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Motivation to Learn L2 Pragmatic Features

Abstract

Motivation has been extensively researched in second/foreign language (L2) learning, yet its impact on pragmatics acquisition remains underexplored. This nine-week mixed-methods study aimed to address this gap by examining how motivation to learn L2 pragmatic features fluctuates over time whilst identifying factors that may influence these changes. Thirty-seven Czech secondary school learners of English participated, completing a trait motivation questionnaire before and after instruction. Additional data were collected through follow-up interviews and motometers during lessons on suggestion-making. The findings confirmed the dynamics and multidimensionality of motivation, shaped by individual factors, classroom activities, teaching methods, and the relevance of pragmatic content. Motivation varied significantly within and between lessons, driven by both internal and external stimuli. As learners developed a deeper understanding of pragmatics, their motivation increased, enhancing their ability to use English appropriately. The study concludes with recommendations for L2 teaching practices and future research on motivation in pragmatics learning.

Keywords: second language motivation, motivation dynamics, pragmatics learning, speech acts, suggestions, classroom-based research

Motivation is crucial in second/foreign language (L2) learning, as it significantly influences learners' success and persistence by driving their engagement and effort to master the language (Dörnyei, 2020). Initially, motivation was categorized into integrative and instrumental orientations, with the former focusing on cultural integration and the latter on practical goals like career advancement (Gardner, 1985). Recent research, however, views motivation as a dynamic construct, evolving with various internal and external factors (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021).

This contemporary perspective highlights the complex interaction between motivation and context, particularly in L2 classrooms, where motivation can vary even within a single lesson due to learner characteristics, tasks, peer

interactions, and teacher influence (Lamb et al., 2019). Despite its importance, motivation in relation to pragmatics learning—an essential area of L2 competence—has been underexplored.

To address this gap, the current study examined motivation within authentic classroom settings, following recommendations by Al-Hoorie et al. (2021). Unlike previous “snapshot” studies that lack classroom context (Sampson, 2016), this study used both quantitative and qualitative methods to explore how learners engage with L2 pragmatic elements—including speech act forms, politeness, and directness—that reflect group behaviors and individual experiences. This approach is particularly relevant to Czech students, whose motivation to learn English has been insufficiently studied.

By applying three key frameworks—Gardner’s (1985) socio-educational model, Deci and Ryan’s (1985) Self-Determination Theory (SDT), and Dörnyei’s (2005, 2009) L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS)—this study offers a nuanced understanding of L2 motivation in pragmatics learning. As we delve into the following sections, these theoretical insights will help frame the discussion of how motivation intertwines with pragmatics, revealing gaps in the literature and highlighting findings from longitudinal studies. This will point toward potential developments in L2 teaching and future research directions.

Literature Review

L2 Motivation Research Approaches

The historical development of L2 motivation theory can be divided into three stages, each enriching our understanding of its complexity and impact on L2 learning (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). The “social psychological period” emphasized learner attitudes and motivational dispositions. Gardner’s (1985) integrative motive theory highlighted that shifts in motivation, influenced by factors like sudden interest or external pressures, could alternate between integrative and instrumental orientations. Integrative motivation involves learners’ goals, interest in the language, attitudes toward the L2 community, and the learning environment (Gardner, 2005), mirroring social factors that positively predispose learners toward the L2 group and stimulate their desire to interact with its members. In contrast, instrumental motivation emphasizes the pragmatic benefits of mastering an L2, such as accessing better education or advancing professionally, aligning learning goals with functional, utilitarian purposes.

Gardner’s (1985) model has faced criticism due to its narrow focus. Early critics such as Kruidenier and Clément (1986) argued that motivations like

friendship and personal knowledge often overshadow integrative motives and are closely tied to instrumental orientations. Skehan (1991) also questioned its applicability outside Canada, suggesting that in foreign language contexts, instrumental motives outweigh the influence of integrative motives. Similarly, Dörnyei (2019) noted that the framework overlooks the role of personal identity and global influences in modern L2 motivation (see also Davidson et al., 2016). Recent developments address these limitations by integrating internal aspirations and external stimuli into a more comprehensive understanding of this construct.

The “cognitive-situated period” shifted the focus to the self, identity, and classroom dynamics through Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and Attribution Theory. SDT emphasizes intrinsic motivation and psychological needs (Deci & Ryan, 1985) while acknowledging external influences on L2 goals (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). Attribution Theory explores how environmental cues, such as ability and effort, shape explanations for behavior and future actions (Weiner, 1992). This approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods, provides a deeper insight into how past attributions impact future motivation.

Dörnyei’s (2005, 2009) L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS), emerging during the “process-oriented period,” expands on theories of possible selves and self-discrepancy. It includes the “ideal L2 self,” a desirable self-image motivating learners, and the “ought-to L2 self,” reflecting perceived expectations to avoid negative outcomes. The “L2 learning experience” addresses situational motives related to immediate learning contexts. The complex dynamic systems perspective further refines the L2MSS by acknowledging the unpredictability and evolving nature of L2 learning (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008). Dörnyei’s (2014) retrodictive qualitative modeling also emphasizes uncovering motivational factors through retrospective analysis.

Critiques of the L2MSS have raised concerns about its ability to fully capture the complexity of motivation. Despite its prominent role, the model’s emphasis on the ideal and ought-to selves may overly simplify motivational dynamics (Dörnyei, 2009; MacIntyre, 2002). Specifically, it tends to overlook how societal contexts and perceived external pressures shape learners’ self-images and motivations (Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017). This limitation highlights the need for a more fine-grained understanding of L2 motivation that incorporates these contextual factors, as intimated recently (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021).

Empirical research continues to build on Gardner’s (1985) framework, which remains central to data collection in motivation studies (for a review and meta-analysis, see Gardner, 2019; Masgoret & Gardner, 2003). Longitudinal studies have shown that motivation stems from integrative orientations and attitudes toward teaching, even if the learning process seems irrelevant (Mendoza & Phung, 2019; Williams et al., 2002). Although motivation may not always

fluctuate significantly, language attitudes can change over time, guided by achievement levels (Gardner et al., 2004).

Research within the L2MSS has extensively demonstrated the dynamics of motivation across cultural contexts and over time (for comprehensive analyses, see Boo et al., 2015; Yousefi & Mahmoodi, 2022). Shoaib and Dörnyei's (2005) retrospective analysis found that recurring themes, like internalizing external goals, often lead to motivational adjustments, though historical data might not fully capture these shifts. Campbell and Storch (2011) observed that motivation fluctuates due to learning environments and personal goals, with the ideal L2 self being a stronger predictor of success compared to the ought-to L2 self (see also Jung et al., 2020). This suggests limitations in the effectiveness of the ought-to L2 self for sustaining motivation.

In different cultural contexts, Taguchi et al. (2009) and Pawlak (2012) identified diverse motivators: promotion-oriented motivation and familial expectations in Asia, and instrumentality and the ideal L2-self in Europe. These studies reveal the adaptability of the L2MSS but also highlight biases and limitations due to brief study durations. Nitta (2013) showed that individual motivation trajectories can vary significantly over time, often reflecting personal challenges or successes. Similarly, Waninge et al. (2014) found that motivation can fluctuate even within a single lesson, influenced by factors such as time of day, task selection, and teacher characteristics. These conclusions emphasize the fluid and context-dependent nature of motivation. More recently, Wong (2018) and Zhou and Papi (2023) illustrated how past successes and the ideal L2 self interactively influence future achievement, while Wu (2024) reported the complex relationship between affective variables like anxiety and the ideal L2 self.

These findings collectively underscore that L2 motivation is a multifaceted and evolving construct, shaped by various individual and contextual elements. Although the L2MSS provides a robust framework, its application needs to consider cultural and individual differences. Longitudinal studies reveal that intrinsic motives play a central role in many contexts, while extrinsic factors become more prominent in cultures with strong social pressures. Despite the valuable insights gained, limitations such as brief study durations and potential biases require careful interpretation. To build a broader understanding of motivational dynamics in language learning, it is essential to integrate these insights with research on L2 pragmatics. This will be discussed in the following section.

Motivation in Second Language Pragmatics

Over recent decades, research has examined how motivational factors impact L2 learning, including aspects like task performance, teaching strategies, and willingness to communicate (for a review, see Lamb et al., 2019). However,

interest in the intersection of motivation and L2 pragmatics has only recently started to gain some traction.

Tajeddin and Moghadam (2012) distinguished between general pragmatic motivation, which involves the desire to use strategies like politeness, and speech-act-specific motivation, focused on mastering particular forms. They found that while learners were motivated in both areas, their pragmatic use was often limited by interference from their mother tongue. Speech-act-specific motivation was a stronger predictor of effective outcomes than general pragmatic motivation, but the cross-sectional design did not address whether motivation changed over time.

Within Gardner's (1985) framework, Khorshidi and Nimchahi (2013) found that integrative motivation can enhance pragmatic development and reduce negative interlanguage transfer, which suggests that teaching should align with learners' specific motivational types. Since limited exposure to authentic language often leads to pragmatic inaccuracies, the authors further recommended increasing students' awareness of pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics.

Findings from Deci and Ryan's (1985) model highlight intrinsic motivation's role in developing L2 pragmatic competence. Takahashi (2005, 2015) showed that intrinsic motivation fosters an understanding of pragmalinguistics, a finding supported by Tagashira et al. (2011) and Li et al. (2015). These studies noted that learners driven by personal interest use language more effectively. Sanjaya et al. (2023) critiqued the overemphasis on grammar in L2 instruction, while Omrani and Tafazoli (2021) demonstrated that extrinsically motivated learners could excel in pragmatic tasks if rewarded. This underscores the need for instructional strategies that incorporate cultural and contextual language use.

Using Dörnyei's (2005, 2009) L2MSS, Inagaki (2019) explored how motivation affected pragmatic development in a study-abroad context. The study linked a strong ideal L2 self and self-confidence to successful pragmatic development. Conversely, anxiety from the ought-to self encouraged thorough contextual examination. Yang and Ren (2020) and Yang and Wu (2022) identified the ideal L2 self, intended learning efforts, and attitudes toward the L2 community as key predictors of pragmatic awareness. Building on this, Zhang and Papi (2021) noted that promotion-focused orientations enhance pragmatic outcomes, whereas prevention-focused orientations may hinder them by discouraging interaction opportunities.

Despite these insights, gaps remain in the current literature. Research relies on cross-sectional designs and self-report measures, limiting the ability to track motivational changes over time and introducing biases like social desirability and inaccurate self-assessment (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010). Studies often overlook the advantages of mixed-methods approaches, which can address the limitations inherent in each method. Moreover, focusing on single motivational frameworks ignores the interplay between motivational types and the role of

contextual factors, such as cultural influences, on pragmatic development (Taguchi, 2015a).

This study aimed to address two of these gaps. First, I examined changes in motivation to learn L2 pragmatic components over time using Gardner's (1985) and Dörnyei's (2005, 2009) frameworks. While the L2MSS dominates current research, earlier models remain relevant for explaining motivation, with integrativeness and attitudes toward the learning situation continuing to be strong predictors of L2 achievement (Gardner, 2019). Second, I employed both quantitative and qualitative methods to assess whether motivation fluctuates over short and long periods. The study also sought to deepen our understanding of how motivation influences L2 speech act learning, with a focus on Czech students, a relatively underrepresented group in this research area.

Method

Research Question

Based on the theoretical and empirical insights discussed, I sought to answer the following research question: How does motivation influence Czech learners' interest in learning L2 pragmatic features—including speech act forms, politeness conventions, and degrees of directness—over time, and what factors contribute to any potential changes?

Participants

The study sample comprised 37 Czech EFL students aged 16 to 18 years ($M = 17.2$, $SD = 0.66$). All were native Czech speakers, with seven being early bilinguals. English was their first L2, and they were also fluent in one or two additional languages. Participants were divided into three groups: Group 1 ($N = 12$) was in the sixth year of an eight-year secondary program, while Groups 2 ($N = 12$) and 3 ($N = 13$) were in the fifth year of a six-year Czech-Spanish bilingual curriculum. Although Groups 2 and 3 belonged to the same academic year, the school had divided them for L2 lessons to facilitate learning; thus, they were treated as distinct groups in this study. All participants began learning English in primary school and received four hours of instruction per week, demonstrating proficiency as independent or advanced L2 users (see COE, 2018). None had studied English abroad, but 23 had additional English education through language schools or private tutoring.

Trait Motivation Questionnaire

This 49-item questionnaire aimed to profile students' motivation in connection with their interest in learning L2 pragmatics (see Appendix 1). Using a six-point Likert scale, the items were adapted from a rigorously tested questionnaire (Taguchi et al., 2009) to suit the participants' specific context. Following Ryan's (2009) framework, the questionnaire covered four sets of factors. "Attitudinal factors" captured learners' perspectives on the world and their role within it, subdivided into five clusters: integrativeness, instrumentality, attitudes toward the L2 community, cultural interest, and interest in learning pragmatics. The latter cluster, which focused on learners' awareness of communication styles and cultural differences, was developed from pragmatic literature and adhered to Dörnyei and Dewaele's (2023) guidelines on item wording. "Self-related factors" included the ideal L2 self and the ought-to L2 self. "Situational factors" explored learners' attitudes toward the learning process, particularly their enjoyment. Lastly, "motivational effects" assessed the effort participants were willing to exert in sustaining their motivation.

Follow-up Interviews

These instruments were designed to complement data from the previous questionnaire (see Appendix 2). Following Campbell and Storch (2011), three interviews were conducted to track changes in motivational factors. This approach aimed to achieve what Dörnyei (2014) calls saturation, where repeating similar questions to learners helps identify key variables influencing L2 learning behavior through consistent responses. Each interview included questions about motivation to learn pragmatics using examples of L1 and L2 pragmatic situations.

Interview 1 focused on trait motivation to establish participants' motivational profiles. It explored their reasons for learning English, their commitment to L2 learning, and any recent changes in L2 motivation. Interview 2, conducted four weeks later, investigated shifts in motivation since the first interview and gauged interest in continuing pragmatic studies after instruction (see below). Interview 3, held one week after the second, reviewed motivational changes since the second interview.

Motometer

A thermometer-shaped figure was designed to measure state motivation during pragmatic instruction. Participants received an eight-motometer set

and drew a horizontal line across the next motometer at 2.5-minute intervals, prompted by a prerecorded bell. Each motometer included a comments section for elaborating on self-reported motivation. Following Waninge et al. (2014), motivation was assessed based on the effort students were willing to exert to learn the material. For a copy of this instrument, see Appendix 3.

Pragmatics Learning Questionnaire

This five-item questionnaire complemented the motometer data by asking students to rate their overall motivation during L2 pragmatic lessons on a six-point Likert scale. Motivation was assessed based on interest, usefulness, relevance, enjoyment, and the desire to expand knowledge. Three additional questions in the initial session determined if participants had prior instruction on the discussed pragmatic topics.

Explicit pragmatic instruction was delivered by the researcher (not the regular teacher) over three lessons in two weeks. The goal was to deepen students' understanding of pragmatic forms and encourage reflection on speech acts. Each session followed a four-step process: raising awareness, presenting pragmatic input, conducting metapragmatic analysis, and performing interactive tasks.

The focus of the instruction was on the speech act of suggestion, addressing its face-threatening nature (Brown & Levinson, 1987) through the regulation of politeness and directness. Pedagogical activities, including individual and interactive listening, reading, and speaking tasks, were designed to target specific pragmatic features. These tasks ranged from analyzing conversations between classmates solving school-related problems to engaging in decision-making tasks and board games, set in real-life contexts like work, school, health, and leisure. Metapragmatic discussions were incorporated throughout, and a summary handout was provided at the end to consolidate learning. For further details on the instruction and tasks, refer to Márquez and de Graaff (2026).

Data Collection Procedures

L2 motivation was examined over nine weeks using a four-phase design. In the first phase (week one), all participants completed the trait motivation questionnaire. To avoid practice effects, three-item sequences were employed. In week two, 18 randomly selected students were individually interviewed by a research assistant. Both the questionnaire and interviews were conducted in Czech to enhance data quality (Dörnyei & Dewaele, 2023), and the interviews were audio-recorded for transcription and coding.

In the second phase (weeks three and four), three L2 pragmatic lessons were observed. During each 20-minute lesson, students used the motometer and completed the pragmatics learning questionnaire. Lessons were also audio-recorded.

In phases three and four (weeks five and nine), participants underwent two follow-up interviews, with interviewers and interviewees matched as closely as possible to their initial pairings. After the final interview, participants completed the trait motivation questionnaire again.

Data Analysis

SPSS was used for calculating descriptive and inferential statistics. Two-tailed significance tests were applied, with effect sizes derived from the z -value ratio to the square root of N (see Fritz et al., 2012). Wilcoxon signed-ranks tests compared changes in motivation from the start to the end of the study. Asymptotic p -values were reported based on G*Power 3 analysis, which required a minimum sample size of 35 ($\beta = .80$, $\alpha = .05$), while exact p -values were used for within-lesson motivation analysis due to the smaller sample size.

Internal consistency of the questionnaires was evaluated using intraclass correlation coefficients and Cronbach's alphas for each item cluster (see George & Mallery, 2003). Relationships between motivational factors were analyzed with Spearman rank-order correlation coefficients, following Plonsky and Oswald's (2014) benchmarks.

Interview data were transcribed with fictitious names to protect identities. Dörnyei's (2014) retrodictive qualitative modeling was adapted to identify and categorize prototypical responses, assign motivational variables, and outline key components. Qualitative data from the motometers were analyzed at both group and individual levels, linking self-reported motivation to comments and considering environmental factors like class time and activities.

Results

Trait Motivation in the L2 Classroom

Before analyzing motivational factors for learning L2 pragmatics, the internal consistency of the trait motivation questionnaire was verified. Cronbach's alpha coefficients ($\alpha > .70$) indicated internal consistency for each item cluster at the study's start and end (see Table 1).

Table 1*Internal Validity of Trait Questionnaire Variables—Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients*

Motivational variable	Study's start	Study's end
Integrativeness	.709	.749
Instrumentality	.740	.809
Attitudes toward the L2 community	.742	.760
Cultural interest	.725	.753
Interest in learning pragmatics	.758	.831
Ideal L2 self	.773	.797
Ought-to L2 self	.780	.746
Attitudes toward learning English	.789	.820
Criterion measures	.826	.824

Participants were motivated throughout the study. Initially, motivation was driven by positive attitudes toward the L2 community ($M = 5.45$), followed by cultural interest ($M = 5.10$) and ideal L2 self ($M = 4.99$). Other factors included criterion measures ($M = 4.95$), instrumentality ($M = 4.93$), ought-to L2 self ($M = .85$), and integrativeness ($M = 4.82$). Attitudes toward learning English ($M = 4.78$) and interest in pragmatics ($M = 4.74$) were also notable. Except for integrativeness, all mean scores increased by the end of the study (see Appendix 4). Significant increases were observed only in ideal L2 self ($z = 2.02$, $p = .044$, $r = .337$) and instrumentality ($z = 1.99$, $p = .046$, $r = .332$) (see Table 2).

Table 2*Comparisons of Motivational Factors over time ($N = 36$)*

Motivational variable	Wilcoxon signed-rank (z)	Effect size (r)	Significance (2-tailed)
Integrativeness	.105	.018	.916
Instrumentality	1.99	.332	.046
Attitudes toward the L2 community	.598	.100	.550
Cultural interest	.772	.129	.471
Interest in learning pragmatics	.574	.096	.566
Ideal L2 self	2.02	.337	.044
Ought-to L2 self	.928	.155	.353
Attitudes toward learning English	1.13	.188	.258
Criterion measures	1.21	.202	.223

Note. One participant did not complete the questionnaire at the study's end.

Interest in learning pragmatics correlated significantly ($p < .001$) with all motivational factors (see Table 3). At the beginning of the study, strong correlations ($r > .70$) were found with ought-to L2 self, attitudes toward the L2 community, and attitudes toward learning English. Moderate correlations ($r > .60$) were observed with cultural interest and instrumentality, and medium ($r > .50$) with integrativeness, ideal L2 self, and criterion measures. By the end of the study,

correlations strengthened ($r > .70$) with attitudes toward learning English, cultural interest, criterion measures, instrumentality, and ideal L2 self. Correlations with integrativeness remained stable but decreased with ought-to L2 self and attitudes toward the L2 community.

Table 3

Correlations between Pragmatics Learning and Other Motivational Factors

Motivational variable	Research phase	Spearman correlation
Integrativeness	Start	.598
	End	.598
Instrumentality	Start	.664
	End	.736
Attitudes toward the L2 community	Start	.717
	End	.597
Cultural interest	Start	.604
	End	.748
Ideal L2 self	Start	.580
	End	.617
Ought-to L2 self	Start	.732
	End	.694
Attitudes toward learning English	Start	.716
	End	.787
Criterion measures	Start	.528
	End	.704

Note. $N = 37$, start; $N = 36$, end.

Two additional correlations are noteworthy. Despite statistical significance ($p < .001$), the relationship between instrumentality and ought-to L2 self remained moderate at the study's outset ($r(37) = .561$) and conclusion ($r(36) = .533$). In contrast, the correlation between integrativeness and ideal L2 self increased from medium ($r(37) = .540$) to strong ($r(36) = .779$).

At the study's start, interviewees mentioned six out of nine motivational variables (see Excerpt 1). All saw English as instrumental in achieving goals like studying or working abroad (John). Cultural interest was prevalent, with references to curiosity about other cultures (Jessica), films (16 comments), and books (12 comments). Ought-to L2 self motives (67%) were significant, driven by school requirements (Jessica) or family expectations (Amanda). A few participants acknowledged positive attitudes toward L2 community (6%) and learning English (39%).

Excerpt 1

I study English to understand everything and learn more. You can find more resources in English than in Czech. I also do it to be able to work or study in English-speaking countries, and because it's necessary [to speak English] nowadays. (John)

I study English because it is included in our school timetable. I like it a lot and want to improve in order to speak with people I meet. I'm also into other cultures quite a lot. (Jessica)

Well, I'm expected to learn it. My mom teaches English, so I've been taking classes since forever. In the future, I'd like to study partially abroad and travel a lot. (Amanda)

I learn English because it is internationally recognized. It's a very nice language and I think it will be useful in the future if, for example, I decide to study in an English-speaking country. It will definitely be useful, especially at a higher level of proficiency. (Anna)

Interviews also provided initial insights into criterion measures and motivational changes. Despite prior L2 exposure, only 13 participants (72%) explicitly mentioned their learning effort. Nine (50%) reported no motivation changes over the past year, while others noted increases due to recognizing L2 importance (39%) or experienced decreases as English became easier (11%). The language teacher's influence varied.

At the study's end, participants discussed enjoyable L2 activities and motivational shifts. More than half (56%) enjoyed activities like watching series, reading, and interacting with L2 users, while 44% found school requirements less engaging. Overall, motivation remained stable: 13 participants (72%) continued due to school obligations; three (17%) developed an interest in cultural materials; and two (11%) maintained low motivation, citing sufficient proficiency and a shift to non-language tasks.

Motivation to Learn L2 Pragmatics

The activities related to suggestion-making impacted motivation differently at the group level, with initial motivation being moderate (see Figure 1). Pragmatic awareness-raising talks had minimal effect, listening tasks caused slight interest fluctuations, and reading tasks improved focus. Feedback

sometimes reduced motivation, while metapragmatic discussions and oral interactive tasks, particularly the latter, were most effective in enhancing motivation.

Figure 1

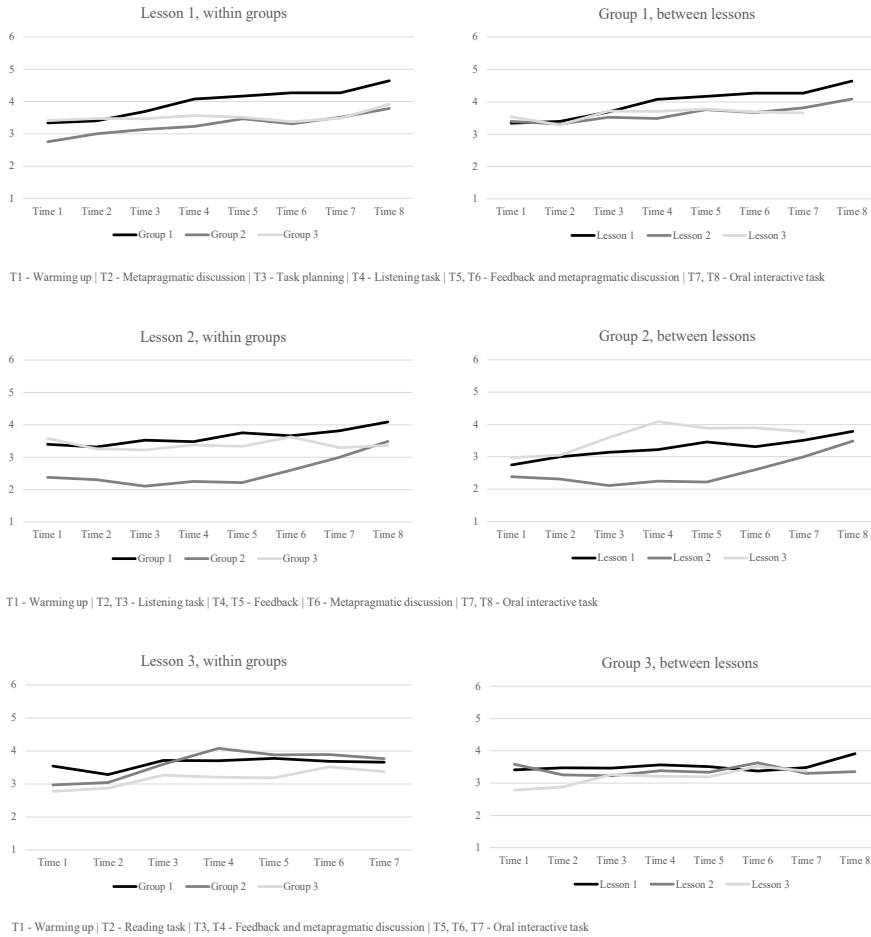
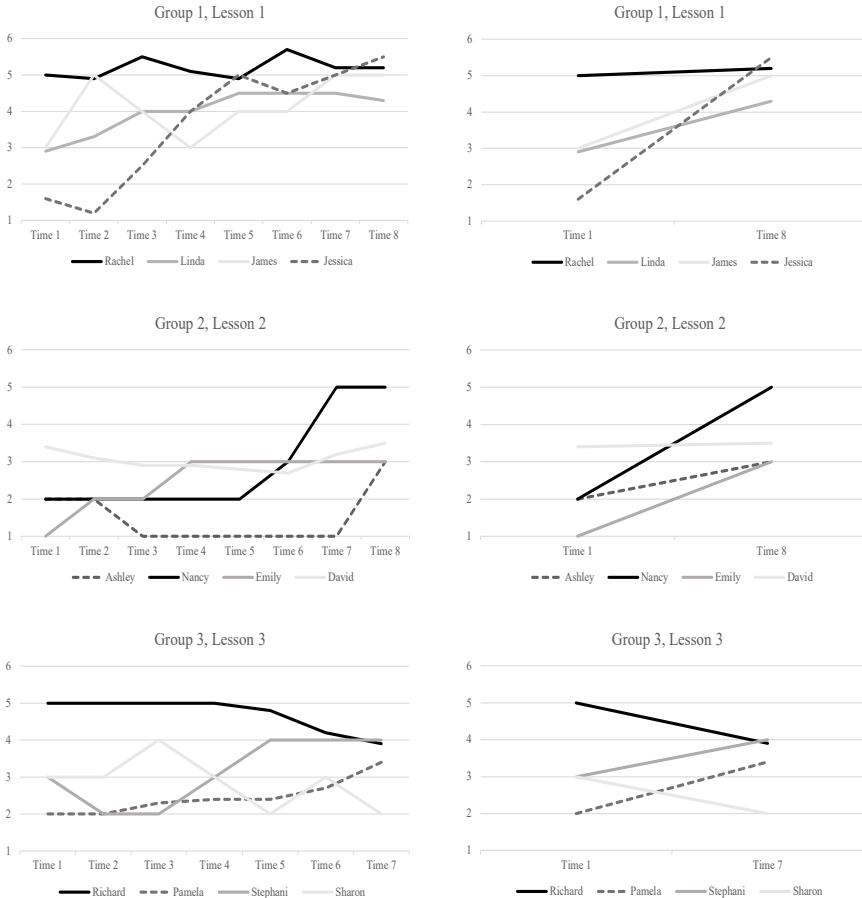


Figure 1 also shows motivational variability between lessons. Group 1 started with low motivation, which gradually increased but then declined in later lessons. Group 2’s motivation fluctuated, peaking at moderate levels, with the lowest effort in Lesson 2. Group 3 had stable motivation, though commitment dropped in the final lessons.

Individual trajectories differed from group trends (see Figure 2). In Group 1, Rachel and two other participants were motivated by the topic, while Linda and others improved their engagement over time. James and the other males

were highly motivated by discussions and the instructor’s enthusiasm. Jessica’s interest grew as the lesson progressed.

Figure 2



In Group 2, tiredness in Lesson 2 led to low motivation. Ashley and a peer struggled with the listening task but liked the oral task. Nancy and others valued metapragmatic discussions, increasing their commitment. Emily and four others showed growing interest without significant effort. David and another participant found the listening task challenging but engaging, regaining energy through interaction.

In Group 3, fatigue affected motivation, with only Richard and another student appreciating the closing remarks. Richard found the oral task stressful due to his partner’s lack of seriousness. Pamela and three classmates were sleepy

but found the speaking task somewhat engaging. A competitive student was highly motivated by the oral task. Sharon enjoyed reading but found subsequent activities repetitive and simple.

Cronbach's alpha coefficients confirmed the internal consistency of the pragmatics learning questionnaire across lessons ($\alpha = .803$, Lesson 1; $\alpha = .864$, Lesson 2; $\alpha = .842$, Lesson 3). Motivation increased from Lesson 1 ($M = 4.65$) to Lesson 2 ($M = 4.75$) and further to Lesson 3 ($M = 4.83$). Although short-term increases were not significant ($z = .688$, $p = .507$, $r = .147$, Lesson 1 to Lesson 2; $z = 1.21$, $p = .238$, $r = .247$, Lesson 2 to Lesson 3), the overall increase from Lesson 1 to Lesson 3 was significant ($z = 2.22$, $p = .027$, $r = .523$).

The questionnaire also revealed that students had prior pragmatic exposure at school (100%) and in language schools (31%). Instruction types included explicit (42%), incidental (8%), or mixed (15%), with 35% not specifying approaches.

Follow-up interviews (see Excerpt 2) explored long-term motivation. Most participants (83%) wanted to enhance their pragmatic skills for communicating better (Jennifer), being accurate (Kimberly), and avoiding culture shock (Margaret). Conversely, 17% did not see L2 cultural features as important (e.g., James).

Excerpt 2

I would like to learn some slang and more about formal language. (Jennifer)

I'm definitely interested. It's like when you're searching for a job abroad. You should not talk to your future employer the way you would talk to a friend in a pub. (Kimberly)

When I travel abroad, I always look for them [cultural aspects of the language] so that local people don't think badly of me. I don't want to be disrespectful to other cultures. (Margaret)

I don't care much about, for example, greetings. It usually depends on my mood. (James)

Overall interest in pragmatics increased post-instruction (see Excerpt 3). Most participants (83%) saw its importance for professional growth (Angela), language competence (Anna), and accurate interaction (Elizabeth). Even initially uninterested participants (17%) recognized its relevance, with 78% reading the post-instruction handouts. However, only seven students (39%) found learning pragmatics enjoyable, while 11 (61%) considered it useful but not pleasant.

Excerpt 3

I find it important for my future life, especially my future job. (Angela)

It's important, definitely, because then you sound different, in a more sophisticated way. (Anna)

It's good to learn how to speak with people I know and those who I don't. (Elizabeth)

Participants praised the dynamic instruction, oral interactive tasks, discussion opportunities, and the instructor's enthusiasm, but disliked the listening tasks and preferred shorter interventions. More than half (61%) reported increased awareness of L2 features and eagerness for more information, while some were content with the current input. Only 28% reviewed handouts between interviews.

Discussion

Dynamics of Trait Motivation

This study highlights changes in trait motivation and the complex interplay of motivational factors. Participants' interest in pragmatics was secondary at first. Their motivation stemmed from diverse sources: a desire to interact with L2 speakers, curiosity about L2 culture, self-perceptions of potential proficiency, practical L2 applications, aspirations for L2 goals, openness to the language, and positive learning attitudes. Metapragmatic discussions on speech act realization aimed to enhance communicative performance by shaping participants' perceptions of L2 users and illustrating how greater pragmatic accuracy can improve language use.

A key finding is an increase in the ideal L2 self and instrumentality in connection with an interest in learning pragmatics. This change goes beyond a simple "self-driven" or "goal-oriented" view of motivation, showing a deeper bond between intrinsic and extrinsic factors. The rise in instrumentality intimates that learners began to internalize the notion that achieving proficiency in English directly aligns with their aspirations (Deci & Ryan, 1985). This shift reflects a broader sociolinguistic environment, where learners saw English not only as a practical requirement but as a path to self-actualization.

This echoes Lamb's (2012) conclusion that learners envision themselves as future English users, linking motivation to the language's relevance for personal and professional identity. Learners were driven not just by enjoyment but by English's instrumental value as a global language. Taguchi et al. (2009) similarly highlight that learners' instrumentality often strengthens as they become more acutely aware of the specific contexts in which English can be beneficial. This heightened awareness is likely influenced by recognizing that mastering pragmatics enhances their competence in various contexts.

Motivation in second language and foreign language contexts may manifest differently. In second language contexts, where learners are immersed in environments where the target language is spoken daily, motivation often arises from immediate, practical needs, and social integration. In contrast, foreign language contexts, such as in Czechia, typically foster more long-term, goal-oriented motivation, driven by aspirations for career advancement, academic achievement, or international communication opportunities.

Given that Czech is primarily spoken within Czechia, it is unsurprising that this encourages the learning of additional languages (see Nekvapil, 2012). English, in particular, is crucial for engaging with the global community, serving as a key tool for communication, accessing information, and creating opportunities worldwide. While relying solely on Czech may limit one's reach, proficiency in English expands horizons. This pragmatic view explains the increased instrumental motivation, as learners recognize their L2 as essential for academic and professional success.

The stability of integrativeness in the study warrants further exploration, particularly considering the participants' sociolinguistic context. Traditionally, integrativeness reflects a desire to integrate into the target language community. However, its consistency here suggests a more fundamental motivational element. For learners from multilingual backgrounds, integrating into an English-speaking culture may be less compelling than for monolingual learners. In this case, integrativeness may signify a broader, more enduring affinity for intercultural communication rather than a specific cultural goal. This idea resonates with Consoli's (2022) "life capital," where linguistic and cultural experiences shape language learning. This acknowledges the intricate blend of memories, emotions, and desires that contribute to an individual's approach to language learning. For Czech learners, English serves more as a tool for international communication than for cultural assimilation.

The shifting correlation between the ought-to L2 self and attitudes toward the L2 community is intriguing. Initially, these variables were strongly linked, reflecting social or familial obligations to learn English. However, by the study's end, this connection weakened, suggesting a shift toward more internalized goals, as discussed in SDT (Deci & Ryan, 1985). As learners become more autonomous, their motivation transitions from fulfilling external expectations

to achieving personal growth. This dynamic reflects the evolving personal and contextual factors in L2 learning (Al-Hoorie et al., 2021).

Meanwhile, the correlation between ideal L2 self and integrativeness strengthened, reflecting increased interest in learning pragmatics. As learners envision themselves as proficient English speakers, their desire to engage with English-speaking communities grows, which they recognize requires pragmatically accurate language. This is consistent with Dörnyei's (2005, 2009) L2MSS, where the ideal L2 self drives motivation when tied to identity and aspirations.

Additionally, the growing correlation with cultural interest reflects a nuanced shift in motivation. Unlike integrativeness, cultural interest here is driven by curiosity and intellectual engagement rather than a need for cultural assimilation. Participants expressed interest in engaging with global English-speaking cultures through diverse cultural products. This connects with Sampson's (2016) observations, whereby learners' motivation extends beyond the classroom and taps into broader cultural aspirations, further influenced by life capital (Consoli, 2022).

Self-reported effort and interest in pragmatics increased after instruction on speech acts, highlighting the impact of metapragmatic discussions. These discussions raised awareness of the effort needed to achieve learning goals and their complexity. Effective integration of L2 features requires deep analysis and deliberate practice (Taguchi, 2015b). Learners' dedication to extracurricular activities reflects this effort, which validates Pawlak's (2012) findings that intrinsic motivation strongly drives language learning. Educators can harness this motivation to enhance the L2 learning experience.

Interest in pragmatics also emerged as a multifaceted variable, similar to overall L2 motivation. Learners value L2 community connections, enjoy learning, and are influenced by contextual expectations. Their motivation stems from an appreciation for L2 culture, practical use, and commitment to goals. The study shows that engagement with pragmatics improves when motivations, self-concepts, and attitudes match the desire to enhance pragmatic competence, highlighting the interplay between intrinsic and extrinsic factors for meaningful learning.

Interest in Learning L2 Pragmatics over Time

This study also reveals a dynamic interest in learning L2 pragmatics, influenced by classroom activities and teaching methods. The relationship between learners' interests and other motivational factors shows how task-based instruction affects motivation. Learners perceived the content and delivery methods differently, with metapragmatic discussions and oral interactive tasks being most effective in sustaining or enhancing motivation. This is in line with the cognitive engagement principles of task-based learning (see Robinson, 2011).

Czech learners stay motivated with tasks requiring deeper cognitive processing, like oral discussions, which connect to their broader goals of improving English for international communication.

Other class activities had varying impacts on motivation. Listening tasks led to only minor fluctuations in interest due to their passive nature, which offered fewer opportunities for personal connection or engagement. This is consistent with Dörnyei and Ushioda's (2021) assertion that active participation promotes sustained motivation. Conversely, feedback sometimes decreased motivation because it often points out mistakes, which temporarily dampen enthusiasm. Constructive feedback, therefore, should focus on reinforcing progress toward the L2 selves and encouraging growth (Taguchi, 2015b).

Fluctuations in motivation across lessons stress the impact of contextual factors like classroom environment and task design. Reports of tiredness and varying motivation levels among participants show how external conditions—such as time of day, task complexity, and peer interactions—affect engagement with pragmatics. Al-Hoorie et al. (2021) emphasize that motivation is closely tied to the learning context, making it essential to consider these factors for sustaining motivation. The foreign language context also plays a crucial role in shaping how motivation develops over time, as classroom activities become a key source of language interaction. This highlights the need for instructional methods that establish relevance and simulate real-world communication. Additionally, the competitiveness of some learners and their responses to peers underscore the intricate dynamics of classroom interactions. As Sampson (2016) notes, classrooms are complex systems with individual learners bringing diverse backgrounds, goals, and personalities. This ecological view illustrates that learners are complete individuals, with their emotions, physical presence, memories, and identities all shaping their learning experiences (Consoli, 2024).

The growing interest in pragmatic competence for professional use suggests learners viewed pragmatics as crucial for future English use, aligning with Pawlak's (2012) findings on pragmatic awareness in professional and academic contexts. Learners' desire to master pragmatics to avoid miscommunication underlines its practical importance. However, not all participants found instruction on suggestion-making equally engaging. Some saw it as useful but not particularly interesting, reflecting the challenge of balancing the practical importance of linguistic features with maintaining learner engagement. As Pinner (2016) argues, motivation often depends on the perceived relevance and enjoyment of materials. If tasks do not reflect personal interests or self-concept, the learning experience may feel more like a requirement than an intrinsically motivating activity (Sampson, 2016).

Conclusion

This study explored the dynamic nature of motivation to learn L2 pragmatics features, including speech act forms, politeness conventions, and degrees of directness. It showed that motivation is shaped by a complex interaction of trait variables that can be enhanced through targeted pedagogical interventions. Short-term motivation shifts are linked to specific classroom tasks, while long-term changes depend on pedagogical design and learners' orientations. Task-based learning, which engages both cognitive and emotional faculties, is crucial for shaping and increasing motivation.

To improve motivation to learn L2 pragmatics, several classroom strategies can be employed. Implementing short, varied activities that relate to real-world situations can help engage learners and mitigate disinterest. A thorough needs analysis is essential for tailoring tasks that challenge students, build confidence, and support both individual and group goals. Aligning activities with learners' interests enhances intrinsic motivation while linking tasks to personal goals boosts extrinsic motivation. Effective, bidirectional feedback is also vital; teachers should monitor progress and encourage learners to share their experiences. Building strong, kind, and respectful student-teacher relationships facilitates this dialogue, which is a major driver of motivation.

Tools like motometers can provide ongoing feedback on student engagement, helping instructors adjust tasks to meet learners' needs. Teachers must remain adaptable to changing classroom dynamics, as motivation is influenced by various factors such as L2 experiences and interest, while issues like boredom or fatigue can diminish it. Recognizing individual differences in motivation is also important. Dörnyei's (2014) retrodictive qualitative modeling could help identify learner types and motivation patterns through observation, categorization, and interviews.

Limitations of this study include a small sample size, specific participant backgrounds, and a focus on particular L2 pragmatic features, all of which impact the generalizability of the findings. However, the results are still valuable for similar educational contexts and student populations. The observational nature of the research constrains the ability to assess the direct impact of motivation on pragmatics learning, suggesting a need for further experimental studies (Al-Hoorie et al., 2021). Additionally, reliance on self-reports introduces subjectivity, as students may over- or underestimate their efforts. While self-assessment can offer useful insights (Pinner, 2016), external factors, such as a desire to please the researcher, may affect accuracy.

Future research should explore the link between task engagement (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021) and pragmatic learning outcomes to identify tasks that effectively sustain motivation. It is also important to assess whether existing L2

motivation frameworks adequately address the nuances of pragmatics learning or if a new construct, such as pragmatic motivation, is needed. Additionally, employing a “small-lens” approach (Ushioda, 2016) to collect qualitative, context-sensitive data could provide deeper insights into the complexities of L2 motivation for learning pragmatics. Consoli’s (2022) concept of life capital may offer valuable perspectives on how learners’ backgrounds influence their engagement, leading to more tailored instructional strategies.

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Sample Items from the Trait Motivation Questionnaire

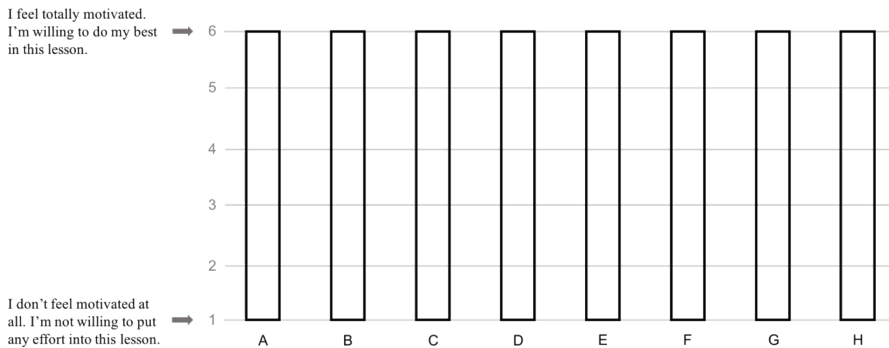
Component	Motivational variable	Sample item
Attitudinal factors	Integrativeness	Learning English is important in order to learn more about the culture and art of its speakers. I like the English language.
	Instrumentality	English ability would help me get a better paying job. Studying English will help me get into better schools.
	Attitudes toward the L2 community	I would like to know more about people from English-speaking countries. I like meeting people from English-speaking countries.
	Cultural interest	I like TV programs from English-speaking countries. I like the music of English-speaking countries (e.g., pop music).
	Interest in learning pragmatics	I would like to understand how cultural differences affect the way of speaking English. It is important to adapt the way I speak English according to the context (e.g., at school, at home).
Self-related factors	Ideal L2 self	I often imagine myself as someone who is able to speak English. If my dreams come true, I will use English effectively in the future.
	Ought-to L2 self	Studying English is important to me because an educated person is supposed to be able to speak English. Learning English is necessary because people surrounding me expect me to do so.
Situational factors	Attitudes toward learning English	Learning English is really great. I always look forward to my English classes.
Effects of motivation	Criterion measures	If English were not taught in school, I would try to go to English classes somewhere else. I am the kind of person who makes great efforts to learn English.

Sample Guiding Questions for Follow-up Interviews

1. Why do you study English? (Example prompts: If mandatory at school, would you be into taking English classes somewhere else? Why or why not?)
2. The desire to do things may change over time. For example, you may be into reading a book today but not tomorrow, right? Compared to last year, do you feel your desire or, let's say, motivation, to learn English has changed? (Example prompts: Why do you think this is so?)
3. When you learn a foreign language, you can read books or watch films or even chat with native speakers of that language to improve your level. What do you do to improve your English skills? (Example prompts: How often do you do that? / Why do you do that (activity)? / If only doing mandatory school assignments, why don't you do other activities?)
4. At times, people vary the way they speak according to the person they speak with. When you speak in English with your teacher, for example, are you more formal with him/her than when you speak with your friends? (Example prompts: Why do you do that? / How do you know you are doing it, maybe you can give me some examples? / If not, would you do it if speaking, let's say, with Queen Elizabeth or the Prime Minister of England? / Why or why not?)
5. Cultural conventions are very important here in Czech Republic: let's say, formal greetings like *dobré ráno* [good morning] versus less formal ones like *ahoj* [hi] or the fact that women are the ones who offer men the opportunity to use *ty* [informal you] rather than *vy* [formal you]. Are these cultural conventions important for you when you communicate in English? (Example prompts: Why or why not? / Do you try to learn these cultural conventions in English? Why or why not? If so, how do you do it? / Do you think these cultural conventions help you speak English better? Why or why not?)

Motometer

Considering how much **effort** you want to put into learning the material right now, please rate your motivation by drawing a horizontal line in the corresponding motometer.



Please write a brief comment (even a word if you want) about each motometer:

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____
- E. _____
- F. _____
- G. _____
- H. _____

Appendix 4

Trait Motivational Factors over Time

Variable	Research phase	Mean	95% confidence interval of mean		SD
			Lower bound	Upper bound	
Integrativeness	Start	4.82	4.58	5.07	.726
	End	4.81	4.48	4.99	.756
Instrumentality	Start	4.93	4.72	5.12	.604
	End	5.05	4.84	5.25	.601
Attitudes toward the L2 community	Start	5.45	5.29	5.65	.532
	End	5.49	5.39	5.70	.466
Cultural interest	Start	5.10	4.99	5.34	.527
	End	5.15	5.00	5.40	.588
Interest in learning pragmatics	Start	4.74	4.60	5.02	.637
	End	4.75	4.50	4.98	.715
Ideal L2 self	Start	4.99	4.89	5.25	.546
	End	5.13	5.00	5.36	.543
Ought-to L2 self	Start	4.85	4.72	5.16	.659
	End	4.91	4.69	5.12	.639
Attitudes toward learning English	Start	4.78	4.56	5.03	.699
	End	4.89	4.70	5.23	.787
Criterion measures	Start	4.95	4.71	5.18	.712
	End	5.01	4.78	5.24	.689

Note. One participant did not complete the questionnaire at the study's end; $N = 37$, start; $N = 36$, end.