Language learning motivation in action:
applications in the language classroom and beyond

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Aims of this session

- To share ideas about L2 motivation based on our practice and experience

- To shed light on some key theories of L2 motivation

- To discuss how useful they can be to language learners and teachers in the language classroom and beyond

Overview

- L2 motivation: what is it and why it matters

- L2 in theory

- L2 in practice

Activity

In small groups, share your experiences, views, ideas with the help of the following questions:

1. What role does motivation play when learning a foreign language?

2. Are there differences between motivation *before* and *during* the learning journey? i.e.: what are some of the:

   • key factors/reasons students choose to learn a language?

   • key factors/reasons they stick with it, enjoy it, etc?

3. What fosters students' L2 motivation/ engagement?

   (in the classroom and outside)

Defining *Motivation*

- from the Latin *motus ad ationem*, lit. 'movement towards action'

- a dynamic concept, which goes beyond simple intentions or reasons for acting or feeling a certain way

- "motivation in learning is that compulsion which keeps a person within the learning situation and encourages them to learn" (Rogers & Horrocks, 2010, p.105)

Socio-Psychological Model
(Gardner & Lamberts 1972; Gardner 1985 - CANADA)

Integrativeness: desire for interaction and "emotional identification with another cultural group" (Gardner 2001: 5)

Instrumental orientation: means-to-an-end, utilitarian motives

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Self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan 1985)

Intrinsic motivation: an inner drive, impulse, emotion, or desire that is derived from inner potentialities and latent resources.

Extrinsic motivation: an inner drive, impulse, emotion, or desire that is derived from other people, or the real world.

Intrinsically motivated activities are ones for which there is no apparent reward except the activity itself. People seem to engage in the activities for their own sake not because they lead to an extrinsic reward." Deci (1975: 23)

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Attribution theory (Weiner 1986)

Perception of past success and failure plays a vital role in shaping one's L2 motivation.

"It is generally believed that learners who attribute both success and failure to internal factors such as effort are most likely to maintain their motivation at a high level." (Richards & Schmidt 2010: 39)

Goal theories (e.g., Locke & Latham 1990)

The higher the specificity and challenge of goals, the more effort individuals are going to put into achieving them. In other words, the vaguer and easier the goals are, the least effort and motivation is likely to go into pursuing those goals.

"Goal salience" (Tremblay & Gardner 1995) represents the specificity of the learner's goals and the frequency of goal-setting strategies used.

Do 'goals' motivate language learners?

Link to video clip

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The *Ideal L2 self* : a strong vision of what it would be like to become a proficient L2 user should be a motivating drive to do what is necessary to achieve that goal, i.e. the Ideal L2 self.

The Ought-to self concerns the qualities and required actions which language learners believe they 'ought to' possess or develop.

A third, less explored element of this theory is the L2 Learning experience i.e., the situation or context where the learning takes place.

Complex Dynamic Systems (CDS)
(Larsen-Freeman and Cameron, 2008)

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CDS characteristics:

Emergent

Dynamic

Non-linear

Adaptive

Feedback sensitive

Context-dependent

Attractor states

Changing, but self-organising

Factors in the system are interdependent

CDS theories have been applied to L2 motivation and SLA
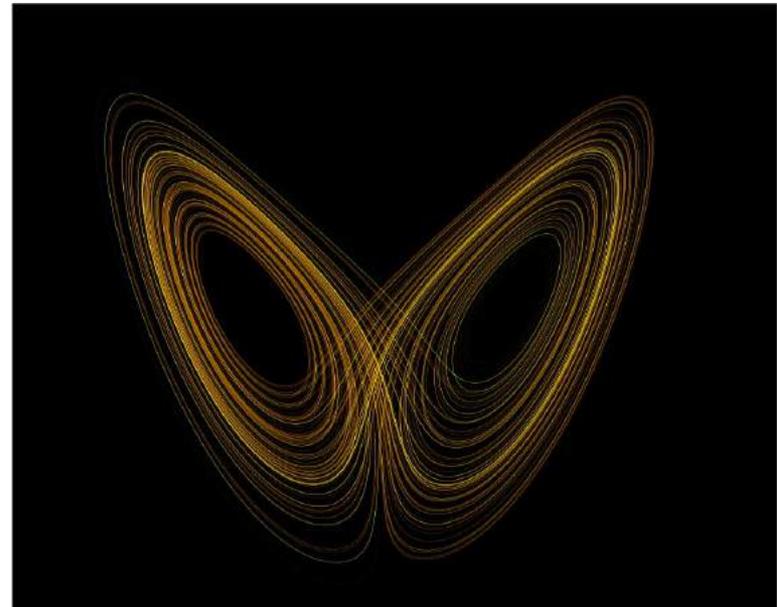
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A '**Directed Motivational Current**' (DMC) is an
intense **motivational** drive which is capable of stimulating and
supporting long-term behaviour, such as learning a language.

Characteristics include:
- Goal/vision-orientedness
- Salient, facilitative structure
- Positive emotionality
- Participant's ownership and directional control
- might be described as being "in the zone" for a sustained period of time

Fiume (River) Model
(Ferrari 2013)

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M factor 1

M factor 2

M factor 3

teacher

group

challenges & barriers
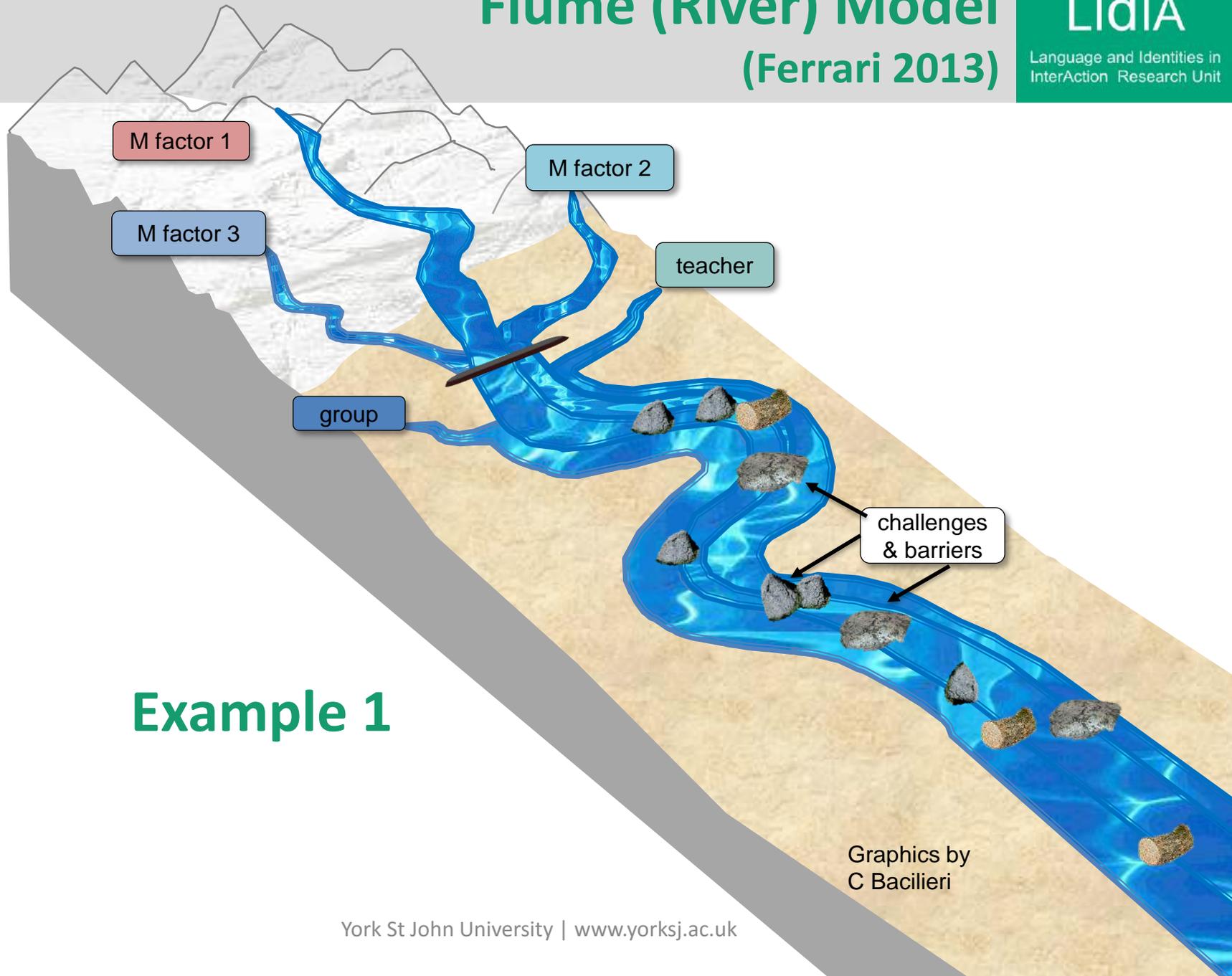
Example 1

Graphics by
C Bacilieri

Fiume (River) Model
(Ferrari 2013)

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M factor 1

M factor 2

challenges & barriers

learning situation
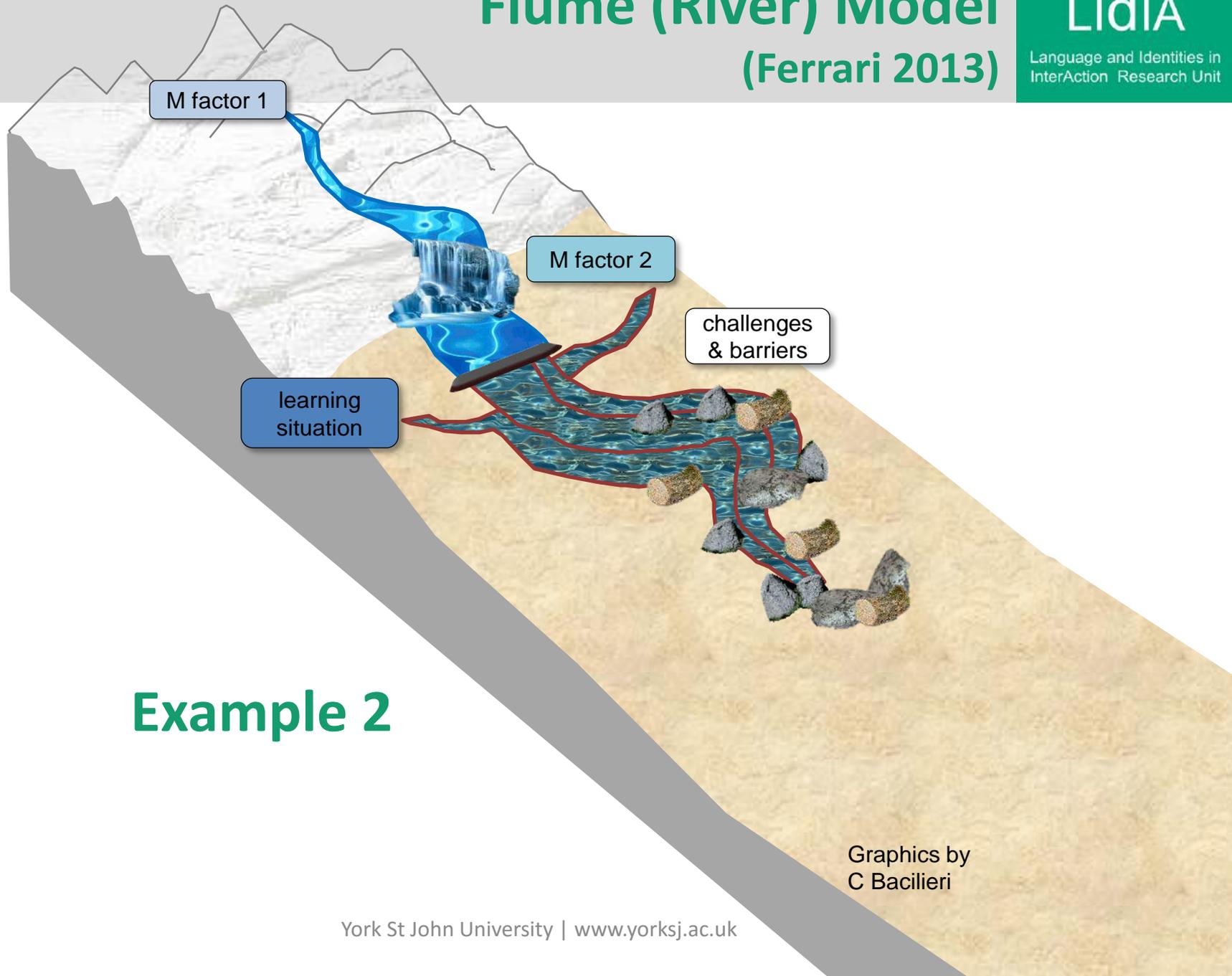
Example 2

Graphics by
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Possible applications:

- Visual metaphor or   heuristic device

  " a concept or idea that is used, not so much because it is well-supported by the evidence, but because it helps us to think about the problem."
  (SAGE Dictionary of Sociology, p.135, 2006)

- Applicable to other teaching and learning contexts

- Dialogue tool for teachers and learners

- Fostering autonomy and reflection

Activity

In small groups, discuss whether one or more of these theories/models could be useful to better explain and understand L2 motivation 'in the real world' of language teaching and learning.

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