

# Language Anxiety and Oral Assessment - Is there any alternative to the speaking test?



# OVERVIEW

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1. Define the research aims
2. Glossary of terms
3. Literature review
4. Interviews with teachers on student motivation
5. Interviews with students on student motivation
6. A questionnaire administered to 50 students
7. Limitations of the research
8. Wrap-up and the BIG SO WHAT!?

# RESEARCH AIMS

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The research aim is to identify motivating and demotivating factors that affect decisions to major in English, and the pedagogical consequences of ascertaining the data.

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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- Contemporary International English (CIE)
- Nyumon Enshu
- The Language Cafe (The LC)

# LITERATURE REVIEW – THE FOREFATHERS

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Gardner and Lambert (1959,1972) identified two motivations to learn a language...

1. Instrumental Motivation

2. Integrative Motivation

# LITERATURE REVIEW – A LATER

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## CATEGORIZATION

Gardner (1985) later categorized integrative motivation into three components...

1. motivational intensity or effort
2. desire to learn a language
3. attitudes towards learning the language

# LITERATURE REVIEW – EXTRINSIC

## MOTIVATION

Skehan in 1989 suggested the ‘carrot and the stick hypothesis’



# LITERATURE REVIEW – WILLINGNESS TO

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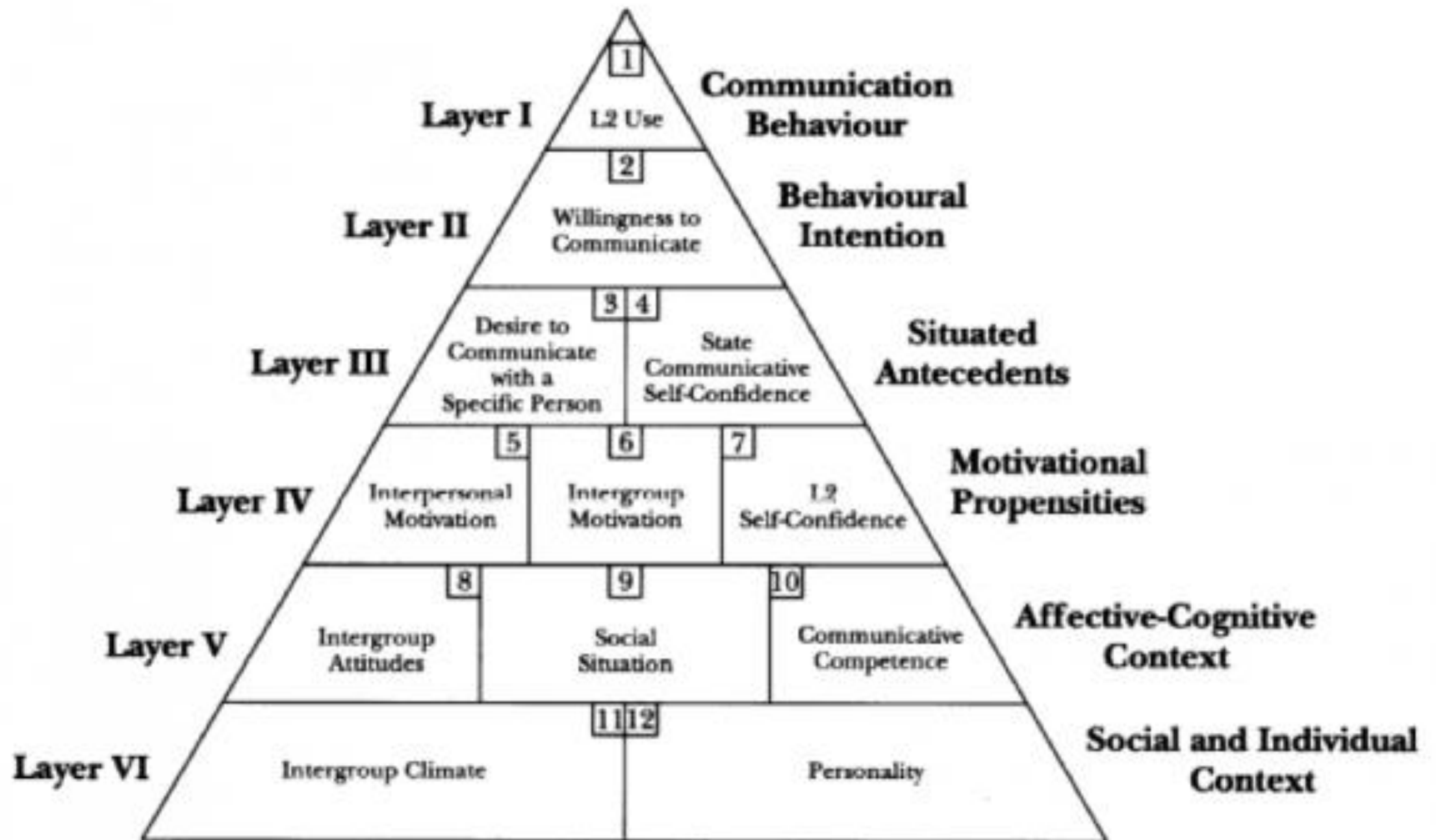
## COMMUNICATE

It is not uncommon to find people who tend to avoid entering L2 communication situations even if they possess a high level of communicative competence. This implies that there is a further layer of mediating factors between the competence to communicate and putting this competence into practice. –

Dornyei 2005 p207



# LITERATURE REVIEW – WILLINGNESS TO COI



# LITERATURE REVIEW – INTERNATIONAL

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## POSTURE

International posture is a tendency to see oneself as connected to the international community, have concerns for international affairs and possess a readiness to interact with people other than Japanese.’ – Yashima 2009 p146

# LITERATURE REVIEW – INTERNATIONAL

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## POSTURE

Learners of English in Japan regard the notion of an English-speaking community freed from the ties of nationality and locality to be a more powerful motivating factor because it presents to learners the possibility of legitimate, full membership of that community. – Sampson 2016 p131

# LITERATURE REVIEW – FOREIGN

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## LANGUAGE ANXIETY

Foreign language anxiety is the feeling of uneasiness, worry, nervousness and apprehension when learning or using a second or foreign language.

– MacIntyre and Gardner 1994 p 321

# LITERATURE REVIEW – A STUDY INTO LANGUAGE

## ANXIETY IN JAPAN

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Ohata (2005) found three factors that caused anxiety in the language classroom...

1. Fear of losing face in front of others
2. Lack of self-confidence in their English proficiency and the subject matter
3. Culturally fixed beliefs

# EXPLORATORY INTERVIEWS WITH TEACHERS

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## – THE QUESTIONS

1. What motivates our students to choose English as a major?

2. What demotivates our students to not choose English as a major?

3. What are the pedagogical consequences of yielding this information?

# INTERVIEWS WITH TEACHERS – THE ANSWERS

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## (MOTIVATION)

It's all about getting the grade, that's the main reason to be there, get the grade, graduate, get the job...playing the game – P1

I mean there could be some pressure to please parents going on, that might spur them on as they want to make mommy and daddy happy, but then again that could lead to performance anxiety as well – P2

Most of those kids have already decided on their major long before entering the classroom, they're there to just get the credit – P2

# INTERVIEWS WITH TEACHERS – THE ANSWERS

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## (MOTIVATION)

There's a bigger issue going on here, the students all the way through their education are not aware of the application of what they're learning, they've never been concerned with, I mean... 'why' had never been explained to them... it's just for tests. It's a stressful but motivating factor of doing XYZ but that's not giving them life skills, it doesn't promote life long learning – P2



# INTERVIEWS WITH TEACHERS – THE ANSWERS

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## (MOTIVATION)

English is still the gatekeeper to getting those elite positions, those who have it can become the elite...but I'm not teaching the elite, so I need to make it meaningful for them – P3

I mean they get it, the students get it, well some of them, they get the practicality of English, it's an important tool, and one day they might need to tick a box someday – P1

# INTERVIEWS WITH TEACHERS – THE ANSWERS

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## (MOTIVATION)

The gang you see down the Language Café at lunchtime, speaking to each other in English, they got intrinsic motivation if that's what you want to call it, they are interested in making friends with people from different places – P1

The best of them are on the fringes of globalization – P4

# INTERVIEWS WITH TEACHERS – THE ANSWERS

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## (DEMOTIVATION)

Who's going to be the one student to say 'let's speak English.'

It's a dilemma, a quandary for them, they know they should be talking to each other in English, but something is stopping them from doing so, they lack the confidence to insist on English – P3

# INTERVIEWS WITH TEACHERS – THE ANSWERS

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## (DEMOTIVATION)

You know, well...I do not want my students to have an inferiority complex about their English, it's O.K...that seems to be implanted in them at an early age...that they're not good enough – P3

What you will find is... cultural access is highly regulated in Japan, these things remain foreign, not what they are concerned with...the deeper and richer concept of being Japanese is way more important –

P4

# INTERVIEWS WITH TEACHERS – THE

## ANSWERS (PEDAGOGICAL)

Speaking tests make them nervous, that's for sure, some of them who can write it all down well enough just can't do it when it comes to oral assessment. I mean what are we testing? Informal banter? The students who can do it are not necessarily the better students if you know what I mean...there's a kind of superficial nature to those kids who speak English well, have good pronunciation from going to *Eikaiwa* for years, they just think their skills will be enough to see them through, but what I find is that the students who had a problem with the language, often their content had more depth, they'd tried harder. I think that's what we should be assessing...effort and content. – P3

# INTERVIEWS WITH TEACHERS – THE

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## ANSWERS (PEDAGOGICAL)

Oh for sure it'd be nice to know what motivates the students, yeah, but is it totally necessary to know? I don't think so, I know more about this than they do, I can figure out the course and the content regardless – P1

It's unfeasible to hit all the motivations because there is just so many of them (students), what that ends up in is a generic textbook that's on travel and food and those topics are boring, those topics don't hit anyone's motivations that's for sure – P2

# INTERVIEWS WITH TEACHERS – THE

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## ANSWERS (PEDAGOGICAL)

You know, things that were happy with or not so happy with within the classroom are the things they spoke about at most length. These interpersonal relationships at their age are so important to them, they feel they are part of a total equation that leads them to succeed or not when they have to do some speaking test or whatever – P3

# INTERVIEWS WITH TEACHERS – THE

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## ANSWERS (PEDAGOGICAL)

I'm not terribly convinced that the students are a better judge of what they need than I am, if you see what I mean, this is university but they are not encouraged to think independently...what this leads us to is a situation where you, the teacher are in a position to point out their needs, am I going off topic? I realize needs and motivation are not quite the same – P4



# INTERVIEWS WITH TEACHERS – THE

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## ANSWERS (PEDAGOGICAL)

If a teacher is committed, confident and interested in the students and what he's teaching, I don't have a problem with him being the leader as long as he's taking the students to a good place – P4

# INTERVIEWS WITH 2ND YEARS – THE

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## QUESTIONS

Was English your first choice as a major? Why/why not?

How often do you speak English outside the classroom?

Do you want to use English after graduation? In what ways?

# INTERVIEWS WITH 2ND YEARS – THE

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## ANSWERS

### Student A

I like English, English is fun.

I do not have chance to speak in real world, only classroom...now.

Communicating with foreigners, maybe I can, I'm not sure...abroad is more difficult than in Japan, English teacher in Japan know Japanese.

### Student B

I didn't know words of English, difficult for me.

I will be a civil servant in the future so maybe don't need English, maybe only for travel.

# INTERVIEWS WITH 2ND YEARS – THE

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## Student C ANSWERS

I decided to major in CIE because I want to speak with the world, if I can speak English well, then I can speak to more people easily

English has more information on the internet than Japanese so English is important.

I sometimes hang out with English speaking friends, they are not native speaker, but we have fun.

## Student D

I don't like studying English, but speaking can be fun in English. I study because I want to touch English like movies.

English makes me nervous because I'm not very good at English.

# INTERVIEWS WITH 2ND YEARS – THE

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## ANSWERS

### Student E

I lived in Australia for one year when I was a high school student, and I still have friends there...we chat on Skype. Sometimes I can't remember the words so it's getting more difficult to do it. I chose this major because I want to keep my English.

### Student F

I want to make friends with people from all over the world.

I use English at work sometimes...nervous but fun.

I can get information about culture from speaking to people in English.

# QUESTIONNAIRE FOR 50 STUDENTS – THE RESULTS

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I understand that studying CIE means frequently communicating with my teacher and classmates in English. Furthermore, I am expected to seek opportunities to speak in English outside of the classroom.

**YES 50/ NO 0**

I will choose CIE (English) as my major from April 2018

**YES 27/ UNSURE 10/ NO 13**

# QUESTIONNAIRE FOR 50 STUDENTS – THE RESULTS

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Strongly Agree: SA Agree: A Undecided: U Disagree: D Strongly Disagree: SD

I want to be in situations where I can speak English.

SA: 10 A: 20 U: 5 D: 13 SD: 2 (3.46)

I avoid situations where I need to speak English.

SA: 5 A: 10 U: 5 D: 15 SD: 15 (2.5)

‘I want to study abroad again, so I need to find situations for my practice.’

‘I don’ t look for situations but I don’ t avoid them either.’

‘I want to be in situations in foreign, but not in Japan.’

# QUESTIONNAIRE FOR 50 STUDENTS – THE RESULTS

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I want to make foreign friends with English.

SA: 12 A: 25 U:3 D: 9 SD: 4 (3.82)

I might find my future life partner through English.

SA: 2 A: 4 U: 2 D: 33 SD: 11 (2.18)

‘It is so fun to have foreign friends.’

‘ I want to teach foreign friends about Japan in Japan.’

‘I have many foreign friends, do you mean make more?’

‘If I study abroad next year, I want to make friends who are not Japanese.’



# QUESTIONNAIRE FOR 50 STUDENTS – THE RESULTS

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I want to be part of a global community so English is important.

SA: 15 A: 15 U: 10 D: 7 SD: 3 (3.64)

‘I want to go abroad to study abroad in global community.’

‘In my future, Japan is more international so English is necessary.’

‘Tokyo Olympic is coming so we need English for foreigner.’

‘I want to experience the world and touch other people’s life.’

# QUESTIONNAIRE FOR 50 STUDENTS – THE RESULTS

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I'm interested in international current affairs such as the news and using English will help me understand them better.

SA: 13 A: 25 U: 10 D: 2 SD: 0 (3.98)

'I want to watch CNN in English'

'I sometimes watch the news in English, but I understand almost nothing'

'Understanding English will give me a different view'

# QUESTIONNAIRE FOR 50 STUDENTS – THE RESULTS

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I feel anxious when speaking English in front of other students.

SA: 8 A: 18 U: 8 D: 15 SD: 1 (3.34)

‘Some students are better than me so I feel bad’

‘My level is not so good so I feel embarrassment’

‘I make a mistake when speaking so I’ m shy to speak’

# QUESTIONNAIRE FOR 50 STUDENTS – THE RESULTS

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Understanding the class content before the class is important to prepare myself for English communication.

SA: 15 A: 15 U: 15 D: 5 SD: 0 (3.8)

‘We should know about topics before as a homework’

‘If I don’t know in Japanese then I don’t know more in English’

I want to know class content to get ready my answers’

# QUESTIONNAIRE FOR 50 STUDENTS – THE RESULTS

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I'm worried that my English is not good enough so I sometimes speak in Japanese in class.

SA: 20 A: 12 U: 10 D: 7 SD: 1 (3.86)

'Sometimes I don't know a work so say Japanese language – it's bad'

'All in English is too difficult to me'

'Japanese is easy for us'

# QUESTIONNAIRE FOR 50 STUDENTS – THE RESULTS

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Speaking tests cause me stress that makes it difficult to communicate.

SA: 37 A: 8 U:2 D: 3 SD: 0 (4.46)

‘I HATE SPEAKING TESTS’ (written in capitals)

‘I don’ t understand why we need to have speaking tests, it is not natural to have a test which is speaking a conversation, it is like a testing sleeping or eating’

‘Please stop speaking tests’

# QUESTIONNAIRE FOR 50 STUDENTS – THE RESULTS

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15) Japanese people are generally not good at speaking English.

SA: 4 A: 12 U: 20 D: 10 SD: 4 (3.04)

‘Japanese are shy so not good at speaking English’

‘Japanese are not good because nervous people’

‘Japan (sic) is an island in Asia not connected so no use English, only Japanese’

‘Japan is changing country becoming more globalization so not true anymore’

# LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

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- Lack of Japanese on the student written questionnaire
- Lack of comments
- Disparity between questionnaire results and student registration
- Pedagogical consequence



# SO WHAT!?

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- They're on the fringes of globalization.
- Motivation both extrinsic and intrinsic exists in varying measures.
- There is evidence of International Posture and WTC.
- Without clear pedagogical consequences, the validity of motivation research is questioned.

# HOWEVER...

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It's about the individual narrative, it's just not that clear. – P3

# DISCUSSION STATEMENTS/QUESTIONS –

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## MOTIVATION

- Do you think the students are mature enough to articulate their motivation for L2 acquisition?
- Will a written questionnaire yield genuine research data?
- Generic textbooks focussed on topics such as food, travel etc. are boring and don't 'hit the motivations.'
- Is quantitative data collection a waste of time in motivation research?
- The 'why' has never been properly explained to our students.
- Does the teacher need to know what motivates their students?

# DISCUSSION STATEMENTS/QUESTIONS –

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## LANGUAGE ANXIETY

- The ‘all-English’ classroom demotivates as depriving access to the L1 creates unnecessary anxiety.
- There should be no ‘surprise element’ in the classroom.
- Speaking tests make students anxious so should be avoided.
- Speaking tests can be superficial in nature, how can conversation be graded!?