

Thursday 4 June

2:20pm - 3:00pm

Room: Block Y, Room Y305

Presentation Title: Motivation and Independence: The Case of First-Year University Language Students

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Theme:	Learner and teacher experiences
Presentation Type:	Paper presentation

Abstract

This paper reports on a small-scale empirical study into student experiences of the transition from school to university, seeking to establish the affective challenges posed by greater learner independence.

Dornyei and Otto's process model of language learner motivation (1998) recognises motivation as dynamic and resulting from a variety of factors. As such, the concept suggests that a change in the learning environment can impact on learner motivation.

A pilot study with six first year Modern Languages students found that the most frequently reported changes caused by the transition from school to university were of an affective nature and were linked to the extent and quality of independence required at university.

The main part of the study therefore focuses on the effects of the perceived need for independence on the motivational profiles of the students. This part of the investigation is based on two semi-structured interviews each with nine level one Modern Languages students. The analysis will conclude that in school, many students rely on the affective support of a well-established teacher-student relationship. Such students can find it difficult to develop the strategies necessary to sustain their motivation in HE, especially when faced with perceived isolation and failure.

Dornyei, Z. and Otto, I. (1998) Motivation in action: A process model of L2 motivation. Working Papers in Applied Linguistics, 4, 43-69.

Biodata

Ulrike Bavendiek is the Director of the Institution-Wide Language Programme at the University of Liverpool, UK. Her research focuses on language learner autonomy and motivation and on the roles of reflection and awareness for language learning.

Ulrike Bavendiek completed her PhD thesis 'Portfolios and Learner Autonomy: the case of undergraduates learning German' [unpublished] in 2006.