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THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DESK: UNDERSTANDING LANGUAGE TEACHERS' COGNITIONS ON MOTIVATIONAL TEACHING PRACTICE

Mairin HENNEBRY-LEUNG (Tasmania, Australia)

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1841-9497>

Email: mairin.hennebryleung@utas.edu.au

HENNEBRY-LEUNG Mairin. THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DESK: UNDERSTANDING LANGUAGE TEACHERS' COGNITIONS ON MOTIVATIONAL TEACHING PRACTICE. While the field of language learning motivation has progressed significantly in recent decades, there is still a considerable gap in our understanding about teachers' motivational practice. Specifically, the focus has been on descriptive accounts of the strategies teachers employ and their perceived effectiveness, but how teachers think about student motivation and their own motivational practice and why teachers do what they do is vastly under-researched. Understanding teacher cognitions on this phenomenon is a crucial component of moving the field forward into real classroom impact. Drawing on stimulated recall interview data, this paper explores the cognitions of English language teachers in Hong Kong, in relation to learner motivation. Findings point to diverse approaches to motivational practice dependent largely on the extent to which teachers' conceptualisations of motivation are static or dynamic and the degree to which they recognize the agentive role of the teacher in shaping and directing motivation. The paper argues the need for an explicit focus on motivational teaching practice in teacher education programmes, equipping language teachers with the tools for socioculturally classroom responsive pedagogical frameworks.

Keywords: *language teacher, cognition, teaching practice, motivation, strategies, agentive role, education programmes.*

Introduction

Language teachers today face unprecedented motivational challenges. In many contexts around the world, English language learning is now integrated in national curricula as a basic skill, taught all the way through from primary to tertiary levels, and assessed through high-stakes examinations (Graddol, 2006). As a consequence, teachers face heavy demands not only from institutions focused on raising standards, but also from students who are less likely to adopt a submissive role in the classroom than their predecessors, as they increasingly expect not only to be taught, but also entertained in the classroom (Lamb, 2017). Teachers of languages other than English also face considerable challenges as the relevance of these languages is called into question in the popular view as a result of the rapid globalization of English. Teachers of languages other than English find themselves engaged in a continuous fight to justify their subject area both to their students and often to school managers and policy makers.

Research suggests that 18-33% of variation in language learning success is associated with learners' motivation (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003). Motivation has often been studied as an individual variable inherent to the learner (Ushioda, 2009), yet dynamic models of motivation underline the influence, both positive and negative, that teacher action can exert on learner motivation (e.g., Dörnyei and Ottó, 1998).

Adopting this perspective, an increasing number of publications has emerged focussed on helping teachers develop 'motivational strategies' (e.g., Dörnyei, 2001), particularly for teaching 'those that don't want to learn' (Vaello Orts, 2007). The extent to which teachers implement such motivational strategies, however, depends on their perceptions and understanding of their work context and on their own beliefs about motivation. Some work has been done to identify the strategies teachers use and their students' reactions to these (e.g., Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008). Such studies are typically quantitative in nature, relying on questionnaires and rating scales to gauge the use and effectiveness of certain strategies. They provide interesting insights into the range of

strategies used and their perceived effectiveness, but they do not explain the rationale behind teachers' use of certain strategies and avoidance of others.

Furthermore, since these approaches tend to rely on pre-made lists of strategies they offer little scope for teachers to provide their own account of their practice, asking them instead to conform to the researcher's account. Despite the importance of motivation and of teacher beliefs and practices in motivating learners, few studies have explored teachers' cognitions on motivation and motivational language teaching or how these cognitions influence their decision-making processes in motivating their students.

Given the important influence teachers have on that motivation and the significant influence motivation has on language learning outcomes, language teacher education courses should arguably integrate opportunities for pre-service and in-service teachers to explore and develop motivational language practices. Indeed, among other factors, the increased emphasis on student assessment and evaluation and the resultant heavier accountability demands, have prompted calls for motivation research to more substantially contribute to teachers' professional development (Wigfield et al., 2012; Lamb, 2017). Efforts to equip teachers for motivational practice, however, are only meaningful if they acknowledge and respond to teachers' professional contexts, reflecting both situated views of teacher learning (Tsui, 2007) and more authentic person-in-context relational views of motivation (Ushioda, 2009). While the 'person' has typically taken to be the learner, the teacher is also a key figure in the motivation complex. As understandings of the complexity of teacher learning develop they are characterized by increased recognition that simply providing novice or experienced teachers with taxonomies of pre-ordained instructional strategies is largely ineffective if they fail to align with teachers' existing beliefs and values (Borg, 2003; Kubanyiova, 2012).

Teacher Cognition

A shift away from splitting practice and theory in teacher education (Wright, 2010) has drawn greater attention to the need for focusing more on practical translation of abstract principles into real classroom instruction (Bartels, 1999) and less on 'apprenticing' teachers into an academic knowledge base. In this sense, teachers can be better understood as agents engaged in the creation of teaching within a specific sociocultural school context, rather than viewing teaching as a pre-determined body of knowledge to be passed down through academic coursework (Freeman & Johnson, 1998).

Coming into the classroom, language teachers bring implicit but deeply ingrained ideas and beliefs about teaching and learning processes, emerging from their own experiences as language learners (Freeman, 2002) that impact on their classroom practice. These particular beliefs and ideas lead to *everyday concepts* of language teaching and learning, which are typically based on superficial understandings of learning and teaching processes (Johnson & Golombek, 2011). Effective teacher learning then engages teachers in a developing interplay between *everyday concepts* and *scientific concepts* where *everyday concepts* are tested through teachers' systematic observation and theorization rooted in up-to-date research and theories and transformed into *scientific concepts*. Such learning relies on first uncovering and understanding teachers' existing beliefs. Significantly, while discourse around the theory/practice dichotomy has too often positioned teachers as passive recipients of theory, this view positions them instead as active agents in its development. Public theories are reconstructed and integrated into practice only in light of contexts and participants. Practice is not only a product of the enactment of theory, it lies at the centre of theory construction. Thus, as Tsui (2011) argues, teacher educators must support teachers in relating learned theories to their specific contexts and experiences, reshaping their beliefs in light of theory and reshaping theory in light of their lived experience. Drawing on Williams (1999) notion of public and private theory, where public refers to the received field knowledge and private refers to teachers evolving explanations, discrepancy between teachers' application of public theory to their practice tends to arise from the interaction between their private theory and the perception of the immediate context and learners. Exploring language teachers' private theories and the ways in which these interact both with their practices and with public theory facilitates understanding their pedagogical

decision-making, both in the moment as it unfolds in the classroom, and in its evolution all in the context in which they work, since this is where teacher learning is maximized. Lamb (2017) notes:

If we want to understand why and how teachers adopt and adapt [motivational strategies], researchers need to engage with the literature on teacher cognition, and conduct in-depth qualitative studies of individual teachers as ‘persons-in-context’ (Ushioda, 2009) ... [They need] to see how their thinking has evolved over time, how they orient to the profession, and how they perceive the affordances and constraints of their particular context (Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015) ... (p.333)

AUTONOMY AND AGENCY

Teacher autonomy plays an important role in generating and maintaining motivation in the language classroom (Glas, 2015). Working within and even against structural features, teachers need to create spaces and approaches that support student motivation (Jiménez Raya et al., 2007). This requires a degree of autonomy and ownership of practice.

Language motivation research has, in recent years, increasingly drawn on notions of autonomy (e.g. Ushioda 2009). Drawing on self-determination theory (Deci and Ryan 1985) as a framework has indicated both teacher and learner autonomy as playing a role in generating and sustaining motivation in the language classroom and underlines the significance of intrinsic motivation for human learning, development and well-being. Together with competence and relatedness, autonomy is a core factor in self-determinations theory and is identified as one of three necessary conditions for the existence and support of intrinsic motivation. While teacher autonomy has traditionally been considered as observable to outsiders, there is also a subjective facet to it, namely a teachers’ sense of agency (Glas, 2015).

Biesta and Teddler (2004, p.5) consider agency as “the capacity of actors to critically shape their own responsiveness to problematic situations” (Biesta & Tedder, 2006, p.5). A sense of personal agency allows teachers to exercise and exhibit autonomy, offers a subjective awareness of being in control of their actions and of the ability to act in accordance with their professional judgment, rather than feeling restricted by outside factors (Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop, 2004). Ahearn’s (2001, p.112) definition of agency as “the socioculturally mediated capacity to act” is a reminder that agency is not only dependent on the individual but is also context- bound and socioculturally mediated. In relation to teacher agency, this mediation can refer, for instance, to the teachers’ repertoire of motivational strategies, their teaching materials, or other tools that support their engagement with students (Glas, 2015). Internal and external constraints may mediate teachers’ personal sense of agency in relation to motivating students. Examples of internal constraints might be a lack of experience or self-efficacy, or certain beliefs about their students or about the learning situation. Meanwhile, external constraints could include assessment procedures, the imposition of certain teaching methodologies, or curricular policies, all of which are themselves mediated by teacher cognitions.

Giving a voice to teachers’ cognitions through qualitative approaches, offers a way to understand both the decisions teachers make around their motivational practice and the rationale behind those decisions. It opens possibilities for understanding the influences that converge to shape these decisions, and how and with what culturally acquired tools teachers mediate constraints and challenges in the enactment of those decisions. Effective teacher education programme needs to start from this knowledge- base, as does any attempt to move the field of language motivation towards a pedagogical framework for effectiveness. Giving expression to teachers’ cognitions is not only foundational for effective teacher preparation; it is also foundational for the field of language motivation research. As active agents, teachers shape and direct teaching and learning. They bring front-line expertise that should be integrated into a two-way dialogue between teaching and research and allow for teacher expertise and experience to contribute to the extension of the field. In the field of language motivation, where the focus has, till very recently, been largely on describing the nature of student motivation, drawing on teachers’ beliefs and experiences can enable the development of robust frameworks of motivational language teaching practice, rooted from their very outset in authentic understandings of classroom contexts (Douglas Fir Group (DFG), 2016). How teachers

enact their teaching in school and bridge public and private theories of motivational practice is an essential question for moving the field forwarding and rendering it directly relevant to teachers and learners.

Motivational teaching practice

Motivational teaching strategies can be understood as instructional interventions applied “to consciously generate and enhance student motivation, as well as maintain ongoing motivated behaviour and protect it from distracting and/or competing action tendencies” (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p.103). Attempts have been made to translate the extensive body of research on learner motivation into recommendations for classroom practice (e.g. Alison & Halliwell, 2002; Dörnyei, 2006).

Dörnyei and Csizér’s (1998) study of Hungarian EFL teachers identified groups of motivational teaching techniques perceived by teacher participants as effective, providing the basis for Dörnyei’s (2001) taxonomy of motivational strategies. Dörnyei proposed a four-stage cycle for implementing these strategies: 1. Creating the basic motivational conditions; 2. Generating initial motivation; 3. Maintaining and protecting motivation; 4. Encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation. The taxonomy has been empirically validated by various studies (e.g. Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007; McEown & Takeuchi, 2010) and these studies have offered further support for strategies that teachers across diverse sociocultural settings view as effective for motivating learners (e.g., Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007; Guilloteaux, 2013). More complex studies have examined learner behaviour and self-reported motivation as indicators of the effectiveness of motivational strategies (e.g., Papi & Abdollahzadeh, 2012), while others have used quasi-experimental designs to identify contextually responsive motivational strategies, comparing them with ‘traditional’ teaching (e.g., Moskovsky et al., 2012; Arabai, 2016).

Studies so far broadly support the cross-cultural value for both teachers and students of certain macro-strategies, such as promoting positive student-teacher relationships or supporting learner self-efficacy. Yet, research indicates that the relative importance of macro-strategies may vary across contexts and that teachers’ implementation of strategies should vary according to the specific classroom (Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007; Guilloteaux, 2013; Wong, 2014). As Lamb (2017, p. 305) writes, “...it is simply not possible to reduce highly complex issues to pedagogical ‘dos or don’ts’. The successful motivator somehow learns when, where and how to deploy [motivational strategies] in particular lessons.” Thus, uncovering the thinking and decision-making processes of individual teachers offers particularly useful insights for understanding the way that theoretical conceptualisations of motivation can be translated into effective classroom practice. And yet teachers’ perspectives on motivational practice remain largely under-explored (Glas, 2015), despite the significant role that teachers play in creating and maintaining learner motivation (Chambers, 1993; Trang & Baldauf, 2007). While quantitative research has yielded insights into the relationship between teachers’ practices and student motivational outcomes, qualitative studies seeking to understand *why* teachers adopt certain strategies and avoid others are rare, though such studies would avoid the pitfall of quantitative work that typically adopts ‘ready-made’ lists of strategies and does not allow for the teachers’ own authentic practice to come through. Understanding these diverse aspects of teachers’ cognitions and practices for motivational teaching is essential in shaping relevant teacher education programmes.

The Study

The findings reported here are part of a larger parent study exploring English language learning motivation among secondary school students in Hong Kong secondary schools. The focus here is on teacher interview data gathered in five of eleven schools. Findings from student data are reported in Hennebry and Gao (2018) and in Hennebry- Leung & Hu (2020). A key aim of the teacher component was to understand the language teachers’ cognitions in relation to motivating their students.

PARTICIPANTS

All participating schools were required to follow the curriculum indicated by the Government, as is the case for the majority of Hong Kong secondary schools. In each of the five schools participating in the teacher phase, two teachers were interviewed twice during the course or one term. Due to constraints, only interview data is reported here, but each of the teachers was observed three times during the term. The observations offered context and a stimulus for the interviews. Teacher recruitment reflected a distribution of student year groups and socio-economic status, as well as a distribution of mean scores on measures of student motivation. A further significant factor for recruitment was teachers' willingness to commit to the fullness of the study, an important consideration given that the need to match teacher and student data for the parent study.

INTERVIEWS

Data was gathered using stimulated recall combined with semi-structured interviewing. Interviews explored teachers' cognitions on language learning motivation and opportunities and challenges they perceived in terms of motivational practice. During the interviews, teachers watched the recordings of their lesson and talked through their thinking in relation to students' motivation and their own motivational practices. Teachers shared their thought processes and decision-making during the episodes. During the interviews, teachers were asked about their understandings of learner motivation and motivational practice as well as the factors they believed impact on their motivational teaching practices and the extent to which they felt their practice reflected personal and public theories of language learning motivation.

ANALYSIS

Analysis of interview data followed Miles & Huberman's (1994) proposed stages: 1. Noting frequencies of occurrences, observing patterns and themes within and across interviews, and using informed intuition to examine plausibility; 2. Clustering data into categories, types and classifications, reflected in the presentation of the findings; 3. Iterative analysis and re-analysis of data to enable inter-coder agreement on themes and identification of a core list of themes; 4. Exploration of patterns and individualities allowing personal and contextual differences and their relationship to motivational practices to emerge.

Findings

Teachers' cognitions on motivating language learners

Interview data indicates that teachers did indeed have an awareness of a range of discrete strategies that could be implemented to promote language learning motivation and that could be seen to align also with those identified in previous literature, once again supporting the notion that certain strategies are perceived to be effective across sociocultural settings. Such examples included the use of interesting materials, designing activities with a communicative purpose, the use of team and individual competition as well as opportunities for collaborative work, using multi-media, selecting topics that are relevant to learners, building rapport with students, providing clear instructions, offering positive affirmation, and providing scaffolding for protecting learners' self-esteem. Other strategies teachers identified are perhaps less commonly found in the literature, such as providing motivational talks akin to a sports coach, providing negative feedback, providing a role model. Yet, the data also suggested at times a degree of misunderstandings about what constitutes motivation and a lack of a coherent framework of motivational practice. Furthermore, though there was a clear awareness of diverse motivational strategies, their implementation emerged as rather reactive and extempore. While a number of themes emerged from the data, this chapter focuses on three that seem most closely to relate to teacher education concerns: i) understanding what motivation is and how to promote it; ii) attribution of responsibility for learner motivation; and iii) theory versus practice. In discussing teachers' responses data has been drawn from both the stimulated recall and the semi-structured components of the interviews.

i) UNDERSTANDING MOTIVATION

Interviews explored teachers' understandings of motivation, asked them to reflect on their students' motivation and to indicate what evidence they drew on in making that assertion. Responses highlighted considerable variety in teachers' cognitions on language learning motivation.

Aligning with a significant current thread of motivational research, some teachers were aware of key influences directing and shaping motivation, though the precise nature of this relationship seemed more elusive. Comments from Ms Tse and Ms Wong seemed to suggest a perception that motivating students is only possible in the case where tasks and topics are in themselves stimulating and interesting:

I do oral discussion, at least they can do something, everyone can participate. However, we cannot do speaking all the time... that's why we do try to find something related from YouTube or pictures at least to have some more interesting visual things for them to help them understand and arouse interest... but then we can't do it all the time... (Ms Tse)

It depends on the subject itself, I mean, what we are going to teach (Ms Wong)

Ms Tse seemed resigned to the fact that in cases where visual aids cannot be used or oral activities are not the focus, arousing students' interest will not be possible. Similarly, in the second statement, Ms Wong felt her capacity to motivate students depended heavily on the nature of the topic. Such perceptions naturally lead to a sense of futility given that much school learning involves learners engaging with tasks and topics that may not hold intrinsic interest for them.

In further exploring understandings of motivation with Ms Wong and Ms Tse, it became evident that there was perhaps some conflation of the notions of motivation and discipline:

*They are very responsible students, they always did their work punctually. (Ms Wong)
Most of them follow instructions, although sometimes I scold them. On the whole they follow instructions. Are they very interested in learning English? I can't say they are... but somehow they would follow and are willing to do the tasks... Ms Tse)*

In both cases, students' compliance was seen to indicate motivation. Yet, Ms Wong evidenced a more nuanced understanding of motivation as she went on to highlight the motivational potential of adopting a cultural semiotic approach to teaching language:

I am trying to encourage them to make sure they know that I need to learn English in order to connect with the world. If I don't know English I cannot understand what the movie is about, what the sources are about. So I try to arouse motivation playing different cultural purposes, in order to invite them to join the English world. (Ms Wong)

While student participation may indeed be one indicator of motivation, it is also important to reflect on the extent to which students in a Chinese educational context comply with teachers' instructions less out of an interest in language learning and more out of deference to cultural norms that define the teacher-student relationship. This possibility warrants a critical approach that questions assumptions and seeks to develop an evidence-base for better understanding learners' experience. In the case of Ms Tse particularly, a lack of criticality became particularly apparent as the interview progressed. She held seemingly strong views about learner's motivation rooted primarily in her own everyday theories (Johnson & Golombek, 2011) that were not necessarily subjected to critique. One particularly salient example was a perception of competence and motivation as rigid and resistant to change:

They do not make an effort in memorizing what they have learned. They fail to apply what they learned in their reading and writing... we try to highlight like 'you can use this and that' ... some are able to do better, some cannot. That's life. (Ms Tse)

Such beliefs can be problematic inasmuch as they can result in attributing problems with students' learning to factors outside the teachers' control leading, therefore, to resistance to changes in teaching practice. In the case of Ms Tse, these beliefs were evidenced throughout the interview and seemed deeply engrained, resulting in a sense of defeatism. Contrasting with this stance, Mr Akbar viewed motivation as resulting from a complex array of factors, which he believed bore specific and practical implications for his practice:

...I'm using something that they hear on their televisions, they read on their phones... I think it does motivate them, it does make them think... students have to write a letter of complaint but the context may seem very unnatural, but here a very natural context is given to them... (Mr Akbar)

[English] should be treated more like a means of communication...these students do sit for exams but at the same time I want them to experience the language that is out there in the real world, so this is what I've done here... used something real, a news article, at the same time, create question types that they sort of struggle with and that will help them in the exams, so I think this motivates students. (Mr Akbar)

It appears that for Mr Akbar, making learning relevant to students' experiences is central to motivational language teaching, providing authenticity and a communicative purpose in the learning tasks, while also acknowledging the role of instrumentality in supporting motivation. Mr Akbar's implied conceptualisation of language motivation closely reflected emergent motivational teaching practice frameworks, for instance Dörnyei's taxonomy (2001). The contrast between Ms Tse and Mr Akbar pointed to a broader theme across the interviews distinguishing between teachers who drew primarily on discreet motivational strategies in an ad hoc fashion and those who evidenced a more cohesive conceptualisation of teaching practice within which they embedded motivational strategies specific to the tasks, topics and themes in question and responding also to the students' stages of learning.

ii) ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Ms Tse focused primarily on the student role in motivation and this took on generally negative associations:

These days students are not very patient. They like something very quick. They don't spend time thinking. They are very careless. (Ms Tse)

She seemed to feel that she had little part to play or that her efforts were largely constrained by factors outside her control:

I tried to involve them... but then the point is you could see that they did not respond much...of course I can spend more time thinking of a better way to motivate them, but I don't have time to do that. (Ms Tse)

She was resigned to the situation: *'This is the best way already given the limited time...We can develop a better way but then this is already quite good for a lesson...'* (Ms Tse).

By contrast, Ms Lo, also recognized challenges but adopted a critical and pro- active response:

You have to use it [the textbook], but think about strategies of how you're going to use them, so it's kind of typical that I have to find other materials...I want to look at how my students are progressing and then I think about okay this may not be very suitable, so how do I help them from step one to step four... (Ms Lo)

Teachers who saw motivation as out of their control, typically reported using ad hoc, reactive motivational strategies rather than a cohesive, student-centred approach grounded in robust educational principles:

I just told them 'if you are able to get 5 marks more for those students, you will be rewarded a beautiful sticker or a stamp'. And they were able to do that. (Ms Yip)

They have to collect some stamps and they are usually keen on getting some stamps. If they can get it right, maybe I will give them some stamps. So this is also a kind of motivation, especially for the weakest students. Usually games and competitions. (Ms Law)

Ms Lo's approach contrasted with this. Acknowledging the challenges her students face, she sought to identify pedagogical approaches and teaching strategies in response to these challenges. These responses seemed to be based on a more thoughtful conceptualization of language learning, grounded in a combination of private and public theory:

These students they are not very good at relating to the text... so somehow I think language is a tool for communication and that's why it would be good to think about what they're reading and then in a way this kind of question I ask them to guess... (Ms Lo)

Feedback was for her, a tool for supporting progression and acknowledging students' contributions for promoting their self-esteem and she underlined the teacher's role in building transforming the classroom into a learning community. Again her intertwining of private theory emerging from her classroom experience and her understanding of public theory was evident:

me asking questions is also kind of feedback, which actually helps students as what SLA says... you know, achieving the best to actually stretch potential more, instead of just having then get finished...without any more thought to what they have just said... (Ms Lo)

While Ms Tse attributed responsibility for learner motivation to the students and Ms Lo considered it the responsibility of the teacher, Ms Szeto demonstrated a different perspective:

If the students are not motivated to learn they won't learn, but it's really difficult to do it. That depends on the teacher's character, I'm sorry to say that some of the teachers are so boring. How can they motivate the students to learn? That depends on the personality of the teacher... (Ms Szeto)

She recognized the significance of motivation for supporting learning and acknowledged that motivating students was not an easy task. Furthermore, it was clear that she believed it was the role of the teacher to generate and promote motivation and yet somehow absolves the teacher of responsibility by suggesting that a teacher's ability to motivate learners is a matter of personality, which she seemingly views as static; either a teacher 'has it or they don't'.

These diverse perspectives and stances on learner motivation and motivational practice seem to stem from implicit beliefs about the extent to which motivation is dynamic. Ms Lo's reference to diverse strategies implies a view that motivation is responsive to teaching techniques, suggesting that it is dynamic and flexible. Ms Tse's perceptions, on the other hand, suggest a more static view of motivation and a notion that it is unresponsive to pedagogy and resistant to change. Meanwhile, Ms Szeto's perspective somehow absolves both learner and teacher of responsibility, but also renders a sense of futility; motivation is seemingly dependent on teacher personality traits and therefore out of the control of the learner and pedagogically at least, of the teacher.

Teachers' comments also pointed to notions of agency. Aligning with Glas (2015), a subjective sense of agency was seemingly mediated by external and internal means for Ms Tse, Ms Lo and Ms Szeto. External factors were common to all three teachers, but it was the internal factors, particularly beliefs about their students and about the learning context, that seemed to result in their varying approaches to practice. Viewing agency as teachers' critical capacity to shape their response

to problems (Biesta & Tedder, 2006), the teachers' varying responses to perceived challenges in motivating their students can be argued to result from their varying degrees of a sense of agency.

iii) THEORY AND PRACTICE

Understanding the kind of input on motivational practice that teachers felt they had received in their teacher preparation sheds some light on possible reasons for the apparent lack of cohesive frameworks of motivational practice, and for the ad hoc nature of the implementation of motivational strategies. Most teachers said they had received limited or no input, while others reported that the input they had received was difficult to relate to their classroom practice. Ms Lo provided a succinct summary of teachers' perceptions of the preparation they had received:

We had a little touch on motivation theories but honestly you know theories are theories and how you are going to deploy it is another thing... it's never really what they model to you... they never did. (Ms Lo)

Ms Lo's comment points clearly to the age-old struggle of teacher educators to support teachers in critically and reflectively implementing in their classroom practice the learning from their teacher preparation programme. The enactment of teacher learning is most likely to take place when it derives from and connects to the content and students they teach (Hammerness, et al., 2005). Locating teacher learning within school contexts is likely to be more powerful than models developed in outside settings, such that Ms Lo's comment points to the struggle that faces teachers when there is a lack of integration between teacher learning and teacher practice. She went on to explain:

even you are not taught about like intrinsic motivation, you know that all right cos you were a student yourself...but in terms of whether it's a must I do have doubts yes, because to me rather than having this PGDE [Post-Graduate Diploma of Education] ... I rather appreciate that maybe my mentor had shared her teaching experiences... (Ms Lo)

Ms Lo's comment implicitly highlights her 'everyday theory' of motivation generated on the basis of her own experiences as a language learner. In the context of this, she struggles to see the necessity of 'scientific theories', expressing instead a preference for 'practical' guidance that models classroom techniques. In this sense she seemingly divorces such 'practical' techniques from a theory base.

Conclusion

A number of implications arise for research, but here the focus is on implications for teacher education:

1. Teachers' understandings of learner motivation vary considerably and are often based on everyday theories of teaching and learning. These theories seem to be strongly held even when they may fail to support learner motivation. A key feature of such theories seems to be the notion of motivation as resistant to change, rendering teacher efforts futile. In light of the importance of motivation in language learning success, teacher education initiatives would do well to integrate a robust component on motivation and motivational teaching practice. Uncovering teachers' implicitly held beliefs and critically engaging them with consideration of the broad evidence-base on language motivation would be an important feature.
2. Teachers struggled to connect their learning on teacher education courses to their classroom practice. Given that all teacher participants had engaged with rigorous teacher education programmes involving teaching practicums specifically intended to support theory-practice connection, this was particularly surprising. Teachers were aware of discrete strategies for promoting learner motivation, but how to intertwine these into a coherent framework of practice was more elusive. Teacher education should support theory-practice in the context of specific language teaching aspects and in the context of real classroom settings. In terms of motivational practice, it should guide teachers to consider how discrete strategies combined and coordinated to

generate and sustain motivation and to respond to changing classroom realities. This requires close connection between teacher education and teachers' professional contexts.

3. Though teacher motivation and teacher efficacy were not an explicit focus of the study, they seemed to be significant factors in determining teachers' willingness to engage with ongoing reviewing of their practice. Teachers in any context face institutional constraints and the participants were no exception. Teacher education should entail explicit identification and critical discussion of potential challenges, strategies for working effectively within them, and nurturing of professional efficacy as a basis for perseverance. The significance of such support is heightened in contexts where teachers may lack access to the professional communities that are widely recognized as fundamental for supporting teacher confidence and facilitating innovative risk-taking.

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ВІДОМОСТІ ПРО АВТОРА

Хеннебрі-Леунг Майрін – доктор філософії (Ph.D), професор, викладач мов та TESOL Університет Тасманії, Австралія.

Наукові інтереси: методика викладання англійської мови.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mairin Hennebry-Leung – Lecturer in Languages and TESOL University of Tasmania, Australia.

Scientific interests: teacher training, citizenship education.