the 24 participants seem to suggest they derived satisfaction and experienced pleasure in learning English. To make these comments more salient I have used part of Vallerand and Ratelle's (2002) hierarchical model to show three subtypes of intrinsic motivation to learn English; to learn for pleasure and satisfaction, for achievement and a sense of surpassing oneself, and to experience stimulation or pleasant sensations.

#### ***4.11.1 Learning English for pleasure and satisfaction***

Yuki was actually the only first grade participant who did not mention an interest and enjoyment in learning English as a language subject. An example from Miki provides a sample of the comments. She stated, "Another reason why I like English is the different pronunciation. It's interesting that each English speaking country have different pronunciations and accents" (M1Y1Q21). Saori's comments accounted for two of the 24 coded units in this category and her comments were quite typical of the other participants who spoke about learning English for pleasure and satisfaction. Saori's initial answer to the question of why she is learning English gave the impression of an intrinsic interest in learning English as a language subject. Her response was "I like English because English is interesting" (S1Y2Q1). Although this is a rather vague answer, she added some further information when prompted to describe why she thought English was interesting. Saori added, "English words have many different meanings...there are many different expressions and it is interesting [to learn them]" (S1Y2Q6). It seems likely that learning new words helped to satisfy Saori's curiosity.

Saori was not the only student to discuss deriving pleasure and satisfaction from learning English. Nana seemed to derive pleasure from the grammatical

structures in English. She noted, “I like the pronunciation. I want to get good pronunciation. I like the grammar...constructing sentences...I learned how to construct sentences in junior high school and I thought it was interesting” (N1Y3Q4). These findings relate to those of Ushioda (2001). In her study with Irish learners of French, Ushioda found personal satisfaction in learning French was one of “the principle[s] defining rationale of each subject’s perceived motivation” (p. 105).

#### ***4.11.2 Learning English for achievement and a sense surpassing oneself***

Yoshi’s comments perhaps best highlight how learning English gave him a sense of achievement and gave some of the participants a sense surpassing themselves. Yoshi stated, “I want to make my foreign friends and teachers surprised...I want to make them go wow...saying how do you know these words, or say you have a strong vocabulary” (Y1Y3Q7). Many of the comments in this section could be interpreted as matching Wigfield and Eccles’ (2000) model of task values. As mentioned in the literature review above, Wigfield and Eccles see task value as comprising of four components; attainment value, intrinsic value, extrinsic utility value and cost. However, during the first interview Yuka, a third grade student mentioned that “everyone studies English from junior high...if you try hard you can be good at it...I think these days it is nothing special...so English became the only one thing that I’m proud of. (Y1Y3Q24). This would suggest that Brophy’s (2008) description of the benefits of education using terms such as “enrichment, enablement, and empowerment” (p. 40) would be more applicable for many of the learners in this study. I would suggest that here Yuka sees English as a way of enhancing and advancing her life and takes real satisfaction in her achievements.



On the other hand, there are many comments that show the attainment and intrinsic value of learning English through popular culture. This comment from Mika draws attention to this.

The novel was made into a movie and when I watched the movie, I thought it was a fantastic story. I really loved the story, so I thought reading the book would be a great way to learn English. I thought I could learn vocabulary and phrases from the book. (M1Y2Q9)

#### ***4.11.3 Learning English to experience stimulation or pleasant sensations***

“I went to an English conversation school when I was a junior high school student. I went to ECC. When I learned English, I felt that I’m cool and smart...a good feeling” (N1Y3Q5). This was a quote taken from Nana’s first interview and was typical of many of the comments in this category. Many participants commented on how they were learning English for pleasure and satisfaction. Rina, a first grade student stated,

If I’m in Japan and I speak English people are like wow you can speak English...it makes me feel good! If people ask me what a foreigner says, I can tell them what they are saying.

This was typical of many of the other comments from the second grade students. In particular, independent learning seemed to provide the most pleasure. As referred to in the literature review section above, Ushioda (2001) found that successful learners emphasized the “motivational impetus of a positive learning history” and “intrinsic affective rewards” while less successful learners emphasized their goals and

incentives (p.119). In other words, motivated learners derived motivation from experience and less motivated learners' motivation is directed towards future goals. These second grade participants did not mention their past successes in the language learning classroom as frequently, but they did talk about learning English to experience stimulation or pleasant sensations more frequently than the other two groups. They also talked a considerable amount more about general goals for the future than the other two groups. Applying Ushioda's model to this situation indicates that the first and third year students' motivation is a little more developed than this particular group.

#### **4.12 English as a facilitative and communicative tool**

The discussion now moves on to comments placed in two of the categories in the broad category Values and goals. The comments in this category either refer to learning English as a tool to achieve something else, or refer to learning English as a tool for communicating with people from other countries. In sum, these references are a realization of how English could be used. It contains what might be described as intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, but all references are to the usefulness of English. These comments have been coded into two separate categories because some of the references are clearly related to communicating with people from foreign countries whereas others are distinctly relating to the usefulness of English to achieve a future goal. However, there is a close connection and some comments have been dual coded because they simply refer to both the value of English as a tool for communication and for other purposes. Take this example from Koyo. "I want to use English to communicate and work in a foreign country" (K1Y1Q6). Therefore, for the purpose of cohesion, these comments will be discussed jointly.

Broad category	Category	First grade students	Second grade students	Third grade students
Values and goals	English as a facilitative tool	29	6	16
	English as a tool for communication	10	5	13

*Table 12: Number of coded units in the first interview relating to English as a Facilitative Tool and as a tool for communication*

The first category, English as a facilitative tool, was made up of a wide spectrum of responses, but each referred to learning English so it can be used as a *tool* to achieve something. The second category referred to English as a tool for communication with native and non-native speakers. Following this further, these references appeared to represent a realization of how English could be used in the participants' future lives:

- To interact and communicate with intercultural partners;
- To develop foreign cultural knowledge;
- To learn more about international issues and topics;
- To disseminate knowledge;
- To realize humanitarian goals abroad;
- As an international language.

Yuki simply sums this up with the following statement. She said, "I'm interested in other languages but English is the most useful to speak" (Y1Y1Q4). It is interesting to note how the majority of these references to the usefulness of English came from the first grade students. Later, I will discuss potential reasons for this. In the meantime, the discussion will turn to the comments of another first grade student, Miki, who spoke in some detail of how she portrayed the usefulness of English and how it had driven her to learn the language.

During this first interview, it became evident that Miki had realized English was an international language which could be used as a tool to help her fulfill her ambition to do philanthropic work in developing countries. Initially, Miki was asked why she was learning English, and her first response was that “English is the best tool for communication” (M1Y1Q1). When asked to elaborate on this, she added that she would like to work in Africa in the future and in particular would like to offer assistance to people in Rwanda. My initial thought at this point in the interview (recorded in note form during the interview) was that this was a career goal, but as Miki continued her elaboration it became clear that this was somewhat more than an occupational related goal. This is reflected in the following extract.

So studying English is not only for me...it is so I can help people in Africa and developing countries...if my purpose for learning English is just for me, I can't study so long. My big purpose is to help people...this motivates me (M1Y1Q4).

Miki reasoned that her goal to assist people in developing countries was sustaining her motivation to learn English, and she indicated that without this goal she would be unlikely to be able continue her English studies in the long-term. The following quote reinforces this point, and also sheds light on how her Christian values of helping others has influenced her motivation for learning English,

I think that it is vain to help myself and to think only about myself...so I want to do something for people...this is my motivation (for learning English) ...very simple...my friends and other people have better reasons (M1Y1Q21).

It is interesting to note how Miki believed it would be vain of her to study for a purpose other than for helping others. This gives us an indication of the strength of her Christian values, and is perhaps an instance of her trying to divert attention from herself and making her motivation seem less important than that of others.

Miki reported that this desire to do humanistic work started when she was a junior high school student. She added, “I read some books about Rwanda...it was very...I was surprised...I didn’t know that was happening...the history of Africa and Rwanda” (M1Y1Q13). She continued, “After I read this book I was interested in many things about Africa and English and foreign countries...and then I couldn’t speak English, but in the future I wanted to work in Africa so I studied English” (M1Y1Q15). Recalling the work of Norton (2000), and her concept of identity as a socially and historically situated process, Miki conceivably was constructing a relationship to the world during junior high school, and through her religious beliefs and the knowledge gained about the situation in Rwanda, began to understand her possibilities for the future. It might even be suggested that Miki constructed an identity as a Christian hoping to conduct humane work in a developing country, and realized that English would be a tool required to help her fulfill this.

What is particularly interesting is the majority of these comments stem from a realization that English is a global language (Crystal, 2003). What is more, seven of the references were directly related to how English is perceived as being necessary in a globalized world. Consider this example from Koyo, a first grade student. “Now English is...I think English is needed because the world is becoming globalized and English is...most people are learning English...it is the international language...I want to be able to speak English very well” (K1Y1Q20). The comments also seem to

imply awareness that English could be used not only with English speakers, but with “speakers who come from different linguacultural backgrounds” (Jenkins, 2007, p. 200). Rina, another first grade student noted, “When I go and travel around the world, it would be helpful if I could speak English” (Y1Y3Q5). Kyoko also mentioned, “I want to make a lot of friends...not only Japanese and not only English” (K1Y1Q2). Finally, when Natsumi, another first grade student, was reflecting on a school trip to Malaysia, she noted, “In Malaysia, I think English not the mother tongue so they were studying English and we were studying English so to understand each other English is a very important tool” (N1Y1Q11). Again, these comments offer support to the research of Yashima (2000) who investigated Japanese EFL college students’ reasons for learning English, and discovered that English in Japan is viewed as an international language with the learners not identifying with any particular community.

As reported above, Yuki and her cohorts seemed to view English as the best tool for communication with other non-Japanese. Yuki stated at the start of her first interview, “I like talking with many people so...especially foreigners and if I can speak English I can speak to many people and of course people from many countries” (Y1Y1Q1). Again, Miki was most explicit about her desire to learn English to communicate with non-Japanese. Indeed, her accounts during the interview indicated that Miki understood English to be an international language, and knowledge of English would allow her to communicate with people of other nationalities with similar religious beliefs. Consider the following account.

I’m a Christian and I go to church...there are many other nationalities...for example...African, Chinese and Korean...and I want to communicate with

them... I'm Japanese but I'm a part of the world...I want to be friends with people all over the world...I can't live without my family or parents...just as we (Japanese) can't live without another country...it's the same idea...so I want to know more about foreign countries and I want us to understand each other more (M1Y1Q7).

Miki's comments suggest she had an international orientation and would like to develop relationships with Christians of other nationalities. In addition to this, Miki seemed to recognize that she was living in a globalized world, and believed it necessary for her as a Japanese to learn and understand more about foreign countries. It is interesting to note a lack of reference to English speaking countries where Christianity is the dominant religion. Miki referred to communicating with people from China and Korea where Christianity is not the predominant religion. These comments also appear to suggest Miki was aiming to develop her international posture (Yashima, 2002) in order that she could establish relationships with Christians around the world.

These comments seem to refer to what have been traditionally termed integrative and instrumental goals, and are closely related to the concept which Yashima termed international posture and resonate with further findings of Yashima (2002). This is illustrated by the references to developing cultural knowledge which suggests "openness or a non-ethnocentric attitude towards different cultures" (p. 57). Consider this comment from Eimi, a first grade student,

I think...this world has many different cultures and ways of thinking. There are no right answers so...learning other countries cultures is important to understand other people...their way of thinking. If I can do that, I think I can

be more...if I can understand another person's culture, I can understand that person...their character...their thinking (E1Y1Q17).

As referred to above, the majority of references to English being a facilitative tool came from freshmen students. This group seemed to have a much greater international posture than both the second and third grade students. I would like to suggest that one possible explanation for this is related to the institutional pressures discussed in Section 4.6 above. For the second and third year students, the high stakes of the TOEIC test and its role as a gatekeeper to future employment might possibly have been diminishing intrinsic interests and desires to develop an international posture. Their paramount focus appears to have become securing a TOEIC score sufficient enough for job-hunting which is something the freshmen seemed relatively unconcerned with. How these sociocultural and historical influences along with their values and goals develop over the period of one academic year will be discussed in Chapters 5 and 6 below.

As a final point in this section, I would like to offer a brief caveat. Although I have speculated above that the pressure of achieving a suitable score on the TOEIC test might have impacted intrinsic interests of third grade students, I do not mean to claim this is a simple causal relationship. This relationship was postulated as an example of one possible interaction between the complex sociocultural and historical contexts placed in the first broad theme (BT1) and the goals and values from the second broad theme (BT2). One could hypothesize that the sociocultural and historical contexts should not be treated as external factors which have influenced the participants' motivation, but should be used to understand how their motivation has developed thus far, and will continue to develop through their interaction with these



contexts. Likewise, the goals and values placed in BT2 should not be regarded as just having been shaped by the sociocultural and historical influences in BT1, but should be considered to work in a more responsive relationship with the contexts. In other words, the interaction between the context and the values and goals is reciprocal with the individual actively contributing to the developing context. The fluctuations seen in the second and third rounds of data collection which are reported in Chapters 5 and 6 below offer more insights into how this dynamic relationship develops amongst different age groups and with individual participants. Meanwhile, the discussion turns to the comments placed in the category Desires or interests in Western culture.

#### **4.13 Desires or interests in Western culture and people**

The comments in this section reflect a strong interest in engaging with Western culture and people. This section has been organized into two general themes. The first includes comments which reflect a desire for greater social relations with Western people, and the subsequent theme includes references to a strong interest in the cultural products of Western cultures.

Broad category	Category	First grade students	Second grade students	Third grade students	Total
Values and goals	Desire or interest in Western culture and people	15	5	20	40

*Table 13: Number of coded units in the first interview relating to a desire or interest in Western culture and people*

#### ***4.13.1 “So, if I marry a foreigner” - Desires or interests in***

##### ***Western people***

With regard to personal relationships, many of the participants in this study did seem to have a greater Western orientation than an international orientation discovered by Yashima (2000). Although I reported above that it appeared there was no specified target community to identify with, several of the participants had, what appears to be, a very strong desire to have close personal relationships with Western people. This can be seen when Yuki was discussing the situation of her mother’s cousin who had married an Australian man. As reported above, Yuki had stated that “they had a kid and he was very cute and could speak English and Japanese, so I thought it was very cool and fantastic...I thought I wanted to study English more” (Y1Y1Q6). Then later in the interview she added,

Two years ago my mother’s cousin came back again and they had two kids and I looked at the family and thought they were an ideal family...so it is my dream to make a family where my husband is a foreigner and the kids are half Japanese and half foreign...and cute...it’s my dream. (Y1Y1Q9)

Although this reference does not specifically state that she would like to marry a Western man, she stated in the member checking session that she would prefer an English speaking husband because she would have the opportunity to talk in English. She also added,

“So...if I marry with a foreigner I can speak English with him...I want to speak English in my daily life...so if I marry a foreigner I can use English...and also my kids will be able to speak English

and Japanese which is a very cool thing...it's my ideal family”

(Y1Y1Q17).

As mentioned above, Nana also reported on being fascinated with her American-Japanese friend's father. She stated that this family friendship with a Western man influenced her to go to a conversation school and study more English. Mana, another participant in the third grade spoke about potentially meeting and having a relationship with a Western man. After a long discussion about North America, Mana stated, “I want to stay in another country. If I meet a person from another country, I think I'd want to live in his country or I want to take my family to Canada in the future” (M11Y3Q21). The comments in this section reflect what Takahashi (2013) describes as *akogare*, or a desire for increasing engagement with the West amongst Japanese women. However, the comments in this study relating to a desire for engagement with the West were not exclusively made by the female participants. This can be seen in the following section about desires and interests in Western culture.

#### ***4.13.2 “I like Western music and Hollywood movies” - Desires or interests in Western culture***

There appeared to be a very strong interest in Western culture amongst the majority of the participants in this study, regardless of their sex. In fact, male students across all the age groups talked about their interest in Western culture, and in particular, Western pop culture. Take this response from Koyo, a first grade student, as an example. “I like Taylor Swift and Victoria Justice...she has performed on TV in Japan. Not everyone knows her...only a few people. I like Bio Hazard or Harry Potter...Mission Impossible” (K1Y1Q8). Most of the references were to American products. Koyo again discusses his love for American pop culture. When asked if he

had other reasons for learning English, he stated, “I like Western music and Hollywood movies...and I am very attracted to US culture” (K1Y1Q4). Tomo, a second grade student, gave this reply to the opening question asking why he was learning English,

First, I like foreign movies, music and books so I want to be able to enjoy them directly without a Japanese translation. I like pop music, all kinds of movies and I sometimes read paperbacks. I’m not interested in one particular country, but I like popular culture from the USA (T1Y2Q1)

Nana, the student whose responses typified those of the third grade students talked in detail about the characters in her favorite American TV show. She said, “I like *Gossip Girl*. The actresses are very beautiful and the fashion is cool...ah...I want to go to America...to New York because I watch this drama. I want to walk down the streets of New York...go shopping” (N1Y3Q12). These responses reflect the ‘colourful’ responses in Takahashi’s findings (2013). Takahashi noted that her participants often spoke about their desires for English and Western countries in childhood. She continues, “These responses usually extended to their encounters with Western men in Japan or in Sydney. For example, their *akogare*, many enthusiastically told me, came from watching *Sesame Street*, Hollywood movies, and Western pop/rock stars” (p.1).

In this particular study, many of the participants appeared at ease and at times enthused when talking about these hobbies. In fact, when Nana talked about her love for *Gossip Girl* she was beaming with delight.

#### **4.14 What typifies a motivated English language learner in this context at the start of the study?**

The discussion now offers an overview of what typifies a motivated English language learner in this context. More specifically, it provides responses to the first two research questions posed in Section 2.13 above:

- 1) From the perspective of Japanese university L2 learners, what motivates them to learn English?
- 2) What differences in these perceptions can be seen between first grade, second grade, and third grade Japanese L2 learners?

Given the wide-range and complex nature of the discussion presented above, providing both a comprehensive and concise overview of language learning motivation in this context is challenging. This section therefore begins by offering a brief general overview the perceptions of language learning motivation from the perspective of Japanese university L2 learners. Considering the scale of the study and constraints on space it would be impractical to review each of these perceptions in any detail. The discussion will therefore be limited to the more prominent features of language learning motivation at this stage.

Presented below are the sociocultural and historical influences in categorized BT1 and the goals and values from BT2, and it should be once again noted that the goals and values should not be considered individual variables which have been shaped by sociocultural and historical influences. Instead, they should be conceptualized as working in a series of responsive relationships with the contexts. In other words, these concepts should be seen to be interactive with the individual actively contributing to the developing context. Interspersed with this brief overview

and discussion of prominent motivational features, the discussion also highlights more specific differences between these viewpoints in the three different age groups in an attempt to answer the second research question.

As can be seen in Figure 3 below, there were references to the macro- and micro-social contexts, and the global context. However, the vast majority of coded units categorized in BT1 were relating to the participants' past educational history and ongoing context. From these comments it can be hypothesized that both the past and current educational contexts are influential on language learning language motivation.



Figure 3: A visualization of the total number of coded units in the first interview in BT1 and BT2

The participants in this study reported having more positive learning experiences than negative ones, and having been encouraged or influenced by an English teacher. More specifically, there were references to the students' ability in the

past to get good grades, their efforts being rewarded, a good classroom atmosphere and interesting activities in English classes, and positive references regarding English teachers.

However, the data was not void of comments relating to a negative learning history with methods of instruction and evaluation in middle and high school being amongst the most common. Nakata's (2006) longitudinal and qualitative study of motivational development showed Japanese university learners are usually demotivated by their learning experience in junior high school and high school, and it might be suggested that participants in this study maintained their motivation despite these experiences. With classroom teaching at middle and high school having grammar instruction as the central and foregrounded method of instruction (Sakui 2004), many participants in this study indicated that English education at these levels was "excruciatingly boring" (Y1Y3Q2). Overall, the findings in this study suggest concurrence with Ushioda's (2001) inference that higher level learner's attribute "motivational importance to perceptions of L2 ability and a positive learning history" (p. 108). The data suggests that there are also several goals and values which are also impacting on the participants' language leaning motivation at this stage of the study and the review moves on to these after looking at similarities and differences between perceptions of language learning motivation within the three age groups relating to their sociocultural and historical influences.

The major differences in perceptions of language learning motivation between first grade, second grade, and third grade Japanese L2 learners at this stage stem from institutional pressures. In particular, as reported in Section 4.6 above, third grade students reported being under a great deal of extrinsic pressure to secure a suitable score on the TOEIC test. More specifically, the third grade participants are more

acutely aware of the requirements and pressures obtaining a high score on the TOEIC test in order to help secure a job. With the official job hunting process about to begin, the unofficial process having already started, and additional pressure coming from their English teachers at university, the third grade learners are feeling the pressures of this strict system far more than their juniors, and they are aware that their TOEIC score will help determine the kind of career they can pursue.

There are also some subtle differences amongst the age groups in attitudes and motivated behaviour stemming from past language learning variations. More specifically, these appear to derive from differences in direct contact experiences abroad. In Section 4.8 above, it was postulated that contact experiences, enthusiasm for foreign culture, and desires to interact with foreign people were one of the main driving forces behind the motivation of the first grade learners who had experiences in foreign countries. Potentially, Yuki and her cohorts who had been abroad had a greater tendency to see English as an international language and appreciated the value in learning English to communicate with non-Japanese. It was argued that these experiences, for both the short-term and long-term study abroad students, promoted motivated learning behavior. Evidence of this is the vast majority of comments relating to interactions with non-Japanese back in Japan came from participants who had studied or travelled abroad. This suggests that intercultural contact abroad was both a means and an end in studying English in this context (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2005).

Across all three age groups there were multiple references to indirect contact with popular culture through media. Included in these were comments regarding indirect contact with pop music, movies, dramas, current affairs, and documentaries. It was postulated above that these findings are comparable to the work of Csizér and



Kormos (2009) in the Hungarian EFL context who noted media products held a more important position in their model of language learning motivation than both direct and indirect contact. In addition, it was hypothesized that convenience and ease of access to pop music through content sharing sites and social media sites is enabling learners in this context to produce their own social and cultural environments. Content sharing sites offer more access to other cultures than previous generations had, and social media allows them access to communities of heterogeneous people. It was argued therefore that sociocultural activity is much less restricted by the physical location. In addition, language learning motivation is not simply being influenced by Western pop music, but the data suggests in this study the sociocultural context is interacting with the participants' goals and values.

Moving on to the perceived values and goals in this study, Figure 3 above illustrates how there was a more even distribution of the number of coded units in this second broad category. As a reminder, these are all related to the participants' values and goals. More specifically, these included goals to travel, study, and live abroad, career goals, an interest and enjoyment in learning English as a language subject, desires or interests in Western culture and people, English as a tool for communication, and perceiving English to be a facilitative tool.

It appears that English is perceived as tool for communication or as a facilitative tool and this has motivational importance at this stage of the study. Therefore, the discussion will begin with an overview of these concepts. The category entitled English as a facilitative tool was made up of a wide spectrum of responses. Each of these referred to learning English so it can be used as a tool to achieve a tangible goal. References coded into the second category referred to English as a tool for communication with native and non-native speakers and appeared to represent a

realization of how English could be used in the participants' future lives. More specifically, how English can be used to interact and communicate with intercultural partners, develop foreign cultural knowledge, inform regarding international issues and topics, assist in disseminating knowledge, help to realize humanitarian goals abroad, and be used as an international language.

At this stage of the study many of the participants appeared to have desires or interests in Western culture and people. Indeed, many had a greater Western orientation than an international orientation discovered by Yashima (2000) and possessed a very strong desire to have close relationships with Western people. The comments reflect what Takahashi (2013) describes as *akogare*, or a desire for increasing engagement with the West amongst Japanese women. However, the comments were not exclusively made by the female participants. In fact, the comments suggest a very strong interest in Western culture amongst the majority of the participants regardless of their sex with male and female students across all the age ranges discussing their interests in Western culture, predominately, Western pop culture.

It can be seen across all three age ranges that there are a wide range of personal and vocation goals during the first set of interviews. The data suggested career aspirations across all three age ranges. However, the vocational aspirations of the first and second grade contrast with the career aspirations of the third grade students. The career goals of the younger two sets of learners appeared to be very specific and detailed, but were also perceived as being ambitious with the learners appearing to have created an ideal-self in terms of their career aspirations. It would seem these learners have a strong vision of their desired future self-image with these images being very clear and elaborate. In contrast, many of the career goals for the

third grade learners were more pragmatic. Perhaps this is one indication of the complex responsive relationships between sociocultural and historical influences and the values and goals of the learners.

## **5. Findings and discussion – The mid-way point**

The discussion now moves on to an analysis of the data collected during the second interviews. These interviews were conducted in July approximately three months after the initial set of interviews. At this time in the semester, all of the participants were preparing for their final examinations and were also writing their final reports for their chosen courses. In addition, at this time, the temperature in this area of Japan becomes very hot and humid, and in the diary entries several of the participants had reported that these two factors were impacting on their general well-being and their motivation to study English. Furthermore, many of the participants reported that the intensity of the semester, the number of compulsory and elective classes, and their other commitments to clubs, circles, and part time work seemed to impact on their general state of mind. This contrasts to the students' mood in April when they had just returned from a long spring break and had reported feeling refreshed and ready to study. It is perhaps wise to consider this when reading the findings and discussion below.

The aim of the discussion in this section is to present the perceptions of language learning motivation of a typically motivated learner in this context in the middle of the academic year. Simultaneously, it will highlight and discuss fluctuations from the data collected during the initial interview. Following the pattern in Chapter 4, I will analyze comments from Yuki, Saori, and Nana, which typify the responses of other students in their age groups and thereby highlight what typifies a motivated first, second, and third grade learner in this context after three months of study during an academic year. I will also attempt to compare these findings to the ones outlined in the previous section above. The intention of doing this is to endeavor to establish any

changes in perceptions of language learning motivation of a typically motivated learner in this context from the start to the middle of an academic year.

### 5.1 The here and now - Values and goals on hold?

The section begins by taking a brief look at the changes in the total number of coded units in the two broad themes. The rationale of doing so is to identify any general fluctuations or new perceptions of language learning motivation. As can be seen Table 14 below, there was a large increase in the number of coded units in the first broad theme, Sociocultural and historical influences. In contrast, there was quite a dramatic decrease in the number of references in the Values and goals theme. The discussion will continue by taking a closer look at the categories and sub-categories within these themes starting with the four categories and 19 sub-categories in the Sociocultural and historical influences theme.

Broad themes	Total no. of coded units in the 1st interview	Total no. of coded units in the 2nd interview
Sociocultural and historical influences	306	494
Values and goals	229	133

*Table 14: The number of coded units in the two broad themes during the first and second interviews*

The section on Sociocultural and historical influences commences by examining the comments in the educational context. The justification for introducing this category first, is that it contained the largest number of coded units during the second interview. Once again, within this category, there were many references relating to the participants' perceived learning histories. Therefore, to be consistent with Chapter 4 above, the discussion will begin with this. The discussion then continues with an analysis of the comments relating to influences and encouragement from Yuki, Saori, and Nana's English teachers. Thirdly, the discussion proceeds by

examining the data relating to increased institutional pressures the participants perceived themselves to be under. The following two sections examine the changing perceptions of relationships with their peers before analyzing the distractions they face. The discussion of the comments relating to sociocultural and historical influences wraps up with an examination of their direct and indirect contact experiences in Japan. Subsequently, the discussion turns to an analysis of the data in the Values and goals theme. For the most part, these areas typify the responses of the participants in this study and are prominent themes in the interviews conducted in the middle of the academic year.

## 5.2 More frequent negative learning experiences?

As displayed in Table 15 below, there were a total of 232 references in the category entitled Educational context in comparison to 173 in the initial interviews in April. The number of references to positive learning experiences decreased and the number of negative learning experiences slightly increased.

Category	Sub-category	1st Interview- All participants	2nd Interview- All participants
Educational context	Positive learning experiences	62	37
	Negative learning experiences	26	29
	Teacher (encouragement / influence)	43	15
	Teacher (negative experiences)	0	7
	Self-appraisal of progress	0	48
	Institutional pressures	32	84
	Investment	10	12
		173	232

Table 15: The number of coded units in the educational context category during the first and second interviews

As in the data from the first interview, some of these references seem to show the causal attributions of past successes and failures highlighted in Weiner's attribution theory (1986). However, in the second interview, the majority of these

comments were directly related their current English studies and their ability to progress in English classes over the period of time between the first two interviews. This comment from Yuki serves as an example. “In April, I came to university for the first time, and I was very motivated to study English. I really enjoyed classes and I could speak English, so I am really enjoying it” (Y2Y1Q25). Many of the participants reported enjoying the opportunity to talk in English in class. Eimi, a first grade student noted, “Especially, I'm enjoying my communication classes...speaking and using English” (E2Y1Q2). Others also cited the content of their classes being enjoyable. Nana mentioned, “I'm studying about the Cold War in my Seminar class. It is difficult, but I can learn new things and ideas, and it is a good opportunity” (N2Y3Q16).

As can be seen in Table 15 above, the total number of references to negative learning experiences increased from the first interview. Most frequent amongst these responses were comments relating to the perceived value that the participants see in certain classroom tasks. Take this comment from Kyoko, a first grade student. She noted, “In one class, I watch a movie and translate to Japanese...just translation. I can understand, but I can't use this English” (K2Y1Q14). It is clear that Kyoko places little value on doing these kinds of tasks. For her, and others in the study, certain tasks seem to have little valued outcome. These findings appear to resonate with the Wigfield and Eccles' (2007) model of task value. This comment by Kyoko shows she places little attainment value, intrinsic value, or extrinsic utility value on this kind of translation work.

Other negative learning experiences were directly relating to peers in an English class. Rina appeared to be frustrated at the ability or effort of some classmates in English classes. She stated,

Maybe...like when I have to talk in a pair in class I want to say something but other people can't understand what I want to say. It's not that my English is not good it's just that they can't understand what I want to say.

Several of these comments have been dual coded, and they will be discussed in more detail in Section 5.6 Peer influences and vertical hierarchies below.

At this stage, I would like to reiterate the caveat offered in Section 4.12 above before attempting to highlight a potential example of the complex relationship between the sociocultural and historical contexts placed in the first broad theme (BT1) and the goals and values from the second broad theme (BT2). Once again, I would like to emphasize that I am considering the sociocultural and historical contexts not as external influences which have shaped the participants' motivation. Instead the comments should be used to understand how the participants' motivation has developed thus far, and will continue to develop through their interaction with these contexts. Furthermore, the sub-categories in the Goals and values theme BT2 should not be regarded as individual interactions which have just been created by the sociocultural and historical influences in BT1, but are to be considered to work in a responsive relationship with the contexts. In other words, by taking a relational approach (Sealey & Carter 2004), I consider the interaction between the context and the values and goals as reciprocal with the individual actively contributing to the development of their context.

One possible example of the complex relationship between the sociocultural and historical contexts and the values and goals can be seen in the comments of Miki, a first grade student. When asked to reflect on any recent changes in her life, Miki stated, "Yeah, in university my surroundings and my environment...everything has



changed” (M2Y1Q22). Then, when asked how her motivation had altered since the first interview, Miki added,

It has changed a little because I had a lot dreams when becoming a university student, but now I recognize what I can and can't do as a university student, so I'm more realistic, and when I'm thinking about a dream, I think more about whether it is possible or impossible. If I think about my dream, I think about what I should do now. My motivation has not changed but my mind and my feelings have...I have become more realistic now. It is good for me because when I was a high school student, I was a dreamer, and I had many dreams and I wanted to do everything I had an interest in, but now I know what I can and can't do. I'm more motivated now in the long term...not day by day. Day by day there is no change but gradually...sometimes my motivation goes low but gradually [it is] getting higher (M2Y1Q24).

From these comments we can see how Miki attributes changes in her educational context, or coming to university, to having an impact on her goals and dreams for the future. This perhaps could be attributed to maturity because of living and studying independently for the first time. Again, I would like to stress that I do not conceive this as a simple cause and effect relationship, but as part of a complex and dynamic integrated view of motivation, self, and the ever changing context. Earlier in the second interview Miki had shared an example of her recent motivated behavior. She said,

I'm now not nervous. I look for a chance to speak English in my daily life. For example, last month I joined an exchange program with people from Tonga and my part-time job [is] in English or with a foreign

tourist, so I always look for a chance to speak English with a foreign person. I am improving.

As reported with Yuki in the first interview in Section 4.8, it appears that Miki began to seek out contact opportunities with non-Japanese at some point after the first interview. Here she also notes a reduction in her communication apprehension. It is quite feasible to believe that these changes are in some way linked to the development of her goals and dreams for the future reported in quote M2Y1Q24 above. I would like to suggest it is another example of the dynamic relationships between motivation and context. This is perhaps a simplification of a complex system of interactions; however, it is clear that Miki's context, or her surroundings and environment are changing. This in turn, has led to an evolution in her goals and dreams which, subsequently, is impacting on her context as she seeks out new contact experiences around her and in her daily life. Furthermore, this data perhaps suggests that Miki's social identity or her sense of self is also developing and evolving here. She sees herself as less of a 'dreamer', and more of someone who is able to set more concrete goals and has more confidence to interact with non-Japanese in English.

### **5.3 What are they saying? Negative experiences with English teachers**

As can be seen in Table 15 above, in comparison with the initial interview, there were far fewer references to encouragement and influence by an English teacher, but there were several references to negative experiences with an English teacher. This section will give a brief overview of these comments and will offer possible explanations for them. Brophy (1985) names eight possible negative expectancy-driven teacher behaviors that might reduce student motivation. These include criticism for failure and most of the comments in this section are directly related to this. Take this comment by Koyo as an example.

So, we are reading graded readers and we have to read sentences. We are reading but sometimes some teachers criticize our accent and pronunciation, so we listen to a CD and practice at home and in the next class. We read aloud in class and we have to be close to the CD, but when we couldn't do that we were criticized by the teacher (K2Y1Q8).

#### 5.4 Finding flaws – A self-appraisal of progress

The discussion now moves on to the participants' self-appraisal of their progress since the first interview. There were a total of 48 references to this in the second interview, and as can be seen in Table 16 below, the majority of these came from Yuki and her cohort in the first grade. The discussion in this section will begin with this age group.

2nd interview - Self appraisal of progress	No. of coded units
First grade students	25
Second grade students	13
Third grade students	10

Table 16: The number of coded units relating to the participants' self-appraisal of progress

There appears to be a sense of frustration in many of these comments. The most frequent of these seem to relate to a lack of progress made during the participants' first semester as a university student. This comment from Yuki seems to highlight this. She states,

In April, I came to university for the first time, and I was very motivated to study English. I really enjoyed classes and I could speak English, so I really enjoyed it. In May, I often hung out with friends at night so I was so tired, but I have to study and do homework, so I was so tired of that, and at that time I didn't want to study English. At first I was fresh and everything was new (Y2Y1Q24).

Many of the other comments related to distractions and social influences, and these will be discussed in more detail in Section 5.7 below.

As this study is an attempt to highlight the process dimension of language learning motivation, I would like to offer some thoughts on determining how students see their progress over the three months since the initial interview. Taking into consideration Dörnyei and Ottó's (1998) process model of L2 motivation, my initial analysis could suggest that in April these particular students were at the start of the *actional phase* in Dörnyei and Ottó's model. Rina reflects on whether she made the correct decision in selecting this particular university. She noted,

Maybe in May I was a little bit down...not only English, but I was thinking that this university is not so good for me. I chose here, but if I was able to choose a different university I was wondering what it would be like (R2Y1Q15).

As referred to in the literature section above, Dörnyei and Ottó postulate that this stage represents when a learner has committed to an action (becoming an English learner at university) and has moved from deliberation to implementation. During this phase, it is argued that the learner breaks down plans to shorter-term goals, appraises their progress, and applies control mechanisms to maintain motivation and progress. Dörnyei and Ottó state that the main influences on motivation during this phase are the perceived values of the learning experiences, social influences, classroom experiences, sense of autonomy, and the ability to implement self-regulatory strategies. However, due to the complex nature and large quantity of data combined with the process model being non-reductionist and comprehensive, it would be an over simplification to state that the participants were at a certain phase in the model at a certain time. This comment could easily be interpreted to be about choice and

decision and indeed be related to the pre-actional rather than the actional phase of motivation. This highlights the challenges of determining the temporal process of language learning motivation.

Several of first grade students mentioned that they were dissatisfied with certain classes and peers. Natsumi commented, “Now I'm very used to university life in a bad way, and [my] motivation has decreased a little bit” (N2Y1Q5). Rina talked about her frustrations when trying to talk in English with her peers. She noted, “I always talk with Japanese...even in English. I don't talk to foreigners. Even in class, so if I make a mistake they don't know. They can't tell and they don't know. I feel a little bit sad and frustrated” (R2Y1Q5). Kyoko noted that a lack of autonomy was frustrating her as she felt the curriculum and pressure to study for the TOEIC were inhibiting her progress. When talking about the perceived development of her English skills, she said,

I think it has maybe not changed. I studied hard for the TOEIC test, but I don't need to speak in that test, so maybe my speaking level is the same...the same or it has gone down. I have improved my vocabulary for business, but it is not useful. I can't use it in daily life (K2Y1Q20).

Kyoko and one other first grade participant noted how her studies over the previous months had impacted on her career aspirations. When asked how she thought her motivation has changed since April, Kyoko said, “In April, I wanted to be an English teacher, but recently...maybe since last month...I don't want to be a teacher. I don't have a future vision and my job is not my future motivation” (K2Y1Q27).

At this stage, Saori was also contemplating a different career after graduation. During the first interview, Saori had said she wanted to become an English teacher,

but during the second interview she said, “I’m also thinking about working in a company because being a teacher might not match my personality. I can’t speak in front of many people, so I was thinking about working in an office instead” (S2Y2Q7). Later she added, “Other students give presentations which are easily understood and they use eye contact, but I just look at my paper or the screen” (S2Y2Q7). These comments appear to show the participants are modifying their goals and their subsequent actions to achieve those goals. In addition, for Saori, it seems she has processed her perceived difficulties in her classes and attributed them to a lack of ability. This in turn is impacting on her choice of future career.

For Nana, the student whose responses typified the third grade students, it appears that the need to gain qualifications to secure a job is impacting on her motivation to study English. When asked about any changes in her motivation to learn English since April, she said,

It has changed. In April, I wanted to study English more and more, but now my motivation is down. This study to be a public employee is big for me, so my motivation to learn English is down. But sometimes I listen to foreign music and I think I want to learn more English and go abroad, but I think I can’t...it is tough (N2Y3Q8).

These pressures will be discussed in more detail in the following section below.

## **5.5 The pressure is on – An increase in perceived institutional pressures**

The section continues with a discussion of the comments relating to institutional pressures that the participants perceived themselves to be under. In Section 4.6 above, this sub-category was defined as an external pressure placed on the participant by an

educational institution or a teacher. The aim of this section is to highlight the changes in this pressure over the course of the spring semester amongst the three age groups.

2nd interview - Institutional pressures	No. of coded units
First grade students	13
Second grade students	19
Third grade students	52
Total	84

*Table 17: The number of coded units relating to perceived institutional pressures*

As can be seen in Table 17 above, the vast majority of these comments came from students in the third grade. I will therefore start with a brief analysis of the comments from the first and second grade learners before concentrating on what perceived pressures the third grade students considered themselves to be under.

The majority of the comments relating to institutional pressures from the first grade students were regarding the TOEIC test. Koyo succinctly highlights why the TOEIC is important for him and his cohorts. When asked why this test was so important, he stated,

First, we can get money for a scholarship. TOEIC can also tell us our level and if we get a high score we can take a lot of elective classes.

This university uses TOEIC for a lot of decisions...what classes we can take and whether we can graduate and get money...a scholarship. I have to get a high score as soon as possible.

From this comment we can understand the importance the TOEIC test is starting to have at this phase in the first grade students' lives. There appears to be a realization that this test score influences the level of funding in terms of scholarships, and it can potentially restrict their selection of courses available. Other participants also noted that it can impact on their funding for the compulsory short-term study

abroad program and there was a TOEIC requirement for graduation. Given the important nature of this test, it is not surprising to see comments relating to washback (Alderson & Wall, 1993) for the learners and their teachers. These examples from Mai, a second grade student, show the pressure from teachers in this context. “My seminar teacher told me to get 730 on TOEIC” (M2Y2Q11). Later she added, “I started studying words on the bus using word cards...because of the pressure from my teacher I felt I had to study” (M2Y2Q13) before finally adding, “Yesterday my teacher sent me a mail telling me to get a higher score...to get 730” (M2Y2Q19). There also appears to be washback in terms of the learners’ studies too. Mika commented, “I feel like I have to study. I feel I have to...not want to” (M2Y2Q5) and then added, “I want to study TOEIC because my reading is not good...I have to...not want to” (M2Y2Q11). It appears that this lack of a sense of autonomy could be hindering their motivation. In other words, it is possible to conceive that this necessity to study for the TOEIC is impacting the participants’ motivation. This can be seen in several comments which purport to the requirement of this kind of English study. Kimio stated, “The tasks are compulsory. I have to do them. It is like being a high school student” (K2Y2Q2). In addition, one could hypothesize that this potentially caused negative washback in terms of pressure, fear, frustration, and anxiety on the learners. Many participants talked about the pressure to improve their score and Miki, a first grade student, said her low TOEIC test score made her feel “inferior” to her peers.

In contrast, the comments in this sub-section from the third grade students portray a slightly different perspective. Although many of the comments were relating to improving their TOEIC test scores, they were more specifically related to getting a higher TOEIC test score *to secure future employment*. This series of interactions with



Nana typify responses for eight out of the nine third grade students. When discussing why she had placed emphasis on her TOEIC score, she noted “TOEIC is really important for job hunting. Some companies give you a higher salary if you have over 800. In Japan, TOEIC is important in helping you get a better job and a higher salary” (N2Y3Q5). Subsequently, when asked how this made her feel, Nana responded,

Bad...bad...if I can't find a job...I always think...if I can't find a job in the future, what I should do in the future. It is a big pressure. Now in Japan unemployment is higher, so I'm nervous and I want to be a public employee, but this job is very popular and many people compete for this job. If I want to...if I take the examination for this job, I can't look for another job. If I concentrate on only this job, I can't look for another job...I can't do job hunting for other jobs in the future, so I'm nervous about my future. If I can't pass this exam, I can't get a job (N2Y3Q7).

When subsequently asked how this was affecting her motivation for learning English, Nana responded, “I can't study English. In October or November, I will stop studying English because I have to concentrate on my studies for this job. I have to concentrate on this. The pressure is very big. This situation is bad” (N2Y3Q8). She continued, “Now I have some time...now, but in August, September and October I will have no time” (N2Y3Q9).

Finally, when asked how her motivation for studying English had changed since April, Nana noted, “It has changed. In April, I wanted to study English more and more, but now my motivation is down” (N2Y3Q10).

As referred to in Section 4.6 above, this method of job hunting has been presented as reason for a lack of motivation to study English (Strong, Dujmovich, McLaughlin & O'Dowd, 2012), and cited as a reason for the decreasing number of students studying abroad (Yoshikata, 2011). Again, I would suggest that the older participants in this study are more aware of the requirements and pressures of securing a job. Indeed, these pressures seem to have dramatically increased over the three months since the initial interview. For some of the participants, this appears to be transforming their goals and values. Take this comment from Mana as an example. "In April, I really wanted to talk with people from other countries and study about other countries or cultures. This was my goal, but now my goal is to get a high score on the TOEIC and to study more English to help me get a better score... yeah my motivation has changed" (M2Y3Q9). Further changes in goals and the job hunting process will be covered in Section 6.4 below. The discussion will now turn to influences from peers.

## **5.6 Peer influences and vertical hierarchies**

In marked contrast to the initial interviews in April, the second interviews at the end of the semester contained numerous references to influences from peers and vertical hierarchies amongst the different age groups. Indeed, there were only eleven references to positive peer influences in the first interview, three references to negative influences, and just two participants mentioned vertical hierarchies within this institution. Conversely, there were 106 comments relating to these in the second interview (See Table 18 below).

One possible straightforward explanation for this variation might be the timing of the two interviews. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the first interviews were conducted at the start of the spring semester, and it is likely that the participants had not spent a great deal of time studying together in the preceding

months. However, the second interview was conducted at a time when the participants had almost completed a 15-week semester and therefore had undoubtedly spent a great deal more classroom time with their peers. The discussion will now focus on a more detailed analysis of this data.

### **5.6.1 Positive peer influences**

The data suggests that group dynamics has become of greater importance at this stage of the academic year for the first grade learners in this study. In contrast, it appears that this becomes less relevant for the second and third grade participants. In particular, the closeness of a group, or group cohesiveness, appears to be most meaningful to the youngest age group. Take this comment from Koyo as an example. “There are a lot of women in this university, and they are all a very high level. They have good pronunciation. When I see them, I think I have to study English harder” (K2Y1Q2). He continues to say his classmates are “an inspiration” (K2Y1Q3) and that he is, “motivated by all [his] classmates” (K2Y1Q21). The literature suggests that members of a cohesive group are more likely to have a strong connection with each other. More specifically, the group members are more likely to participate, share ideas, and cooperate with others (Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003). This appears to be a frequent occurrence for Koyo and his cohorts. Koyo states, “In my writing class now, there is a very good mood and we are all friends, so we can talk without thinking a lot. If there is a good mood in the class, I want to talk and I can enjoy class” (K2Y1Q26). Yuki, the student whose responses typified those of her age group, also mentioned having a friendly rivalry with her classmates which spurs her to study more.

Sub-categories	First graders	Second graders	Third graders	Total
Peer influence (-)	22	7	9	38
Peer influence (+)	24	12	2	38
Age relations and vertical social hierarchies in Japan	8	4	18	30

*Table 18: The number of coded units relating to peer influences and vertical hierarchies*

The data suggests that these positive dynamics are impacting on these first grade students' group norms. As mentioned in the review of the literature above, group norms are rules accepted by all group members. These rules, in turn, influence group members to act in accordance with higher standards of learning behaviors (Ehrman & Dörnyei, 1998). Positive group norms have been shown to improve learning by acting as appropriate boundaries (Dörnyei & Malderez, 1997, 1999). In addition, positive group norms reinforce the members' desire to perform well (Levine & Moreland, 1990). These positive group norms can be seen in this comment by Koyo. When talking about his classmates in his writing class, he said, "I really enjoyed it [class]...so I want to study more and I want to practice more (K2Y1Q5). Yuki also mentioned that the work her cohorts were doing was inspiring her to take on new challenges. She noted, "My friends told me their plans to go abroad and take a TOEFL test and I thought I should do that too. I was motivated again" (Y2Y1Q29). These comments suggest that these positive norms are enhancing the first grade participants' autonomy as they appear to be encouraging each other to study independently outside of the class.

### **5.6.2 Negative peer influences**

The analysis of the data highlights several personal and interpersonal issues which are having a negative impact on the participants. This was again most common amongst the youngest age group. Take this as an example from Yuki. "After coming to university everyone is...I think everyone is better than me...it is frustrating"

(Y2Y1Q12). As reported in the literature review above, personal and interpersonal issues have been investigated in conjunction with other social and psychological constructs such as competitiveness, self-esteem, group identity, and social discourse (Bailey, 1983; Horwitz, 1988; Price, 1991; Young, 1991). In this study, the majority of first grade students mentioned competitiveness lowering their self-esteem. This was particularly evident with Kyoko. Take this series of interactions as an example. When asked about a program she attended with non-Japanese exchange students, Kyoko noted,

Well there were not only first grade students who went on the program. There were some third grade students who came too, and they spoke better English than me. I couldn't talk...I thought when I'm a third grade student, I'm not sure if I can talk like them...I'm worried...yes (K2Y1Q9). *You said in your diary that you sometimes didn't want to speak English because you were disappointed to see someone who speaks good English. Did that happen at any other times? Yeah, maybe anywhere...in the lesson when someone talks English very naturally, I get worried. (K2Y1Q10). You also said you often make mistakes and you worry about your mistakes. Tell me more about that.* I talk in English but maybe I use the wrong word, and other students help me and I compare myself to other students and felt disappointed...in class and sometimes out of class (K2Y1Q11). *Why did you think they were better than you? They could have a natural conversation. Usually, when I talk to a foreigner, I need time...thinking time, but they didn't, so it (the peer's conversation) was more natural (K2Y1Q12).*

In an examination of the relationship between learners' competitiveness and self-esteem, Bailey (1983) found learners' competitiveness and self-esteem as a potential source of learner anxiety. It appears that the competitive nature of L2 learning in this context, and in particular for the younger students, is causing anxiety because the learners are comparing themselves to others or to their own idealized self-images.

To summarize, it appears that group dynamics, and in particular group cohesiveness and norms, are creating more autonomy amongst the youngest age group. However, it is also evident that the members of the younger age group appear to have several personal and interpersonal issues with competitiveness and self-esteem. These issues seem to be more prominent at this stage of the study than in the initial interview at the start of the semester. In addition, these positive and negative peer influences seem to be exaggerated when combined with the strict vertical hierarchy system in Japanese society and the educational system. In Japanese, this is known as the *sempai/kōhai* (senior/junior) system. This discussion will now turn to this.

### **5.6.3 Vertical hierarchies**

In order to provide the reader with the best understanding of my interpretations of the comments in Table 18, I have divided them into four themes. The comments in the first theme show how seniors within the educational context of this study can have a negative influence on the younger learners' language learning motivation. The second theme shows how this influence can sometimes have a positive impact. The third and fourth themes describe the perceived negative and positive impacts on senior learners from their juniors. For clarification purposes, I will begin with a general overview of this vertical hierarchy system in the Japanese educational system.

The data suggests that the senior/junior system seems to have a particularly strong impact on students in English communication classes. In general, many of the other classes that are taught at this particular institute are lecture style classes. In these classes, it is uncommon for learners to ask questions or challenge the information provided by the lecturer. In addition, the students are seldom asked to participate in class discussions or to conduct any group work. Furthermore, many of these classes are compulsory for a particular age group. This means that this seniority or vertical hierarchy system does not usually have a major impact on the learners in these classes. This contrasts starkly with many of the English communication classes that are taught in this context. They are often elective classes and students from varying age groups are allowed to join. This can create an unusual dynamic in these classes and it is very common for the varying age groups to voluntarily segregate themselves.

I first became aware of the severity of this system during a member checking session with Yuka. (As a brief aside, Yuka is a very competent speaker of English with a TOEIC score of almost 900.) During this session, she told me that she had purposely and consistently underperformed in an English presentation course because of the pressure from her seniors in class. She stated that she was prepared to fail the class and potentially lower her grade point average (GPA) rather than being seen as superior to a senior, standing out in class, and risking being ostracized by seniors. During the second interview, I followed up on this conversation. Yuka stated, “When I was in the second grade the senior students were so scary” (Y2Y3Q19). I then asked why these students were intimidating and Yuka responded, “Because they made a group and I think they gave junior students some pressure...not directly, but their attitude or something. My friend also noticed that and she told me about that. She also got a bad grade” (Y2Y3Q20). She continued, “Yeah, their attitude or like yeah their

attitude...they didn't talk to us in a friendly way, and they made a group, and only talked to each other in the group" (Y2Y3Q21). Yuka summed up by saying, "I think it can't be helped because they probably experienced the same thing when they were younger, so I hate Japanese culture. The Japanese sempai and kōhai relationship is so serious" (Y2Y3Q21). The almost unique environment that is created in an English communication class is certainly an area of research that deserves exploring. Yuka's final comment seems to resonate with the findings of Okazaki (1989). Okazaki noted that there is little resistance to the seniority rules because even though a junior might not enjoy their role, they will eventually become a senior and their status will change.

#### ***5.6.3.1 Negative influences from seniors***

Like the comments from Yuka above, the majority of the comments in this sub-category were regarding a negative impact on learning caused by seniors in an English class. Many of these comments referred to underperforming in front of seniors or not fully participating when working with a senior. Take the following example from Yuki. She was discussing the effect of having seniors in her English classes, when she said, "Doing better than older students...we can't do it. We have to wait for their answer. If the older students are good, we can be good, but if they are bad, we can't do anything. We don't think about the details though. We don't think deeply about it is just natural" (Y2Y2Q17). Yuki seems to be suggesting that if the older students in class are putting in effort and performing well, then the juniors are permitted to perform at the same level. If this is not the case, then the juniors feel obligated to hold themselves back and not outperform their seniors. It is also interesting to see that Yuki mentions this as quite conventional behavior.

Miki adds further light to this system when she says, "If I have another opinion, I can't say it in the group...I have to side with another person...especially a



sempai” (M2Y1Q21). Miki is suggesting here that it is not considered socially acceptable to express alternative viewpoints during group work, particularly when doing group work with seniors. Eimi, a first grade student, recalls a specific example in her English class. “There were three people including me and the others were second grade students, and even when I talked to them in English they responded in Japanese. They were talking to each other in Japanese...I felt weird. I spoke in English at first, but then I spoke in Japanese” (E3Y1Q21). Despite Eimi trying to stay on task in English, she eventually made concessions and reverted to speaking in her L1. When asked how often this occurs, Eimi said, “Almost all the time...when I make a group with seniors...I think this is not a Japanese class. I want to talk in English. I came here to talk in English” (E3Y1Q22). It appears that it is socially unacceptable for a junior to question a senior in these kinds of situations. Clearly these participants are sacrificing the opportunity to practice speaking English or expressing their opinions to maintain harmony and avoid any kind of conflict and it appears to be a source of anxiety. Findings in other contexts have shown how language anxiety corresponds with learners’ self-ratings of proficiency leading to anxious students more likely to underestimate their own ability (Macintyre, Noels & Clément, 1997). However, in this particular context, the causal effect seems to differ. These students do not seem to doubt their own competence, and the comments above from Eimi display that the anxiety does not come from her self-rating of proficiency because she states she wants to speak English. In this case, she chooses not to use English because of the social context and the strong vertical hierarchy.

### ***5.6.3.2 Positive influences from seniors***

Although the majority of the comments in this sub-category were relating to negative influences from seniors, there were several references to upperclassmen having a

positive influence on underclassmen. Several of these were relating to receiving guidance and study advice. One such example came from Yuki, who said, “Now I'm the youngest and there are many sempai who can teach me many things...kind of study things...or life things...or what is important or how to study better...like that” (Y2Y1Q15). In this respect, the senior's role seems to be one of a mentor and to offer advice based on their experience and knowledge. There was only one comment that was directly related to an experience in an English class. This came from Saori, who said, “In my reading class I am the youngest. I am the kōhai. The sempai are great. I just look at them and think in my head. I don't really say anything because I want to be careful what I say. The sempai have good ideas and my ideas are not so good, so I just listen” (S2Y2Q13). Although not entirely positive, Saori seems to be willing to listen and learn from her seniors. This comment also reflects Ishii and Bruneau's (1994) observation that Japanese use an internal message screening process discussed above. In summary, the example from Yuki appears to show that outside of the classroom environment seniors can play an important role in the development of younger students in this context. Although there are certain cases inside the class, these appear to be much less frequent and are more likely to have a negative impact.

### ***5.6.3.3 Negative influences from juniors***

The discussion now turns to the perspectives of senior students and how they perceive their relationships with younger students. As with the perspective of the juniors, I have interpreted both a positive and negative impact on language learning and motivation. The main negative emotions that appeared in the data were towards junior students who could perform better in class. Senior students reported feeling pressure, anxiety, nervousness, envy, and even inferiority when talking about juniors who they perceived as having a higher level than themselves in English classes. Kana, a second

grade student, stated, “I feel more pressured talking with juniors if they can speak English well...seniors have studied English for one more year than me, so I don’t feel much pressure, but if I’m talking to a junior...if I talk with a junior who speaks English well, I feel I have to study English more and this makes me worried” (K3Y2Q14). This example shows Kana has a clear expectation that the older students should be able to perform better than the younger students. This is solely based on number of years studying English. If she gets the impression that a junior can speak better English, it causes her pressure and anxiety. Yuka, a third grade student expressed a strong desire to be better at English than her juniors. This suggests that it would be an embarrassment and even a cause of shame if a junior performed better during a class. Although this could be interpreted as a source of extrinsic motivation for improvement, it predominantly appeared to be a cause of pressure and anxiety for Yuka. Mana, another third grade student was very explicit about this vertical hierarchy. She stated, “If the younger student is a higher level than the older student, it doesn't work...it is difficult to communicate in English...this is the Japanese way of thinking” (M2Y3Q29). Nana stated that talking with a junior who she perceives as being at a higher level causes a great deal of anxiety. She stated, “In my English seminar class the juniors gave good presentations and I felt real strong pressure...mmm...In Japan the up and down relationships are strong...so it is pressure” (N2Y3Q26). As reported in the literature review above, Horwitz and colleagues (1986) noted three components to foreign language learning anxiety; communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. The kind of anxiety being experienced here appears to be a fear of negative evaluation which is created by the age-related hierarchical system. In other words, it could be seen as a fear of negative evaluation by a junior. This can often cause anxiety for seniors but can also be a form

of extrinsic motivation as seniors attempt to ensure they are the more proficient in class.

#### ***5.6.3.4 Positive influences from juniors***

The comments in this final section of this sub-category are related to perceived positive influences by senior students towards juniors. There were only a few comments relating to this kind of feeling and they all stated how a junior who performed well during class could encourage the senior to study more so as not to be outperformed in the future. In other words, it becomes an extrinsic motivator. The following comment from Kana shows this. Kana said, “I think there are many students who can speak English well in the first grade and I thought I must study more. In the interpretation guide activity, we had a presentation and the first grade students did good presentations and I was surprised and I thought I have to study more” (N2Y2Q20). Kana does not state that this makes her feel under any pressure or anxiety, but she does show a desire to improve her performance in this English class so to appear more proficient than her younger peers. The influence on a senior from a junior who has a high speaking ability is perhaps a form of social comparison (Lewis & Sullivan, 2007) with the particularity being that this is specifically an age-related comparison where the older learner feels self-conscious emotions speaking in front of a junior. It is also possible that this is an age specific form of performance orientation (Ames, 1992). In this case, the senior student focuses specifically on demonstrating their ability to outperform the junior student.

## 5.7 “Actually, I have been tired these days” – Distractions to English studies

As this thesis takes a dynamic integrated view of language leaning motivation, self, and context, it is worthwhile analyzing some of the comments relating to distractions to learning English that the learners reported at this particular time. In doing so, it might also help further the understanding of the participants’ context and how the learners are shaping this context through their own actions. During the first interview, there were no references to any distractions to English studies. However, during the middle of the academic year, there were a total of 36 references spread evenly across the three age groups. These are presented in Table 19 below.

Distractions	Number of coded units
First grade participants	12
Second grade participants	12
Third grade participants	12

*Table 19: The number of coded units relating to distractions to learning English*

Before discussing the participants’ distractions, it might be pertinent to take into consideration the impact of this study had on the self-regulatory actions taken by the participants. During the course of this study, the participants had the opportunity to reflect on their thoughts and actions each month by writing diary entries. Upon submitting her final diary, Natsumi, a first grade student, wrote an email to me expressing her thanks for the opportunity of being a part of the study. She continued to add that she appreciated the experience of keeping a monthly diary, and stated, “I could confirm what I'm interested [in] now and what the purpose of studying English is. Maybe I can't make effort without your diary”. It is quite plausible that by participating in this study, the learners could notice and regulate their own behavior leading to potentially less distractions and a deeper understanding of their own goals.

It is therefore feasible that by participating in this study the learners were more likely to take self-regulatory actions and therefore limit some of the distractions they faced. Natsumi was not the only student to express this. Indeed, Yuka approached me towards the end of the data collection period and asked could she continue to write and submit a diary entry every month. The discussion will now move on to frequently mentioned distractions to learning English.

One of the most common distractions to learning English came in the form of other non-English related studies. In particular, assignments, reports, and homework for non-English classes were most common. Take this comment from Tomo as an example. “My motivation has gone down a little because I have had so many classes, assignments and reports...so my motivation became lower than April. It has gradually gone down as the semester has got busier and busier” (T2Y2Q10). Other distractions were club and circle activities, friends and partners, social media, part-time jobs, and the weather. In both the diaries and in the interviews several participants reported tiredness and fatigue as a major distraction. One participant reported only sleeping three hours per night at this time of the semester to keep up with the distractions reported above. Keiko commented, “Almost every day I realized when I wake up...I think...have I slept last night? Not only studying English...it [fatigue] distracts me from studying everything” (K2Y3Q11). In addition, the third grade students talked extensively about preparations for job hunting. Although job hunting did not officially start until the end of that calendar year, many of the third grade students reported that they had started preparing. Ayano stated, “I usually go [to a cram school] at night after school, so it is very hard. I have to go four times a week, but during the summer vacation I have to go every weekday. My classes start at 6:30 and finish at about 9:00” (A2Y3Q19). As reported in Section 5.5 above, several of the third grade students

stated that they would soon stop all their English studies in order to concentrate on job hunting. Again, for most of the third grade participants, this appears to be transforming their goals and values. This will become more apparent as the discussion turns to temporal changes in goals and values below. The discussion now continues with an analysis of the participants' direct and indirect contact experiences at this time.

### **5.8 My motivation has come back again! Direct and indirect contact experiences**

Although many of the participants mentioned having many distractions at this time of year, they also talked extensively about their direct and indirect contact experiences in Japan. As can be seen in Table 20 below, there were a total number of 40 references to direct contact experiences and this represents a marked increase to the 15 references during the first set of interviews. In addition, there were 28 mentions of cultural experiences in Japan which is a similar number of coded units as in the initial interview. In contrast, there were very few references to contact experiences abroad, but a simple explanation for this is that only one of the 23 participants traveled overseas in the time between the first and second interviews.

Sub-category	First grade students	Second grade students	Third grade students	Total
Direct contact experiences in Japan	15	13	12	40
Cultural experiences in Japan	3	12	13	28

*Table 20: The number of coded units relating to direct and indirect contact experiences*

In Section 4.8 above, I suggested that at the time of the first interview, many of the first grade students displayed a strong enthusiasm for interacting with non-Japanese. In the case of Yuki, her desire to interact with foreign people still appears to be the driving force behind her motivation. Yuki's enthusiasm for meeting and

communicating with non-Japanese was highly evident again in the second interview. She recalled participating in a series of activities with a group of learners from Tonga, and noted, “In June, I had many chances to communicate with many foreigners so my motivation has come back again” (Y2Y1Q27).

Saori and the other second grade students spoke more extensively about their indirect contact experiences. Although there were several comments relating to direct contact experiences, the majority of these came from a small number of this age group. Saori talked about watching American movies and reading novels in English, but made no references to direct contact with non-Japanese.

Nana and her cohorts’ responses were similar to those of the second grade learners’. Once again, most of the comments relating to direct contact came from a small number of this age group. Nana talked about an incidental meeting with a tourist. She stated, “I change buses in XX station, and while I was waiting for the bus, a foreigner asked me how to get to YY. I understood the question and I knew how to get there, so I taught the way in English and maybe the foreigner understood. When asked how this made her feel, Nana added,

Happy...very happy...and in the future I want to help foreigners like this...in my job in the future. During this 5 or 10-minute conversation I asked the foreigner where he came from and where he was going today and so on, but sometimes the foreigner couldn’t understand my questions, but almost we could understand each other. This is the first time to talk to a foreigner like this, and at first I was very nervous, and I thought I wouldn’t be able to understand his questions, but the foreigner spoke more slowly so I could listen and understand his questions.



It was clear from Nana's behavior whilst talking about this incident that she enjoyed this experience. She appeared relaxed and smiled throughout the time she recalled this encounter. Overall, the data suggests that although Saori, Nana and their cohorts have an open attitude towards variety of different cultures, their level of international posture is not as strong as that of Yuki and the other first grade students. It appears that Yuki's age group is more willing to seek out direct contact opportunities. Take this comment from Miki as an example. "I look for a chance to speak English in my daily life" (M2Y1Q16). The data suggests that there has been little change since in international posture and the willingness to seek out contact opportunities since the initial interview.

### **5.9 Pragmatism setting in? - Fluctuations in career aspirations**

There was quite a dramatic decrease in the number of references to values and goals during the second interview. This is surprising considering the fact that the second interviews were much longer than the first interviews and all the participants spoke in greater detail. The section will commence with a discussion of the data relating to career aspirations before analyzing data relating to the participants' goals to travel, study, and live abroad. The discussion will move on to the learners' interest and enjoyment in learning English as a language subject before looking at how they perceive English as a facilitative and communicative tool. Finally, the discussion will turn to the participants' desires or interests in Western culture and people.

Values and goals	No. of coded units- First interview	No. of coded units - Second interview
Career	38	20
Study abroad	13	15
Live and travel abroad	35	13
English as a facilitative tool	50	14
Interest and enjoyment in learning English as a language subject	24	17
English as a tool for communication	29	25
Desire or interest in Western culture and people	40	29
Total	229	133

*Table 21: The number of coded units relating to values and goals in the first and second interviews*

There were almost fifty percent fewer references to the participants' career aspirations during the course of the second interviews. Moreover, more than half of these came from the third grade learners. For Yuki, Saori, and their first and second grade cohorts, career aspirations seemed to be on hold at this stage in the academic year. Having said that, there were some references to changing career goals and these changes seemed to stem from influences from the participants' sociocultural and historical situations. Yuki was starting to make plans to do a working holiday. She described the prospect of working abroad for short period of time as,

Very attractive because we have to use English all the time and also you can work in that country. It is good for getting money...we can earn money. If we don't have much money, we can still go abroad, so I thought it would be good for me (Y2Y1Q19).

Saori was contemplating a different career to the one she discussed in the first interview. In that interview Saori had stated that it was her dream to be an English teacher, but at this stage she was considering other options. She noted, "I'm also thinking about working in a company because being a teacher might not match my personality. I can't speak in front of many people, so I was thinking about working in

an office instead” (S2Y2Q7). Several of the comments from the first and second grade learners suggest that their career goals are becoming more pragmatic and realistic. Eimi, who had stated that she wanted to work for a non-government organization (NGO) in the first interview stated, “Recently I'm not only thinking about working for an NGO, but thinking about doing other jobs...for example being a teacher or an office worker” (E2Y1Q23).

It appears likely that the first and second grade participants' current evolving sociocultural situations are impacting on their career goals. Take this comment from Natsumi as an example. When talking about what she work she wanted to do in the future, she stated, “As I learn more my [career] goal is changing” (N2Y1Q13). Given the large number of references to their sociocultural situations and the number of distractions mentioned in Section 5.7 above, it could be postulated that this group of learners are concentrating on the here and now at this stage of the study. This could be the one of the reasons for the dramatic decrease in the total number of comments towards their values and goals. This is not to suggest that these learners are no longer setting or attempting to achieve goals, but rather they are focusing on their sociocultural surroundings.

Nana and her cohorts talked more about their career goals, but as mentioned in Sections 5.5 and 5.6 above, most of these comments were relating to job hunting. When asked about job hunting Ayano stated,

In my job hunting guidance here every Tuesday...the job hunting staff told me many criteria and said that my TOEIC score is important.

*When did you start guidance?* In June...last month. *What job do you want to get?* I want to be an office staff in XXXX. In XXXX...to be an office worker in XXXX. I need 730 on the TOEIC...this is a plus point

for the test, so I want to get this score. *Does this make you feel pressured?* Yes. *When do you start job hunting?* In December, but the test to be an office worker...the study to take the test to an office worker...I have started already. I have to study like the center test for university...and logic...Japanese government and the constitution. I have to study math, Japanese and history...many subjects (A2Y3Q17)

It appears evident that there is a high level of pressure on this age group. This was reported by a nonprofit group called Lifelink who found that “One in five college students contemplates suicide during the job-hunting process” (The Japan Times Oct 26, 2013). Given this high level of pressure and anxiety it is not surprising to see this age group prioritize career aspirations and other English related goals and values.

### **5.10 Goals to travel, study, and live abroad**

As can be seen in Table 21 above, there was also a large decrease in the references to having goals to travel, study, and live abroad. As discussed in Section 4.10 above, there were a total of 48 references in the first interview compared to only 28 in the second interview. The discussion will now look at how these goals have altered since the first interview.

Table 21 shows a slight increase in the number of references to studying abroad from 13 to 15 coded units. A closer analysis of these numbers reveals that the vast majority come from the first and second grade learners. In fact, there was only one reference to studying abroad from a third grade student and this particular learner was not doing job hunting as she was planning to continue her studies at graduate school.

Almost all of the first grade participants discussed taking part in a one-year study abroad program. Yuki stated, “Now I'm studying to be an exchange student now” (Y2Y1Q21). Kyoko mentioned that studying abroad on a one-year program was now her biggest focus. When asked what her goals were, she stated, “It's just I want to use English, and I want to be an exchange student. Maybe becoming an exchange student is my only goal now” (K2Y1Q18). She later added, “Yes...usually I don't think on a daily basis that I want to go abroad and make foreign friends, but if you ask me what my goal is, I'd say like this” (K2Y1Q26).

In contrast, many of the second grade students mentioned wanting to study abroad for a short period of time. As mentioned in Section 4.10 above, one of the reasons for not wanting to study abroad might be the economic burden. This comment from Kana suggests that this might be the case.

I want to go to Oxford [on the short term program] because the program is attractive and we can communicate with a lot of students because we stay in a dorm and we study for longer, so I want to study there. I want to go on the exchange program, but it is expensive, so I'm thinking about getting a scholarship. I have searched on the Internet...if I can

As referred to above, MEXT reported approximately 60,138 Japanese studying abroad in 2012 compared with 82,945 in 2004 and Ota (2011) suggested five reasons for this decrease. Ota postulated that the declining birthrate and an oversupply of domestic higher education, a decrease in financial affordability, differences between curriculums in Japan and other countries, lack of incentives when job hunting, and a large decrease in the number of Japanese wanting to work abroad were the main reasons why less Japanese were studying abroad. Data in this study certainly suggests

that affordability and job hunting are prominent reasons why many of these learners are not planning to study abroad.

With regards to traveling and living abroad, Yuki was the most enthusiastic of all the first grade students as her comments accounted for more than half of all those made by her cohorts. Yuki appeared excited when discussing her desire to live abroad in the future. She stated, “My dream is to live abroad and have everyone around me speaking English. I want to be surrounded by English speakers” (Y2Y1Q30). Again I would like to suggest that this is linked to her strong *akogare* discussed in Section 4.13 above. This will be discussed in more detail in Section 5.13 below. There were no references from Saori and the remaining second grade students regarding living or traveling abroad and I would again postulate that they are concentrating on the present at this stage of the study.

The third grade students talked predominantly about traveling abroad in the future after graduation. When asked about traveling to another country, Keiko stated, “I think it is in the future...a long way in the future...until that I want to study more, and get more confidence, so I feel a little pressure...because of this I think I want to study more. It's my dream for the future” (K2Y3Q10). In sharp contrast to the mannerisms of Yuki when discussing her desire to go abroad, Keiko was very solemn and somber when talking about her dreams for the future. In brief, this again highlights the influences arising from the third grade learners’ social and educational contexts. I would suggest there is a desire to travel abroad, but any concrete plans are being put on hold due to commitments to securing employment.

## 5.11 Interest and enjoyment in learning English as a language subject

Interest and enjoyment in learning English as a language subject	Total number of coded units
First graders	8
Second graders	6
Third graders	3

*Table 22: The number of coded units relating to interest and enjoyment in learning English as a language subject*

As can be seen in Table 22 above, there was a slight decrease in the number of coded units relating to an interest and enjoyment in learning English as a language subject.

The comments from the first and second grade learners appear to suggest they are still deriving satisfaction and experiencing pleasure in learning English. In similarity with the first interview, there were comments relating to learning English for pleasure and satisfaction, learning English for achievement and a sense surpassing oneself, and learning English to experience stimulation or pleasant sensations.

It is possible that the lack of comments from the third grade students is perhaps a reflection on their current circumstances and another example of the complex relationship between context and values and goals. As referred to above, these students appear to be prioritizing their search for employment and perhaps this small number of comments is an indication of this. This does not necessarily mean they no longer enjoy learning English as can be seen in this comment by Yoshi. He stated, “I think it is fair to say that I’m enjoying learning English at this moment. I’ve read many articles in the newspapers and online like CNN and Al Jazeera every day” (Y2Y3Q1). Perhaps this comment from Kazahiro summarizes the situation most aptly.

In the summer vacation I don't have a schedule to follow and I have a lot of free time...I don't have any work to do. Maybe I'll be free to study what I want to study. This makes me more motivated to study.

Given the comments above, especially relating to the pressures and distractions, it is plausible that this particular age group do not have the time to work on any English self-study. Therefore, their interest and enjoyment in learning English as a language subject is on hold at present.

### **5.12 English as a facilitative and communicative tool**

Although not as numerous, the comments in the second interview appear to follow the same pattern as they did in the first interview with regard to using English as a facilitative and communicative tool. The data suggest that these desires are still perceived as being important, but the once again the focus seems to be on their current context and situations rather than their desires and goals.

Categories	First graders	Second graders	Third graders	Total
English as a tool for communication	11	4	10	25
English as a facilitative tool	6	2	6	14

*Table 23: Number of coded units in the second interview relating to English as a facilitative tool and as a tool for communication*

Once more, the first grade learners talked most frequently about how they perceived English as a facilitative and communicative tool. Take this comment from Rina as an example. “It's fun. Communication in English is good. If I don't know English, I can't communicate with foreigners. It's a tool and it's useful” (R2Y1Q23). Yuki’s comments suggest that she saw English as a means and an end. This comment illustrates this. “I have learned English and maybe I can speak English, so if I talk in English with a native speaker it will improve my English skill and also I can use my knowledge” (Y2Y1Q37).



### 5.13 More *akogare* - Desires or interests in Western culture and people

In Section 4.13 I described many of the comments coded into this category as a form of *akogare*, or a desire for increasing engagement with the West amongst Japanese. However, contrary to the findings of Takahashi (2013), the comments in this study were not exclusively made by the female participants as the similar kinds of longings for Western people and culture were evident across both sexes. Although there were references which reflect both a desire for greater social relations with Western people and to a keen interest in Western cultural products, this section will concentrate on the former. Simultaneously, this section will also compare the comments at this stage of the study with those from the first interview three months prior.

As can be seen in Table 24 below, there were a total number of 29 coded units regarding interests in Western culture and people. This is a drop from the total number of 40 during the first interview. However, this total was largest in the Goals and values theme at this stage of the study.

Broad category	Category	First grade students	Second grade students	Third grade students	Total
Values and goals	Desire or interest in Western culture and people	10	6	13	29

Table 24: Number of coded units in the second interview relating to a desire or interest in Western culture and people

#### 5.13.1 *Desires or interests in Western people*

As in the first interview, certain participants again reported a very strong desire to have close relationships with Western people. Yuki was quite vocal about her desire to meet a Western man. When asked if her feelings have changed since the first interview, Yuki stated,

My dream is to live abroad and have everyone around me speaking English. I want to be surrounded by English speakers. If I have a foreign husband we will have to talk in English, and the kids will talk in English...I will teach them Japanese...I don't know how to say...it has been my dream since I was a child (Y2Y1Q30).

It is interesting to note that Yuki mentions having this desire since she was a child. One could hypothesize that that her mother's cousin marriage to an Australian could be the source of this *akogare*. Perhaps their seeing their apparent happy relationship helped to foster this desire for a Western husband and has encouraged Yuki to study English. It seems probable that this desire or *akogare* has changed little since the initial interview. Yuki continues to say that, "Actually, I've never met a good Japanese husband... and I want to be like a foreigner" (Y2Y1Q31). When prompted to say did she want to be like a foreigner in terms of behavior, Yuki added,

Yeah, I thought so. It's my ideal...it's not a good reason...but since I was a child. I dreamt about it. Now it is a little bit different because I'm dating with a Japanese boyfriend. Also I want to have kids...half kids because they look cute. Foreigners are different to Japanese. I think foreigners are very kind to women and they are romantic. For Japanese to behave romantic is...kind of strange, so most Japanese guys don't do that...yeah. Sometimes Japanese guys don't treat women well, but now my boyfriend is really good, so some Japanese husbands are nice...it depends on the person (Y2Y1Q32).

Although Yuki was the only freshman participant to discuss this desire for engagement with the West and with a foreign partner, Eimi alluded to it being common amongst her peers when she noted,

Some girls study English because they look up to western culture or western people...like people who have blond hair and blue eyes. They also like western music or fashion or food. Some girls are studying English because they are looking to western culture (E2Y1Q30).

Nana also reiterated her desire or longing with the West when she stated, “Maybe I long...I long to speak English and I long to be like Western people...American and Canadian people...why? Mmm...” (N2Y3Q18). When pressed why, Nana responded, “I always watch foreign dramas...their faces are cute, the style is good, but Japanese are small...they [Americans] have good style...I want to have such a style” (N2Y3Q28). It is certainly clear that there is a strong desire or longing towards Western people and even the desire to find a Western partner. This could perhaps be attributed to sociocultural and historical influences. In Yuki’s case her mother’s cousin’s marriage and in Nana’s case her friend’s American father. However, this is an area that outside of the work of Takahashi (2013) little is known and would certainly warrant further research.

#### **5.14 What typifies a motivated English language learner in this context in the middle of the study?**

The discussion now presents an overview of what typifies a motivated English language learner in this context at the halfway point of the study. Moreover, it offers answers to the three research questions posed in Section 2.13 above:

- 1) From the perspective of Japanese university L2 learners, what motivates them to learn English?
- 2) What differences in these perceptions can be seen between first grade, second grade, and third grade Japanese L2 learners?

- 3) How do Japanese university L2 learners' perceived feelings and attitudes towards English, and their motivational actions, fluctuate over the period of an academic year?

Following the format and logic presented in Section 4.14 above, this section offers a brief overview the perceptions of language learning motivation from the perspective of the participants in this study. Once more, taking into account the scale of the study and constraints on space it will not attempt to discuss each of these perceptions in detail. The discussion subsequently moves on to the more prominent features of language learning motivation and in attempt to respond to question three above. It then offers a comparison with the responses in the first interview to identify fluctuations at this stage.

Displayed in Figure 4 below are number of references to the macro- and micro-social contexts, the global context, and the educational context. Similar to the findings in the first interview, the majority of these coded units were again relating to the participants' educational context. The participants once more reported having more positive learning experiences than negative ones although as can be seen in Table 15 in Section 5.2, the discrepancy was much smaller.

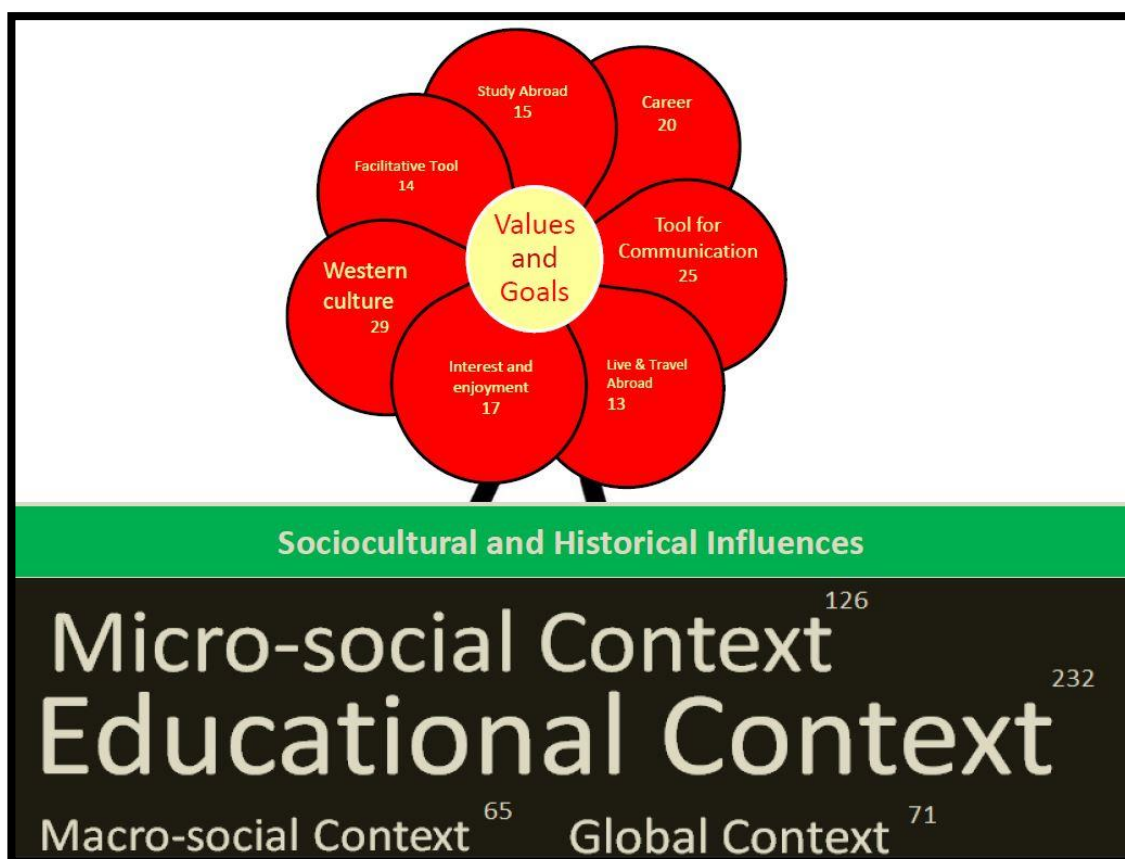


Figure 4: A visualization of the total number of coded units in the second interview in BT1 and BT2

In addition, there were far fewer references to encouragement and influence from an English teacher and a small number of comments relating to a negative experience with a teacher. Furthermore, there appeared to be a great deal of self-appraising occurring and large increase in comments relating to perceived institutional pressures. The discussion will therefore begin by summarizing these pressures across the three age ranges in comparison with those in the first interview.

As reported in Section 5.5 above, there was a large increase in the number of institutional pressures reported across all three age groups. Amongst the first grade students, these were predominately relating to the perceived pressure of improving their score on the TOEIC test. In contrast to the first interview when there was only one reference to this test, it appears that it is now having a large impact on their language learning experience and motivation to learn English as the first grade

students comprehend how this test score impacts the level of funding in terms of scholarships and the study abroad program, potentially restricts their selection of courses available, and ability to graduate. The findings for the second grade learners showed a similar pattern with several participants also reporting washback in terms of self-pressure, fear, frustration, anxiety, and a reduction of a sense of autonomy which appears to be impacting the participants' motivation. The pressures reported amongst the third grade participants indicate a more acute form of pressure. Once more, the comments were more specifically regarding increasing their TOEIC test score to secure future employment. Furthermore, the pressures seemed to have dramatically increased since the initial interview and this appears to be impacting on some of the participants' goals and values. In addition, several of the participants in third grade students even declared that they would cease studying English in order to concentrate on this job hunting process.

An analysis of Figure 3 in Section 4.14 and Figure 4 above shows a marked increase in references regarding the participants' micro-social context. In comparison to the initial interviews, the interviews at the end of the semester contained numerous references to positive peer influences, negative peer influences, and perceived distractions along with a reduction in the number of comments relating to parental and family influences. One possible suggestion for this change postulated was the timing of these interviews might explain this variation. However, the findings suggest that group dynamics have become of greater importance for the first grade learners in this study. In contrast, it was proposed that this became less relevant for the second and third grade participants. More specifically, group cohesiveness and group norms are helping to create more autonomy amongst the youngest age group. In addition, findings highlighted personal and interpersonal issues which were having a negative

impact on the participants were most prevalent amongst the youngest age group. Furthermore, the majority of first grade students mentioned competitiveness lowering their self-esteem and as a potential source of learner anxiety. These issues appear to be more prominent during the middle of the semester than in the initial interview at the start of the semester. During the second interview there were also 36 references to distractions which were spread evenly across the three age sets (See Table 19 in Section 5.7 above). Common distractions to learning English came in the form of other non-English related studies, club and circle activities, friends and partners, social media, part-time jobs, and the weather. In addition, several participants reported tiredness and fatigue as a result of attempting to keep up with these distractions. However, it was postulated that by participating in this study, learners were able to notice and regulate their own behavior leading to potentially less distractions and a thorough understanding of their own goals therefore limiting some of the distractions noted above.

In addition to the references to peer relations, there were many comments at this stage to and age relations and vertical social hierarchies that were not frequently mentioned during the interviews in April. In Section 5.6.3 above, it was noted how seniors can have both a negative and positive influence on the younger learners' language learning motivation and juniors can also positively and negatively impact on seniors' motivation. It appears many junior participants perceive a social obligation to underperform in front of seniors or not fully participate in order to not outperform their seniors which is having a negative impact on their language learning, and in particular, in communication classes. Several juniors reported choosing not to use English in class due to the social context and the strong vertical hierarchies. Although much less numerous, it was also noted that upperclassmen can have a positive

influence on underclassmen. In particular, relating to getting guidance and study advice where the senior's role appears to be one of a mentor offering advice based on their experience and knowledge. It was hypothesized that seniors could play an important role in the development of juniors in certain cases inside the class although these appear to be much less frequent and are more likely to have a negative impact. From the perspective of senior students, again there appear to be both positive and negative influences. Senior students perceive feelings of pressure, anxiety, nervousness, envy, and even inferiority when communicating in English with juniors who they regard as having a better ability. The kind of anxiety being experienced here appears to be a fear of negative evaluation (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986) created by the age-related hierarchical system. It was also noted above that it seems the older students believe they should be able to perform better than their juniors. It is also possible that there were positive influences on senior students by their juniors although these didn't appear so frequently in the data set. Participants mentioned how a junior who performed well during class might encourage the senior to study more diligently so as not to be outperformed in the future and this was highlighted as a potential form of social comparison (Lewis & Sullivan, 2007) with the particularity being that this is specifically an age-related comparison. The possibility that this is an age specific form of performance orientation (Ames, 1992) was also suggested. There are certainly many implications for teachers working in similar contexts with mixed age groups and these will be discussed in Section 7.4 below.

In Section 4.14 above, it was noted how both direct and indirect contact opportunities in Japan and abroad were impacting on the participants' language learning motivation. At this stage of the study, there were far fewer references to direct and indirect contact abroad and this was attributed to the fact that only one of



the participants had traveled overseas in the interim period between the interviews. However, it appears that contact opportunities in Japan were continuing to play an important role in the learners' language learning motivation. Regarding direct contact, it once more appears that it was the first grade students who displayed a greater enthusiasm for meeting and interacting with non-Japanese with this age group displaying a greater willingness to seek out direct contact opportunities. It was suggested that for the majority of this age group direct contact with foreign people still appears to be the driving force behind their motivation with their level of international posture Yashima (2002) once again appearing to be stronger than many of their seniors. The data suggests that at this stage in the study, although the second and third grade learners appear to have an open attitude towards variety of different cultures, their level of international posture is not as strong as that of the first grade students.

In addition, it appears there have been fluctuations in the perceived motivational emphasis attributed to the participants' values and goals. Figure 4 illustrates how although there was still an even distribution of the number of coded units in this second broad category, there was now a large reduction in the amount of references to career goals, goals to travel and live abroad, desires or interests in Western culture and people, and perceiving English to be a facilitative tool. With only the categories an interest and enjoyment in learning English as a language subject, study abroad, and English as a tool for communication having a similar number of mentions as in the first interview.

An analysis of Figure 3 in Section 4.14 and Figure 4 above shows quite a dramatic decrease in the number of references to the participants' career aspirations in the second interviews with more than half coming from the third grade learners. It was

suggested that for the first and second grade cohorts, career aspirations were on hold at this stage of the study. Furthermore, career goals appeared to become more pragmatic and realistic and there were also changing career goals stemming from influences from their current evolving sociocultural situations. At this stage of the study it seems that these two groups of learners are prioritizing their immediate surroundings over setting or attempting to achieve career goals.

As noted in Section 5.10 above, it is apparent there was also less motivational emphasis on goals to travel, study, and live abroad at this stage. There was a slight increase in the number of references to studying abroad although the vast majority of those comments came from the first and second grade learners. The data suggests that affordability is a prime concern amongst all the age groups and job hunting is the most prominent reason why the third grade learners are not planning to study abroad. Learners in the third grade appear to be considering traveling abroad in the future after graduation and although they still hold a desire to travel abroad, the commitment to securing employment remains number one priority. It could be postulated that the majority of learners are concentrating on the present at this stage of the study.

A similar pattern can be seen in the comments coded into the categories, interest and enjoyment in learning English as a language subject and using English as a facilitative and communicative tool. There was a slight decrease in the number of references from the first and second grade learners relating to deriving satisfaction and pleasure in learning English, enjoying learning English for achievement and a sense surpassing oneself, and learning English to experience stimulation or pleasant sensations. It was also suggested that the older learners' felt that learning English as a language subject had less of a motivational emphasis at this stage once again because

of their current circumstances searching for employment. This is also another indication of the complex relationship between context and values and goals. With regards to using English as a facilitative and communicative tool, there appeared to be a similar pattern to the data collected in the first interview suggesting that these desires are still perceived as being important particularly amongst the youngest age group. However, once more the focus seems to be on the learners' current context rather than their desires and goals.

As in the first interview, there were references which showed both a desire for more social relations with Western people and to an interest in Western cultural products. Indeed, as can be seen in Figure 4 above there were more references in this category than in any other of the categories within the Values and goals theme. Some participants reported a very strong desire or longing towards Western people and even the desire to find a Western partner. It was suggested that this longing could possibly be attributed to sociocultural and historical influences in the participants' lives. Learners who reported growing up around foreign people certainly talked more extensively about this *akogare*. However, it should be reiterated that outside of the work of Takahashi (2013), there is little is known and would certainly warrant more research. The following chapter highlights the fluctuations at the end of the academic year.

## **6. Findings and discussion – The end of the year**

This chapter will provide an analysis of the data collected during the final set of interviews. These interviews were conducted in January approximately five months after the second round of data collection and almost nine months after the initial set of interviews. As with the second interviews, these coincided with the time the participants were preparing for their final examinations and reports for all their courses. Once again, several participants mentioned that the intensity of the semester, the number of classes, and commitments to clubs, circles, and part time work were having an effect on their lives and studies. In contrast to the previous interview, the weather had become very cold and the temperature had dropped to close to zero. In the diary entries, several of the participants had reported catching colds and getting sick. These factors appeared to impact on the participants' general state of mind and their motivation to study English. This again contrasts to the students' frame of mind in April when they had returned from a long break and had reported feeling refreshed and willing to study. As stated at the beginning of Chapter 5, it is worth bearing these conditions in mind when reading the findings and discussion below.

The aim of this chapter is to present the perceptions of language learning motivation of a typically motivated learner in this context at the end of the academic year. I will also discuss fluctuations from the responses during the first and second interviews. For consistency, I will follow the style adopted in Chapters 4 and 5. I will therefore analyze comments from Yuki, Saori, and Nana which typify the responses of other students in their age groups and attempt to feature what typifies a first, second, and third grade learner in this context over the period of an academic year. In addition, I will use comments from the remaining 20 participants to assist in highlighting the main findings. To summarize, the main intentions of this chapter are twofold. First, is

to discuss the participants' perceptions of their language learning motivation at this stage of their development. Second is to highlight temporal fluctuations to demonstrate potential changes in perceptions of language learning motivation of a typically motivated learner in this context over the course of an academic year.

### **6.1 Looking ahead – Are values and goals are back in prominence?**

This chapter starts by briefly examining the changes in the total number of references in the two broad themes. As can be seen in Table 25 below, there was a dramatic increase in the total number of coded units in the first Broad theme, Sociocultural and historical influences from the first to the second interview. This then remained almost constant in the third interview. In contrast, there was a dramatic decrease in the number of references in the Values and goals theme between the April and the July interviews with then a striking increase in the number in the final interview.

Furthermore, this suggests that during the middle of the academic year, values and goals were of less importance to the learners in this study and this changed dramatically towards the end of the academic year. This contrasts with the participants' sociocultural and historical influences which appeared over the course of the study to be more consistently influencing them. The following sections of this chapter attempt to break down these numbers and present a clear picture of these themes. The chapter analyzes prominent categories and sub-categories within these themes. It begins with a discussion of categories and sub-categories in the Sociocultural and historical influences theme before moving on to the categories in the Values and goals theme.

Broad themes	Total no. of coded units in the 1st interview	Total no. of coded units in the 2nd interview	Total no. of coded units in the 3rd interview
Sociocultural and historical influences	306	494	510
Values and goals	229	133	280

*Table 25: The number of coded units in the two broad themes during the first and second interviews*

The discussion regarding sociocultural and historical influences opens by examining the comments in the educational context. The justification for doing this is that this category contained the largest number of references during the final interview. At this stage, there were fewer references to learning experiences and encounters with teachers than at any other stage during the study. This section begins by examining these comments collectively before moving on to categories which had a much larger number of references; self-appraisal of progress and institutional pressures. The remaining two sections analyze the perceptions of relationships with peers before examining direct and indirect contact experiences in Japan. Subsequently, I present an analysis of the data in the values and goals theme concentrating on career aspirations, goals to travel, study, and live abroad before discussing how English is perceived as a communicative and facilitative tool. Finally, I discuss the participants' continued desire and interest in Western culture and people before offering responses to the three research questions.

## **6.2 Positive and negative learning experiences**

As can be seen in Table 26 below, there were a total of 298 references in the educational context category. This is in comparison to 173 in the initial interviews and 238 during the second interview. The number of references to positive and negative

learning experiences slightly decreased at this stage as did positive and negative encounters with teachers.

Category	Sub-category	1st interview- All participants	2nd interview- All participants	3rd interview- All participants
Educational context	BC1-CA-SCI-Positive learning experiences	62	37	33
	BC1-CA-SCII-Negative learning experiences	26	29	22
	BC1-CA-SCIII-Teacher (encouragement / influence)	43	15	13
	BC1-CA-SCIV-Teacher (negative experiences)	0	7	4
	BC1-CA-SCV-Self appraisal of progress	0	48	86
	BC1-CA-SCVI-Institutional pressures	32	84	116
	BC1-CA-SCVII-Investment	10	12	29
		173	232	298

Table 26: The number of coded units in the educational context category over the academic year

The majority of the comments relating to positive and negative learning histories seem to equate with what the participants stated during the first two interviews. Once more, there were references that showed the causal attributions of past success and failures highlighted in Weiner’s attribution theory (1986) as students reflected again on their English learning experiences in middle and high school. Furthermore, there were many comments that were once again directly related to their current English studies and classes. This comment from Rina exemplifies this. “The classes are fun especially the classes taught by native speakers are good” (R3Y1Q4).

One interesting observation that was alluded to in Section 5.7 above was the reports of enjoying the opportunity of being a part of this study. There were several comments which seemed to suggest that the students considered participating in this study as an opportunity to practice speaking and writing in English and therefore improve their own English skills. When asked at the end of the interview for any final comments, Mana said, “If this study finishes, or there are no more diaries to write...I can’t think about my abilities or my English skill...I can think more about my ability thanks to you...I can feel that it is important to study English and speak English. It is

so interesting and useful helping you”. Then when asked has the experience been useful in terms of improving her English proficiency, she added, “Yeah...yeah...I like to write in English so yeah...it has been interesting” (M3Y3Q25). Shiori, a student in the third grade, also indicated that participation in this study had been enjoyable when she stated, “I was really happy and I enjoyed writing this diary...when I wrote this diary, it was such a happy time for me...such a refreshing time” (S3Y3Q4). It could also be hypothesized that by participating in this study, learners could notice and regulate their own behavior and achieve a deeper understanding of their own goals and values. Take this comment from Miki as an example of this.

If I didn't do this (join this study) ...I'm ordinary now...but I would be a more ordinary student...just a student who enjoys school life, so this study makes me stimulated...it has stimulated me...all the time...and I thought about what I want to be...recently I don't know what I want to be in the future and what I want to do, but I didn't stop thinking about what I will be because of this study, so I think it is very good for me (M3Y1Q5).

When asked if she felt taking part in this study had impacted on her language learning motivation, Miki added, “Yeah. Other members of this study also told me the same yesterday. If we didn't join this study...it is a little scary to think what...what kind of student I would have become” (M3Y1Q7). If we apply these comments to Deci and Ryan's (1985) self-determination theory, it is possible to hypothesize that over the course of the study the extrinsic motivation of completing the diary entries and taking part in the interviews and member checking sessions has altered over the course of the year. It is probable that for Miki and other participants, these tasks were initially a form of external regulation, and over time, these developed to introjected



regulation, identified regulation, and eventually integrated regulation. At this stage of the study, Miki seems to believe that these tasks are now choices that have become positively assimilated with her needs, values, and beliefs. Furthermore, it could be suggested that these learning experiences have influenced and shaped Miki's motivation. Her comment "I didn't stop thinking about what I will be" shows a sense of autonomy. Her comments also seem to suggest a feeling of satisfaction and competence in terms of her development. It also seems evident that Miki has developed her relatedness with other members of the study as she has established connections with other participants. Perhaps this has significance for teachers in similar contexts and these will be discussed in the teacher implications section below.

The references to negative learning experiences were comparable to the comments made in the previous two interviews. Reiteratively, comments indicated negative feelings derived from learning English, a poor academic record, but the majority of comments related to negative experiences in the classroom. Many comments were ascribed to the kind of class or the course content the learners had to study. Kyoko noted, "Sometimes I feel...especially the reading class...now we are learning about kind of...topics that are not useful...the words we don't usually use them like *genocide*...not common words, so it is not useful" (K3Y1Q20). Certainly, several of the participants seem to feel the four motivational conditions at the course-specific level; interest, relevance, expectancy, and satisfaction highlighted by Crooks and Schmidt (1991) are probably not being met. Natsumi noted,

On Tuesday I only have Japanese teachers and on Tuesdays I'm not very motivated because the classes are very boring. I think reading to improve on the TOEIC test is important, but it doesn't suit me...just it is more fun and interesting to speak in English class (N3Y1Q39).

Overall, as in the previous two interviews, it appears that *state motivation* (Julkunen 1989, 2001) is often impacted by unenjoyable tasks or classes which participants take part in. Keiko stated, “In my writing class I don’t study...I can’t study anything new for me...this class...in this class I study how to write an essay” (K3Y3Q7). This comment by Keiko shows that she places little attainment value, intrinsic value, or extrinsic utility value on this particular class (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000), but seems to derive much more satisfaction from another class when she noted, “in English seminar I am using English and learning information, so it is very interesting for me” (K3Y3Q5). During this final interview, there seemed a great deal more reflection than in the previous two interviews. The discussion will now therefore turn to the participants’ self-appraisal of progress.

### **6.3 How am I progressing? Reflections and self-appraisal**

As can be seen in Table 26 above, there was a significant increase in the number of comments made by students that appeared to reflect back on the perceived progress they had made. On the one hand, this should not come as any great surprise because during this final interview I asked each participant to reflect on their progress with their English studies and how their experiences had influenced and shaped their language learning motivation. However, there were some interesting and unexpected comments and these will be discussed in this section.

With the exception of one or two students, the vast majority of the participants seemed disappointed with their progress in terms of their English ability, scores on standardized tests, and with the effort they had expended over the course of the year. There appears to be a pattern in terms of feelings and attitudes towards English

amongst the different age-groups. The discussion therefore deals with each age group individually starting with students in the first grade.

For Yuki and her cohorts, it seems that the first year was seemingly a transitional year in terms of future-goal orientation. This supports the findings of Ushioda (1998) who reported that concrete goal structures take a long period of time to crystallize. Many participants reflected on how their goals seem to be evolving after encountering difficulties or setbacks particularly in their educational context. Yuki reported being disappointed at her score on her first attempt at the TOEFL iBT test. She stated that she was therefore considering her goal to study abroad in America. She stated, “I researched the score I needed to get for studying abroad in America and it was 60 points, but I got 48...it is not good, so I can’t go to America” (Y3Y1Q18). This appeared to impact on her confidence as she added, “[my] English level is getting lower, so I’m not that motivated now” (Y3Y1Q21). Miki reported a similar feeling when she did not achieve the score she wanted on the TOEIC test. However, despite these disappointments, this age group appears to be highly motivated. Miki added, “but I’m always thinking about how to study English...the best way to study English...now I’m interested in how to study English. I’m interested in learning the best way to study English” (M3Y1Q3). In a moment of reflection Miki appears to be determining the best method of study for her and this comment shows she is willing to be persistent and expend more effort on learning English. Natsumi also reflected on how her changing goal-orientations impacted on her motivation. Reflecting back over the past few months, Natsumi said,

Yeah...it was a very busy and stressful period for me, but maybe this was a very important time because I could think about my abilities...English...and I’m interested in everything, so I was thinking

what I should concentrate on. At the beginning of June, I talked with W Sensei, and I told him that I was very interested in fair trade and that I wanted to study about it at this university, but he said fair trade is not really helpful for children anymore, so my dream was broken and so I lost my way because studying about fair trade was my big purpose for studying English and studying at university, so I couldn't focus on what I should study instead of fair trade (N3Y1Q11).

She continued by talking about how she found it difficult to study English while her goal was in flux. She added,

Maybe at that time I lost my purpose for studying English...studying English to learn about fair trade...like international problems, and I couldn't find another reason for studying English, so I thought if I just study English I would find another reason...something that I was interested in...I thought if I study English I could find other reasons for studying English (N3Y1Q27).

I would suggest that Natsumi is also displaying motivated behavior here as she discusses her persistence and willingness to expend effort on her English studies when she sought to find a new purpose for learning English. Later in the interview she added, "Now I'm interested in international law and studying English...it is a really clear purpose and I think this really suits me" (N3Y1Q36).

For Saori and her cohorts in the second grade, their appraisal of progress seemed slightly different. Similar to the first grade participants, this cohort seemed to reflect on a sense of disappointment. However, the disappointment seemed to be in their perceived improvement in their English ability and the effort they had expended over the course of the academic year. When asked how her English level or ability had

changed since April, Saori responded, “The same I think...maybe...my effort has not...I have not tried hard enough at writing, reading and listening” (S3Y2Q24). This sense of disappointment was evident in the final interview with one of Saori’s cohorts, Mai. During the second interview, Mai had mentioned her belief in herself using and studying English had decreased. When asked how her confidence was in January, Mai responded, “Now...it hasn’t changed...just like my motivation” (M3Y2Q20). It became apparent at this stage of the interview that Mai was starting to become a little down. Her body language became more negative and she ceased making eye contact with me. She also started to talk in a much quieter voice. I continued by asking her how she felt her English level or ability had changed since the initial interview and she added, “I don’t think it has changed...ah...”. At this point it became evident that Mai was upset as the sigh at the end of the sentence sounded heartfelt, and when she looked up from the table, she had tears in her eyes. After a few minutes of silence, as she composed herself, she continued, “I think I tried harder when I was in the first grade...in the second grade I don’t think I tried as hard...I think in the first grade I wasn’t as busy studying other things...now I have less free time” (M3Y2Q21). I continued by asking her did this make her feel disappointed and she noted,

Yes, yes, yes. Mmm...I should have studied more. I still want to study more English, but I haven’t thought much about whether I will get a job using English...whether I’ll get a job where I can speak English with foreigners or not...maybe just a regular job (M3Y2Q22).

Mai seemed to attribute this lack of English study on the fact that she was engaged in other forms of study and commitments. These extra commitments seemed to have an even bigger impact on the English studies of the third grade students.

The majority of the third grade students reported feeling much less motivated to study English at this stage than in the first interview in April. They also reported a sense of disappointment in the progress they had made over the course of the study. Nana attributes this to her efforts to secure a job. When asked how she perceived her English ability in comparison to in April, she stated,

It has maybe changed. Maybe it has gone down. My study to become a public employee...the test to become a public employee there is an English section, but it is a small section and I made some mistakes and I was shocked very shocked. Before (in previous semesters) I studied English every day...but now I just take one class, so I can't solve English problems on the test...I was very shocked. My motivation for studying English has gone down. (N3Y3Q11).

There seems to be a relationship between the demands this age group were under to secure employment and their efforts and attitudes towards learning English. Nana continued, "It [motivation] has gone down more, but when I listen to western music...only this situation, I think I like English and I want to speak English" (N3Y3Q13).

The discussion continues in the subsequent section relating to the perceived institutional pressures the participants are under.

#### **6.4 Wish me luck! - Institutional pressures**

The section continues with a discussion of the comments relating to perceived institutional pressures. In Sections 4.6 and 5.5 above, this sub-category was defined as an external pressure placed on the participant by an educational institution or a teacher. The aim of this section is to present the changes in this pressure over the

course of the academic year and to highlight the differences in pressure amongst the three age groups. As can be seen in Table 26 above, there were a total of 32 references to pressures in April. By July, this had risen to 84 and during the final set of interviews there were a total of 122 references to perceived institutional pressures with the vast majority of these comments again coming from third grade students. As shown in Table 27 below, this pattern was repeated in the final interview with the third grade students talking more frequently about their educational stresses and tensions. Once more, the discussion will begin with an analysis of the comments from the first and second grade learners before moving on to the perceived pressures third grade students considered themselves to be under.

3rd interview - BC1-CA-SCVI-Institutional pressures	No. of coded units
First grade students	29
Second grade students	21
Third grade students	72
Total	122

*Table 27: The number of coded units relating to perceived institutional pressures during the final interview*

For the first grade students, once again the biggest perceived pressure is to achieve a higher score on a standardized test, mainly the TOEIC test. Miki mentioned the pressure to improve her score due to the fact a low score would restrict her selection of courses available. She mentioned, “It is really difficult because if I couldn’t get a high or a so so level score on the TOEIC, I can’t take some classes...I have to take some compulsory classes...so it is a kind of pressure” (M3Y1Q3). Earlier in the interview, Miki also revealed how much of the pressure comes from her English teachers. When asked does she have any other reasons for studying English, she stated, “Mmm...For TOEIC, but this is not my opinion it is my teacher’s wish and my friend’s wish...it is more of a duty, so to study just for TOEIC is not something I want

to do, but I have to study it...it is different from my feeling in Spring” (M3Y1Q2).

When asked how this made her feel, she added, “Yeah bad...the bad score on the TOEIC test caused me to worry very much, so I recognized I have to study English...to study English for the TOEIC test is my duty” (M3Y1Q8). As discussed in Chapter 2 above, Horwitz and colleagues (1986) noted three components to foreign language learning anxiety; communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. It appears evident that Miki and her cohorts are now suffering with test anxiety.

There were references to show the participants understood the consequences of attaining a high score on the TOEIC test in particular relating to securing a job after graduation. Natsumi noted,

I’m taking [a] class this semester...and almost every time he forces us to study for the TOEIC test...to get more than 650 points is very...if I can get that score I can find a job very easily...more than other people...it is the standard of Japanese companies. It is really scary because I have to study for the TOEIC test and get more than 650 is very important, but this is the average...not average but the standard (N3Y1Q23).

Taking into consideration Deci and Ryan’s (1985) work on self-determination theory, it could be suggested that motivation to study for these standardized tests could be categorized the type of extrinsic motivation described as external regulation where the motivation is coming entirely from external sources in the form of pressure from teachers or the need to secure employment. Natsumi perceives a high score on the TOEIC and good English abilities dichotomous. She notes,



I don't know. I think to get a high TOEIC score is different from being good at using English because there are ways of getting a high score but it is just a way...even if I get a high score on the TOEIC it doesn't mean I can speak English very naturally...speaking English well and getting a high TOEIC score are not related. To get a high score is really just related to finding a job or getting a higher position in a company (N3Y1Q25).

Given the fact that there was only one reference to pressure to achieve on standardized tests in the first interview from the first grade participants, it could be hypothesized that during the first year of study at the tertiary level, this institutional pressure builds to be become one of the most important aspects of their academic lives and in turn causes a great deal of language learning anxiety, in particular, test anxiety.

Although there were fewer references to institutional pressures from the second grade students, as with their juniors, there were many references to the pressure of securing a high score on the TOEIC test. In addition, at this stage of the academic year they were more specifically concerned about attaining a higher TOEIC test score to secure future employment. Although this was briefly alluded to by a second grade student in Chapter 5, this pressure was evident amongst all the second grade students during the third interview.

For Saori, there appeared to be a double pressure of securing a 600-point score for job hunting and graduation. She stated,

If I get a high score...companies favor employees with a high score.

Also to graduate from here I need 600 on the TOEIC. If I don't get it, I

can't graduate from this university...and unless I can get 650...there are some classes I can't join unless I get 650 on the TOEIC test (S3Y2Q9).

Even though the job hunting process would not officially begin for another 12 months, it appears evident that it is already causing her and her cohorts some anxiety. She continued,

Now I'm thinking about my future...hunting for a job. I always talk with my friends about getting a job...like what should we do? What kind of job do we want to get? What do we want to be? Like that...every day we talk about it, but we haven't decided what to do. My English level, if my English level is high, maybe I can choose from many jobs, but my English level isn't very high, so I don't have a lot of jobs to choose from (S3Y2Q21).

The discussion now turns to the institutional pressures of Nana and her cohorts in the third grade. In Chapter 5, it was reported that many of the comments in this category were related to getting a higher TOEIC test score to secure future employment. In the final interview, there were also numerous reports of the pressure of studying TOEIC, but there also seemed to be a shift towards solely concentrating on securing work after graduation. Nana stated that she had now ceased studying English in any form due to the pressures of trying to obtain work. She stated,

Now I don't study English, so I can't speak or write English as well as I could before. If I will take TOEIC, I think I can't get a good score because I didn't study English. Now I don't want to take the TOEIC

because I would be worried about my score. It would go down maybe (N3Y3Q10).

She mentioned studying for the exam to become a civil servant as the main reason for no longer studying English. As she had almost completed her credits for graduation, Nana was now attending a private school in the evenings and on the weekends to help her prepare for this. These time constraints also appear to be preventing her from continuing her English studies. She added,

Now I only go to school on Monday. Actually my motivation for studying English has gone down. For the study to become a public employee English is not important. Other subjects are important, so I don't study English. I have to study law and economics, history, science, and Japanese...many subjects. Yes, English...there is only a little, so my motivation for learning English has gone down.

In previous interviews, Shiori, a third grade student, had talked at length about her intrinsic enjoyment studying English. However, during the final interview, she reported a shift in her attitude towards learning English. She stated,

In April my heart was so calm and I wasn't busy, but after the summer vacation I became so busy because the job hunting started and I had many companies to visit and write many entry sheets, and I had to get a high score on the TOEIC. Studying English makes me happy and it is my time that I can enjoy, but I can't have enough time to study. In April, I was so happy and I was enjoying studying English, but now from October, November, December, and January it is so hard. My

heart has changed towards studying English. Nowadays, I just study English for the license so it has changed...my heart.

The situation appeared similar for all but one of the third grade participants and that particular learner had not started the job hunting process because she intended to continue her studies. Yoshi stated that studies for the Synthetic Personality Inventory<sup>10</sup> (SPI) test meant that he could no longer spend time studying English. In the interview in July, he stated was going to attempt to balance his job hunting and English studies, but when asked in January had he managed to keep a balance, he added,

To tell the truth, no...I said I don't want to put my English studies to one side and concentrate on getting a job or job hunting, but now I'm leaning towards looking for a job. Of course, now I am studying, but I have a lot on my plate to do, but my heart is in hunting for a job, so I'm afraid I can't manage to keep a balance (Y3Y3Q23).

It could be hypothesized that for the third grade participants, their individual motivation is not simply influenced by their sociocultural factors and context here. Indeed, Yoshi added,

I'm studying a lot of math at the moment...Wish me luck! I want to study English! Why doesn't the aptitude test include English? Some may have an English section, but the one I am learning now has Japanese and math only.

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<sup>10</sup> The Synthetic Personality Inventory (SPI) is an aptitude test which is commonly used in the Japanese recruitment process for employment.

Drawing on the work done in the field of sociocultural theory (Hickey, 2003, Hickey & Granade, 2004), it could be postulated that Yoshi's and his peers' motivation is a fundamentally sociohistorically situated process. It emerges and fades through interactions with context and through their sociocultural activities. Likewise, I would argue that the context has not caused the third grade students to become less motivated. Despite being incredibly busy, this age group seems to have the capacity to make plans and to regulate their execution. Shiori, a third grade learner, feels studying English makes her "happy and it is my time that I can enjoy", and other third grade students discussed continuing studying English as a hobby after completing job hunting. Mana noted, "Now I'm so busy so if I have free time I would study English" (M3Y3Q21).

## 6.5 They are getting me down - Peer influence

As shown in Table 28 below, the data suggests that the major changes in peer influence at this stage of the study occurred with the first grade participants. A deeper analysis of the data showed that the comments from the second and third grade students were similar across the final two interviews. However, the freshmen students reported far fewer positive influences and much more negative influences. This discussion in this section therefore concentrates on this changing dynamic.

Sub-categories	First grade students	Second grade students	Third grade students	Total
BC1-CB-SCI-Peer influence (-)	24	10	3	31
BC1-CB-SCII-Peer influence (+)	7	11	6	21

*Table 28: The number of coded units relating to peer influences in the final interview*

Although there were comments to suggest that the first grade students had established relationships which were helping to develop their motivational orientations, the majority of comments seemed to suggest that peer influence had a

more negative influence on their motivation towards the end of the year compared with during the first interview. First, once again, the data suggests that several personal and interpersonal issues had a negative impact on the participants and were again most common amongst the youngest age group.

Take the following encounter with Kyoko as an example. “I have many friends who are studying English, so they study hard...and I feel that I also need to study hard” (K3Y1Q8). She continued, “in class we talk with a partner, so I could hear the other person speaking and I felt that my English is not good...not as good as the other person” (K3Y1Q10). When asked how this made her feel, Kyoko noted, “I think I have to study harder...it makes me feel sad...not sad...disappointed...like kind of annoyed (K3Y1Q11). In this study, the majority of first grade students mentioned competition as having a causal effect on their self-esteem. In the first two interviews, several first grade learners reported a having a friendly rivalry with their cohorts. However, in the final interview this rivalry seemed to have escalated into a more competitive state. Rina noted, “M had and K had about 740 [TOEIC], so I don’t want to lose to them. Ah yeah...maybe I could get...or now I have rivals...like them...that’s right yeah” (R3Y1Q43). Eimi discussed being in the same major class as her rival.

We are going to be in the same seminar, so when I think about that I feel nervous, but spending time with my rivals is a good experience.

When I graduate from university, I will have to work with people who I don’t like

As referred to in Chapter 2 above, Bailey (1983) found learners' competitiveness and self-esteem as a potential source of learner anxiety. There does

appear to be more competitiveness between this youngest age group and it is possible that this is causing anxiety for these students. This rivalry has certainly grown over the period of the academic year and has certain teaching implications which will be discussed in the following chapter.

## 6.6 Still looking – Contact opportunities in Japan

Over the course of the interviews, there was a steady increase in the number of references to direct and indirect contact experiences in Japan. As can be seen in Table 29 below, there were a total number of 56 references to direct contact experiences in Japan. In addition, there were 45 comments relating to cultural experiences in Japan. Looking back at Sections 4.8 and 5.8 above, we can see that this number increased consistently over the year and amongst all three age groups. This section begins by looking at direct contact experiences in Japan before moving on to cultural experiences with cultural products and artifacts whilst in Japan.

Sub-category	First grade students	Second grade students	Third grade students	Total
BC1-CD-SCII-Direct contact experiences in Japan	20	21	18	56
BC1-CD-SCIII-Cultural experiences in Japan	9	21	18	45

Table 29: The number of coded units relating to direct and indirect contact experiences in Japan

The data suggests that across all the age groups and throughout the study that direct contact opportunities had a positive impact on the motivation of the participants. Reflecting back on her summer vacation when she was away from campus and her foreign friends, Rina stated, “During the vacation I don’t speak a lot...no...I don’t have a chance to speak English. I don’t meet any foreign people. It’s terrible” (R3Y1Q27). She also expressed a desire to see more foreign students studying at this university. “Yeah. I think we need more exchange students. I still

think we do, but it is impossible. Maybe C University has some exchange students. I want to make friends with them” (R3Y1Q32). Yuki implies that a recent visit to an amusement park popular with foreign visitors gave her a suggestion for a possible future career. She noted,

I thought I'd like to be a guide...like a job in the future. Before I went, I didn't know that many foreigners visited there, so when I went, I was surprised, so I thought this would be a good place to work. There were a lot of foreign people there. In N, it is hard to meet foreigners, but there were many foreigners there, so it is a good place I think (Y3Y1Q15).

As reported in Chapter 2 above, Csizér and Kormos (2009) found motivated behavior in their study of Hungarian language learners was directly affected by “two latent concepts: language-related attitudes and perceived importance of contact” (p. 176). This quote from Miki clearly shows the perceived importance of opportunities to meet and interact with non-Japanese. She stated,

These are good for my motivation and the events...I just enjoyed them and the events stimulated me each time and by joining these events they make me not forget about studying English. I could learn a lot of things when I joined these events. For example, the culture or the character of the people...or their images of Japan...for foreign people. It helps me keep my interest in another world. If I didn't join these, I will forget to think about things that I don't know much about, so it is a good chance for me to know other ways. I imagined before I came to N that I would be able to have a lot of opportunities to meet foreign people, but in fact when I came here I realized that if you want to speak



English, and you want to know other things you have to go outside [of the university], and I must make opportunities by myself, so maybe I am more active than before.

Research has shown the important role that cultural products have played in foreign language learning situations with little direct contact to the L2 community (Clement, Dörnyei & Noels, 1994). At this stage, there were in total 45 references to indirect contact with cultural products. Furthermore, almost all the students talked about indirect contact experiences in Japan.

Shiori appeared enthused when asked to reflect on her enjoyment of foreign culture and music. She stated she had spent time on the Internet researching and making plans, she then added,

Yes! I talk about foreign countries with my friend who wants to work at an airline counter. I am really interested in foreign fashion, food and hairstyles. There are a lot of differences to Japan. Nowadays, I talk about foreign countries with my friends about a school trip...a graduation trip...where shall we go? What do you want to do? I'd like to go to Europe, but it is so expensive, so I'm thinking now, but I'd like to see the Sagrada Familia in Spain. I would really like to go to Spain. I sometimes listen to foreign music. My friend recommends a CD, so I listen to it. We both like rock music, so we enjoy talking about the music (S3Y3Q16).

In addition, Csizér and Kormos (2009) reported that contact through media products held a more important position in their model than both direct and indirect contact. Csizér and Kormos continue by adding, in a monolingual setting such as

Hungary, increasing the amount of cultural products with which students interact with can have a positive effect on attitudes towards English, its speakers and culture. These findings are relevant to the situation in Japan where monocultural and monolingual aspects of Japanese society have contributed to a restricted sociolinguistic space for English in the society” (Stanlaw 2004, p. vii). It is also evident how important cultural products, and in particular media products, are to the participants in this study. Ease of access to these cultural products appears to be an important factor with Natsumi noting “There is good technology now” (N3Y1Q18). Participants reported listening to music, watching movies, dramas, comedy shows and YouTube clips, reading online news, and accessing social media. Tomo mentioned that such media has impacted on his goal orientations. “My main motivation is movies and music, so I want to see these things...if I go to America, I can touch their culture or see their daily lives...so that’s why I want to study abroad” (T3Y2Q12). As discussed in the literature review above, Yashima’s (2002) findings show the concept of international posture is composed of “interest in foreign affairs, willingness to go overseas to stay or work, readiness to interact with intercultural partners, and, one hopes, openness or a non-ethnocentric attitude toward different cultures” (p. 57). In the final interview, all the participants across the age groups seemed to display an international posture. Yoshi, a participant who was predominantly quiet and reserved during the interviews and one who always took his time to compose his thoughts and reply was another participant who displayed almost exuberance during the interview when he had the opportunity to discuss both his direct and indirect contact opportunities.

Last October I had the chance to take place in an international festival in N...like the international students at the University of N had a booth, and the Vietnamese students made noodles, and the Bangladesh

students made curry and rice, and the other students...I think they are from Kenya...Kenyan students sold necklaces and other traditional garments, and I had a lot of time to speak with them and I think learning English helps me to get a better understanding of other cultures (Y3Y3Q6).

Later in the interview, this energy and enthusiasm returned when I asked him about learning current affairs in English. He added, "I really love...I'm really interested in current affairs and in the class I had time to exchange my thoughts and opinions. Of course, J sensei and the other students helped me to organize my opinions and tell them" (Y3Y3Q17). Overall, throughout all three interviews the participants seemed to revel in talking about their direct and indirect contact opportunities and there was also a sense of longing for more opportunities from several of the participants. I would suggest that these experiences have had a positive effect on attitudes towards English, its speakers and culture. These findings suggest there are implications regarding cultural products in the classroom and these are discussed in Chapter 7 below.

## **6.7 A career focus**

As can be seen in Table 30 below, there were considerably more references to career aspirations during the final interview than during both the first and second interviews. As reported in Section 5.9 above, for Yuki, Saori, and their first and second grade cohorts, career aspirations seemed to be on hold in the middle of the academic year after mentioning career goals which seemed very specific and rather ambitious in April. I hypothesized that these two groups of learners had created an *ideal-self* in terms of their career aspirations with them appearing to have a strong vision of their desired future self-image which was adequately different from their current self.

However, at the time of the first interview it was unclear whether the participants had developed a plan to operationalize their visions, would work to keep the vision alive, or whether they had any counterbalance for the vision (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). With regards to the third grade participants, many of their career goals appeared more pragmatic and grounded in April. Then in July, Nana and her cohorts discussed their career goals in relation to job hunting. This section attempts to analyze if and how these career goals changed by the end of the academic year.

Career aspirations	First interview	Second interview	Third interview
First grade students	13	4	24
Second grade students	10	4	26
Third grade students	15	12	29

*Table 30: The number of coded units relating to career aspirations over the academic year*

All but one of the first and second grade students discussed how they would like to secure a job that will allow them to use their English skills. Tomo provides an example of this when he states, “My dream is to get a job using English, and I want to travel abroad a lot of times in the future” (T3Y2Q26). The career goals they discussed in April seemed very specific and rather ambitious, and at this stage of their development they seemed to have developed more pragmatic career ambitions. These seem to have come about through interactions with their ever changing sociocultural context, and more specifically, through their educational context. Take this as an example from Kyoko. “I’m not sure...but after the writing lesson I taught, I thought I wanted to become a teacher again...a little bit” (K3Y1Q17). Natsumi talked about her evolving career goals. She stated,

I am interested in working with children because when I was in high school I studied about fair trade, but now I’m still interested in that, but now I want to support children by making some international

laws. Before I wanted to join an NGO and go to some developing countries and help children, but now...I think that way is important too...but now I want to help children in a more logistical way...making rules and use the law...I think it is more helpful and effective for them...I don't if that is true but now I'm interested in that kind of study. Not by going to a developing country, but in some developing countries...I want to make laws (N3Y1Q).

What appears evident for this age group is that although they have ambitions to use English in their future careers, they have not established any concrete ideas. In the final interview with Eimi, she mentioned three distinct career goals in a five-minute section of the interview. She began by saying "Now I'm interested in teaching Japanese to foreigners", (E3Y1Q25) and then added, "I'm also interested in becoming a flight attendant" (E3Y1Q26), and finally noted she had considered working for an NGO and stated, "I want to help people in developing countries" (E3Y1Q27).

As for Nana and her cohorts in the third grade, the majority appeared to want to secure work using English, but their major concern once again seemed to be to complete period of job hunting successfully. Shiori was keen on securing work as a cabin attendant, but was aware of the challenges in seeking such a job. She stated,

ANA and JAL...I'm also thinking about Korean Air and Shirashida Air...a Japanese company. It's so hard because it is so competitive. I went to an explanation lecture and there were a lot of airline companies and ANA and JAL took part in this in December...on December 1st...and students went to this explanation...and there were a lot of

women there and I was surprised by how many women were there. I felt pressure...like oh really? (S3Y3Q11).

Many of the comments suggested that this age group were now less sure of being able to use English in future employment. Nana noted her goal with slight caution. “To become a public employee and I want to help foreigners using English if possible...yes. In the future I want to speak English...if I become a public employee, I will have a chance to talk with foreigners” (N3Y3Q18). Finally, Keiko and Mana stated that they had abandoned the idea of using English in the workplace due to the competitive nature of securing such a position with Kana stating “I don’t want to use English in my job” and Ayano adding, “Now my main motivation for learning English is to travel...to go abroad, so during that time I can talk with many people, so I want to speak...listen and speak English” (A3Y3Q1). The discussion now turns to the participants changing goals to travel, study, and live abroad.

## **6.8 Changing goals to travel, study, and live abroad**

As displayed in Table 31 below, the total number of references to studying, living and traveling abroad dropped dramatically in the second interview but then increased once more in the third set of interviews. Looking in a little more depth, there are certain patterns which can be seen relating to these various goals. This section therefore begins by analyzing the data relating to goals to study abroad before continuing with an analysis of the participant’s desires to live and travel in another country.

Values and goals	No. of coded units - First interview	No. of coded units - Second interview	No. of coded units - Third interview
BC2-CB-Study abroad	13	15	28
BC2-CC-Live and travel abroad	35	13	35

Table 31: The number of coded units relating to goals to study, live, and travel abroad over the academic year

The data suggests that now only the first and second grade learners harbor goals to study in another country. Of all the third grade participants, only Ayano stated that she will go abroad to study. She noted, “I will go to America or Canada [in the summer]. At that time, I will go to language school, and it will be a working holiday” (A3Y3Q2). In contrast, four of the seven first grade students and three of the seven second grade students stated that they were planning on becoming an exchange student and would study abroad for six to 12 months. In addition, six first grade and five of the second grade students discussed concrete plans to go on a short term study abroad program for about one month.

As reported in Section 5.10 above, there has been a steady decline in the number of Japanese studying abroad in the 10 years prior to these interviews taking place. Two second grade students reported financial affordability as a problem of studying abroad. Mai stated, “My parents have always been so kind...I thought my parents would say to me *do whatever you want to do* but there are money problems and study abroad is expensive” (M3Y2Q14). To summarize, it could be hypothesized that data from this study suggests that affordability and job hunting for the third grade learners are prominent reasons why many of these learners are not planning to study abroad.

With regards to living and traveling abroad, there were many comments across the three age groups about hopes and goals to travel abroad. For Nana and her cohorts

in the third grade, traveling independently after completing their studies seemed a very desirable goal. Nana stated,

I watched some beautiful scenery on TV...oh I want to go to the Maldives too...on honeymoon...haha! I will go on my honeymoon...haha. If I go abroad to travel, I will go without an interpreter. I want to go and use my own abilities and talk to people. In the future I want to do that. I want to study English forever...keep studying English. If I finish my exam, maybe I will have free time, so maybe I will study English at that time.

Keiko perceived traveling abroad as her major long term goal. Take this series of interactions with Keiko and myself as an example.

*You told me your dream for the future is to travel independently. Is this still your dream?* Hmm...maybe I said traveling all over the world, but now I want to stay for a long time in one country because my friend is going to Australia. She is in Australia now, and she is...I think she is enjoying staying there, so I want to try. *Where did she go?* Brisbane. *Where do you want to go?* I haven't really thought about it...I would like to stay in a beautiful place. I went to Seattle last year on the short-term study abroad. Seattle is very nice and I would like to live there. I would like to stay in place like Seattle. After I get a job, when I have enough money, I will maybe go abroad. *Is your final goal to go abroad for a long time?* Yes, that's right (K3Y3Q17).



The first and second grade students also talked extensively about their goals to travel abroad. Saori stated, “I also want to travel to foreign countries someday” (S3Y2Q2). She continued, “I want to go to Hawaii and Italy. The food in Italy looks very delicious. I like Italian food...pizza and pasta. I like them. I will need to be able to speak English if I travel abroad” (S3Y2Q5). Many of the first and second grade students reported having specific reasons for wanting to go to certain places. As an example, Kimio discussed the possibility of visiting Europe to watch some football matches.

## **6.9 I want to use English - English as a facilitative and communicative tool**

In Section 5.12 above, the majority of references to English being a facilitative tool came from freshmen students. At that stage, that particular age group seemed to have a better developed international posture than their seniors. I suggested one possible explanation for this was related to the institutional pressures placed on the older learners discussed in Section 5.5 above. For the second and third year students, the high stakes of the TOEIC test and its role as a gatekeeper to future employment seemed to diminish intrinsic interests and desires to develop an international posture. Their attention seemed to focus on securing a TOEIC score sufficient enough for job-hunting. In the second set of interviews, reported in Section 5.12 above, the comments relating to English as a facilitative and communicative tool were not as numerous although they appeared to follow the same pattern as they did in the first interview. The data suggested that these desires were still perceived as being important, but the focus seemed to be on their current context and situations rather than their desires and goals.

Broad category	Category	First grade students	Second grade students	Third grade students
Values and goals	BC2-CD-English as a facilitative tool	20	10	12
	BC2-CF-English as a tool for communication	13	15	21

*Table 32: The number of coded units relating to English as a facilitative tool and English as a tool for communication in the final interview*

In the final set of interviews there appeared to be little change in the patterns reported above. Once again, the first grade students talked much more frequently and extensively about English being a facilitative tool. This is perhaps highlighted best by these comments from Miki. When asked why she was learning English, Miki responded, “English is my tool to help people and to learn new things...this will never change...English is a tool for me...this is my opinion (M3Y1Q1). When reflecting on how she perceived fluctuations in her motivation, she added, “At the moment...it hasn’t changed...it hasn’t changed at all...I still have the same feeling and opinion now. If I study English, I can learn about things that I don’t about now, so it never changes” (M3Y1Q15). Then when asked does she still see English is a tool to learn other things, she noted, “Yeah...sure my opinion never changes...it is my...it is part of me” (M3Y1Q16). Finally, Miki noted,

I want to study many things in English...religion and culture and politics...I don’t like that, but I have to study it. My plan is to make time and to study something in English...like a goal. I told you before I want to help people in developing countries...like this, but now my plan has changed a little. I still want to help people in foreign countries, but last year I met people from charities...and I learned about NGOs and what it is to help people...I really know, so how to help people...I want to study how to help people. Maybe in the first interview I said I

want to study how to help people at university...this will never change.

This is my dream.

## **6.10 A continued sense of longing - Desires or interests in Western culture and people**

Over the course of the study the comments relating to desires or interests in Western people and culture remained reasonably consistent. As reported in Sections 4.13 and 5.13 above, several of the participants appeared to have a greater Western orientation than an international orientation discovered by Yashima (2000) with certain participants having, what appeared to be, a very strong desire to have close relationships with Western people. In addition, there also appeared to be a strong interest in Western culture amongst the majority of the participants in this study during the first two interviews. There appears to be little change in these feelings in the final set of interviews.

Interview	Category	First grade students	Second grade students	Third grade students	Total
1st Interview	BC2-CG-Desire or interest in Western culture and people	15	5	20	40
2nd Interview	BC2-CG-Desire or interest in Western culture and people	10	6	13	29
3rd Interview	BC2-CG-Desire or interest in Western culture and people	12	13	9	34

*Table 33: The number of coded units relating to desires or interests in Western culture and people in the final interview*

Saori once more discussed her fondness of foreign pop culture. Again, at this stage in the interview her demeanor became more relaxed as she discussed her favorite artist and pop music. Several of Yuki's comments also seem to suggest she still has a strong desire to have close relationships with Western people. Yuki stated,

Maybe said this in April and maybe it hasn't changed. I like speaking in English and I like talking to people in English...foreign people, so that's why I am learning English. You know I like talking very much and also with Japanese people, but I mostly like talking with foreign people. I can know many things from talking with foreign people...differences and culture, so that's why I like learning English.

### **6.11 What typifies a motivated English language learner in this context at the end of the study?**

The discussion concludes with a review of what typifies a motivated English language learner in this context at the end of the academic year. As in Section 5.14, it offers responses to the three research questions posed in Section 2.13:

- 1) From the perspective of Japanese university L2 learners, what motivates them to learn English?
- 2) What differences in these perceptions can be seen between first grade, second grade, and third grade Japanese L2 learners?
- 3) How do Japanese university L2 learners' perceived feelings and attitudes towards English, and their motivational actions, fluctuate over the period of an academic year?

For consistency the review will follow the organization and rationale presented in Sections 4.14 and 5.14 above. This section therefore presents a brief overview the perceptions of language learning motivation of the participants in this study at the end of the year. Furthermore, it should be reiterated that the scale of the study and constraints on space requires that not all these perceptions will be examined in detail. Rather it will cover the more prominent features of language learning motivation to

respond to three questions above. In addition, it also offers a comparison with the responses in the first and second interviews to highlight fluctuations over the academic year.

Figure 5 below highlights the number of references in each of the two broad themes. Once more, the majority of these comments in BT1 were relating to the participants' educational context.

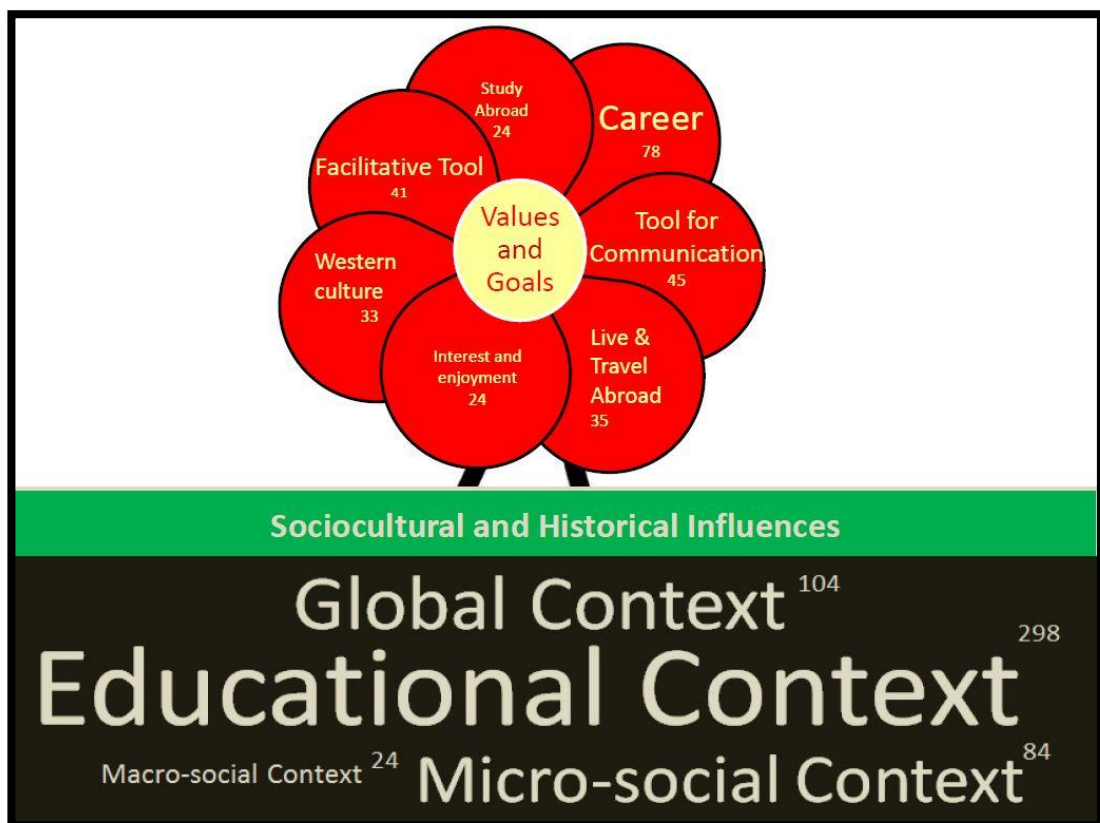


Figure 5: A visualization of the total number of coded units in the third interview in BT1 and BT2

As was displayed in Table 25 in Section 6.1 above, there was a large increase in the total number of coded units from the first to the second interview in the first Broad theme, Sociocultural and historical influences with a slight increase in number of references in the third interview. In contrast, the number of references in the Values

and goals theme decreased from the April to the July interviews and this number increased dramatically in the final interview.

The participants again reported having more positive learning experiences than negative ones and more encouragement and influence from teachers than negative experiences although there was a reduction in the total number of coded units in all these sub-categories. There was a great deal more self-appraising of progress occurring and another large increase in references relating to perceived institutional pressures. The review therefore starts by summarizing these pressures across the three age ranges and interviews.

As reported in Section 6.2 above, many of the comments relating to positive and negative learning histories compare with what the participants stated during the first two interviews. Students once more reflected on their English learning experiences in junior and high school highlighting the causal attributions of past success and failures (Weiner, 1986). In addition, there were many comments that were again relating to their present English studies and classes. References to negative learning experiences were also comparable to what was stated in the previous two interviews with comments indicating negative feelings derived from learning English, a poor academic record, and many to negative experiences in the classroom. More particularly, comments describing the kind of class or the content the learners were required to study. It was noted that for several of the participants, the four motivational conditions at the course-specific level; interest, relevance, expectancy, and satisfaction (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991) were potentially not being met. As in the previous interviews, unenjoyable tasks, classes, and courses appear to be impacting state motivation (Julkunen 1989, 2001). Furthermore, there were certain comments

which suggested participants considered this study as an opportunity to improve their own English skills. It appears writing the diaries and taking part in the interviews and member checking sessions potentially helped regulate some of the learners' behavior and reach a deeper understanding of their goals and values. The duty of completing a monthly diary possibly altered from an extrinsic form of external regulation to eventually integrated regulation. Comments suggest that these tasks became choices positively assimilated with certain learners' needs, values, and beliefs, and the learning experiences conceivably influenced and shaped their motivation.

In Section 6.3 it was noted there was an increase in the number of comments that appeared to reflect back on the perceived progress they had made throughout the period of this study with the majority appearing disappointed with their progress in terms of their English ability, scores on standardized tests, and the general effort they had expended. It was suggested that the initial year at university for the freshmen was a transitional year in terms of future-goal orientation supporting the findings of Ushioda (1998) who hypothesized that goal structures take a long period of time to crystallize with participants reflecting on how their goals were evolving after experiencing difficulties in their educational context. There were mentions of this impacting the confidence of members of this cohort although overall this age group appears to have maintained a high level of motivation over the year with reports of motivated behaviour in the form of a persistence and willingness to expend effort on their English studies. The appraisals of progress noted by the middle age group appear to reflect on a stronger sense of disappointment. This manifested in comments relating to their perceived improvement in English and the effort they had expended over the course of the academic year. Several attributed this lack of English study on engagement with other forms of study and commitments. These extra obligations

seemingly had an even bigger impact on the English studies of the third grade students who reported feeling decidedly less motivated to study English at this stage than during the first interview. Like their younger counterparts, this group reported a sense of disappointment in the progress they had made with learners mostly attributing this to efforts to secure a job. The overview continues with a more detailed review of these perceived institutional pressures.

As stated in Section 6.4 above, there was a further increase in the number of comments relating to institutional pressures across all the age groups but once more predominately coming from third grade students. As reported in Section 5.14, the first grade students perceived the pressure to achieve a higher score on the TOEIC test as the greatest pressure. Again, this impacted on their English language learning motivation as they understand repercussions this test score has on possible funding, potentially restricts availability of courses, and the opportunity to graduate. Indeed, since the first interview, this institutional pressure has appeared to build to become one of the most important aspects of their academic lives leading to language learning anxiety, in particular, test anxiety amongst this cohort. A similar picture seems to emerge with the second grade students. However, they appeared more specifically concerned about attaining a higher TOEIC test score to secure future employment at this stage of the study. This was briefly suggested by a second grade student during the second interview. However, this pressure was apparent amongst all second grade participants during the final interview. The pressures reported amongst the third grade participants again demonstrate a more acute form of pressure. In Section 5.14, it was noted that in the second interview pressures had dramatically increased since the initial interview and were impacting the participants' goals and values. In the final interview, reports of the pressure of studying TOEIC were again commonplace. In



addition, the comments also suggested a shift towards wholly concentrating on securing employment with participants reporting having completely ceased their English studies because of the pressures of trying to obtain work. However, it was not suggested that this cohort had totally lost motivation to learn English but their motivation is fundamentally a sociohistorically situated process and at this stage is fading through interactions with context and through their sociocultural activities. Although time constraints also appear to be preventing participants from pursuing their English studies, there were reports of a desire to continue after this process had ended.

With regards to peer influence, it was reported in Section 6.5 above that that the major changes in perceived peer influence in the final interview were most noticeable amongst the first grade participants. The second and third grade students' responses appeared to show little variation between the second and third interviews. However, the first grade learners less frequently reported positive influences and discussed more negative influences. Despite the freshmen students reporting their relationships were helping to develop their motivational orientations, the bulk of the references suggested peer influence having more of a negative influence on their motivation at the end of the year in comparison with the initial interview. It was suggested that personal and interpersonal issues had a negative impact on these participants and as in the second interview were most common amongst the freshmen participants with the majority of this perceived competition having a causal effect on self-esteem. This contrasts to the first two interviews where learners reported having more friendly rivalries with cohorts. At this stage, this rivalry appears to have escalated to a more competitive state which at the end of the first year is potentially creating anxiety for this age group.

As mentioned in Section 6.6 above, there was a constant increase in the number of comments relating to contact and cultural experiences in Japan. Across all three age groups and throughout the study the perceived importance of opportunities to meet and interact with non-Japanese was evident and there were constant references to how direct contact opportunities impacted on motivated behavior. In addition, with few opportunities for direct contact to the L2 community, cultural products appear to play an important role in this context. Indeed, almost every participant across the age groups mentioned their indirect contact experiences in Japan. Furthermore, ease of access to cultural products, and in particular media products, appears to be perceived as being important for these learners with references to how such media have impacted on their goal orientations. In sum, across the interviews participants seemed to embrace these direct and indirect contact opportunities creating a positive effect on attitudes towards English, its speakers and culture and suggesting a level of international posture (Yashima, 2002).

In Section 6.7 above, it was noted that there were significantly more references to career aspirations at this stage in comparison with both the initial and second interviews. For the first and second grade learners, career goals appeared to be specific and ambitious at the start of the academic year. These two sets of learners had created idealistic career aspirations with a strong vision of their desired future work-self which was appropriately different from their current self. Although it was not apparent whether the participants had developed plans to operationalize these visions, would work to keep these visions alive, or if they had a counterbalance for the vision (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). This appeared to fluctuate during the middle of the year with career goals seeming to be on hold at that point. By the end of the data collection, these career ambitions seemed to have become more pragmatic which could be

attributed to interactions with their fluctuating sociocultural context, specifically, their educational context. It appeared that although they have ambitions to use English in their future careers, these have yet to be developed into concrete plans. With regards to the third grade learners, many career goals appeared more pragmatic and grounded than their juniors in both April and July. Throughout the study, Nana and her cohorts comments were mostly related to job hunting. At the end of the academic year several participants still sought to secure work using English, but their overriding concern was to complete job hunting successfully. It also appears likely that this age group were less sure of being able to secure employment that required English usage in future. Furthermore, two participants reported relinquishing the possibility of using English in the workplace stating the competitive nature of securing such a position.

Turning to the fluctuations in goals to studying, living and traveling abroad, the number of references dropped substantially from the first to the second interview but then increased again in the third set of interviews. A deeper analysis revealed certain patterns relating to these goals. At the end of the study it appears only the freshmen and sophomore participants possess goals to study abroad. In contrast, 50% of first and second grade students referred to becoming long term exchange students and the vast majority discussed plans to attend a short term study abroad program. The primary concern for these age groups appeared to be affordability. However, for the third grade learners the prominent reason for not intending to attend a study abroad program was job hunting. With regards to the goal of living and traveling abroad, most harbour desires to travel to a foreign country with independent travel after graduation a strong desire for the third grade participants, and the first and second grade students also talking extensively about their hopes to travel abroad.

The data collected in the initial interview suggested that freshman students placed a greater motivational emphasis on English as a facilitative and communicative tool, and although the focus seemed to be on their current context and situations rather than their desires and goals, there appeared little fluctuation at that stage. Furthermore, the first year participants appeared to have a greater international posture than their seniors with the perceived institutional pressures placed on the older learners reported as a potential cause. During the final interview, this pattern was also apparent. The first grade students put a greater emphasis on English as a facilitative tool. For the second, and more intensely for the third year students, the high stakes of the TOEIC test and role it plays as a gatekeeper to employment seemed to diminish the intrinsic interests and desires to develop an international posture. Their attention appeared to focus on securing a TOEIC score sufficient enough for securing future work.

As reported in the previous section, over the course of the academic year there appeared to be a consistent desire or interest in both Western people and culture. There appeared to be little change in these patterns in the final set of interviews. This resembles a form of *akogare* (Takahashi, 2013), although this was not exclusive to the female participants as longings for Western people and culture were evident across both sexes. In addition, even though the participants did appear to display an international orientation similar to that discovered by Yashima (2000), they also seemed to have a strong Western orientation formed by experiences in their sociocultural and historical backgrounds.

## **7. Conclusion**

### **7.1 Chapter overview**

In this final chapter, I first review the aims of this research project and then present a summary of the findings from this study. Following this, I offer a short autobiographical reflection and highlight implications from this study for teachers and policy makers in this and other similar contexts. The chapter then turns to the limitations of the study before briefly outlining possible future research areas stemming from this study. The chapter then closes with some succinct concluding thoughts.

### **7.2 Review of the aims**

The general aim of this longitudinal qualitative study was to investigate fluctuations in motivation of different age groups of Japanese university English learners in order to discover perceptions of their motivation and examine the temporal progression of how these would evolve over an academic year. It attempted to elucidate the participants' evolving notions towards learning English, and their fluctuating attitudes towards English over the course of two academic semesters. More specifically, this study endeavored to discover what motivated these learners, what differences there were between the three age groups' perceptions of motivation, and how these perceived feelings and attitudes towards English, and their motivational actions fluctuated throughout their journey.

### **7.3 Review of the findings**

Given the wide-range and complex nature of the learners' motivational evolution, offering a brief and concise summary of what typifies a motivated language learner in

this context is unfeasible. Throughout this thesis, I have argued that the learners' motivation is a constantly fluctuating series of complex processes, which are evolving and maintaining the participants' involvement in the development of their English learning. At each stage of the discussion, I have offered examples of the interaction between the sociocultural and historical context and learners' values and goals. I would like to reiterate that these should be seen as reciprocal with the participants actively contributing to the development of their context. To review all these and to attempt to map out precisely what typifies a motivated student in this context is therefore beyond the scope of this summary. Therefore, as an alternative to providing a simplified version of what typifies a first, second, and third grade learner in this context, I endeavor to tell a story of my perceptions of what embodies each age group over the course of the year. In doing so, my aim is to elucidate particular and salient points rather than to offer generalizations. In order to sufficiently answer the three research questions posed in Section 2.13 above, I have presented this in 10 sections. The first four sections look at what typifies a motivated first grader and how this fluctuates, and the subsequent six sections do the same with the second and third grade learners.

### 7.3.1 –The journey of a first grade learner - The educational

#### context

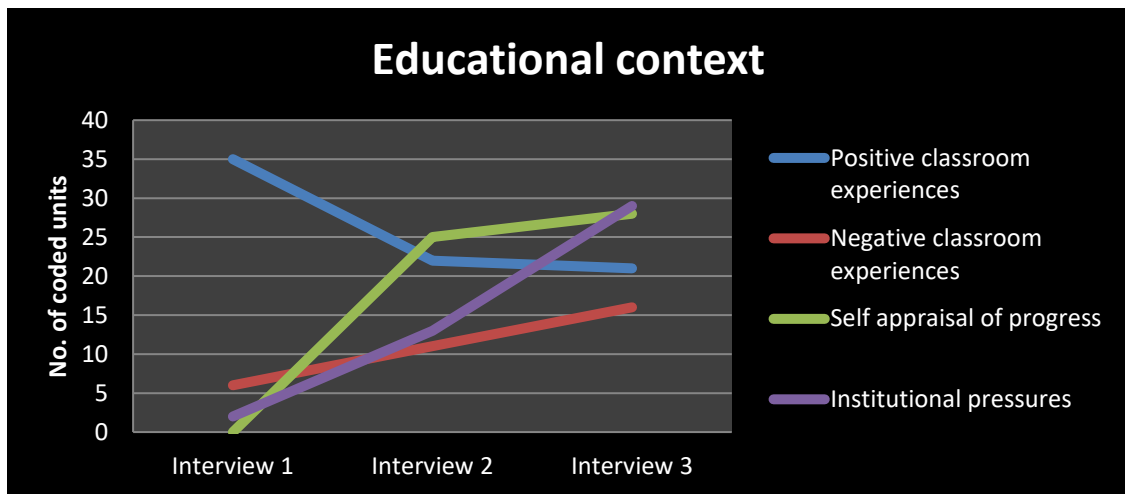


Figure 6: The temporal fluctuations in the number of coded units in the educational context

It appears clear that the educational context is important for a motivated first grade learner. A typically motivated first grade student in this context was successful and took enjoyment from their English classes at both junior and high school. In addition, they seemed to have had support and encouragement from a teacher which also influenced their motivation to learn English. To a large extent, at the start of their university lives, they ascribed motivational importance to these past experiences. As the year progressed, positive experiences in their current academic environment seemed also to impact on their motivation, although, by the end of the year, there were other educational influences which were impacting on their motivation to learn English. The most prominent of these were institutional pressures, and in particular, the pressure to improve their TOEIC score. Furthermore, a sense of frustration at their perceived lack of progress with their English studies seemed to develop over the course of the year.

### 7.3.2 –The journey of a first grade learner - The micro and macro-social contexts

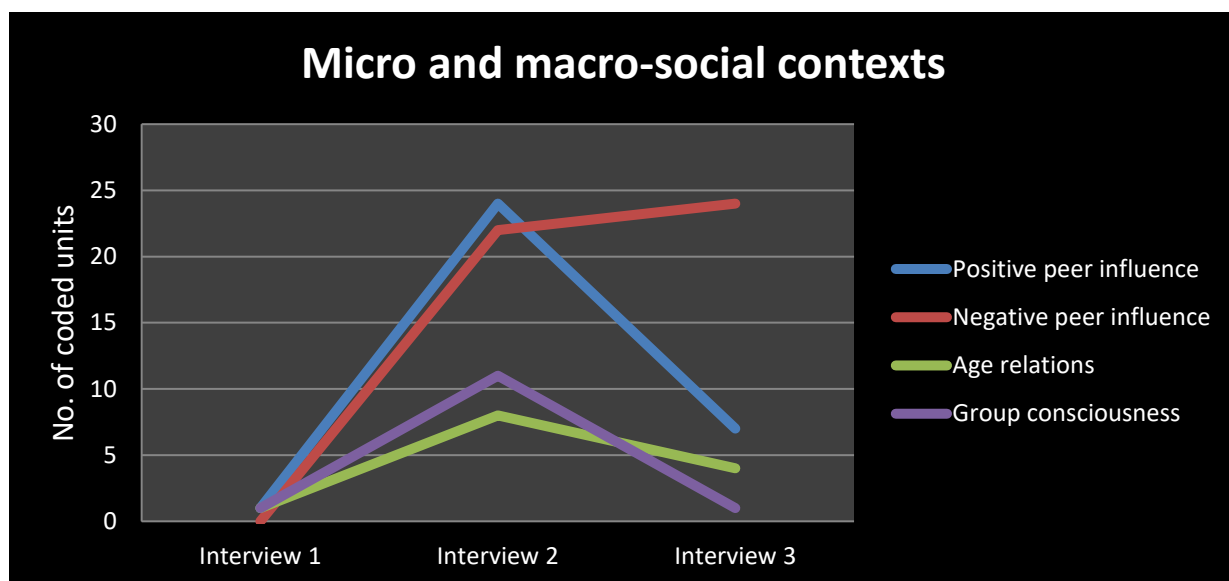


Figure 7: The temporal fluctuations in the number of coded units in the micro and macro-social contexts

For this age group, there were also some interesting motivational fluctuations in their micro and macro-social contexts. It appears that initially at the start of their university lives, relationships with peers were not significantly influencing their language learning motivation. However, as the year progressed, the impact on motivation by peers appeared to change quite dramatically. One possible explanation for this fluctuation might be the timing of the three interviews; given at the start of the study many of this age group had only been on campus for a short period of time. During the middle of the year group cohesiveness appeared to become important with these positive norms seemingly enhancing the first grade learners' autonomy. However, a sense of competitiveness also appeared to lower their self-esteem and potentially caused anxiety at that stage. In addition, the social context and the strong vertical hierarchy system was also another source of anxiety with younger learners attempting



to maintain harmony with their seniors and avoid conflict, particularly in communication-based classes. At the end of the year, this dynamic seemed to have continued. Although the first grade students had established relationships, which were helping to develop their motivational orientations, it appears that peers had a more negative influence on their motivation towards the end of the year. In particular, the friendly rivalries discussed in the earlier interviews had escalated into a more competitive state again causing language learning anxiety.

### 7.3.3 –The journey of a first grade learner - The global context

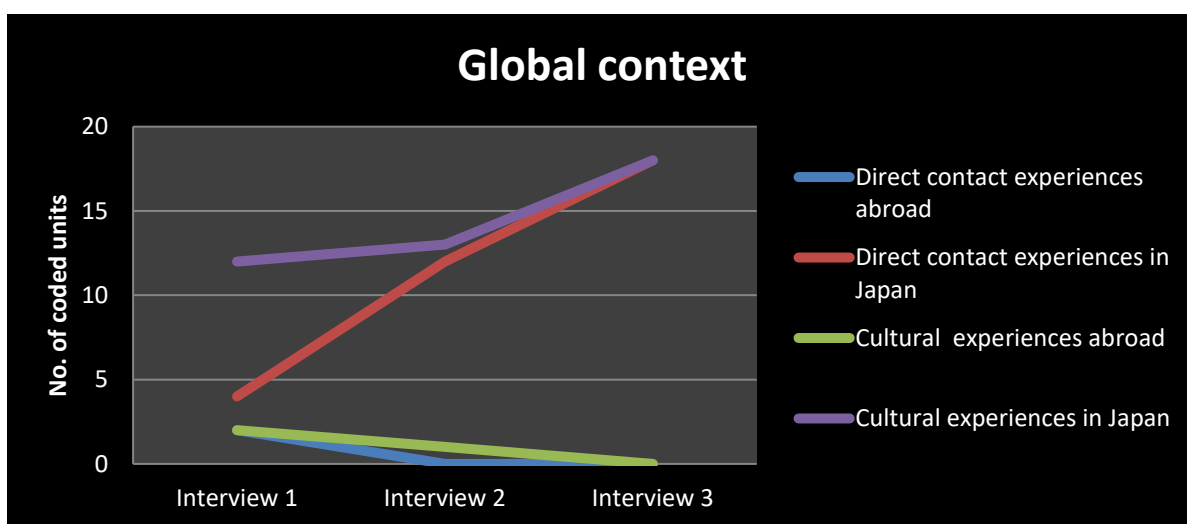


Figure 8: The temporal fluctuations in the number of coded units in the global context

Temporal fluctuations in the global context are not so apparent although there were some interesting patterns in the contact experiences of this age group, which appeared to impact their attitudes and motivational thinking. I would suggest that this age group perceived a great deal of importance in opportunities to meet and interact with non-Japanese. It was also evident how important cultural products, and in particular media products, were to the first grade learners. Indeed, throughout the course of the study, enthusiasm for foreign culture, and a desire to interact with foreign people appeared to be one of the strongest driving forces behind the language learning motivation of this

age group. The data suggested that this cohort also had a rather strong international posture with English being seen as an international language. The lack of references to both direct contact experiences and cultural experiences abroad in the second and third interviews could be attributed to this cohort not traveling outside of Japan during the course of the year.

### 7.3.4 –The journey of a first grade learner - Values and goals

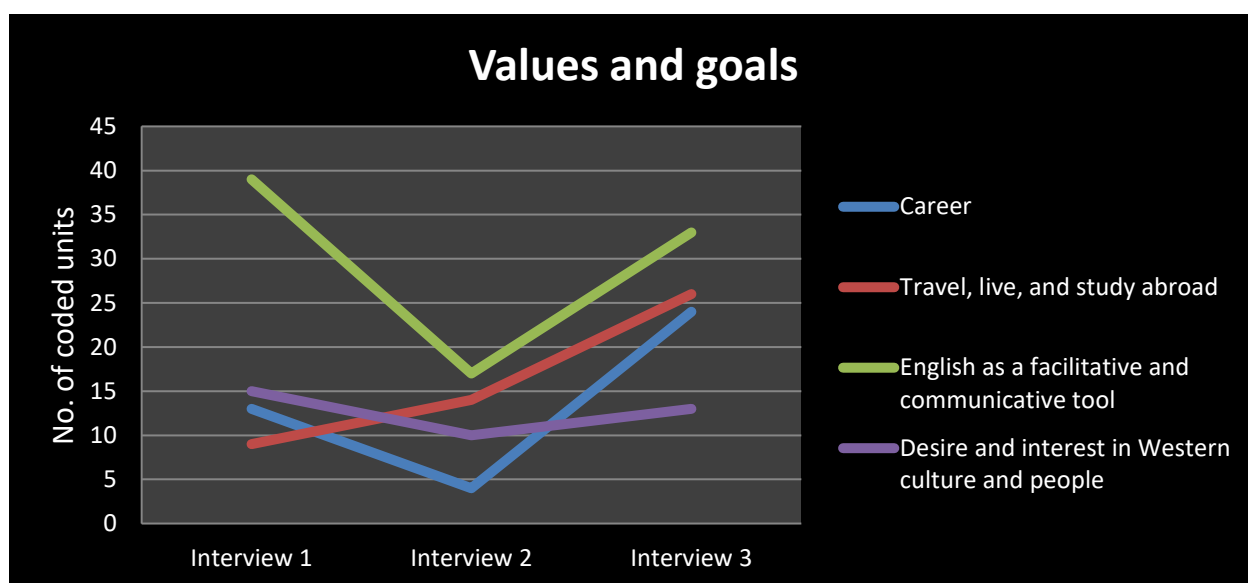


Figure 9: The temporal fluctuations in the number of coded units in the values and goals theme

For the first grade students, there were some wide fluctuations in their values and goals over the course of the study. With regards to career aspirations, in April, securing a job in English appeared to be their main career goal. However, although the goals were specific and detailed, they were also very ambitious. At that early stage, they appeared to have created an ideal-self in terms of their career aspirations. By the middle of the study, these career aspirations seemed to be on hold. However, by the end of the year, once again, the desire to secure a job using English was apparent and they seemed to have developed more pragmatic career ambitions although they had not established any concrete plans. Throughout the course of the study, this age group

seemed to develop goals to travel, live, and study abroad. Initially, this orientation was not so evident. However, by July, the typical first grade participants were considering the option of taking part in a one-year study abroad program, and by the end of the year, desires to travel and study both short and long term were being operationalized. Two motivational orientations which feature prominently and consistently for this group were the perception or value of English as a facilitative and communicative tool and a strong desire and interest in Western culture and people. This age group appeared to have an understanding of the value of English as a global language with English being perceived as being necessary in a globalized world. It also appeared evident that this group had a greater international posture than their senior students with less institutional pressures perhaps being one explanation. Similarly, this group displayed a strong sense of Western orientation with strong desire to have close relationships with Western people and a concrete interest in Western culture.

### 7.3.5 –The journey of a second grade learner - The educational context

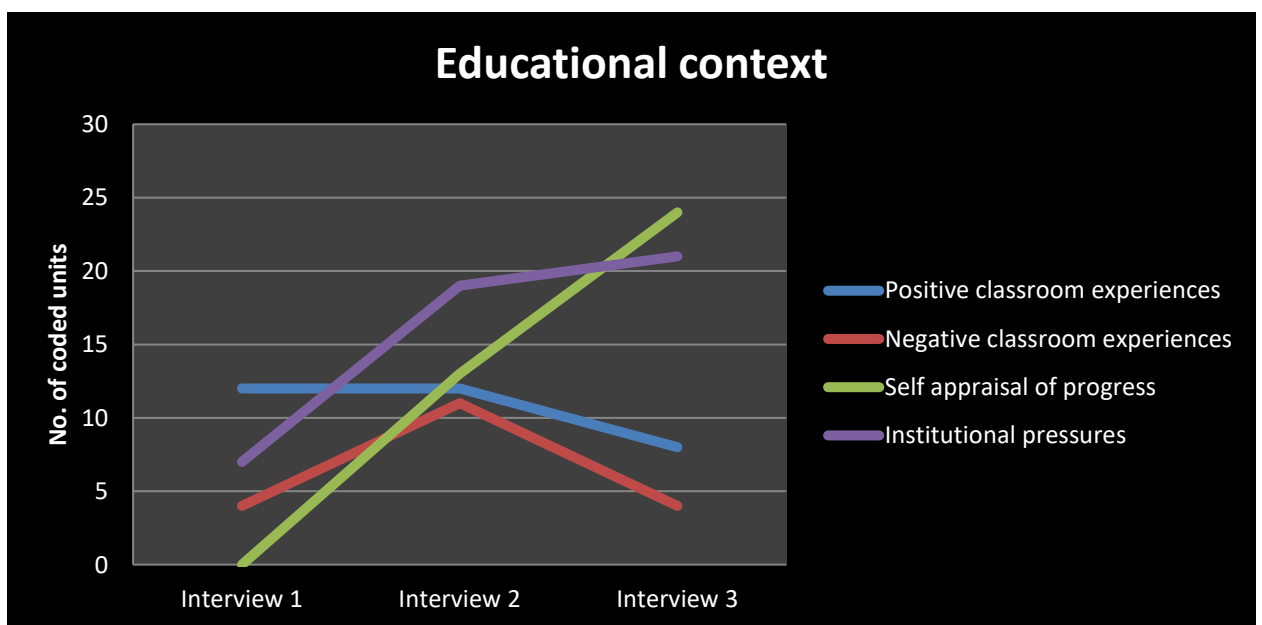


Figure 10: The temporal fluctuations in the number of coded units in the educational context

As with their juniors, it appeared that the educational context was also important for a motivated second grade learner. Once more, the causal attributions of past successes, and support and encouragement from teachers during their school days seemed to impact on their language learning motivation. It is likely that these past successes, especially during adolescence, had consequences on their future achievement attempts. Again, similar to the first grade students, throughout the year, positive experiences in their present academic environment seemed to impact on their motivation, but less emphasis was placed on the role the teacher played on their motivation at university. However, by the end of the year, there were again other motivational influences impacting on their learning. The most noticeable of which were institutional pressures. One subtle difference for this age group was the concerns and pressures to attain a higher TOEIC test score to secure future employment. Moreover, this age group not only perceived a sense of frustration at their progress with English, but also a sentiment of disappointment and again this seemed to develop over the course of the year.

### 7.3.6 – The journey of a second grade learner - The global context

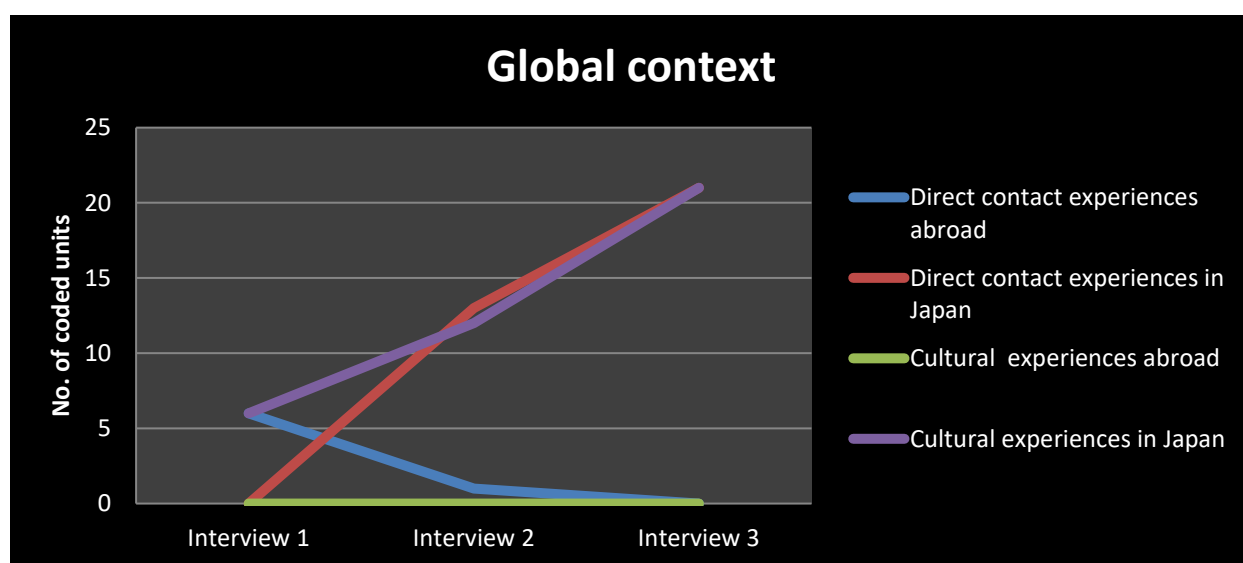


Figure 11: The temporal fluctuations in the number of coded units in the global context

For the second grade learners, there were some interesting patterns in their contact experiences which appeared to impact their attitudes and motivational thinking. Furthermore, both direct and indirect contact experiences seemed to take on more motivational importance as the year went on. During the initial interview, neither contact with non-Japanese or cultural experiences seemed of great importance. However, as the year progressed, this age group appeared to perceive a greater importance in both opportunities to meet and interact with non-Japanese and access cultural products. This enthusiasm for foreign culture and the desire to interact with foreign people developed as the academic year progressed. In the final interview, the data suggested this cohort had a stronger international posture with English also being seen as an international language. Once again, the absence of references to direct contact experiences and cultural experiences abroad in the latter interviews should be attributed to this group not traveling outside of Japan during the study.

### 7.3.7 – The journey of a second grade learner - Values and goals

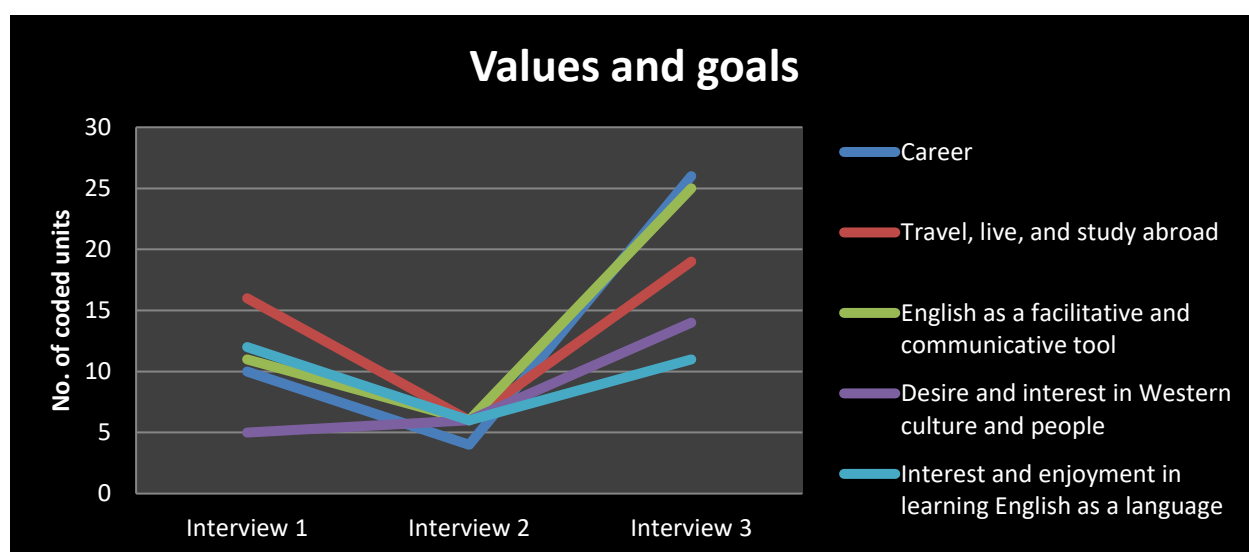


Figure 12: The temporal fluctuations in the number of coded units in the values and goals theme

For the second grade students, there was a similar pattern of fluctuations discussed above for their juniors with values and goals seemingly on hold during the middle of the study and rising again as the academic year came to an end. This was consistent across almost all the categories in this theme. Initially, securing a job using English appeared to be their main career goal. In addition, in slight contrast to the first grade students, these were marginally more pragmatic career ambitions. By the halfway point in the study, these career aspirations seemed to be suspended, but by the end of the year, the desire to secure a job using English was once again apparent although they had not established any specific plans. In addition, this age group appeared to derive satisfaction and experience pleasure in learning English. Although this intrinsic form of motivation was less apparent in the middle of the year, it was again more salient towards the end of the study. At both the start and at the end of the study, this age group seemed to harbor goals to travel, live, and study abroad. A typical learner at this stage of their development seemed to have less ambition to study abroad long term but displayed a strong interest in a short term study abroad program. Two motivational features which seemed to undergo substantial development during the year were the perception or value of English as a facilitative and communicative tool and a strong desire and interest in Western culture and people. Initially, this group appeared to have a less pronounced international posture and did not view English as a global language to the extent of the first grade students. However, as the study progressed, this international posture became more evident. Additionally, this group did not primarily display desires to have close relationships with Western people or a strong interest in Western culture although again this seemed to develop into a much stronger orientation by the end of the academic year.

### 7.3.8 –The journey of a third grade learner - The educational

#### context

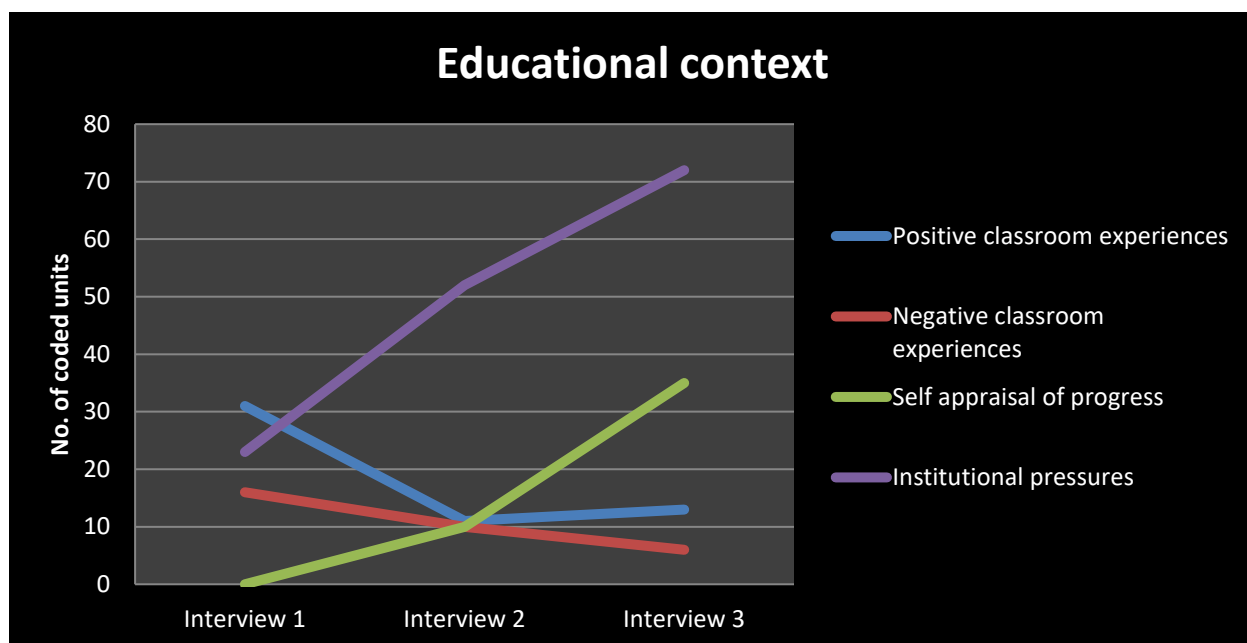


Figure 13: The temporal fluctuations in the number of coded units in the educational context

Similar to both the first and second grade learners, the educational context was influential for a typically motivated third grade student. Again, causal attributions of past successes in school and encouragement from English teachers appeared to impact their language learning motivation. However, this group was most vocal regarding dissatisfaction in the English school educational system. The majority of negative comments were relating to methods of instruction and evaluation in middle and high school. Indeed, this group gave the impression they maintained their motivation despite the teaching methods. At this stage of their development, this group was also concerned throughout the study with the institutional pressures they were under. These were evident in April at the start of the study and intensified as they approached the start of the job hunting period with mentions of ceasing English studies frequent at the middle and end of the year. This is not to suggest they became less interested in

English, but the commitments to this process took priority. This group also reported a sense of disappointment in the progress they had made over the course of the study which was generally attributed to their efforts to secure employment.

### 7.3.9 – The journey of a third grade learner - The global context

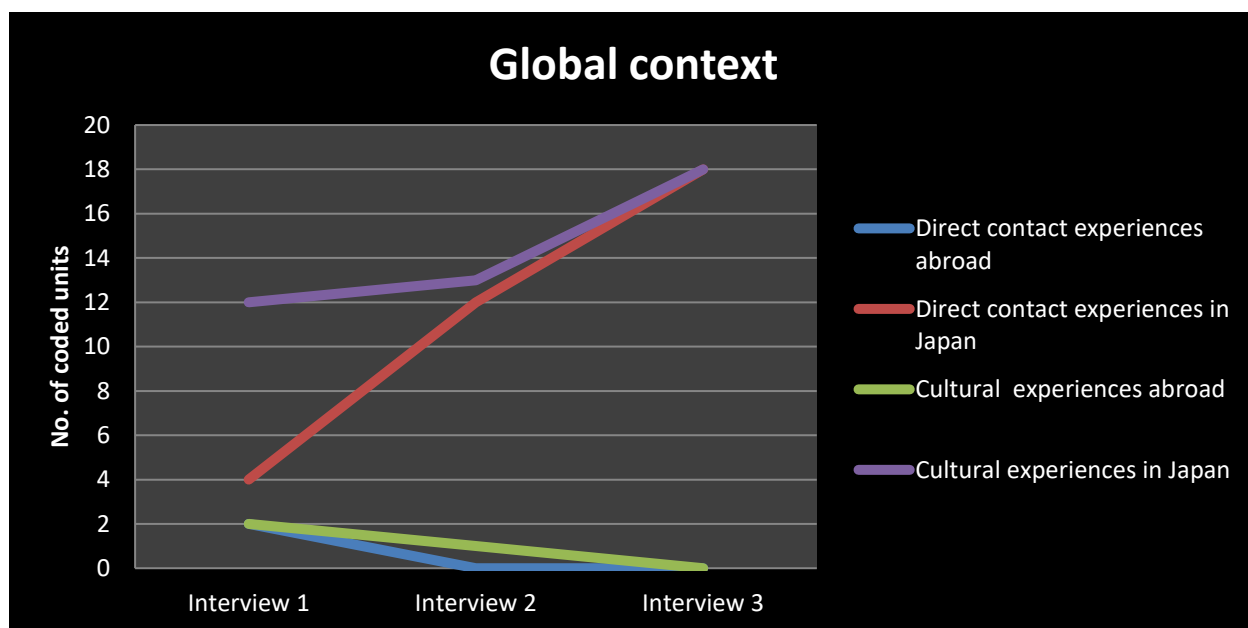


Figure 14: The temporal fluctuations in the number of coded units in the global context

Like the other cohorts, for the third grade learners, contact experiences appeared to impact their attitudes and motivational thinking. Moreover, both direct and indirect contact experiences in Japan seemed to become more motivationally important as the study progressed. During the first interview, only cultural experiences seemed of significance. However, as the year progressed, this age group appeared to perceive a greater importance in both opportunities to interact and communicate with non-Japanese and access cultural products. This keen interest in other cultures, particularly Western cultures, and the desire to interact with non-Japanese evolved over the academic year. As with the second grade students, in the concluding interview, this



group appeared to have a stronger international posture. They also seemed to perceive English as an international language.

### 7.3.10 – The journey of a third grade learner - Values and goals

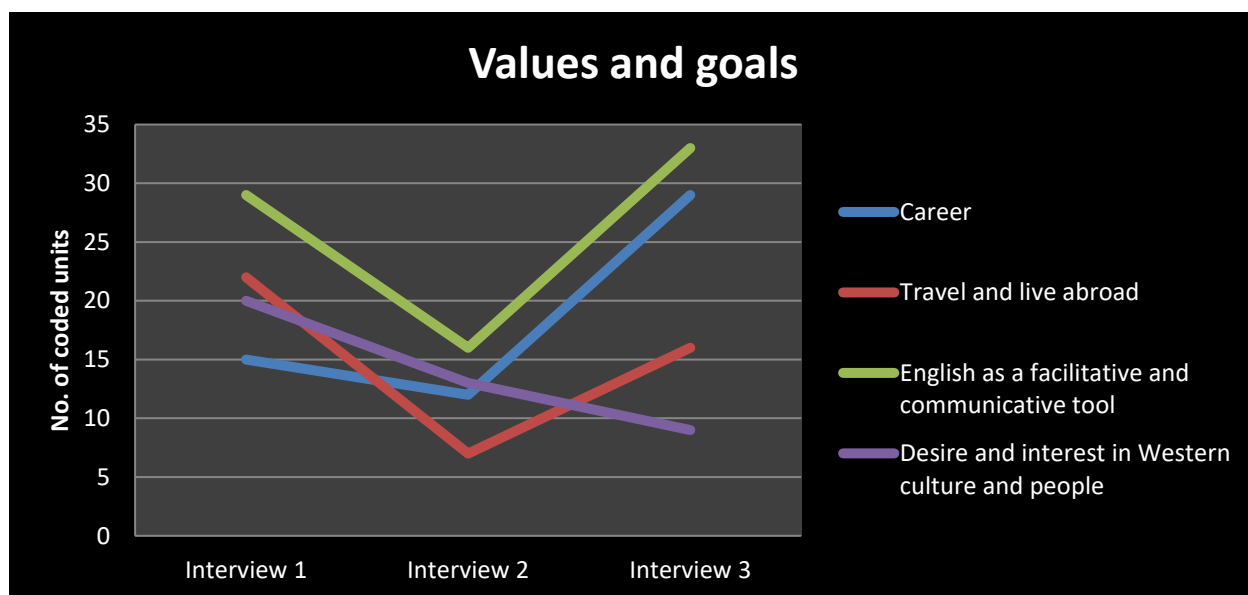


Figure 15: The temporal fluctuations in the number of coded units in the values and goals theme

The overall pattern with regard to values and goals matches that of the other cohorts. Values and goals were apparently on hold during the middle of the year and rose again as the academic year closed. With regards to career aspirations, there were some differences between this age group and their juniors. Initially, the majority of their career goals appeared more pragmatic and grounded and most wanted to secure a job in which English would be necessary. In July, most of the discussion was relating to securing a position rather than the type of job, and at the end of the year, many were less sure of being able to use English in future work or had abandoned the idea of using English in the workplace due to the competitive nature of securing such a position. Throughout the study, there were almost no references to wanting to study abroad although this age group consistently appeared to have a desire to travel abroad. The data suggests affordability and job hunting factor into why this group of learners

did not intend to study abroad. As with their juniors, this age group appeared to perceive English as a facilitative and communicative tool and also harbored strong desires and interests in Western culture and people. Both of these motivational features were prominent throughout the year. However, although desires to have close relationships with Western people or a strong interest in Western culture seemed strong at the start of the study, these orientations seemed to start to diminish by the end of the study. On the other hand, the perception of English as a facilitative and communicative tool was strongly evident at the end of the study.

#### **7.4 An autobiographical reflection and potential implications**

This section begins with a short reflection of the experiences and lessons learned on this research journey. It continues by highlighting implications that have arisen from the participants' educational, micro and macro, and global contexts. Following this, the section moves on to look at implications that became evident from the participants' comments on their fluctuating values and goals.

##### **7.4.1 My autobiographical reflection**

In undertaking this research study, I have gained some invaluable learning experiences. Whilst going through the research process, I developed a much greater appreciation of the nature of research, and of qualitative research in particular. More specifically, I learned a great deal about the challenging and sometimes messy cyclical nature of the research process. An example of this would be the cycle of coding, analyzing, researching, and writing where I went through the process of re-coding on five separate occasions. Overall, I learned that conducting research at this level and on this scale requires a tremendous amount of commitment and persistence in addition to a strong support network.

In addition, this research study provided me with some ideas which have helped me examine my own professional values, and how I approach, plan, and teach English as a foreign language. Over the course of the study, and as I started to gain a greater understanding of the data, I also gradually started to question how learners portrayed me as a tutor, how much attention I paid to my participants' needs, values and goals, how much impact the participants' ever changing sociocultural and historical context had on them as learners and people, how I was noticing these often subtle and complicated changes, and how I could develop my own teaching style and methods to best assist my learners to become more motivated and successful language learners. Furthermore, through process of researching work of other academics, I have been encouraged to view my own educational context within a much wider educational field. This has provided me with a wealth of resources which I have used in order to improve the quality of my teaching and assist my own professional development.

#### **7.4.2 Implications**

This section will present findings from the data which could have implications for teachers in Japan and some of which have impacted heavily on my own teaching. In order to make these as salient as possible, they will be presented under the themes, categories, and subcategories used in Chapters 4, 5, and 6. Due to constraints on space they will be not be exhaustive, but instead will concentrate on the issues that seem most pertinent.

### **7.4.3 Implications arising from the participants' educational context**

The section begins with comments relating to the participants' educational context. As reported in the findings chapters above, there were consistently more references relating to the learners' educational context than comments in any other category. Many of the mentions from participants in this category were directly related to positive and negative learning experiences and encounters with English teachers. The data certainly suggests that the motivated learners in this study had more positive learning experiences than negative ones and more encouragement from teachers than negative experiences, and this was noticeable in their experiences during adolescence and high school. However, despite the role of English in Japan now being seen as a fundamental educational skill (Ushioda, 2013), and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (2002) in Japan stating that skills in English were essential due to the need for Japan to remain economically strong in a globalized economy and society, the findings in this study suggest that for these participants, many classes were still taught with a focus on helping learners pass grammar skewed entrance tests. The comments reported on in Chapter 4 above suggest the findings of Sakui (2004) are still relevant as in actual classroom teaching at middle and high school, grammar instruction is the central and foregrounded method of instruction. Although several participants reported positive English classroom experiences, many appeared to continue to like English despite the methods that were used to teach English. Kie's comment, "I loved English, but I didn't like English classes" (K1Y3Q15) is perhaps relevant for policy makers and teachers in middle and high school. If MEXT fosters a desire for learners graduating high school with essential

skills in English, perhaps there needs to be an evaluation of how English is being taught and the rationale behind these methods.

Furthermore, as reported above, learners discussed competitiveness and self-esteem as a potential source of learner anxiety. There appeared to be more competitiveness between the youngest age group and this appeared to intensify over the semester. I hypothesized that this possibly caused learner anxiety for these students. The students are publicly ranked in the department on their TOEIC score and this perhaps exasperates this feeling of anxiety and insecurity. It might be worth considering amending these kinds of ranking systems in order to negate some of these feelings.

#### **7.4.4 Implications from the global context**

Given the perceived importance of direct contact experiences, educators in similar contexts, might wish to consider language learning practice, activities or classes designed to improve willingness to communicate and to develop an international posture. Although the nature of these types of incidental occurrences is unpredictable, it might be possible for teachers and course designers to develop materials, activities, and lessons that might assist learners in these types of situations. As reported above, motivated behaviour is affected by perceived importance of contact (Csizér and Kormos, 2009). I would like to argue that these particular learners would like to communicate, and many of them started to seek out opportunities to do so, but as mentioned above, these students were selected for the study because they displayed highly motivated behaviour. For other learners, perhaps if they had dedicated time to prepare for these occurrences, they might be less reluctant to engage when an opportunity arose. Moreover, they might also feel less anxious if they have had the opportunity to practice useful language. Overall, throughout all three interviews, the

participants seemed to enjoy discussing their direct and indirect contact opportunities and there was also a sense on longing for more opportunities from several of the participants. I would suggest that these experiences have had a positive effect on attitudes towards English, its speakers and culture, and it would perhaps benefit these learners if teachers could help to increase indirect contact opportunities through activities and information.

#### **7.4.5 Implications driven from the micro and macro-social context**

There were multiple references to influences from peers and vertical hierarchies amongst the different age groups. More specifically, the data showed that the senior/junior system appeared to have a particularly strong impact on students in English communication classes. There were certain instances where participants sacrificed the opportunity to express themselves in English or even came close to purposely failing classes to maintain harmony and avoid any kind of conflict. This also appeared to be a source of anxiety. Further research on this, to offer teachers who may or may not be aware of these dynamics, is suggested. For curriculum designers, perhaps these findings should be taken into consideration when developing courses and scheduling classes. Outside of the classroom it appears that a patient and friendly senior could offer useful assistance and advice to their younger counterparts. This might be something for universities in similar contexts to consider when developing out of class activities, learning centers, or peer to peer advisory centers. I am unaware of any studies conducted in Japanese universities that have focused on the negative impacts caused on learning by this hierarchal system, and research in this area could potentially benefit language learners and teachers in English communication classes, and course designers.

#### **7.4.6 Implications from institutional pressures and the misuse of standardized tests**

From the data collected in this study it appears evident that learners perceive the pressure to achieve a high score on standardized English tests, the TOEIC test in particular, as problematic and a cause of anxiety and stress. The TOEIC test is a norm-referenced test, and one of the virtues of this is in the tests' ability to distribute scores of test-takers into a bell-shaped curve. The TOEIC test is not a criterion-referenced test and was not designed to measure progress toward mastery of certain instructional objectives. However, in this context it appears the TOEIC test is being used for multiple purposes. It was reported that it was used as a placement test for English classes and that it restricted participants' selection of courses available. Furthermore, TOEIC test scores test could influence the level of financing in terms of scholarships. In addition, it impacted on funding for the compulsory short-term study abroad program, and there was a TOEIC requirement for graduation. In this particular context, participants reported taking the test on a regular basis. The TOEIC test was therefore used to measure English ability level and language gains from teaching and learning. For the first and second grade students this pressure also seemed to build over the course of the academic year. For the third grade students, even in April at the start of the study, the pressure to gain a high score seemed intense and the TOEIC tests' role as a gatekeeper to future employment certainly heightened and intensified the pressure. Given the importance of this test, it is not surprising to see comments relating to washback (Alderson & Wall, 1993) for the learners and their teachers.

It appears that the test is being used in ways unsuitable for its purpose. Perhaps the TOEIC should not be used to place learners or assess their progress in English courses with relatively few instructional hours. The TOEIC might be used with

caution as a very general measure of change in proficiency over a prolonged period of time. Moreover, the TOEIC appears not to have been designed for learners who are yet to enter the work place and therefore do not have any work experience. Because of the differing contexts, and experiences between workers in the business sector and students, it is suggested that an alternative to the TOEIC to measure the English language abilities of university students should be found. On a final note, the TOEIC is certainly not a diagnostic test, and it does not accurately identify learners' specific strengths and weaknesses and therefore does not help determine what a specific learner needs to be taught.

#### **7.4.7 Implications from participants' fluctuating goals and values**

Language learning goals and values clearly play an important role in the motivation of learners in this context. Although the participants' goals and values seemed to be on hold during the middle of the year, it was evident that the learners had strong values and had set themselves goals and they were working towards them. They were also regularly reassessing and amending these goals as the study progressed. Given the fact that these were motivated learners, this should come as little surprise. However, for less motivated learners, it might be useful for teachers and educators to assist with goal setting and goal-orientation techniques. Inadvertently, the diary entries seemed to help these students maintain and reevaluate their goals. This strategy might be worthwhile implementing in English classes with less motivated learners.

#### **7.5 Contributions of the study**

This section will present statements of the contribution this thesis has made in the field of language learning motivation. It begins by offering theoretical contributions



that may not have received much attention in the field before offering methodological contributions in the following section. It will conclude by highlighting practical contributions that may be useful for other teachers and lecturers.

### **7.5.1 Theoretical contributions**

Throughout this thesis, I have argued that the interaction between the sociocultural context and the values and goals in this study should be seen as reciprocal with the participants actively contributing to the development of their context. Moreover, the goals and values should not be regarded as individual constructs, which have just been shaped by the sociocultural and historical influences in BT1, but should be considered to work in a more responsive relationship with the contexts. Furthermore, these are to be seen in constant fluctuation with there being no static or individual reason for language leaning motivation. The aim of this section is not to describe the most salient features of language learning motivation in this context. As referred to in the findings chapters above, many of these have been discussed in previous literature. Therefore, this section will highlight three of the most compelling and prominent findings, which emerged that, have not been widely discussed in language learning motivation literature and thus add further theoretical contributions to the wider field.

Certainly, one of the most notable of these three findings was the amount of pressure university English learners are under and how this pressure becomes more heightened and intensified as the learners' academic lives progress. As reported in Chapter 6 above, learners in the first grade appear to place a greater emphasis on English as a facilitative and communicative tool. However, as the learners progress through the second and third grades, the pressure intensifies as the high stakes of the TOEIC test and the role it plays as a gatekeeper to employment seem to diminish the

intrinsic interests and desires to develop an international posture. Indeed, as learners progress through their academic lives, their attention appears to focus on securing a TOEIC test score sufficient enough for securing future work. Furthermore, I hypothesized that this potentially caused negative washback in terms of pressure, fear, frustration, and anxiety on the learners. These findings contrast sharply with what Clark (2010) cynically describes as a “leisure-land” existence for university students with no real incentive to study as graduation appears guaranteed (as cited in Ushioda, 2013). The findings in this study suggest these institutional pressures warrant further research.

A further theoretical contribution to the field of language learning motivation in Japan is the knowledge learned about the vertical hierarchy system and the role it plays in the Japanese educational system. The data suggested that the sempai/kōhai or senior/junior or system seemed to have a particularly strong impact on students in English communication classes at the university level. This study suggested seniors had both a negative and positive influence on younger learners’ language learning motivation. In addition, juniors also positively and negatively impacted on their seniors’ motivation. One of the most prevalent findings was junior participant’s perceptions of a social obligation to not perform to the best of their ability in front of seniors and therefore they did not fully participate in front of their seniors. This had a negative impact on their language learning, in particular, in communication classes. From the perspective of senior students, again there appeared to be both positive and negative influences with the latter being the most extensive. Senior students perceived feelings of pressure, anxiety, nervousness, envy, and even inferiority when communicating in English with juniors who they regarded as having a better English ability. This kind of anxiety was reported as a fear of negative evaluation (Horwitz,

Horwitz & Cope, 1986) created by the age-related hierarchical system. These findings suggest future research into this strict vertical hierarchy system and the role it plays in mixed-age English classes in Japan would be worthy.

Finally, the findings in this study suggest that the participants' language learning motivation did not decrease upon entering university. As reported in Chapter 2 above, Berwick and Ross (1989) discovered that overall motivation over the first year at university was low. They argued that once learners had studied enough to pass the English section on the university entrance tests in high school, there was less motivation to learn a foreign language. Hayashi (2005) also reported a general decline in motivation from junior high school to university marked with increases in motivation before high school and university entrance exams. In addition, Sawyer (2007) described a decrease in language learning motivation upon entering university and stated university students displayed lower levels of motivation than junior high and high school students. Finally, Johnson (2013) discovered that students were "much more highly motivated" (p. 200) at the start of their university lives than during the first semester of their sophomore year. The findings in this study show a more complex picture. Although this study analyzed comments of motivated learners only, there was little to suggest motivation to learn English declined after entering university. It did appear that first grade learners had a greater international posture than their seniors did, but even by the end of the third year, the data did not suggest these participants had totally lost motivation to learn English. Rather, and at the end of the third year motivation does appear to be fading but this is due to interactions with context and through their sociocultural activities with time constraints appearing to prevent participants from pursuing their English studies. However, participants in this age group still reported wanting to and planning to continue their English studies after

this busy period in their academic lives. The thesis will now turn to these complex interactions between the sociocultural context and the values and goals in this study and present the methodological contributions of this thesis.

### **7.5.2 Methodological contributions**

Further to the theoretical contributions described above, this thesis provided methodological contributions to the field of language learning motivation. Perhaps the most salient of these was the flower visualization, which can be seen in in Figure 2 in Section 3.5.2. Following the advice of Ushioda (2009), I adopted a socio-dynamic approach taking a relational viewpoint of the contextual elements discovered in the data seeing “motivation as an organic process that emerges through this complex system of interrelations” (p. 220). This adoption of a relational view allowed the creation of the broad themes, categories and sub-categories, and reflect the concepts portrayed in a socio-dynamic approach. The visualization provides a simple and straightforward way of displaying this complex view of motivation as an organic process. In addition, it allows for a comprehensible overview of the interactions between the sociocultural context and the values and goals in this study. Furthermore, the three word-cloud visualizations, which were used in the Chapters 4, 5 and 6 to show the fluctuations in the number of coded units during each interview, help to give the reader a simple and accessible overview of such a large data set.

### **7.5.3 Practical contributions**

The final section offers three succinct practical contributions for other teachers and lecturers in similar contexts. First, given that there were references to negative experiences in terms of negative feelings derived from learning English, and comments relating to negative learning experiences relating to content and teaching

style in their university English classes, it might be worth suggesting that teachers who are working in similar contexts consider employing motivational strategies to increase learners' expectancies of success. Dörnyei (2001) suggests that teachers can employ various strategies to help learners generate initial motivation for learning English. Amongst these are; providing sufficient preparation, offering assistance, letting students help each other, making the success criteria as clear as possible, modelling success, and considering and removing potential obstacles to learning. Furthermore, whilst studying English at junior high and high school, many participants reported enjoying English despite the methods that were used to teach them. Perhaps teachers in these contexts could strive to find a balance between the grammar focused activities aimed at achieving success on entrance examinations and lessons that are more communicative.

A further suggestion for teachers is to incorporate or provide greater access to popular culture through media products in class. Participants in this study made positive references to indirect contact with popular culture through media. These included references to indirect contact with pop music, movies, dramas, current affairs, and documentaries. It cannot be denied that mobile devices and smartphones have made access to this content widely available, and it seems clear that convenience is a major factor in how often the participants access media products. Teachers could consider incorporating the latest technology to use media products in lessons, or allow learners access to media products independently through the use of task or project based work.

Finally, as reported in Section 7.4.6, it appears that the TOEIC test is being misused as placement test. This, in turn, is impacting on learners in terms of financing opportunities, as a requirement for classes and graduation, and this is causing a great

deal of pressure, anxiety, and stress for learners. Although teachers may not be able to change this system, they might consider incorporating aspects of the test into their class to lighten the burden on the learners. This could be done in the form of including vocabulary found on the test, or by introducing reading and listening strategies that might help learners be more successful when taking the test.

## **7.6 Limitations**

In this section, I will highlight several areas of this study, which on reflection may have caused limitations. These include sampling techniques used, the timing and style of the interviews, the role of the researcher, and how I make inferences regarding fluctuations and changes based on the number of coded units that refer to a particular theme.

One limitation to this study was the sampling techniques applied. First, as referred to in Section 3.3.2 above, I chose only to include motivated learners in this study because first my aim was to discover what motivates Japanese learners to learn English, and second, it was considered that that these learners would be willing to discuss what they perceived as their motivations for learning English. However, in doing so, I did not include less or unmotivated students and therefore lost the opportunity to find out their perspectives on why this had occurred. Secondly, the sample size was relatively small and restricted to one context, a small to medium sized institution. In many ways, the campus is quite unique in its location and design and perhaps would not typify a larger, more urban, and more prestigious university. I would argue that replicating this study in a different context might help to discover other language learning motivational perceptions. Finally, although I used a maximum variation sampling strategy in principle, the sampling strategy was also based on convenience. Given the size of the study body and the challenges recruiting

participants for a longitudinal study lasting one year, this was necessary and therefore impacted on the limitations of this study.

A further limitation to this study was the style and the timing of the interviews. The interviews were all conducted by me in my office. Given the information discussed in Sections 3.12 and 3.13 above, this might have impacted on the quality and reliability of the data. However, these were negated as best as possible through the use of member checking and peer checking techniques along with regular discussions with my supervisor. The timings of the interviews also may have affected the data set. The first interviews were conducted shortly after the participants had returned from a long spring break. However, the second and third interviews were done at the end of the spring and summer semesters respectively. The later diary entries showed that the participants were under stress at the time of the second two interviews and there were numerous factors impacting on their health and general well-being at these times.

Another limitation to this study is my role as sole researcher. A Doctoral degree is designed so that the candidate can display their own ability as an independent researcher. However, this study could have been improved if there were a team of researchers working on it. As a sole researcher, I wrote the interview questions, recruited the participants, and conducted the interviews. In addition, I transcribed, coded, analyzed, and categorized the data set. I also wrote the thesis based on my perceptions of the data. Despite the wonderful guidance of my supervisor, it is inevitable that errors were made and there is also the possibility for researcher bias to have occurred. Furthermore, given the size and the scale of the study, it was a very challenging task for an individual and at times it would have been very useful to have other minds to brainstorm and bounce ideas around. Although I did my utmost to be

transparent and abide by a rigorous methodology, the nature of the analysis required for this study was potentially prone to subjectivity and bias.

One further limitation relates to how I have made inferences about fluctuations and changes based on the total number of coded units that refer to a particular theme, category, and sub-category. As mentioned in Section 3.5.6 above, although I feel this is a valid approach, I would also like to acknowledge that this is a limitation to the study. This method does not give a 100% accurate indication of how explicitly the participants' feelings or thoughts fluctuate over the course of the study. Instead it illustrates what is in the focus of the discussion in that particular interview at that time. However, this is not to suggest that this is an unreliable approach as obviously issues that are mentioned less frequently are generally less prominent.

Finally, although this study certainly has a number of limitations, I do believe it has added to the existing knowledge regarding the language learning motivation of Japanese university learners. I am of the opinion that this study gives insights into what typifies a motivated learner in this context. Furthermore, by conducting a longitudinal study over the course of an academic year, this study has provided more understanding of the temporal fluctuations in motivation that learners experience in their lives as university English students. Finally, this study has also potentially uncovered some of the subtle variations in motivation between different age groups. In sum, I believe and hope that this study provides a greater understanding of how motivation works for a university student in Japan.

## **7.7 Possible future research**

Although the findings in this study have helped to portray a clearer picture of what typifies a motivated language learner in Japan, it has also raised questions that warrant



future research. First, further research into the how vertical hierarchies and communication styles impact motivation would be worth considering. In Section 5.6 above, it is noted how these relationships impacted learners in and out of the classroom. More research into how these senior and junior rules impact learners would be beneficial for teachers in similar contexts. In addition, as noted in Section 3.13 above, there has been little research relating to conducting interviews with Japanese learners of English. Further research into how conventional communication styles impact on qualitative data collected in interviews would assist future researchers in similar contexts.

Throughout the study I have endeavored to adhere to the four concepts Brown (2004) informs us can be used to measure the quality of qualitative research; dependability, confirmability, credibility, and transferability. In doing so, it is my hope that this study could be replicated in other contexts both within and outside of Japan. As referred to in the limitations above, there are many other contexts within Japan that potentially might reveal other interesting findings. Furthermore, it would be interesting to see similar studies conducted in other Asian countries. In addition, as mentioned above, I did not include less or unmotivated students in this study. More research conducted with students who are perhaps not as motivated as the learners in this particular study might help to shed more light on language learning motivation in Japan.

Finally, I adopted a relational approach to this study with the intention of elucidating the particular, the specific (Creswell, 2013), and conceiving context not in static terms but as an evolving process where individuals shape their own future through their own enterprises. However, there is the potential to learn more about this process and this could be done through a smaller scale ethnographic study. Ushioda

(2009) argued for a greater understanding of learners as real people situated in particular sociocultural and historical contexts, a situation where motivation is both shaped by the context and in turn shapes the context. This study has responded to this call but a deeper longer-term study with a small number of participants would shed even greater light on motivation as an organic process that develops through these interactions.

## **7.8 Closing thoughts**

I would like to end the thesis on a positive note. As referred to in Section 3.3.4 above, my initial experiences working in the Japanese tertiary educational system reflected the “motivational wasteland” (p. 206) Berwick and Ross (1989) described over 25 years ago. However, as I have conducted this study, and started to learn more about language learning motivation in my context, I have begun to see more positives and the potential for a bright future for English education in Japan. Perhaps this is a result of putting strategies into practice that I have learned on this long and arduous journey. Regardless, I have certainly seen enough motivated behaviour to encourage me that this journey was worthwhile. It is my sincere hope that this study will inform research on English language learning motivation in Japan and beyond. In addition, I hope it has the potential to inform pedagogical practices and assist those who are engaged in language learning in other contexts.

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## Appendixes

### **Appendix A – Interview prompt questions used for the first set of interviews**

*(Initial warm-up pleasantries and a brief explanation of the purpose of the meeting)*

Opening question: Why are you learning English?

*(Encourage participant to expand on points raised and to offer any new points)*

*(Once the participant has nothing further to add, use the questions below to prompt any further factors impacting on their motivation)*

When did you start learning English? Tell me about your English classes at junior / high school. Tell me about learning English at University.

What do you enjoy/like about learning English?

What do you like best about studying English? (New words / reading etc.)

What goals do you have for the future? Tell me about them.

Do you want to use English in the future? (Job / travel etc.) What would you like to do?

Does anyone encourage you to learn English? (Friends / teacher / parents) Tell me about how they encourage you.

Does anyone put pressure on you to learn English? (Friends / teacher / parents) Tell me about how they pressurize you.

Tell me about any experiences you have had with foreign people.

Tell me about the kinds of foreign culture you like.

## **Appendix B – Transcript from the first interview with Miki**

### **Why are you learning English?**

Because I like to connect with anyone and I want to connect with people all over the world and I think English is the best tool for communication. I also want to know about foreign...everything...for example, people, religion, fashion and companies...anything.

### **Do you have any other reasons for learning English?**

Yes, in the future I want to work in Africa...I want to go to Rwanda and if I can speak English I can communicate more...so studying English is not only for me it is so I can help people in Africa and developing countries...if my purpose for learning English is just for me, I can't study so long. My big purpose is to help people...this motivates me. When I was in high school my ALT was a very good person and he encouraged me...and I was influenced by him. I also had many complexes because my family members are excellent...my parents and sisters are wiser than me...so I had many complexes so my ALT helped me and my family can't speak English so English is very important to me for my identity...if I can't speak English I don't have any special features or special characteristics...good points. It makes me different from my family.

### **Do you have any other reasons for learning English?**

I'm a Christian and I go to church...there are many other nationalities...for example...African, Chinese and Korean...and I want to communicate with them. Also I think the subject in an English sentence...I and You is almost an equal relationship...but in Japanese it is important to use the correct title...to use honorific language...in Japanese the persons rank or position is very important, but in English it

is not so important. Can you understand what I mean? In English if I talk to a teacher it is different for example.

**You said you want to connect with people all over the world and English is the best tool for communication. Tell me more about that.**

I'm Japanese but I'm a part of the world...I want to be friends with people all over the world...I can't live without my family or parents...just as we (Japanese) can't live without another country...it's the same idea...so I want to know more about foreign countries and I want us to understand each other more...we have many misunderstandings with other countries so we have a stereotype...in fact it is sometimes my thinking is wrong...I want to know the reality...I have to know the reality...about another country...I want to know about the culture but especially I want to know more about other religions. I'm Christian but most Japanese are not...it is rare to be Christian in Japan...so I used to have a strong complex about being Christian...now I'm not so bad...so I want to know more about other religions...many Japanese have a bad impression about religions, so I want to teach them the reality...I think my god is important for me, but anyway I want to understand more. I want to teach Japanese people about other religions...I believe that many Japanese don't want to know what is different from us, but it is not so good...I want to know more.

**You also said in the future you want to work in Africa. Why do you want to do that?**

I don't know but...when I was a junior high school student I read some books about Rwanda...it was very...I was surprised...I didn't know that was happening...the history of Africa and Rwanda...and now I want to work...to help...and I want to enlighten Japanese people...I want Japanese people...I hope more Japanese people

will have an interest and understanding...yeah. After I read this book I was interested in many things about Africa and English and foreign countries...and then I couldn't speak English, but in the future I wanted to work in Africa so I studied English. I also could meet a good ALT and he encouraged me...so I hung in there...studying English.

**Were you good at English in junior high school?**

Just an ordinary student...but in high school I could...I established an English conversation club...so I could speak English more...it was a very good experience for me...I was the leader of the ECC and it was very hard work, but a very good opportunity and then I learned many things...I learned how to cooperate with other friends...and help friends...I learned how to do something for another person without a reward or profit. I noticed that it is not so important to have a profit (reward), but to reward another person it is a bigger reward for me...so I studied hard more.

**You said English is very important to me for your identity. Tell me more about that.**

I feel different when I speak English...Japanese is just a tool that can be used to speak to Japanese people...but in English I can make more friends...from many countries and any races...it my strong point...my mother and my sister admitted that I studied English hard...so I was so happy...before I was a very lazy child...maybe...my teacher and my parents and my sister thought that I was lazy and I thought I didn't like to study...but...I think English is my goal... not my goal but English is my tool...to help other people and to teach Japanese people more... I think that it is vain to help myself and to think only about myself...so I want to do something for people...this is my motivation...very simple...my friends and other people have better

reasons...but many friends have said to me you are not an ordinary girl...my friends often ask me why do you love Africa? But I want to do something...this is my reason. If I recall something, I'll send you an email...I'm a little nervous now so I might not have said everything.

## **Appendix C - Example motivational profile sent to participants after the first interview – Miki**

### **Main motivations**

1. One of your main motivations comes from your desire to communicate and talk to people all over the world. You want to know more about people from foreign countries and you want to understand more.
- 2a. You feel English is an important tool for you to do things in the future. You are not learning English for your benefit, but to help others.
- 2b. You are also motivated by your future work. You want to go to Rwanda and help people in developing countries and you feel you need English to do this.
3. You are also motivated to study English because it helps you make your own identity. Your family seems very intelligent, but English is something that you can do better than your family members. It makes you different from your family.
4. Your religion also seems to motivate you. You are Christian and you want to connect with other Christians around the world using English. You also want to learn about other religions and teach Japanese people about them and English can help you do this.

### **Other motivations**

1. You have had some good experiences using English in the past. You set up an English conversation club in high school and this motivated you more.
2. Your ALT was also nice and this motivated you.

### **Questions**



You also talked about ‘I’ and “You” in an English sentence being equal. I didn’t really understand that. Could you tell me more about that when we have our follow-up meeting?

## **Appendix D – Data transcribed from the member checking session after the first interview with Miki**

I want to correct and add to my main motivations number 4. I want to explain more about my religion because I don't think I explained in enough detail before. I'm a Christian and that is one of my motivations to study English. Japanese people do not have a very good image of other religions. People even criticize them without even knowing about them, and they think people who believe the god are weak. They think that is the reason they believe in a god. Actually, my friend said something like that to me. People dismiss other religions without even knowing anything about them. After these painful experiences I want to know more about church and other religions. Also, I want to clear up the misunderstanding of religion. People just get an image of a religion even when they don't know about it. It creates misunderstandings. To reduce these misunderstandings, I think that it's important to know more, especially about things you don't understand or know about. I think this is connected to my motivation to study English

### **Tell me about any memories you have of growing up.**

Well...Easter...two or three years old is my oldest memory as a child...as a Christian...my church world was everything to me, so I didn't know about other religions...like temples or shrines...I thought all buildings like this were churches. I noticed it was different when I was in elementary school. At lunch time I prayed...and everyone didn't...I was surprised. Many of my friends were interested in what I was doing...they didn't pray and the teacher didn't pray, but my kindergarten was a Christian kindergarten, so I thought everyone prayed at lunchtime with the teacher, so I was surprised and shocked. It is my first memory.

**Did you go to church every week?**

Yes, when I was in kindergarten and elementary school...mmm...I have two sisters, but when I was in elementary school my sisters were in junior high and high school, so they were busier than me, so they couldn't come to church. I didn't go every week, but I went most weeks, but I was envious of my sisters because they didn't have to go to church and they looked freer than me. Gradually my sisters didn't go to church because they felt a little complex...like I felt the same thing...Christians are not ordinary in Japan, so they go more. It was just me and my parents who went to church. I could understand my sisters' feeling and how they thought, but church was important for me I thought because everyone recognized me at church, so I liked church. During junior high I went almost every week, but in Japan we have school on Sundays sometimes, and parent's day, and sports day. Many Sunday events and I couldn't go to church. I couldn't understand why I had to go when I wanted to go to church, but my parents and my teacher said I had to go. I thought ordinary people must be right.

**Do you go now?**

Yes, but recently I'm too busy, so I can't go every week. I try to make time to go to church. I belong to the United Church of Christ in Japan. It is the biggest church group in Japan. It is protestant not catholic...I don't go to a catholic church. The Catholic Church didn't match my style...my church is very free. When I was in high school after school I every day I went to church and chatted with my pastor, played with the children in the kindergarten, or slept or studied in the church...so I liked there. Especially before the examination for university because I was very worried about many things, so I always visited there. My parents worried about me because I was also at church, but I was studying in the church and the pastor was so clever, so he and

she told me how to solve math questions. Yeah, church life is my life. My parents and my friends don't understand me.

**You said you used have a strong complex about being Christian. Did someone say something to you?**

Yes, when I was in the sixth grade of elementary school my teachers was another religion, a new religion, my friend and I had another religion so the teacher always said we did terrible things and that we were wrong, and sometimes I was put to shame in the class, so I thought little children believes adults are always right and we have to mimic adults so I thought my religion was perhaps wrong, or I don't know why she didn't like me but I thought my religion was something bad to her so she didn't like me, so I felt a strong complex. When I was in high school the teacher scolded me and we quarreled because the teacher said some bad things to another student, but I thought it was not so good. One student was late for class and the teacher said to her you don't deserve to be alive because you were late for my class, so I was shocked and I thought the teacher was wrong so I said and the teacher and I quarreled and he said to me you're thinking is very Christian and you are not good, so it was a big shock to me and I felt a complex. I have a lot of memories like this, so unconsciously I felt a complex about my religion.

**You talked about English as a tool. Do you think this is linked to your Christian background?**

Maybe yeah, English is not my goal it is just a tool. This will never change. I thought other people thought like me. It is my thinking, but the teachers always care about my test and TOEIC results. Japanese is just a tool for Japanese. It is just the same.

**Tell me about where you grew up.**

I grew up in the countryside and K has a history...a very exclusive history...for example it has a strong dialect. Do you know why?

**Is it because it is surrounded by mountains and it is difficult to travel to?**

Yeah, but not only this...if an outsider came to K as a spy they couldn't understand what people were saying because of the strong dialect. The language...a linguist said the dialect is made to protect the people of K. It is a very strong accent. Even I can't always understand well what people are saying...older people have a very strong accent.

**Why did you choose this university?**

Because there are a lot of churches here and I thought people would be open to Christianity and many foreign tourists would come here, so if I had chance I'd be able to chat or speak with foreigners...more than in another prefecture, but the most important thing for me is that people are open to Christianity. Also my parents thought that if I came here people wouldn't feel disagreeable to me and Christianity, and I thought if I'm here I could study about theology, so I chose here.

**Tell me about what you meant with 'I' and "You" in an English sentence being equal.**

One of the reasons I like English is that I feel I am always equal when I talk to someone in English. In English, people can call someone they talk to *you*. I think when people use *you* and *I* it has nothing to do with the person's age, sex, job status or position. I think in English I can have conversations when *you* and *I* are used as equal. In Japanese this would not work. We have to consider a person's age, sex, job status or social position then use the suitable word. This might be *teineigo* (polite speech), *sonkeigo* (honorific speech), or *kenjoogo* (humble speech). Otherwise it would be

rude to the person I am talking to. Sometimes I have to be humble or make myself lower than the person I am talking to even when I don't think I am. If I don't do this, the person I'm talking to will think I am arrogant. For Japanese people it is a common courtesy, so I think not many Japanese people are even conscious of it, but I don't like the feeling.

**I see.**

I add another reason why I like English. It's interesting that the same English area have each pronunciations and accents for example *tomato*. Each country has different pronunciations. I think it great that each country use English like a native tongue and move their countries with English as a tool. I think these things make me study English.

## **Appendix E – Transcript from the second interview with Miki**

### **How are you feeling about studying English at the moment?**

I like English but I have a difficult feeling about studying English because many of my friends got a higher speaking level, but I've been studying English but I couldn't improve a lot. It is a little difficult feeling.

### **Are you comparing yourself to other students?**

Yeah, very much...but last month I met my high school ALT and she said my English had improved so that made me feel happy. I have many friends who are highly motivated and they got a high score on the TOEIC test, so sometimes I feel a little inferior. I have had an inferior complex for a long time...I have two sisters and they are better than me, so I have felt like this for a long time...not just now. But now I feel stronger about the TOEIC test.

### **In your classes you said the native teachers make you feel more motivated. Tell me about that.**

My teacher praises us very concretely and in his class there are maybe about 20 students or more but he listens carefully to our group talk...to all the groups talk and if we make a mistake, after the groups have finished talking he explains the mistake...not only grammar...he told me how to react and respond in English and it is useful, so he motivated me to study English...not only English but he taught us skills which are useful in another call so he motivated me...I think.

### **Tell me about some of the negative points in class. You said some of your classmates hesitate to use English in class. Tell me about that.**

Some students try to finish speaking quickly and this makes me less...yeah... because if the people in my group are like this...I want to speak English a lot even if I make a

mistake but others don't have the same feeling and he or she wants to finish quickly we can't continue the conversation and it doesn't motivate me...it demotivates me very much. Some friends say to me that I can speak English a lot, but I don't think so because I'm so good at speaking English but I try...just try. If they try like me, they can speak English, but they don't try. I don't like it. My classmates are very important for me and my motivation. Two of my friends who have a very high motivation scold me or tell me when something is not good very directly. If I were told by them, it is okay because they are highly motivated and have a strong motivation but not from another person who doesn't try.

**Does this make your motivation change quite often?**

Yeah, especially in the class...now my oral communication class is not a very high level, so many of my friends don't want to speak a lot in English and many of my friends are often late for the class and are absent from the class, so it demotivates me.

You also told me in your diary that your parents have praised you. Tell me about that.

Yeah, my parents often call me and ask what I did that day or ask about my health. I am the youngest daughter so my father often calls me and I report what I did that day.

My parents are very strict about my education and my life. It is rare that they praise me or my sister, so when my parents praise me about my study it really really motivates me and makes me happy. I think really simply like a child...I always think so. Many of my friends don't care about their parents and one of my friends goes against her parents. If my parents praise me, it makes me happy. I'm happy if my parents are happy and they praise me.

**Tell me about your native friends. You said talking and chatting online with them makes you more motivated.**



Native speakers often use difficult English (on Facebook) or...for example please is written like this "pls". It is interesting to learn new things like this and to search the Internet to find the meaning...or to find a new word...to learn and to use in daily life on Facebook or Twitter motivates me to study...I don't know...not study but learn...it is more interesting because I can't learn words like this in the class.

**You also mentioned having too much homework. Tell me about that.**

If I have one piece of homework, I can concentrate on it, but if I have a lot I can't concentrate and I can't do my homework perfectly. And sometimes if I have too much homework, it makes me want to run away from my homework and I can't finish it all, so too much homework demotivates me.

**Do you feel you get too much homework?**

Yeah, some teachers like to give homework. One teacher gives us one piece of homework, but sometimes two or three teachers give us homework on the same day with the same deadline, so it makes me panic and I can't concentrate in the class.

**You said in your first diary that there are many high level students and you can't speak positively. Are you comparing yourself to people around you again here?**

Sometimes I don't want to speak English. I feel the same now.

**In your second diary you said you felt like you could speak to foreigners more confidently.**

Yeah, I could speak English without feeling nervous...just I am comparing myself to another person, but I'm now not nervous. I look for a chance to speak English in my daily life. For example, last month I joined an exchange program with people from Tonga and Banatsu and my part-time job in English or with a foreign tourist, so I always look for a chance to speak English with a foreign person. I am improving.

**Is it different talking English to a foreigner when you have Japanese friends around?**

I don't like that kind of situation if another person is looking at me. One reason is I can't concentrate on speaking English and another is to speak English is not a strange sight, so I don't want people to watch me. Many of my friends, especially those who don't speak English...Japanese friends, look very carefully at me. It is strange for me...why do they look? I often talked to my high school ALT about this. She is British/American and she said I am a human but Japanese often say something when I speak English and I have a same feeling and I don't like it. I don't like to be looked at and I don't like attention.

**Is this related to Japanese culture?**

Yeah, this story is a little different, but I told you I am a Christian and when I was a child I didn't know...I believed that everyone was a Christian...I didn't know about Buddhism because my parents were Christian, so I thought it was usual to pray before lunch or eating something. When I was in elementary school i thought it was normal and I prayed before lunch and many of my friends looked at me a lot and said it was strange, so I'm not good at having attention. It is connected to this reason I think.

**Tell me about project EAST.**

We have the same motivations and enjoy...and I can keep working with them without profit. This is an opportunity to speak only English.

**From what you have written here it seems you feel a little frustrated with the way Japanese have to communicate with each other.**

Yeah frustrated, but not only frustrated. I don't like the sempai kōhai system. Many of my kōhai always say to me...I always say to them I don't like this system so please

don't give me so much respect and feel free and talk freely to me, but this is just me so many of my Sempai don't like me because I often say this to my kōhai. Some situations need Keigo, but I think Japanese are too strict using Keigo. I think this is only me...I'm not ordinary. When we were young everyone feels like this but now we are adults we don't think it is strange.

**Does this affect your motivation to learn English?**

Yeah, especially the sempai kōhai...Keigo is alright but do you know kenjogyo? Humble speech...I don't like it because I have to be lower than the person I am speaking to even if I don't think I am. I don't like this. I don't like the group spirit in Japan because if I have another opinion I can't say it in the group...I have to side with another person...especially a sempai.

**Can I ask you about your religion? In the first interview you said this was related to your motivation to learn English. Has anything happened recently?**

Yeah, in university my surroundings and my environment...everything has changed...especially my...department. There are many people who are interested in religion and they don't have bad feelings about religion. Yeah, before I felt pressure to be religious, but now there are many churches in N and many people...some people are Christian and N people understand more than people in K, so I feel free to be Christian, but sometimes...now I am better than before because K is very local and an isolated society...so many people are somewhat repressed and are put off knowing another religion...and Japan has a bad history relating to religion, so I felt a strong complex in K, but now my mind has changed a little. Many of my friends understand my spirit, so now I feel a little comfortable being here so it has changed my motivation to learn English.

**How has your motivation changed since we last talked?**

It has changed a little because I had a lot dreams when becoming a university student, but now I recognize what I can and can't do as a university student, so I'm more realistic and when I'm thinking about a dream I think more about whether it is possible or impossible. If I think about my dream, I think about what I should do now. My motivation has not changed but my mind and my feelings have...I have become more realistic now. It is good for me because when i was a high school student I was a dreamer and I had many dreams and I wanted to do everything I had an interest in, but now I know what I can and can't do. I'm more motivated now in the long term...not day by day. Day by day there is no change but gradually...sometimes my motivation goes low but gradually getting higher.

**How does it feel to be a kōhai?**

If I belong to a strict circle I feel bad being a kōhai, but I belong to the Taekwondo club and my senior is not strict...she is kind, so I'm a little happy to be a kōhai...to be her little sister. If I belonged to a big circle like basketball or dance circle I wouldn't like it.

**Have you joined any groups or circles? Tell me about them?**

I am a member of acapelo. I also have many Line groups. The first grade group...I have many...too many. I ignore many messages...EAST and some subjects...Taekwondo...about 10 or more, but I ignore messages, but I don't ignore EAST messages.

**Is it linked to shudanishiki?**

Yeah, very much! This is linked to tatemae. I just have to join the groups...I don't comment or message, but I have to be a member if people invite me. If I didn't

join...my friends or the person who invited me would have a not good feeling about me...they'd want to know why I didn't join.

**What happens if you join a Line group and there is a problem what happens?**

If I leave the group...it's my opinion but if I join a group people don't care about me as a friend...it is just shiriyai...I'm just an acquaintance so...my friend is worried about this because she wants to change a group...a girls group...she wants to leave and join my group, but she belongs to a girls group...a strong girls group, so if she leaves that group the girls will be angry or they won't want to talk to her...its usual...Murahachibu...ostracized. When I was in high school I cared about groups, but now I don't because I want to care about my feelings...if I join a group that has different opinions it is not so good for me. I'm okay to talk to people from different groups, but my younger friends worry if it is okay to speak to other people...they care greatly. I think it is better to mix with different groups in class, but in Japan we can't do it. We have to take care of each other...I have to take care about how I speak to another person...a junior or senior. In the class we can choose where we want to sit...in high school we can't, so who sit nests to me is important for an ordinary girl and females careful about it. I always have to be careful where I sit in the class because I don't care where I sit...in front of the teacher or at the front of the class...I don't care, but many girls don't like to sit at the front because they can't use their cellphone or do another homework so if there is a free space next to someone I have to sit behind them because the seat next to ten is reserved...it is important for girls. Many girls reserve 3 or 4 seats, so I have to care about it when I go into the class and I'm disgusted about it because it is just to study...why do the seats have to be set?

## **Appendix F – Transcript from the third interview with Miki**

### **Why are you learning English?**

English is my tool to help people and to learn new things...this will never change...English is a tool for me...this is my opinion.

### **Do you have any other reasons?**

Mmm...For TOEIC, but this is not my opinion it is my teacher's wish and my friend's wish...it is more of a duty, so to study just for TOEIC is not something I want to do, but I have to study it...it is different from my feeling in Spring.

### **You said in October when you were a high school student it was okay just to like studying English, but now you worry about your TOEIC score. What is causing this pressure to do well on the TOEIC?**

It is really difficult because if I couldn't get a high or so so level score on the TOEIC I can't take some classes...I have to take some compulsory classes...so it is a kind of pressure. I don't know if the pressure is good influence or bad influence on my study, but I'm always thinking about how to study English...the best way to study English...now I'm interested in how to study English. I'm interested in learning the best way to study English. I have joined your study so I can keep my attention on studying English.

### **In one of your mails to me you said how writing the diary each month has helped you focus on your English studies. Can you tell me about that?**

If I didn't do this (join this study)...I'm ordinary now...but I would be a more ordinary student...just a student who enjoys school life, so this study makes me stimulated...it has stimulated me...all the time...and I thought about what I want to be...recently I don't know what I want to be in the future and what I want to do, but I

didn't stop thinking about what I will be because of this study, so I think it is very good for me, and I have changed a little because of the activities I do in EAST (a charity group). We discussed a lot of things and sometimes I got into a difficult situation and I couldn't understand another member's thinking, but it changed me in a very good way. Before in high school I had a very hard head...more than now, so EAST was a very good influence on me. EAST also gave me the opportunity to think what I want to be.

**Do you think this study has helped you keep your motivation?**

Yeah. Other members of this study also told me the same yesterday. If we didn't join this study...it is a little scary to think what...what kind of student I would have become...thinking about this is changed...yesterday we talked about this.

**You mentioned in August and September that you got a bad TOEIC score and a bad record and this made you more motivated. Tell me about that.**

Yeah bad...the bad score on the TOEIC test caused me to worry very much, so I recognized I have to study English...to study English for the TOEIC test is my duty...I know...I knew then.

**You also said you felt pressure from people around you because they thought you were good at English. Tell me about that.**

Yeah. I think I have more motivation than some other friends. Then sometimes they misunderstand and think I could speak English well, and that I have a good TOEIC score, but I think it is not true...I think I have just...I'm just eager to connect with people...like I'm ambitious...so sometimes they misunderstand...we have the same English level...we are the same...just the same, but they misunderstand because of my enthusiasm and the activities I do.

**Did your friends say something to you?**

Yeah...all the time...they sometimes ask me why do I join so any different activities and why do you often go to somewhere...anywhere even if it is far away? They say you just go there if you want to go...I can't understand...you must be able to speak really good English and you have confidence...so you can do anything...they said, but I don't have confidence...but I just want to get confidence, so I do lots of things. My friends sometimes put pressure on me.

**You said in your diaries that your parents were disappointed with your scores at university. Can you tell me about that?**

My parents also misunderstand and think I have energy and vitality...and have an interest in a lot of things, so they think I can do...I can get a good TOEIC score, but in truth I don't think so...I thought my parents are disappointed in me...but I have changed my opinion a little now

**Why did it change?**

My pastor from church told me "You always look like you are confident and you look like you're comfortable with anything...for example with relationships with people or at studying...so look like this but I don't think you are good at a lot of things...sometimes you feel too much...about things you can't do...so you feel your parents are disappointed, but your parents will never be disappointed with you" she said to me. So I could understand a little what she wants to say...I don't really know about it, but maybe my feeling has changed a little. People around me like my friends or sister or relatives think like this...that's all.

**So you are thinking a lot about what other people think of you a lot of the time?**

Yeah.



**Are you putting pressure on yourself?**

Yes, yes, yes.

**You wrote that you went on some interesting events. A Halloween party, a bus hike, and a birthday party with Dutch people. How did these events make you feel?**

These are good for my motivation and the events...I just enjoyed them and the events stimulated me each time and by joining these events they make me not forget about studying English. I could learn a lot of things when I joined these events. For example, the culture or the character of the people...or their images of Japan...for foreign people. It helps me keep my interest in another world. If I didn't join these I will forget to think about things that I don't know much about, so it is a good chance for me to know other ways. I imagined before I came to N that I would be able to have a lot of opportunities to meet foreign people, but in fact when I came here I realized that if you want to speak English and you want to know other things you have to go outside [of the university] and I must make opportunities by myself, so maybe I am more active than before.

**In April and June you told me a lot about your religion and how it encourages you to study English. How are you feeling at the moment?**

At the moment...it hasn't changed...it hasn't changed at all...I still have the same feeling and opinion now. If I study English I can do about things that I don't about now, so it never changes.

**You told me earlier that English is a tool to learn other things. Do you feel it is a tool to learn about other religions?**

Yeah...sure my opinion never changes...it is my...it is part of me.

**Have you learned anything about other religions in English?**

I haven't yet, but I will...next year I have more free time, so I want to study and learn more about other religions and other things in English and in Japanese...now I'm planning on what I will do next semester...I'm thinking about this, but now I haven't...not yet. Now I'm busy with classes and my part-time job and a lot of events. Before I couldn't make my schedule well because I was either too busy or I had a lot of free time, so I couldn't make a good schedule, so I want to make a better schedule next semester and make time for this [religious studies]. It is my weak point...I am eager to try everything, and when I find something I want to do I do it straight away without thinking about other things. This semester and last semester I couldn't make time for the things I really wanted to do.

**You told me you often compare yourself to other people. How are you feeling now?**

Ah yeah. It never changes, but I said to you about my pastor, and she gave me a lot of advice...she is 30 or 40...not too old, so her advice is...she really understands me and how I think and how I feel, and she know my parents and my family well. She lives in my hometown and we text and Email...she gives me a lot of advice. She said to me "you don't have feel so...it is important to feel relaxed...so this changed me a little, but this feeling [about comparing] hasn't really changed...just a little.

**In our last interview you also told me you don't like the sempai kōhai system and you don't like using kenjogyo. How do you feel now?**

Now I also don't like this system. For example, I have a part-time job in RH and my senior is very strict to me. She always says bad words to me, but she is older and I can say anything...I can't protest. She says "you are..." very bad words in Japanese, so I

don't know how to say in English. She says "you are a fool...I can't use you...I don't need you...your character is bad...I don't like your character" But because she is older I can't say anything...I can't defend myself, so I don't like sempai kōhai. My juniors always take care around me because I am older...I don't like this at all...it will never change. Next year juniors will enter university, so maybe I won't act like this...like this system. University is...everyone...for example in the first grade. Some people are older even though they are in the first grade, so I think this system is not suitable at university. I think this system is not good for university, and I think university students are not children...everyone is an adult, so we don't need this system. I don't know if it is real society...like in a company...maybe we need this system then, but I think we don't need it. It is unique to Japan and is very peculiar...and Japanese culture. Sempai kōhai means a lot of things...especially for girls. Some girls are very strict about this system.

**How do you feel your motivation has changed over the last year?**

Almost the same, but now I feel a little doubt about studying English because there are other things I want to do. I don't know how to say...but sometimes I doubt whether I want to study English...sometimes, but it is rare...not always. I think this is a normal feeling though for most people. My motivation hasn't changed but now I feel studying English is now my duty...sometimes...it has changed a little in my mind.

**Are you still enjoying studying English?**

It depends on the situation...it depends on the situation.

**Can you give an example?**

It depends on the class members and the teacher. I think the class members are important. If another member is motivated, I'll feel more motivated in class to study

English, but in the fall semester many students lost their motivation to study, so it is a bad influence on me.

**How about the teachers?**

The teachers change from the spring and fall semester, so I thought in the fall semester the teachers are better for me...most of my teachers come from N University [another university], so they enjoy the class...haha...because I think this school is not their university, so they enjoy it, so I also enjoy it. Their talks are very interesting and they talk...their opinions and the topics are different from the teachers at this university, so it is interesting for me because N University is different from here and the system is different from this school, and their opinions are interesting for me and I'm interested in their classes.

**Do you have any examples?**

For example...the class system...N University is much bigger, so one class has more students than this university, so how they teach...they have conversations with students and they communicate with students...because the classes are smaller here they can talk with students and they have conversations with them...they don't have chance to do that at their university...but in this school they can, so they often have a conversation time in class, but this school's teachers don't have the time to have a conversation with students, so I think it is interesting. Also my teacher [from N University] knows a lot of things...he is a language...a linguist, so he often goes to foreign countries, and after the business trip he talks to us about what happened. They don't just do study, but also tell us about foreign countries, but teachers at this university just have us study.

**Do you think the teachers here put more pressure on you?**

Yeah...to study TOEIC, so I think teachers from N University are more interesting...for me. His class is fun.

**How has your English level or ability changed since April?**

I don't think it has changed much...I feel I need to study more English now because I will study abroad. I don't know if my level has changed, but my...I could get more knowledge about English and foreign countries...I learned things about foreign countries in English, so yes...maybe...I hope my level is a little higher than in spring. I need to know...I need to study...I know how to study something is English now...yes.

**How will you keep your motivation in the future?**

I want to keep my motivation next year because I won't have a situation like this [research project and interviews], so I'm a little worried, but I will because I have EAST activities, so I can keep my motivation. Maybe I will have more free time next semester, so I want to do more.

**What are your plans for the future?**

I want to study many things in English...religion and culture and politics...I don't like that, but I have to study it. My plan is to make time and to study something in English...like a goal. I told you before I want to help people in developing countries...like this, but now my plan has changed a little. I still want to help people in foreign countries, but last year I met people from charities...and I learned about NGOs and what it is to help people...I really know, so how to help people...I want to study how to help people. Maybe in the first interview I said I want to study how to help people at university...this will never change. This is my dream.

## Appendix G – Sample diary prompt questions

**Dear Miki,**

**Please think back to what has happen to you in April, and then answer the questions below in as much detail as possible. You can write in English or in Japanese. Please attach this document to an E-mail, and send it back to me by Wednesday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>. Thank you very much!**

4月にあなたに何があったか考え返して、下の質問にできるかぎり詳しく答えてください。英語または、日本語で書いてください。この文書をメールに貼りつけ5月22日(水)までに私に送り返してください。ありがとうございます！

1. Can you tell me something which has happened in your classes which has made you more or less motivated to study English?  
クラスで英語の勉強をするのにあなたのモチベーションを上げたもしくは下げたことを教えてください。
2. Can you tell me something which has happened in your daily life which has made you more or less motivated to study English?  
あなたの日常生活で、英語を勉強するのにあなたのモチベーションを上げたもしくは、下げたことを教えてください。
3. Has anything (unusual) happened in the last month that has changed the way you feel about studying English?  
この月英語学習についてのあなたの感じ方が変える普通ではないようなことが起こりましたか？
4. Tell me about any situations or events that have happened where you haven't wanted to speak English or have felt uncomfortable speaking English?  
あなたが以前英語を話したくない、または英語を話すのを不快に感じた状況について教えてください。
5. Tell me about any positive situations or events that have happened where you have enjoyed speaking English?  
あなたが英語を話すのを楽しんだポジティブな状況やイベントについて教えてください。
6. Is there anything distracting you from studying English?  
英語を勉強するのに気を散らされることはありますか？

7. You said you want to know more about foreign people and foreign countries.  
Have you done anything to learn more about foreign people or countries?

Do you have any goals for the next few weeks?

あなたは、もっと外国人や外国について知りたいと言っていました。あなたは、外国人や外国について学ぶため何かをしましたか？あなたは、次の3、4週間の間の目標はありますか？

8. Are you enjoying studying English at the moment? Why or why not?

あなたは今英語を勉強することを楽しんでいますか？なぜ？なぜそうではない？

9. Have you done anything extra this month to improve your English?

あなたは、今月英語のレベルアップをするために特別に何かをしましたか？

**Appendix H – Consent form (English version)**  
**Consent Form**

**Title of Project:** Japanese language learners' conceptions of motivation and how this evolves over time.

**Name of Researcher:** Neil Millington

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated 31 March 2013 for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason.
3. I consent to the discussion being audio-taped.
4. I agree to take part in the above study.

Please initial box


**Name of Participant:**

**Date:**

**Signature:**



## Appendix I – Consent form (Japanese version)

### 同意書

プロジェクトの名前： 日本人の語学学習者のモチベーションの概念と2セ

メスターでどのようにモチベーションを発展させるか。

研究者： ミリントン ニール

しかくに著名し  
てください

1. 私は上記の研究について2013年3月31日付けの  
インフォメーションシートを読み理解した事を承諾します。私  
はこのインフォメーションをよく考え、質問をしてこれらの  
返答をもらう機会がありました。

2. 私は参加することはボランティアでいつでも理由なしにや  
める事ができると理解しています。

3. 私はこのディスカッションがレコーディングされる事を同  
意します。

4. 私は上記の研究に参加する事を同意します。

参加者の名前：

日付：

サイン：

## Appendix J – Participant information sheet (English version)

### Participant Information Sheet

**Name of Project:** Japanese language learners' conceptions of motivation and how this evolves over time.

**Researcher:** Neil Millington

[Address and email removed for confidentiality]

**Supervisor:** Judit Kormos

Dear Student,

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study which is part of my PhD studies in the Department of Linguistics and English Language at the University of Lancaster. Before you decide you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully. We will have a meeting in April and you can talk to others about the study if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

#### **What is the purpose of the study?**

The aim of this study is so I can get a better understanding of your feelings towards learning English, your attitudes towards learning English, and how your motivation towards English changes over the period of one academic year.

#### **Why have I been invited?**

You have been invited because you are a student at the University of N, and you have been recommended by other teachers here at the university. If you choose not to participate, it will not affect your studies or relationship with the university.

#### **Do I have to take part?**

Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw up to one month after the last interview meeting. If you withdraw up to one month after the last interview will your data be destroyed and not used, but after this point will the data will remain in the study.

#### **What will taking part involve for me?**

Outline:

- There will be a total of four interviews over a period of 10 months.
- Each interview will take about 15 minutes of your time and will be recorded and transcribed.

- The interviews will take place in my office [Removed for confidentiality].
- You will be asked to keep a diary in Japanese or English and give this to Neil once a month.
- Further information about the diaries will be given during the meeting.
- If you would like a copy of what you said in the interview it will be available upon request.
- Only Neil and his supervisor will have access to the information you give. I will record the interviews with a voice recorder. The data will then be transferred to a PC immediately, and will be encrypted with password protection so that no unauthorized person can have access to your data.
- I will **not** use your real names in the transcriptions and make sure that you will not be identifiable in the research report.
- The data will be used for my PhD thesis and publications in academic journals.

### **What will I have to do?**

Please come to Neil's office [Removed for confidentiality] at the time agreed. Submit your diary once a month.

### **What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

The interviews will be conducted in English, so it is a good opportunity to have a discussion in English.

You will be given a gift of 5000円 when you start the project from Neil to compensate you for your time and efforts.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research you can contact Dr. Judit Kormos at Lancaster University [Mail address and telephone number removed for confidentiality]

Thank you for reading this information sheet.

**Lancaster University**  
Lancaster LA1 4YT  
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0)1524 65201  
Direct Line  
Fax: +44 (0)1524 843085  
<http://www.ling.lancs.ac.uk>  
Email: [linguistics@lancs.ac.uk](mailto:linguistics@lancs.ac.uk)

**Neil Millington**