

# Motivation in the Language Classroom: Promoting Self - Determination through Having Students Make Themselves Aware of Their Production of L1 and L2

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate how Japanese students studying at a tertiary level of education as English majors perceive their usage of L1 (mother tongue/ first language) and L2 (foreign/ second language) in the classroom and to see if giving the students opportunities to report that perceived usage would result in a self-determined change in behaviour. It was postulated that the students would become more aware of their own actions through the report process, and would therefore autonomously decide to improve their behaviour or to maintain good behaviour over time, good behaviour being maximizing the usage of L2. The teacher, although using L2 only in the classroom, did not encourage or discipline the students to speak more L2 or less L1, it was left up to the student to decide this, therefore giving the students more autonomy.

A modified form of a motivational model (Fortier, Vallerand, Guay, 1995) was presented which suggests that giving autonomy to students leads to higher motivation and better results. A second group of students were asked to fill out the report only on the commencement and completion of the semester, and were given instructions by the teacher to obey the "speak English" rule. They were reminded of this rule at intervals (once or twice per class), especially when it was obvious that almost all communication was being conducted through their mother tongue, Japanese. Results from the two groups' perceived usage of L1 and L2 reports were analysed and it was found that the results supported the ideas put forward by the motivational model, with conditions. The target groups were 2nd year students at a girls only 2-year junior college and all were English majors having opted to take an elective (English) speech communication class for that semester.

The following hypotheses were posited:

**Hypothesis 1:** *If students are given opportunities to make themselves aware of their own language usage, they will drive themselves to speak more L2 and try to minimise their*

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*usage of L1 in the classroom.*

**Hypothesis 2:** *Usage of L1 and L2 are inversely proportional and can be seen as correlated as they are both used for the same purpose, that of communication.*

The statistics showed that, although that having students make themselves aware of their production of L1 and L2 resulted in maintaining initial motivation through to the end of the course, the above two hypotheses were flawed. Based on the results, new hypotheses were presented and it was concluded that using principles supported by the motivational model results in students more willing to continue to use L2 and who try to avoid increased use of L1 in the classroom.

### **Background**

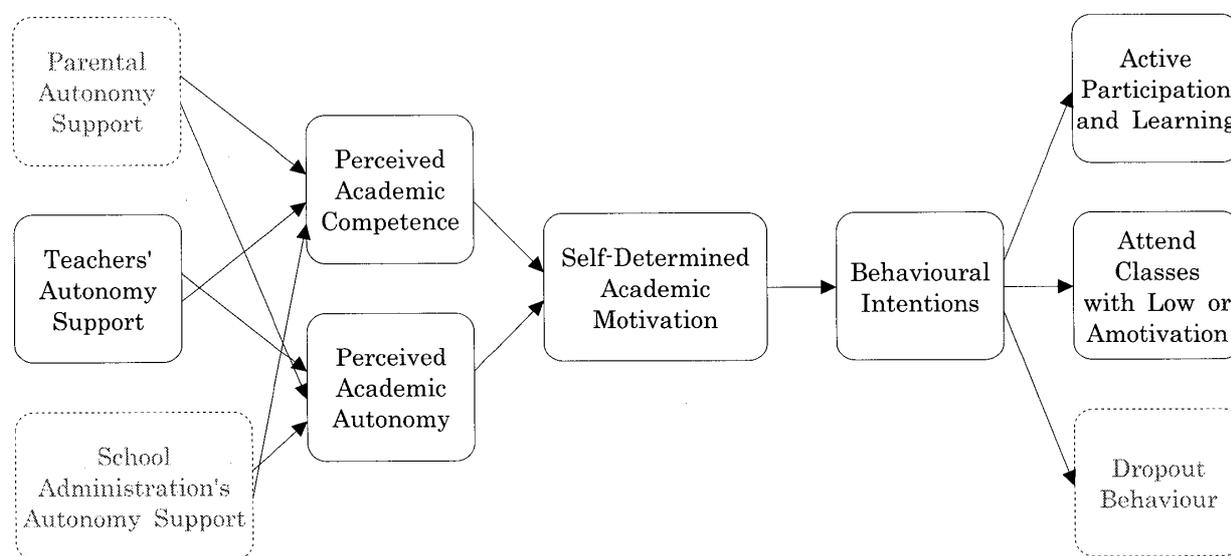
Self-determination ability and persistence by students in their studies has been shown to be affected by the attitudes and behaviour of others. In particular, teacher, parents and the school administration's behaviours toward students influence students' perceptions of competence and autonomy. The less autonomy supportive the social agents' behaviours are, the less positive are students' perceptions of competence and autonomy. In turn, the less positive students' perceptions are, the lower their levels of self-determined school motivation are (Vallerand et al., 1989). To continue the argument, low levels of self-determined motivation can lead students to stop actively trying to improve themselves when external factors controlling their behaviour are removed or reduced. Finally, in the absence of external controlling factors on students' behaviour (e.g. a teacher assigning work or the mandatory attendance in a class), a student may stop actively participating or even drop out of the course. Data supporting this shows that a factor in a student's decision to do so may be motivation (see Bean, 1985; Rumberger, 1987; Tidwell, 1988; Tinto, 1975). It is supposed that, in the case of a student whose motivation is entirely extrinsic the student hasn't built up a stock of intrinsic motivation and can be left unmotivated (or in a state of amotivation) once the external support structures are taken away or become ineffective (see below). On the other hand, a student whose internal motivation support structure is allowed to develop will be more likely to continue to make choices which lead to attainment of education goals, even in the absence of external motivational factors or support structures.

### **A Motivational Model of Behavioural Intentions and Possible Causes**

A simple motivational model of ultimate school performance is depicted in Figure 1. This model is adapted from a model put forward by Vallerand, et al. but modified to show both favourable and unfavourable results. New items in the model are "Active

Participation and Learning" and "Attend Classes with Low or Amotivation". This paper will give the conceptual and empirical evidence supporting the modified model. This paper does not directly address input from parents or the school's administration, nor does it deal with dropout behaviour. Therefore, those items from the original model are included in gray. Dropout behaviour was omitted due to none of the students choosing to discontinue the course which, while of course being a happy outcome, left no data to discuss dropout behaviour. The input focused on the autonomy support from the teacher only. All the students were under the same school administration and parental autonomy support was not measured for this paper.

*Figure 1. The motivational model of behavioural intentions and possible causes*



The above model is made up of four sets of relationships. First, the levels of autonomy-supportive behaviours from, in the case of this study, teachers, are hypothesised to either support or undermine students' perceptions of competence and autonomy. Second, these perceptions of competence and autonomy either fortify or diminish students' self-determined motivation. Third, the levels of self-determined motivation have an affect on the thinking and intentions of students. Finally, these intentions lead students to either participate actively in class or to attend physically but with low or no motivation (amotivation). In the case of this study, active participation was measured by the frequency and quantity of L2 spoken in the class while also investigating its relationship to the use of L1.

### **Motivation in the Classroom**

A motivational approach useful in education puts forward that behaviour can be intrinsically or extrinsically motivated (Csikszentmihalyi & Nakamura, 1989; Deci & Ryan,

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1985; Lepper & Hodell, 1989).

Intrinsic motivation is defined as engaging in an activity for the satisfaction and pleasure derived from participation itself (Deci, 1975). For example, a student who speaks English purely because she enjoys doing so displays intrinsic motivation.

Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, is when someone engages in an activity as a means to an end. The three major types of extrinsic motivation are i. external regulation, ii. introjected regulation, and iii. identified regulation (Ryan, Connell, & Deci, 1985).

External regulation is when the source of control is outside the person. For example, students who answer questions in class because their teachers force them to do so are externally regulated.

Introjected regulation is when one has only partially internalised external pressure/inducement to engage in an activity. An example is when students do their homework because they say they would feel guilty if they did not.

Identified regulation is when one behaves out of choice and values the behaviour as being important. For example, students who make an effort to use L2 as much as they can as they know that ability in the language will have a bearing on their future career.

A third motivational approach has been suggested. Deci and Ryan (1985) suggest that there exists a concept termed amotivation, which refers to the relative absence of motivation. One who is amotivated engages in an activity without any sense of purpose and does not see (or, at least, think about) any relationship between their actions and the consequences of their behaviour.

There is a wealth of research into the motivational concepts above. Results from several studies have supported the validity of subscales that assess the concepts of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and amotivation (Vallerand & Bissonnette, 1992; Alexandris, Tsorbatzoudis, Grouios, 2002). This concept of self-determination as presented in this paper is based on self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1991), thereby providing construct validity for the different concepts underlying the scales.

### **Social Determinants of School Motivation**

Figure 1. shows the social determinants as inputs on the left. The social context in

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education can have an important influence on motivation (see Ames, 1992). This is not only true for language education, but is true across educational fields such as technology (Garrison, 2003) and sports (Alexandris, Tsorbatzoudis, Grouios, 2002). The motivational model given posits that teachers are one of three social agents that have a major role in influencing students' motivation.

Research supports that directly controlling teacher behaviour has been found to be a predictor of poor motivation and engagement in students (Kaplan et al., 2005). Therefore, teacher behaviour is a critical factor in the resulting student behaviour. In other words, if the behaviour of the teacher is modified, then we should see a corresponding change in the motivation of the students.

### **Method**

#### **Participants**

Participants were 24 Japanese students<sup>1)</sup> attending a 2 year Junior college in Japan. All students were English majors and had chosen to take an elective unit of English speech communication - a class taught by a native speaker of English (the author) and focused on improving the students' ability to speak in L2 and to improve their fluency. The 24 students were divided into two groups, A and B, on the basis of attending a class. Group A students were attending the college and took the speech communication class in 2006. They were in the top class of three, based on their performance in a TOEIC<sup>2)</sup> test. Group A totalled 15 students<sup>1)</sup>. Group B students took the speech communication class in 2007 and were also in the top class based on their TOEIC test results. The groups comprised of the total number enrolled for the class and were all girls in their second (final) year, aged 18~20 years. All participants were aware that the teacher was a native speaker of English and had intermediate or higher ability in Japanese.

#### **Questionnaire**

The questionnaire was kept very simple, designed to be completed by the students in a matter of seconds. The questionnaire was designed to gauge the students' perceived use of L1 and L2 in the classroom. Apart from a section for writing the date and name of the students, it consisted of two parts. Both were 7 point Likert scales asking how often the student used the language in class. No information was given to the students regarding the meaning of each value in the scale, except comment given by the teacher indicating to the students that a number 1 is low, a number 7 is high. A completed questionnaire is shown in Figure 2 below.

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*Figure 2. A completed questionnaire - used for the survey*

Name: <u>Mariko</u>		Date: <u>11/20</u>											
How often did I use Japanese in this class today?				How often did I use English in this class today?									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

In order to check whether the students would feel pressured to give false answers to the survey (due to the teacher having authority to decide their final mark for the class) an even shorter, initial survey was given to the students. For this research, this was called the "Questionnaire of Honesty". The teacher was well known to all of the students and a good relationship had been built up through having taught different classes (reading, writing, etc) over the 2 years. Was this, however, enough to make the students believe the teacher when he said that the survey was for research only and would not affect their score in the class? A questionnaire was given to the students with the very arbitrary question "How many times did I use Japanese in this class today?". A completed questionnaire is given in Figure 3 below.

*Figure 3. A completed "Questionnaire of Honesty" - used to check if students would write honest answers*

Name: <u>Yoshiko</u> <u>Goshima</u>		Date: <u>10/6</u>	
How many times did I use Japanese in this class today?		<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">                 a million times             </div> I can't count !!	

This preliminary survey was conducted and it was found that every student had answers with a minimum of "15" to a maximum of "millions". It was concluded that that students did not fear writing their true perceptions of their use of L1 and L2 and the survey went ahead using the questionnaire seen in Figure 2. Note that, as students like the one in Figure 3 wrote comments like "I can't count", asking students about the amount of times they used a language is inappropriate in an actual survey as usage of a language is not a tangible countable statistic, even when asking about perceived usage. Therefore, a Likert scale asking about the frequency of (and indirectly amount of) usage of L1 and L2 was seen as more appropriate for the actual survey (see Figure 2).

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### **Procedure**

Once it was established that the students were answering as honestly as possible (i.e., they realised that what they wrote on the questionnaire did not affect their grade in any way so they felt free to answer honestly), the questionnaire shown in figure 2 was given to the students. The students had 2 classes of English speech communication per week. The students in group A completed a questionnaire at the beginning of their 15 week (excluding holidays, etc) semester and also at the end of the semester. The students in group B completed 11 surveys per student (the first couple of weeks of the semester were used for warming up, the "honesty check" questionnaire, and another couple of weeks were used for testing and interviews). Students used about 30 seconds to fill in the questionnaire, thus the results are indicated of the students true impressions, or perceived use of English, as imposed to thinking deeply about the results. This was satisfactory as an overall impression was desired.

### **Results**

As mentioned above, the students were first given questionnaires to assess if they were answering honestly. The results are as follows:

Please note the following when analysing the results:

- \* Dates are written in YYYY/MM/DD format
- \* **PTUJ**: The perceived number of times the student used Japanese to communicate in class. (estimated by the student)
- \* **PUE**: The Perceived Usage of English (perceived by the student) on an increasing scale of 1 to 7.
- \* **PUJ**: The Perceived Usage of Japanese (perceived by the student) on an increasing scale of 1 to 7.
- \* If a high number was written by student (often millions), it was assigned a value of 50 to avoid skewing calculation.
- \* Student number is randomly assigned.
- \* The class was a speech communication class, taught in English by a native speaker teacher.
- \* Only English was used for instruction but students were aware that the teacher had knowledge of Japanese.
- \* Data from students who attended less than 80% of the classes were gathered but were eventually omitted from the results analysis.

#### 1. Questionnaire of Honesty Results (Perceived Time Using Japanese):

##### ***Group A (control group, not regularly surveyed)***

Not conducted.

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**Group B (regularly surveyed group)**

Date:	Student #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2006/10/06	PTUJ	10	20	10	20	50	15	20	50	50
2006/10/13	PTUJ	10	50	15	20	50	50	20	2	25
2006/10/16	PTUJ	21	20	10	20	50	15	30	20	10

Minimum	Q1	Median	Q3	Max	MEAN
10	15	20	50	50	27.22222
2	15	20	50	50	26.888889
10	15	20	21	50	21.77778

It can be seen from the results above that the students freely indicated that they used Japanese in class. Most of the results are high, with some results showing very high values (although some students wrote "millions" or even "billions", these high results were written as a result of 50 for this initial survey).

This indicated that the students would respond fairly to the survey, thus validity of results could be assumed from the start.

2. Perceived Usage of Japanese:

**Group A (control group, not regularly surveyed)**

Date:	Student #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2005/04/25	PUJ	3	1	3	2	2	2	1	3	3	2
2006/07/19	PUJ	3	5	5	4	4	3	4	7	4	5

11	12	13	14	15
2	2	4	4	3
6	4	4	6	4

Minimum	Q1	Median	Q3	Max	MEAN
1.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	2.466667
3.00	4.00	4.00	5.00	7.00	4.533333

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**Group B (regularly surveyed group)**

Date:	Student #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2006/11/06	PUJ	6	1	2	5	1	3	4	1	
2006/11/10	PUJ	7		2	5	1	3	4	2	4
2006/11/13	PUJ	5	2	1	4	1	2	3	2	2
2006/11/17	PUJ	6	3	2	4	1	2	3	1	3
2006/11/20	PUJ	5	4	2	5	2	3	2	2	4
2006/12/01	PUJ	5	3	2	5	2	4	2		3
2006/12/04	PUJ	5	3	6	4	2	4	2	2	4
2006/12/11	PUJ	7	3	1	3	1	2	3	2	3
2007/01/22	PUJ	7	3	1	5	2	3	3	2	4
2007/01/26	PUJ	5	3	2	5	2	2	3	2	4
2007/01/29	PUJ	5	3	2	5	2	3	2	1	4

Minimum	Q1	Median	Q3	Max	MEAN
1.00	1.00	2.50	4.25	6.00	2.875
1.00	2.00	3.50	4.25	7.00	3.5
1.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	5.00	2.444444
1.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	6.00	2.777778
2.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	3.222222
2.00	2.00	3.00	4.25	5.00	3.25
2.00	2.00	4.00	4.00	6.00	3.555556
1.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	7.00	2.777778
1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	7.00	3.333333
2.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	3.111111
1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	3

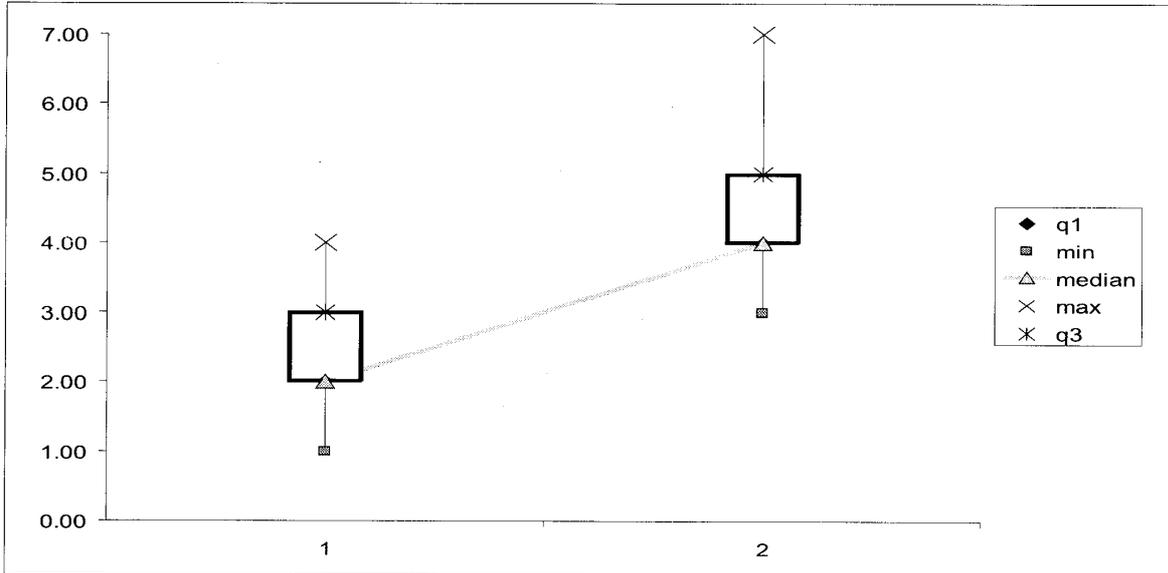
These results indicate that the perceived usage of Japanese rose for both groups. However, there was a large increase for group A, with a much smaller increase for group B.

Group A had a mean increase in perceived usage of Japanese of  $(4.533 - 2.467) = 2.066$ .

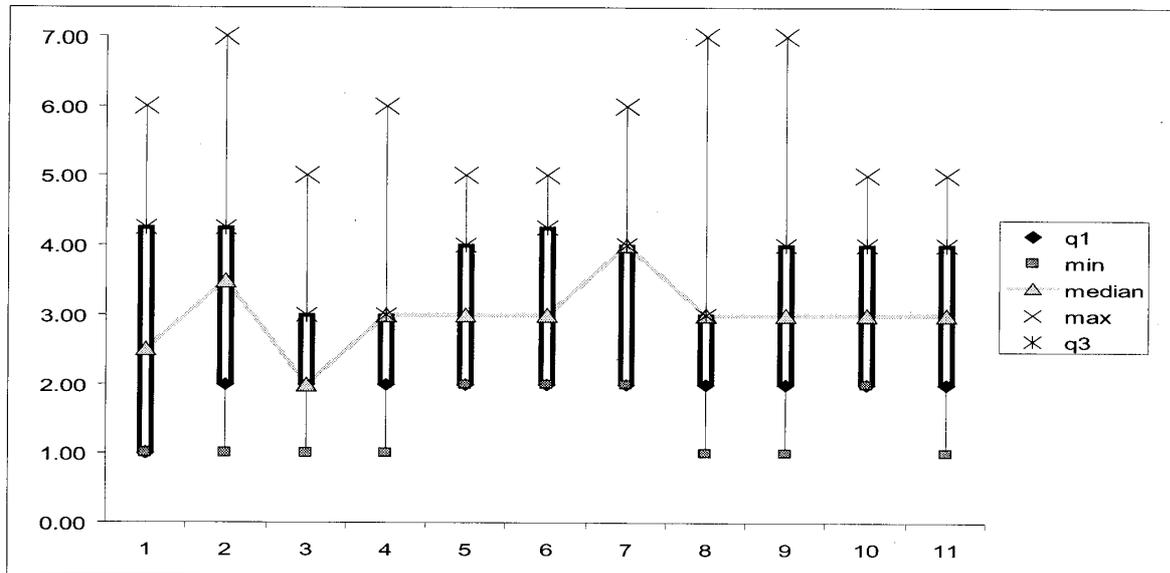
Group B had a mean increase in perceived usage of Japanese of  $(3.000 - 2.875) = 0.125$ .

2.1. Perceived usage of Japanese as shown in a box plot.

**Group A (control group, not regularly surveyed)**



**Group B (regularly surveyed group)**



The results were collected and their minimum, median, maximum and interquartile values were plotted as shown above. Both graphs have the same Y-axes. It is again clear from these graphs that both groups usage of Japanese increased, but that the increase for group B was very small compared to the increase seen in group A.

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3. Perceived Usage of English:

**Group A (control group, not regularly surveyed)**

Date:	Student #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2005/04/25	PUE	4	6	3	4	3	6	5	4	5	6
2006/07/19	PUE	2	6	5	3	4	5	5	1	4	2

11	12	13	14	15
6	6	6	5	4
2	4	4	2	1

Minimum	Q1	Median	Q3	Max	MEAN
3.00	4.00	5.00	6.00	6.00	4.866667
1.00	2.00	4.00	4.50	6.00	3.333333

**Group B (regularly surveyed group)**

Date:	Student #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2006/11/06	PUE	7	5	6	6	6	5	5	7	
2006/11/10	PUE	7		7	6	6	5	5	7	4
2006/11/13	PUE	7	6	6	6	6	7	5	7	4
2006/11/17	PUE	7	6	7	7	6	6	6	7	3
2006/11/20	PUE	7	4	7	6	6	6	6	7	5
2006/12/01	PUE	7	3	6	6	6	5	6		4
2006/12/04	PUE	7	3	6	6	6	5	6	7	4
2006/12/11	PUE	7	4	6	4	7	6	6	7	4
2007/01/22	PUE	7	5	6	6	6	6	5	6	4
2007/01/26	PUE	7	4	6	5	6	6	6	7	4
2007/01/29	PUE	7	4	6	6	6	6	6	7	4

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Minimum	Q1	Median	Q3	Max	MEAN
5.00	5.00	6.00	6.25	7.00	5.875
4.00	5.00	6.00	7.00	7.00	5.875
4.00	6.00	6.00	7.00	7.00	6
3.00	6.00	6.00	7.00	7.00	6.111111
4.00	6.00	6.00	7.00	7.00	6
3.00	4.75	6.00	6.00	7.00	5.375
3.00	5.00	6.00	6.00	7.00	5.555556
4.00	4.00	6.00	7.00	7.00	5.666667
4.00	5.00	6.00	6.00	7.00	5.666667
4.00	5.00	6.00	6.00	7.00	5.666667
4.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	7.00	5.777778

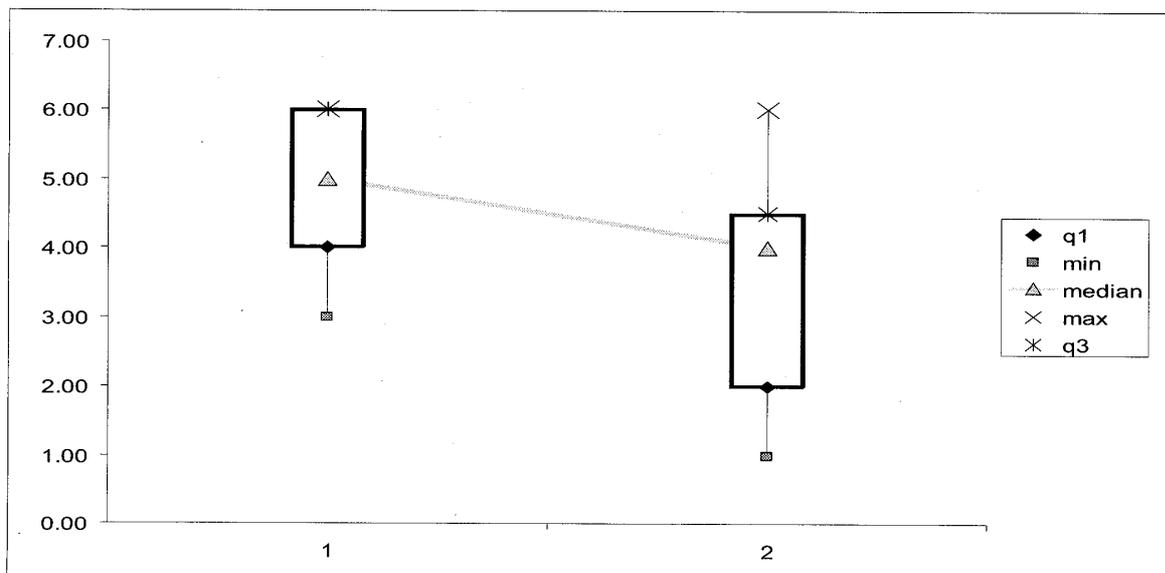
It can be seen from these results that the mean usage of English (perceived) dropped over the semester in the case of both groups. However, the perceived drop was much lower in group B than it was in group A.

Group A had a drop in perceived English usage of  $(4.867 - 3.333) = 1.534$ .

Group B had a drop in perceived English usage of  $(5.875 - 5.778) = 0.097$ .

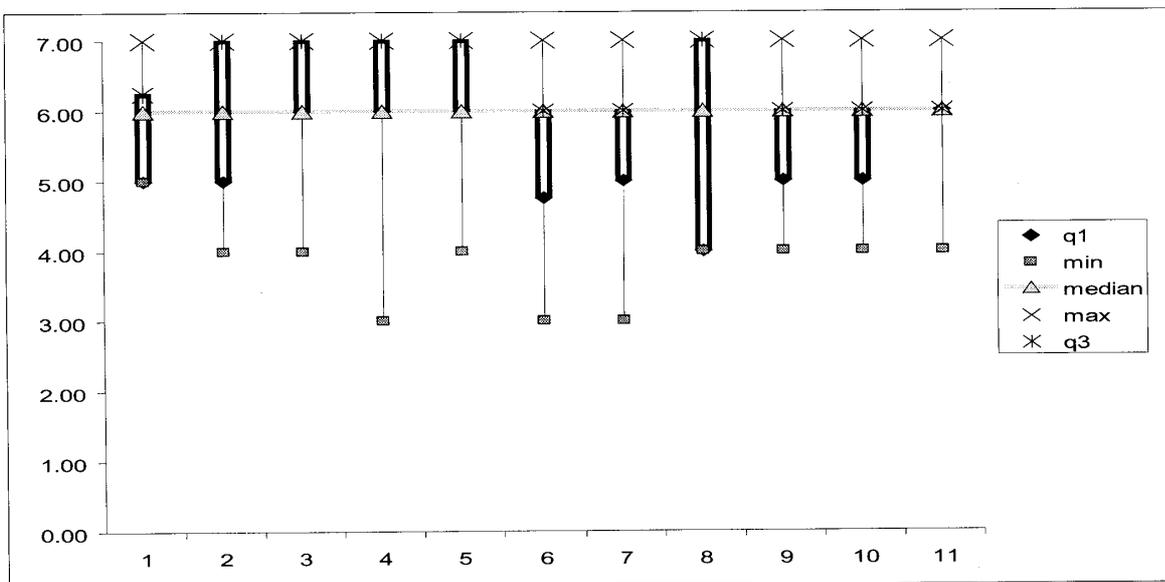
3.1. Perceived usage of English as shown in a box plot.

**Group A (control group, not regularly surveyed)**



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**Group B (regularly surveyed group)**



We can see that Group A showed a large decline in their usage of English throughout the semester, while Group B managed to more or less maintain their initial levels of English.

4. Correlation between L1 and L2.

Correlation between the fall in usage of L1 and the rise in usage of L2 was calculated. The mean of the means, the standard deviation and the number of measurements was used to find this result. As a perfect correlation equates to a straight line diagram, it was not appropriate to calculate this for Group A, as they had only 2 values which would always result in a straight line.

**Group A (control group, not regularly surveyed)**

Not conducted.

**Group B (regularly surveyed group)**

	Mean (of the means)	Std. Dev.	N (# of measurements)
Speaking Japanese	3.077020202	0.339376	11
Speaking English	5.779040404	0.21849783	11

Correlation between Japanese and English:		
	Jpn (X axis)	Eng (Y axis)
Jpn (X axis)	1	
Eng (Y axis)	-0.03411097	1

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The above correlation of  $-0.03411097$  is less than 5%, and is very small. Therefore, it can be said that the usage of L1 (Japanese) and L2 (English) have almost entirely no correlation.

## **Conclusions**

Using the motivational model, two hypotheses were posited at the beginning of this paper. They conclusions are discussed based upon the results and how they support the hypotheses or otherwise.

**Hypothesis 1:** *If students are given opportunities to make themselves aware of their own language usage, they will drive themselves to speak more L2 and try to minimise their usage of L1 in the classroom.*

Questionnaires were used to give the students more opportunities to make themselves aware of their usage of L1 and L2. Group B were given these questionnaires while group A were not. Therefore, if the hypothesis is correct, group B students would have increased their usage of L2 and decreased their usage of L1, which the control group (Group A) would not have done so, or have done so to a lesser extent.

However, surprisingly both groups were seen to have decreased their usage of L2 over the semester and to have increased their dependence on L1. The need for use of L1 in the classroom has been mentioned in other research (Lynch, 2007) but to have a result where students rely, or use, L1 more over the course of a semester was not expected. Although group B's outcome was a much more desirable one than the control group's outcome, it still doesn't support the hypothesis so the hypothesis must be discarded or amended. Looking at the results it can be seen that group B had only very small changes in their usage of L2 and L1. In this light, the hypothesis can be amended as such:

**Amended hypothesis 1:** *If students are given opportunities to make themselves aware of their own language usage, they will drive themselves to maintain their initial enthusiasm to speak L2 and will try to avoid allowing their usage of L1 in the classroom increase by a significant amount.*

The second hypothesis stated the following:

**Hypothesis 2:** *Usage of L1 and L2 are inversely proportional and their usage can be seen*

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*as correlated as they are both used for the same purpose, that of communication.*

The correlation calculation in the results section indicated the contrary, that the usage of L1 and L2 were not correlated at all. This was surprising, but it may be accounted for by students talking a lot when they feel in the mood for talking, using both L1 and L2, while when there were days when they did not feel like talking both L1 and L2 would have decreased. However, some students may have been increasing their L2 while offsetting this increase with a decrease in L1 (and vice-versa) thus resulting in an averaging out and ultimate cancellation of any correlation. This will have to be further researched but what is sure is that L1 and L2 did not show correlation during the course of the research.

As for being inversely proportional, the overall change in the mean values showed this to have some truth. This is seen in the analysis below:

Group A had an increase in perceived L1 usage of 2.066.

Group A had a decrease in perceived L2 usage of 1.534.

We can work out that for every 1 unit increase in L1, there was a 0.74 unit decrease in L2 usage (L2/L1). This shows that the values for group A were proportional by an approximate L1:L2 ratio of 4:3.

Group B had an increase in perceived L1 usage of 0.125.

Group B had a decrease in perceived L2 usage of 0.097.

Again, we can see that for every 1 unit increase in L1, there was a 0.776 unit decrease in L2 usage (L2/L1). This shows that the values for group B were proportional by an approximate L1:L2 ratio of 4:3. The degree of proportionality for both groups was seen to be almost the same.

The above result leads us to realise that overall there was indeed a correlation between the usage of L1 and L2, but that this was not seen when looking at the results in detail. In this case, there is a macro-correlation while a micro (one present at each stage of testing) was not observed. These results tell us that our hypothesis had an element of accuracy but was not precise enough in its prediction. The amended hypothesis is as follows:

**Amended hypothesis 2:** *Usage of L1 and L2 are inversely proportional and their usage*

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*can be seen as correlated when measured over a long time as they are both used for the same purpose, that of communication. Correlation may be absent, or perceived to be absent, in the case of looking at individual measurements or over a short time.*

The adapted motivational model proved useful, in that the students in the experimental group (Group B) showed much more preferable results with regard to usage of L1 and L2 than the control group (Group A) showed. In this case, the thinking behind the model - that allowing students more autonomy in the classroom gave better results - was seen to be correct.

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### **Annotation**

- 1) Initially 26 students were chosen, 15 in group A, 9 in group B. However, due to illness and other circumstances, results from two students in group A could not be collected. Due to this, the total number of students were 24.
- 2) TOEIC is the acronym for Test of English for International Communication™.