

# Articles

## Three Tales of Language Teacher Identity and Student Motivation

Neil Cowie

*Okayama University*

Keiko Sakui

*Kobe Shoin Women's University*

In this study we investigated how EFL teachers perceive student motivation and how their teacher identities influence their strategies to motivate students. The results of in-depth interviews with three Japan-based EFL teachers suggest that they have a complex understanding of learner motivation, which they formulate by amalgamating accepted motivation theories and their own experiences and observations about their students. The teachers recognize their own impact on influencing learner motivation but they also acknowledge their limitations. The strategies that the teachers use to motivate their students vary according to their experience, beliefs, and local contextual factors. We discuss implications for further motivation research as well as classroom practice.

本研究は、英語教員が学生の動機づけをどう理解し、教員のアイデンティティーが動機づけを促すストラテジーとどう関係があるかを調査したものである。日本で英語を教える3人の教員のインタビューデータによると、この3人の教員は、既存の動機づけに関する理論を理解しながら、自分たちの経験や観察に基づいた独自の動機づけの考えをもっており、それらを総括した視点より、動機づけを理解しているといえる。これらの教員は、学生の動機づけをある程度は向上できると考えている一方、それには限度があると述べており、動機づけのストラテジーは、それぞれの教員の経験、考え、また教育環境によって異なることも明らかになった。本稿は、動機づけに関する研究、また教室での実践面についての提言についても言及している。

Learning a foreign language is a difficult and challenging process and to keep studying, make progress, and sustain their enthusiasm students need to have high levels of motivation. In order to help students, many different kinds of practical motivational strategies are available that have been recommended for teachers to use both in and outside their classrooms (Dörnyei, 2001a, 2001b; Oxford, 1990). From a theoretical perspective, researchers have long been investigating student motivation to learn languages and have studied it from a wide variety of approaches. These, amongst others, have included social psychological (Gardner, 1985; Gardner & Lambert, 1972), cognitive-situated (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; Dörnyei, 2005; Ushioda, 2003; Williams & Burden, 1997), feminist and post-structuralist (Norton, 2000), and more recently, self and identity (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009).

Such approaches to motivation research and strategy use have tended to focus on students and their learning processes, but published research into how teachers themselves look at how and why they go about motivating their students is relatively scarce (Sakui & Cowie, 2011). This is an important omission because teachers' motivational practices can play a critical role in influencing their students (Brophy, 2010; Dörnyei, 2005; Falout, Elwood, & Hood, 2009). Two studies in EFL contexts that focus on teacher practices are those carried out by Dörnyei and Cziser (1998) and Guilloteaux and Dörnyei (2008). In the first study, Dörnyei and Cziser identified a list of what they termed the "Ten Commandments" or 10 key strategies that EFL teachers in Hungary believed were most essential for student motivation. These include setting a personal example, creating a pleasant atmosphere, and presenting tasks properly. In the second study, carried out in South Korea, Guilloteaux and Dörnyei found a positive link between teachers' general motivational practices and students' reported motivation levels.

These two studies are useful to identify practical strategies that teachers can adopt and provide additional evidence that strategies can influence students. However, such research is relatively general in nature and has a tendency to "ignor[e the] realities of teachers' lives both inside and outside of the classroom" (Simon-Maeda, 2004, p. 406). In other words, research on teacher knowledge of student motivation does not take much account of how individual teachers are affected by their experiences and beliefs as well as by local contextual factors and the wider socio-cultural milieu. Recent approaches to studies of teacher knowledge have gradually moved away from the idea that teachers are objects of study as sources of good or bad teaching. Instead teacher knowledge is increasingly recognised as socially

constructed and as being continually reworked through experience and reflection (Johnson & Golombek, 2002). It has been claimed for some time that teachers express this “personal practical knowledge” through the telling of stories or narratives about their lives (Clandinin & Connelly, 1986) and an ever-increasing number of narrative-based articles and anthologies from the education field are appearing in print. Narratives of English language teachers, too, have begun to emerge (for example, Casanave & Schecter, 1997; Johnson & Golombek, 2002; Kalaja, Menezes, & Barcelos, 2008; Kieran, 2010; Simon-Maeda, 2004).<sup>1</sup>

These publications reflect the fact that narrative inquiry is becoming an effective method for showing how teachers construct their professional knowledge and a way for teachers’ voices to be included in research agendas. One particular focus of such research is that of teacher identity (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004; Lasky, 2005; Watson, 2006) and its strong connection with teacher-student relationships (Morgan, 2004; Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, & Johnson, 2005; Vásquez, 2011). By extension a teacher’s identity exerts a strong influence on the way in which that teacher will or will not attempt to motivate students.

Identity, from a poststructuralist perspective, is viewed as having a large number of components and aspects—it is multiple, conflicting, ever-changing, and created both by individuals and by the society they live in. For this study we adopt Giddens’s (1991) view of identity as an ongoing life narrative in which individuals constantly reconcile their self with the past, present, and future. Individual identity formation also takes place within social structures. One way to frame this for teachers is through a “communities of practice” approach (Lave & Wenger, 1991) in which teacher learning takes place through a sharing of understandings about what they do and what this means within a teaching community (p. 98). Varghese et al. (2005) suggest that learning to be a teacher is a process of identity formation in which different teachers have “different ways of being and engaging” (p. 29). In other words, teacher knowledge can be understood and expressed by teachers in many different ways as a result of differing identity development.

This study, therefore, investigates the following two research questions:

1. What perspectives do teachers have on student motivation and what strategies do they report that they use?
2. How do teacher identities influence the approaches teachers have to motivating their students?

## **The Study**

### ***Participants and Context***

At this juncture we would like to introduce our own perspective into the study. We have dual identities as both outsider researchers and insider EFL teachers. We are outsiders in the sense that we aim to objectively research what knowledge EFL teachers have of student motivation and what practices they adopt to influence that motivation, but at the same time we are personally involved with the topic of student motivation as we are both practising EFL teachers. In our own classes at the two Japanese universities where we work we have taught students who were clearly not motivated to study English; in fact, they were resistant to learning English. This resistance inspired us to try different strategies to motivate our students; for one of us these strategies were successful and for the other, less so. We reported on these experiences in Sakui and Cowie (2008). We obtained our research data from a written survey of 32 Japan-based experienced EFL university teachers (see Appendix for the questions the teachers were asked). The participants were from six different countries, 25 had a master's degree and seven a PhD, their average age was 46, and nearly 68% of them had over 11 years of university teaching experience.

Following a careful examination of this initial survey data (reported in Cowie & Sakui, 2011), we chose to carry out follow-up interviews with three of the teachers. What was particularly illuminating was how the three teachers could add so much more depth to the information uncovered by the survey. It became clear that their perceptions of student motivation and strategies that teachers use result from, and are embedded in, a complex web of personal and contextual factors. These are factors which are part of each teacher's identity, and which in turn are uncovered through talk about teaching. The current study, therefore, focuses on the interviews with the three teachers. Although all are working in the same regional city in Japan, the teachers were recruited purposefully (Spradley 1979) to mirror a variety of characteristics of EFL teachers in the specific context of Japanese universities: male and female, full- and part-time, working at public and private universities, and both native and nonnative English speakers.

### ***Method***

Each of the three teachers was interviewed jointly by the authors. The 90-minute interviews were semi-structured with questions reflecting issues that had arisen during the previous survey. These included questions on the

participants' knowledge of motivation theories, student autonomy, strategy use by teachers, and teacher identity, as well as their experience of dealing with resistant students. In order to illustrate these issues the teachers were encouraged to share their stories about individual students and classes as well as their other personal experiences. As interviewers we contributed to a co-construction of these narratives, particularly as our own work as EFL teachers allowed us a familiarity with the general teaching context of each participant and meant that we could relate to them. We are aware of the dangers of researching one's own culture (Wolcott, 1994) but claim that our insider position encouraged the teacher participants to talk and reveal their "hidden stories" (Holvino, 2010, p. 263) in a sincere and open manner. At the same time our outsider research stance helped to maintain a distance and lend objectivity to our views of the participants' experiences and stories.

The resulting 66 pages of interview transcriptions were analysed paradigmatically (after Bruner, 1985), a process in which categories were imposed on the data through content analysis (Manning & Cullum-Swan, 1994). In practice this meant that each author individually read and reread the interview transcriptions and placed extracts from the interviews into a gradually evolving table of categories or classes. Examples of such categories included goal setting, personal relations with students, and teaching style. The authors then jointly identified key themes (after Riessman, 2008) relating to the two research questions.

In the following sections each of the three participants (David, Alan, and Noriko—all pseudonyms) and their teaching contexts are briefly described. This is followed by details of their different motivation strategies and their claimed teacher identities, illustrated by excerpts from the interviews; the page numbers are from the transcriptions. There are also a small number of extracts from the participants' original written survey answers. The subsequent discussion section provides commentary on issues that are raised in the "teacher tales" section.

## Teacher Tales

One of the constraints and ironies of a qualitative paper is that there is often little room for the voices of participants. Researchers carefully select quotations from interviews or surveys to support their ideas but readers often do not "get to know" the person from whom the quotation has come from. We are aware of this limitation but would like to try, in this section, to give some background to our teacher-participants and give them a voice

in this paper, admittedly still limited. The tales that these teachers tell are focused on motivation strategies and teacher identity. These have been separated for ease of analysis but they overlap considerably. Themes that emerge include teacher decisions about whether it is their responsibility to motivate students and over what time frame, to what extent the teachers could or should try to create a personal relationship with students, and the different tensions involved in being either a native or nonnative speaker.

### **David**

David is a 45-year-old Canadian who has been working as a full-time teacher in a provincial Japanese public university for over 10 years. David has two master's degrees; his first is in history and his second is in applied linguistics. He teaches a variety of classes including general EFL, comparative culture, and intercultural communication. His smallest classes have fewer than 10 students and the largest have about 40. As many of these students specialize in English but some take it as a compulsory credit, one may expect that their interest in English varies considerably. At the time of the interview David also had some part-time work at a technical college teaching general conversational English. According to David, the students at this college were not motivated to study and he expressed some irritation with them as they "just snub their noses at you" (p. 6).

### *Motivation Strategies*

David told us that he was not comfortable with the idea of having to motivate students as he believes that "the final responsibility lies with the student" (survey). However, if he perceives students as already being motivated then he will respond to them with enthusiasm. He will share with them his high expectations, will frequently compliment them, and will refrain from criticism. David tries to identify what he terms "pre-existing motivational dispositions" (survey) in students and help them to sustain and nurture what they are already good at or interested in. In contrast, David also described how many students, even very talented ones, have a kind of superficial or false motivation in that they say they want to do well but they do not actually want to work hard enough to succeed:

They are more comfortable in a teacher-fronted situation where, as long as I'm using English . . . and they are listening to me and they are happy. They prefer that and the reason why they don't

want to do group work is either that [they're] self-conscious or they can't get their English corrected or they feel that the other students don't understand them. Or they are not expressing themselves as well as they can so . . . I find there is a kind of a backlash against group work, with my students . . . so basically students [are] saying "I want to use English" but then not doing it in the class as much as we . . . would like. (p. 4)

In brief, David responds very positively to students who he believes are already motivated but less positively to those who he perceives are not motivated. He has some conflicting feelings about this as he admits that a "real" teacher would try to motivate all students:

A teacher should desire to switch on everybody. I'm not . . . what I'm saying is [it's] impossible for a teacher to reach everybody but I think a teacher should, I mean a real teacher in the teaching teacher sense should enjoy reaching those students down here and get satisfaction from that. We're talking about teacher motivation [rather] than student motivation. (p. 14)

David's image of motivated students derives from teaching previous students who epitomise what a motivated student does by their observable actions. One of these students was called Kaori. David initially did not want her to join the upper intermediate class that he was teaching but she showed through her hard work over time that she could improve enormously:

Her level wasn't nearly as good as the other students. She talked her way into the course and she really performed well and tried hard and I could see . . . what she was trying to do . . . she went abroad for a couple of months and then she joined my seminar and by the time she graduated she was, at the end of the 4th year she was, she had improved so much through her hard work. (p. 7)

However, David admitted that it was not fair to judge motivation through external actions alone:

Sometimes it's difficult for me to see the motivation. Sometimes because my Japanese is not that great and I only teach in English. And so I could have a very quiet Japanese girl in my class, for example, who I think is not motivated but she might

be very motivated but what she wants to get is not happening in my class. (p. 7)

### *Identity*

David talked about several identities that he holds in relation to his students, each of which has a slightly different influence on his motivational style. David described himself as having been a language teacher for 10 years but he felt that he had been playing this role without any real training in language teaching. Instead he saw himself as a culture teacher:

I don't really identify as a language teacher, I identify as a culture teacher. So a lot of what I do is talking about cultural things in English. (p. 10)

Some examples of these cultural things that David mentioned include teaching about the topics of gender and adoption of children and various systems such as education. David's non-identification as a language teacher conflicts with his motivated students who he believes "want practical language training" (p. 16). A further source of tension for David is his self-image that he is not a good language learner; he mentioned learning French in Canada and Japanese in Japan. He thinks it is strange that a self-confessed poor language learner should be urging others to learn.

David is also very conscious that he is a native speaker of English and as such is markedly different from his students. To bridge this difference he tries to encourage closer relationships with his students by trying to spend time with them outside of class. He mentioned activities such as going caving, having barbecues, or drinking coffee together. Inside the classroom, a further way that he tries to encourage closeness is to talk about himself and his family. David shows that he is willing to share his vulnerability about language learning to his students and is confident that it is safe to talk about himself in English, even though the students do not always appear to reciprocate this:

David: Yeah. I talk about a lot about my family and they are very interested in how I raise my kids and how I met my wife and what international marriages are like and what are the problems. I'm very, very open about myself, frustratingly so because I hope that they, by doing so they would be more open with me but I usually find myself in a situation where I'm sharing too much about myself and they're not giving back.



Sakui (researcher): Don't you feel vulnerable? Opening up your . . .

David: No, no, no, no, but I mean I told, I told the, my students, you know, we talk about divorce and my kids that . . . my mother and father got divorced when I was in high school and they seemed very shocked that I would tell them something like that. Or that my father drank too much, or you know. I don't feel vulnerable I quite like it. . . . Might feel more vulnerable if it was back in my own country but I quite like it here. (p. 11)

David uses his personal life as a springboard in lessons to encourage students to talk. This is his personal strategy but he claims he is responding to the expectations of some students who want native-speaker teachers to reveal something of themselves.

### **Alan**

Alan is an American in his early 30s who has been teaching at the university level for almost 5 years. At the time of the interview he was just completing a master's in applied linguistics by distance learning from a UK university. He teaches part-time at several different institutions, which is a common situation for many EFL teachers in Japan (Cowie, 2011). These institutions include a *juku* or cram school, a public university, and a private university. Alan felt that a number of the *juku* students were very motivated to learn, as they want to study abroad. He related several stories about these students and the kinds of behaviours that they show, which he termed intrinsic motivation. In contrast, Alan claimed that other students want to pass the tests that they have to take and he labelled this as extrinsic motivation. Alan's hope for such students when taking his lessons is that they can care for English beyond the immediate concerns of the tests that they have to take. Alan teaches general conversational English, writing, listening, and various international exam courses such as TOEFL and TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) as well as the Japan-based test called *Eiken*. The average number of students in a class is 15.

### **Motivation Strategies**

Alan does think that he can influence student motivation in the sense of giving students reasons to learn and providing supportive classroom condi-

tions which will help them learn; but in essence he believes that the students themselves must decide whether to learn or not. Alan provides supportive conditions mainly by focusing on good personal relationships with students and using interesting materials wherever possible. Alan believes that in this way he can provide temporal motivation only for the duration of his instruction (typically for one 3-month semester). He recognises the reality that many students will probably never need English in their future lives in Japan, but he hopes that he can motivate them to study during the short time that he teaches them:

To be completely honest a lot of students who never leave Japan never want to leave Japan and never want to work anywhere else aren't too likely to need English in their working lives especially here . . . Yeah it will be great if they did but if they really aren't interested and never want to use it and just want to hunker down in their home country then there is only so much you can do I think, to motivate them. Just temporal motivation really, it's not going to be long term. (p. 6)

One way in which Alan tries to support temporal motivation is to create a pleasant atmosphere by showing a personal interest in students' lives. By remembering students' individual stories and referring to them in subsequent lessons he can make the students more positive about study. Alan also encourages a helpful atmosphere by giving students opportunities to experience success and praising them often. Some of Alan's other motivational strategies include encouraging peer teaching and trying to introduce topics that students are interested in, within the confines of the strictly controlled curriculum that he has to teach:

I try and find out the things they are interested in and include that in lessons when you're doing, choosing topics whatever. Like at the women's university that I teach [at] we have a listening class and we have to take the listening broadcast from the Voice of America website as a special English section. So there I try to choose issues about women in the workplace, advancing women in Japan. (p. 7)

One of Alan's criteria for a motivated student is that they will do extra work on their own outside of class. He stated that with a very controlled curriculum and clear test-oriented goals, there is little scope for students

to show initiative inside the class. One way he tries to promote out-of-class learning is by highlighting his own Japanese learning strategies and recommending DVDs and TV programmes with subtitles and various language learning websites. He finds it hard to personalise learning within a very set curriculum, yet tries with students in private lessons.

Alan expressed his belief that most students already have very clear goals based on school tests or exams such as TOEIC. He reported that these external goals can be overly influential and ideally he would like to “provide alternative goal orientation” (p. 17) that does not focus so much on exams.

### *Identity*

Alan’s own experience of studying Japanese has influenced his teaching in that he believes students need practical reasons to study a language and that they need to make an effort to get better. He tries to use his own language learning experiences as a bridge with students to show them they are “co-learners” (p. 25):

But the main thing that I do to try and motivate those kinds of students is demonstrate that I’m also a language learner, ask them “Oh what’s this in Japanese, how do you read this Kanji?” “Oh I know this word; I remember learning it”—things like that. (p. 6)

In a similar manner to his identity as a co-learner, Alan views his international identity as a way of closing the gap between students and the teacher. He asks students for feedback on Japanese cultural issues by encouraging them to be “a representative of Japanese culture” (p. 11) and to explain their views on aspects of Japanese society that he finds puzzling. Alan also encourages students to show what they know about Japanese issues, and gets them to think and talk about their own culture. He is keen to react to his students’ inquiries about culture as part of his way of getting students to think about other places and people. However, he does not initiate lessons based on culture as he believes that nowadays the world is so connected through the Internet that students can find cultural input for themselves. Alan has an identity, not as an American, but as an international or multi-cultural person and he tends to promote that in lessons:

And then other identities, yeah well I guess this has to do with nationality you know, I don’t want to represent America, I want to represent me and I guess I look at it as an identity issue as

well. Being American is part of who I am but I've been overseas for a long time. I'm very different from other Americans so that's another identity that I internationalised I suppose. (p. 25)

### **Noriko**

Noriko is a 43-year-old Japanese woman who has been teaching at the university level for 20 years. She has a master's in TESOL from a New Zealand university. She teaches part-time at two institutions: a private coeducational high school, (with up to 40 students in each class) and a public women's university (with an average of 20 students per class). She teaches general English classes at both the school and the university and a writing class at the university.

### *Motivation Strategies*

To Noriko, students are innately motivated and she believes that there is relatively little she can do to change their levels of determination to learn. However, although she said that there was little she could do, she also thinks that she can influence students in a temporary way and uses different strategies to influence short- and long-term motivation:

Noriko: Short-term learning motivation is, for example I can use topical events, music and video and game-like activities. Long-term motivation . . . sometimes I introduce some of my own learning history to higher level students. So sometimes I explain how I struggled as a high school student to learn basic grammar.

Cowie (researcher): How do they react to that?

Noriko: They seem to be interested. Sometimes I try to give them shock, especially at the beginning of the school year. I walk into the classroom with all fresh faces in front of me and I suddenly start talking in English, so they think "Wow! She can speak English" and they all look shocked. They seem to be interested in listening and communicating with English, but that won't last long, maybe only twice, three times. (p. 7)

Noriko viewed the short-term strategies as less serious than the longer term strategies, which as well as sharing her language learning history in-

volved linguistic-oriented activities such as using TOEIC exercises and consolidating student knowledge of basic vocabulary and grammar. Noriko has some knowledge of research on motivation but considers that theoretical knowledge and classroom practice are different and that it is difficult to apply theory to complex classroom situations. She knows that learning English and achieving a high level of proficiency “requires long-term hard work and obsession with the language” (survey). She explained how her high school students are not at all this motivated and sometimes behave poorly. She described, for example, how the students are noisy during the lesson, how they sometimes fight each other, and how boys and girls often flirt rather than pay attention to the lesson. In contrast, her university students are better behaved and seem to be more motivated in order to pass tests.

Noriko believes that students are motivated because of a combination of talent and personality traits such as curiosity and persistence. She has developed this view as a result of her own experience in marrying an alcoholic. During the marriage (which has now ended) she gradually realised that she could not change her husband, and in an analogous way she thinks that she cannot change students but has to accept who they are:

Noriko: I learned a lot about teaching from raising my son and also my failed marriage life. My husband was an alcoholic, so it was really tough. That was the time my son was 1, 2 and a half years old and that was the most important time for a baby to have a physical and mental connection with their mother, but I couldn't focus on him because I was always distracted by my alcoholic husband. So I tried to go through the tough time by learning from other alcoholic people or ex-alcoholic people.

Sakui (researcher): In what way?

Noriko: By that time I had been struggling a lot to let my students look at me, let my students work on their task, let my students practice with their classmates, that they had no interest. But . . . I realized, OK, that's the way they are, I can't change them, that's how they are. I just have to accept them how they are. And my husband had lots of problems, and I tried to make him good, I tried to fix him, but I couldn't because he didn't want to change himself. And if you have the cancer in your stomach or liver, you try really hard to fix it, but if you are an alcoholic, you don't want to change it, you don't want to fix it. (p. 3)

*Identity*

Noriko has a strong identity as a Japanese teacher rather than a Western one. She tied her acceptance of her students' motivational state to different educational philosophical traditions, in particular making a link with the psychoanalyst Takeo Doi's (1971) concept of *amae* (dependence of a child on a forgiving parent). She contrasted Japanese and Western approaches to motivating students as being fundamentally different. Noriko perceived a Western approach to be one in which teachers try to push students to be autonomous and independent whereas, in her view, Japanese teachers take on greater responsibility to provide input for students. She described Japanese students as "blank sheet[s]" (p. 4) that the teacher has to fill in, whereas in other countries there may be more emphasis on drawing out children's innate abilities:

Japanese teachers are very serious and want all of their students to achieve a certain level. Even though each student is different, they constantly input information into the students. Western teachers are more understanding and, I think, try to raise the student's motivation level. Western teachers probably put more energy into raising the student's motivation and leave the inputting to the student's own efforts. The teacher lets the students know that it's not the teacher's responsibility to study but the students'. It's not the teacher's problem what level the students reach, because it's up to them, and I think that's how things are in Western schools. (p. 5)

Noriko also wants to be a serious teacher, one that, in her view, can help students understand everything that they may come across in their English lessons. She stated that it is very important to explain all the language points that she possibly can. She tried a more "task-based approach" (Ellis, 2003) after her master's study in New Zealand but soon gave it up as it did not seem to be an appropriate approach in Japan. By task-based she means a more autonomous style in which students can try to understand language input by themselves.

Noriko has different kinds of relationships with different students. She wants to accept her high school students whilst maintaining an authority over them, but with her university students she can build a closer relationship with some of them and occasionally she talks with them about what it is like to be a mother. She also identifies herself as a learner-leader who needs to show that learning is a lifelong task:

I think I want to be leader in learning, leader-learner. A senior in life, in learning. It doesn't have to be in learning English, they're still young and I want them to keep learning in life, and to be sort of a role model. That, no matter how old you are, still you can keep learning new things and there's no end in learning that's what I want to show them. (p. 9)

## Discussion

These descriptions and extracts from the teacher narratives show how all of the teachers are highly committed to teaching and their students, and that they responded to the interview questions with an open and inquisitive spirit. We would now like to reflect on their perspectives and return to the twin research questions of student motivation and identity. Firstly, we show that the teachers' views of motivation are various types of case study, and that the teachers acknowledge the dynamically changing nature of motivation in their choice of motivation strategies. Secondly, the link between different teacher identities and different motivational practices is explored.

### *Teacher Knowledge of Motivation is Based on Case Studies*

All the teachers expressed their knowledge about motivational practice through narratives or tales that were grounded in "personal resources, values, and life experience" (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2007, p. 364). These grounded tales form a set of case studies based on the teachers' experiences with individual students or whole classes or personal experiences outside of formal educational settings: David spoke of a specific student who showed great persistence and determination in her language learning; Alan told of his *juku* students for whom the most important goal was simply to get through the class and pass the exams; and Noriko realised she could not change her alcoholic husband and linked this experience to her students and how she cannot motivate them unless they have their own innate drive.

It seems that when these teachers develop their ideas about motivation, they tend to think about specific people: either students who they remember well, as in David's and Alan's cases, or an ex-husband, as in Noriko's case. We propose that through this mental process, it is helpful for teachers to closely relate to specific individuals in order to generalize motivation concepts. Most motivation research has tended to fall into the category of individual-difference research in which features of student motivation are described in terms of the features of a group. This is useful when describing

general tendencies of learners but does lead to the somewhat limiting use of binary categories such as intrinsic or extrinsic motivation. An alternative approach, such as that taken by Norton (2000), is to describe learners in a more ethnographic way and to truly identify what the differences are between learners and to connect that to a deep knowledge of the context in which learners study.

The data in this paper are limited to interviews with just three teachers who appear to have used the lens of a case study to conceptualise motivation. Future research is necessary to see whether other teachers also think about motivation in this way. If it is found that many do, it is important to investigate what commonalities might exist across cases in order to enable further theorisation about the nature of teacher knowledge. For instance, it would be useful to uncover if different teachers hold similar views about motivated attitudes or motivated behaviours, views that are reflected and refracted through various kinds of case study.

### ***Teachers Acknowledge That Motivation Changes Over Time***

We would now like to show how the participant teachers' practical knowledge of student motivation takes account of how motivation changes, especially over time. Noriko described how she tries to encourage different temporary motivation according to which kind of students she teaches; she tries to motivate her high school students with activities that give them a positive learning experience in the short term, whilst with her university students she will use other, more specific language learning activities aimed to have an effect over the long term. Alan admitted that he could not hope to influence his university students in the long term and spoke about the temporal motivation that his students showed and how he would try to engender that by creating a warm atmosphere in the class. David described students who appeared to be keen to study but in his view demonstrated only superficial or false motivation. David responded more fully with praise and compliments to other students that he felt were really motivated.

These processes seem to match most closely with Ushioda's (1998) framework of motivation which depicts an "evolution" of motivational influences. Ushioda theorises that learners at an early stage in this evolution are motivated more by positive learning experiences and affective rewards than particular goals, whilst at a potential later stage they are much more influenced by goal-directed motives. We can see evidence from the interviews that supports such a view. The teachers appear to identify what kind of



stage students are in regarding their motivation and adapt their lessons accordingly. For students at earlier evolutionary stages, the teachers focus on creating a positive learning experience and good atmosphere, whilst those at a later stage can benefit from more specific goal-directed activities. As it is commonly acknowledged that good teachers adapt their lessons to reflect the needs of their students, it is salutary for the teachers to provide some evidence for how this can happen. Noriko, for example, would not share her serious language learning history-based strategies with her noisy high school students but would reserve that approach for her more test-oriented university students. For her high school students Noriko included activities based on music, videos, or game-like lessons in order to encourage short-term motivational change. Alan, on the other hand, felt that many of his students were already at the goal-directed stage of motivation. They were locked into a very tight curriculum with clearly defined tests as goals, which Alan tries to help them with.

The tales described above show that teachers are aware of how dynamic and variable student motivation is. They often teach students for a relatively short time and have to focus on what they can practically influence during that period. They know that they cannot always change student motivational dispositions so they concentrate on what they can do with a variety of different strategies, responding pragmatically in their various teaching contexts. Motivation research has often focused on how to increase student motivation in somewhat ideal conditions (Williams & Burden, 1997). This study shows that teachers take practical steps to reflect the changing nature of student motivation, in particular how this motivation reflects the context that they teach in and how it changes over time. Such a dynamic view of motivation is in tune with recent trends in second language research, such as dynamic systems theory and emergentism (Dörnyei, 2010), which acknowledge the apparent chaos and complexity of language learning. The teachers in this study, too, intuitively acknowledge the intricacy of student motivation and respond accordingly to the differing demands their students place on them.

### ***Different Teacher Identities Result in Different Motivational Practices***

Morgan (2004), drawing upon Simon (1995) and Cummins (2000), stated that a teacher's identity or "image-text" (p. 173) is a pedagogical resource that is co-created or negotiated by both teachers and students. Morgan further suggested that this continuous interweaving of negotiation and language learning is a case of "teacher identity as pedagogy" (p. 178); in other words, a teacher's identity will be reflected in and constructed by the peda-

gological choices that the teacher makes. We would now like to highlight how each of the three participants in the current study use different pedagogical strategies to motivate their students and how these strategies reflect the co-created identities they have constituted in their relationship with their students.

It is axiomatic that identity is related to an individual's social, cultural, and political context. Noriko stated how she identifies strongly with images of traditional Japanese approaches to teaching and focuses on explaining to students what she feels that they need to know. She contrasted Japanese approaches with "Western" ones, emphasising that in her opinion Western teachers are "more understanding" (p. 5) and encourage students to be more autonomous than Japanese teachers may seem to do. Noriko sees that it is her duty to take responsibility for her students' learning. Clearly Noriko's ideological beliefs have a strong influence on her identity as a Japanese teacher of English. She went to some length to explain how she had tried Western pedagogy—even studying task-based language teaching at the master's level in New Zealand—however, she felt that this kind of teaching approach did not suit her students' needs and that it was important for her to explain language in order that "everything should be understood" (p. 10) by her students.

Whether Noriko's strategies are Western or Japanese is a moot point, but they are clearly different to those adopted by David and Alan in that Noriko has language resources and insider knowledge that is limited or unavailable to non-Japanese teachers. Instead, David and Alan draw upon their status as outsiders to motivate students by highlighting cultural differences, although they do this in their own ways. Instead of direct language teaching, David wants to share stories of his family, including his wife and children, in order to use those experiences as the basis for lesson content. Indeed, David expressed the belief that students expect native speaker teachers to reveal something of their personal lives in the classroom. As part of this co-created expectation he wants to get close to students and constructs opportunities to meet with them outside of class. In addition, David's role as a language teacher is in conflict with his image as a poor language learner and so he foregrounds other identities that students can relate to such as native speaker and intercultural communicator. Here, it is clear that David's identity as a native speaker and poor language learner leads him to use personal anecdotes and stories as part of a teaching repertoire that he feels will motivate students.

Alan is obviously also a native speaker but he wants to de-emphasise this aspect of his identity and narrow the perceived gap between himself and his students. He chooses to do this by revealing his knowledge of, curiosity about, and interest in the Japanese language. By projecting an identity as a “co-learner” of a language, Alan can share tips and hints for language learning with his students as an equal. Rather than a “representative” of America, Alan sees himself as a multi-cultural person. The resulting strategy that Alan uses as a reflection of this “image text” is to encourage his students to engage in English by explaining aspects of Japanese culture. Rather than embodying a culture from outside the classroom, as David does, Alan wants his students to look out, using the resources that they have as Japanese people.

There is one caveat to the above discussion on teacher identity. Missing from this analysis is any objective data regarding the way in which teacher identity is co-constituted by students. We rely on the teachers’ reported relationships with their students. This is an important omission; data from students could serve not just to create a wider picture than is gleaned from teacher-interview data, but also to gain insights into the power relations between teachers and students, which are always reflective in identity formation. Such power relations frame and constrain the pedagogical options that are available to teachers and the identity options that students themselves have (Cummins, 2000). In future research we aim to remedy this weakness by including observations of lessons and surveys of students.

## Conclusion

We conclude with two implications for this paper’s focus on language teacher identity and student motivation. Firstly, motivation strategy research that focuses on teacher perspectives would benefit from recognising how important the professional identity of teachers is in establishing their pedagogical patterns and practices. A thorough exploration of teachers’ lives, their identities, and the conditions they work in could enhance motivation research greatly. Secondly, it would also be helpful for teachers themselves to explore the link between identity and motivation strategies. Just as Noriko, David, and Alan identified and described different cases to help them assess where their students’ motivation lies, we would suggest that a case study approach has the potential to facilitate this exploration process. It is often said that teachers’ ways of theorising are expressed through narrative (Morgan, 2004). We would add that reflection on case studies emerging from narratives of teaching lives can help develop teachers’ knowledge and widen their repertoire of teaching strategies. Teachers can do this in a

vicarious way by listening to or reading about other case studies, as in this paper, or they can make sense of their own experiences through the telling of their own teacher tales.

## Note

1. There has also been a recent special issue of *TESOL Quarterly* on “Narrative Research in TESOL” (Barkhuizen, 2011).

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*Neil Cowie* is an English teacher in the Language Education Centre of Okayama University. His research interests include student motivation and the links between learning and teacher and student emotions.

*Keiko Sakui* teaches English and teacher-trainer courses at Kobe Shoin Women’s University. Her research topics include teacher perceptions of learner motivation and classroom management. Her current interests are educational leadership and management from a feminist perspective.

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## **Appendix**

### **Survey Questions (Cowie & Sakui, 2011)**

#### *Background Information*

- Years of university teaching experience
- Type of ELT training
- Nationality
- Gender
- Age
- Employment status
- Type of institution
- Type of English classes
- Average number of students

#### *Questions*

- Q1. How do you, as a classroom English teacher, understand learner motivation? In other words, what does learner motivation mean to you?
- Q2. Do you, as a teacher, think that you can influence learner motivation? Why/why not?
- Q3. What motivational strategies do you use?
- Q4. When do you think that your strategies are limited in influencing learner motivation?
- Q5. If you would like to make any further comments on this topic/area, please do.