



AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' MOTIVATION AND ATTITUDES TOWARD LEARNING JAPANESE LANGUAGE AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN SRI LANKA

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the motivation and attitudes of students in secondary schools (G.C.E. Advanced Level classes) towards learning Japanese as a foreign language (JFL) in Sri Lanka. Further, it examines whether JFL students are instrumentally or integratively motivated to study Japanese. This study adapted a quantitative research paradigm and used a questionnaire for collection of data. The study focuses on investigating the two important social psychological variables introduced in Gardner's socio educational model, which are the instrumental motivation and integrative motivation. The international version (2004) of Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) was used to examine the students' attitudes and motivation levels. A systematic sampling was used under the complex probability sampling method. The results discovered that the integrative motivation of the students was slightly greater than the instrumental motivation. Further, it was found that the students had positive attitudes towards learning situation which are language course and the language teacher. The findings shows that JFL learners in G.C.E. Advanced level classes were less likely to hold utilitarian and academic reasons for learning Japanese. However, the results proved that their attitudes towards the Japanese language community and its members were highly positive. Finally, the study introduces some pedagogical implications that would help to enhance the students' motivation and attitudes.

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1. Introduction

The study of second or foreign language acquisition has a long history of more than four decades and it was one of the rapidly expanded areas in the field of humanities (Moskovsky et. al, 2017). There is no doubt that every person has a high level of proficiency in their first language but such proficiency cannot be expected from the learners who learn a second or foreign language in formal educational settings (Alnatheer, 2013). The terms, 'foreign' and 'second' language learning, has not been clearly differentiated. Though the one of a main difference between the two terms is that the foreign language is taught as a subject in a formal education setting, in a community where the particular language is not used but a second language is used as a medium of everyday communication and is available in the community. The difference between these two is significant since it is believed that different situations and language learning environments affect the students' attitudes toward learning languages. Moreover learning a second language offers more opportunities to use and practice what they have learned in the community than learning a foreign language, which might affect the level of motivation to learn a language.

In the past few decades, there has been a growing interest about the motivation of language learning. Therefore, motivation has received much attention in the field of research regarding second or foreign language learning. Most researchers believe that a language learner with high motivation is more successful in learning a foreign language. Gardner (2010) states that "*students with higher levels of motivation will do better than students with lower levels*" (p.241). Motivation "*provides the primary impetus to initiate learning the second language and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process*" (Dörnyei, 1998, p. 117). According to Gardner (1985), motivation is the main component of effective language acquisition. It can be considered as an internal driving force which controls or directs the behaviors and activities towards something.

Most of the previous studies have mainly focused on the influence of attitudinal and motivational factors on students' academic performance (Pourfeiz, 2016). Attitudes and motivation in learning languages are significant variables which determine the success or failure in language learning. Students with low motivation and negative attitudes towards learning languages and the target language community may be low in achievement too (Gardner, 2005). These two variables are believed to have correlation with learning languages successfully. Though, it cannot be a causal relationship which cause of the successes or better achievement. Gardner (1985) describes two types of attitudes in second language learning namely educational attitudes and social attitudes. Educational attitudes include attitudes toward the teacher, the course and learning the language. On the other hand social attitudes aimed on the cultural aspects of learning languages such as attitudes toward language

community and its' culture. Gardner states that both of these attitudes are related to achievement in language learning. According to theorists and researches, the individuals who are without sufficient motivation will not be able to achieve long term goals even with a good curricular, good teaching and an ability to learn. (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998). The studies conducted over the past decades related to the relationship between motivation and attitudes have followed the initial studies of Gardner and Lambert (1972).

Gardner and Lalonde (1985) state that the motivation is influenced by two attitudinal factors. One is integrativeness which includes three subscales and the other one is attitudes towards learning situation which measures the students' attitudes toward the language teacher and language course. In his studies, Gardner states the two types of motivation for studying languages, which are integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. Further, he found that students who have integrative reasons with high level of motivation on learning the target language and positive attitudes towards target language community were successful in learning languages than others (Gardner, 2009). Both instrumental and integrative motivations influence on success or failure in language learning though Gardner & Lambert (1972) argue that integrative motivation is much important when learning foreign languages.

Gardner and Lambert (1972) argue that the learners' attitude toward the target language is one of the most significant factors affecting language learning. When someone has a positive attitude towards the target language and the community, they would like to integrate with that particular language group and the culture. Moreover they would actively motivate themselves to achieve their goal in learning languages. Therefore, it is worthwhile to identify the students' attitudes to find out whether they have favorable attitudes towards language learning, target language community, their teacher and the course (Gardner, 2009; Gardner & Lambert, 1972). Comparing the learners' attitudes and their language achievement along with motivation may help to understand the relationship among those variables. Therefore, teachers should be aware about this relationship, so that they will be able to identify the issues related to the language classroom to find better solutions (Genc & Aydin, 2017). Negative attitudes toward the target language and its community may cause students' demotivation while positive attitudes may increase the level of motivation.

In Sri Lanka, it is believed that English or other foreign languages are learnt mainly for its utilitarian value rather than integrative motivation. Because in general, Sri Lankans expect to get better careers or higher education opportunities by learning another language. Although some researchers argue that integrative orientation plays a more important role in foreign language learning while second language learners have instrumental orientation. Yet, which one is more important may depend on context to context and language to language (Gardner, et.al, 1989). Therefore, in this context, the findings of Gardner and his associates may debatable and it may not be applicable for JFL students in Sri Lanka. However, not enough researches have been carried out in the field of foreign language education in Sri Lanka related to this area. Japanese language

is being popular among Sri Lankans since mastering Japanese language opens various opportunities to Sri Lankan people and they believe that learning Japanese is economically beneficial than learning other foreign languages. Nevertheless, students' attitudes and motivation towards learning Japanese have not received much attention during the past years though learning Japanese language was introduced to the school curriculum more than 30 years ago (Silva, 2015).

The Attitude/ motivation Test Battery is being used for decades by Gardner and his associates in Canada and in many other countries such as Croatia, Japan, Poland, Romania and Spain (Gardner et. al., 1975, 1985, 2001). However, this will be the very first time that the International AMTB is used in the secondary school system in Sri Lanka as a need of filling a gap in the socio education domain of learning foreign languages with special regard for Japanese language from a quantitative perspective. Therefore, the current study is investigating JFL students' attitudes and motivation which is specific to Sri Lankan context to fulfill the research gap in this area. Moreover, this study will be important for Sri Lankan JFL teachers to identify students' attitudes toward learning Japanese and what type of motivation they possess.

2. Literature Review

The learning a second or foreign language influences the learners behavior, attitudes and thoughts and also it incorporates with the grammatical rules, structure, speech sounds, cultural values and behaviors of the target language and the community. The proficiency or the achievement of second or foreign language is influenced by a number of affective factors (Noreen et.al, 2015; Gardner, 2005). Among the factors affecting language achievement, the motivation is strongly related to achievement than other factors and it is a driving force that enables learners to expend the continuous and sustained effort to learn languages. It is being used to determine as one of the most significant factors that influence on success or failure in language learning (Anjomshoa & Sadighi, 2015; Fen Ng & Kiat Ng, 2015; Cheng & Do`rnyei, 2007).

Motivation is one of the most important prerequisites for learning languages (Matsumoto & Obana, 2001). Over the past decades, learners' attitudes, motivation, perceptions and beliefs were the most attracted areas of researchers in the field of foreign and second language learning (Gardner, 1983; Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993). Thus, the field of motivation was influenced by social-psychological approaches as one of the prominent areas during the last decades and it was initiated by Robert Gardner and Wallace Lambert until 1990. There are many motivation theories which are related to various human behaviors and psychological aspects. Nevertheless, Robert C. Gardner was the pioneer theorist among them. Therefore, the Gardners' Socio Educational model is considered as the most empirical tested motivational theory and it has been revised several times with a number of changes over the past years. This theory explains that the successful learner of a second or foreign language must be psychologically prepared to acquire different aspects of

behaviors and cultures of another community. Basically, it focuses on integrative motivation which affects the students' level of motivation towards language achievement (Taie & Afshari, 2015).

Gardner (1985) suggested three key components of L2 motivation: motivational intensity, desire to learn the language, and attitudes towards learning the language. There are two types of orientations in Gardner's socio educational model; an integrative orientation, which is an interest in interacting with the target language group and an instrumental orientation, an interest in gaining the practical advantages such as opportunities for a better career or higher studies. Gardner's socio educational model includes six conceptual constructs. Though, motivation is the main construct of the model (Gardner, 2005). The main point of the Gardner's theory was that learning a second or foreign language is different from learning the other subjects in the school curriculum since it requires openness to target language group and acquires features from the language community which are different from learners' own cultural values (Gardner, 1983).

Nevertheless, Gardner's findings have been criticized that it cannot be applied universally. Gardner (2005) emphasizes that integrative motivation is most important when learning a language though some researchers have found that instrumental motivation is important (e.g. Lukmani, 1972; Rahman, 2005; Maduerawae, 2014) specially in English as a second language (EFL) contexts. Some studies have not found any significant relationship between integrative motivation and language learning (e.g. Strong, 1984, Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Gardner, Lalonde and Moorcroft, 1985). However, Gardner (2005) argues that it is not necessary to find a strong relationship between integrative motivation and language learning and it does not mean that the findings are not validated. Further, Gardner states that motivational factors may differ according to different expectations of learners and different contexts where the target language is taught. Some other researchers argue that Gardner's explanation about integrative motivation should not be rejected or accepted until enough evidence is gained from research around the world which supports the integrative motivation.

Students' attitudes also has been considered as an important factor in socio educational model as attitudes towards the learning situation, learning languages and the target language community influence the students' level of motivation to learn another language; in other words, it serve as a foundation for motivation (Masgoret, Bernaus, & Gardner, 2001). Attitude is related to an individual's feelings towards something which reflect their emotional expressions such as likes, dislikes, beliefs, love etc. It can be either positive or negative attitudes or favorable or unfavorable feelings. However, the definition of attitudes differs from persons' point of view toward something. Hence, understanding the learners' motivation towards learning specific language and their attitudes toward language related factors, would be effective in order to support the teachers to understand their students well and it may help them to develop proper teaching materials and activities which will improve students' motivation to better achievement.

Most of the empirical studies related to foreign language learning were based on Gardner's international Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (Gardner, 2004, International AMTB Research Project), which was originated from the original test conducted by Gardner and Smythe (1975). The AMTB has been tested by the Gardner and his colleagues in Canada and many other countries like Croatia, Japan, Poland, Romania and Spain (e.g. Gardner. et.al. 1975, 1985, 2001). However, research on JFL motivation has been conducted in various contexts such in countries like Russia (Ikari, 2005), Nepal (Hashino, 2000), Taiwan (Yang, 2011), and Thailand (Narita, 1998) which has reported different motivational dimensions. In Sri Lanka, only little research has been done in the area of Japanese language education (Silva, 2015). Silva further states that some different aspects of motives such as economic, educational, practical, integrative, instrumental, passing exams, friendships employment and understanding Japanese people were discovered (e.g. Hashino, 200; Ikari, 2005; Narita, 1998). However, JFL students' attitudes and motivation has not received much attention during the past decades in Sri Lankan secondary education system.

Previous studies which were conducted relating to language learning motivation have clearly shown that its effect would be shown in a different way in different contexts. For an example students' attitudes toward the target language and community and their orientation to learn the target language may vary in different contexts (Musleh, 2011), because of the learners' individual differences. Hence, it will be very important to conduct a study to identify the relationship between JFL students' attitudes and motivation in Sri Lankan context. A study conducted by Silva (2015) was mainly directed towards the JFL students' motivation to learn Japanese in the university level and so far a study has not yet been conducted in this area which is focused on JFL students' motivation and achievement in the school level. Therefore, Silva (2015) suggests that future research on JFL student motivation in the school level should be conducted in order to improve her findings. When reviewing the previous research it seems that there is no agreement regarding which type of motivation is influenced on learners' success in learning a foreign or second language. Therefore, the current study investigates the JFL students' attitudes and what types of motivation they have to learn Japanese as a foreign language. Accordingly, 3 research questions were formed for the current study as follows.

3. Research Questions

1. Are the JFL students motivated instrumentally or integratively towards learning Japanese?
2. What are the attitudes of the students towards learning Japanese Language and Japanese community?
3. Does integrative motivation, instrumental motivation, and students' attitudes contribute to the strength of motivation?

4. Methodology

The research design of the study will be discussed in this section including the instrument, methods, data collection and analysis.

4.1 Participants

The participants were 273 JFL students who were in grade 13, the last year of the secondary school and were waiting to appear for the G.C.E. Advanced level examination which was conducted in August 2016. Out of the nine provinces in Sri Lanka, only six provinces were selected for the study since currently Japanese language studies are being taught only in these provinces. The majority of the participants were girls. In the current study, systematic sampling was used under the complex probability sampling method.

4.2 Instrument

In order to generate a large amount of data in a short period of time, a survey was conducted. It was decided to use a questionnaire as a time and cost effective tool which was suitable for gathering data from a group of people since it was easy to prepare, and quick to administer (Dörnyei, 2003). The questionnaire was adapted from Gardner's (2004) international version of 'Attitude/Motivation Test Battery' (AMTB) to assess the participants' attitudes and motivation. The original test battery consists of 12 scales with 104 items which was merged into six variables. However, in the current study, the items of the questionnaire were focused on Measuring integrative motivation, instrumental motivation, attitudes towards learning situations and students' motivation with 74 items. The scale used in the questionnaire was a six-point Likert-type scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. There was no neutral scale in this instrument. The items of the sub scales were presented in random order as same as presented in the original instrument. The questionnaire was translated in to Sinhala by two experts in the field of translation and reviewed by two experts for ensuring the validity of the instrument before conducting the pilot study to identify the discrepancies and differences with the original one. After conducting the pilot study with 30 JFL students, the questionnaire items were modified.

The reliability coefficient (Cronbach Alpha) value for the Integrative orientation , Language teacher evaluation, Language course evaluation, Motivational intensity, Desire to learn the language and Attitudes toward learning the language were greater than 0.70. Attitudes toward the target language community and Instrumental orientation were less than 0.7. However, Chronbach Alpha value for the Interest in learning foreign languages (IFL) was less than an accepted level. Therefore, the items of the construct 'Interest in Foreign Language' were removed from the instrument before conducting the main study.

4.3 Data analysis

Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS 21) was used in order to analyze the data. The statistics in the study included descriptive statistics with mean scores and multiple linear regression to examine the relationship between the variables.

5. Limitations

There are some limitations in this study. First, the researcher could not visit each and every school because the period of time was limited before the target group of students left the school. Therefore, the researcher personally administered the survey only in 12 schools and remaining questionnaires were directly sent to the principals with attached covering letter explaining the objectives of the study and instructions for answering the questionnaire. As such, the teachers had the responsibility of handing out the questionnaires and collecting them back with the answers. This situation may have an impact on the honesty of some students' remarks about the attitudes towards the teacher.

6. Result and Discussion

The total number of the participants was 273 and out of this 252 (92.3%) were girls while only 21 were (7.7%) were boys. Hence, in the current study, the number of female participants was greater than males. Among the total number of participants only 36.3% have studied Japanese language in grade 10-11 for the G.C.E. Ordinary Level examination. Furthermore, 93.4% students have attended extra classes for learning Japanese in addition to school education. However, the general objective of the students for learning Japanese were asked and 45.2% students agreed that they wanted to get better career opportunities and 40.4% students wanted to visit Japan for higher studies. Though, some students mentioned that they do not have any specific reason to learn Japanese. 3.3% have selected Japanese language because they want to live in Japan later, while 1.5% students liked to interact with Japanese people. Further, 4.4% students wanted to learn more about the Japanese culture. Among the participants, 91.2% students stated that they will continue to learn the Japanese language even after leaving the school.

As can be seen in Table 1, the mean score for intergrativeness was 5.1137 and the mean score of the attitudes towards learning situation was 5.4370. The mean of the instrumentality and motivation was 5.0586 and 5.3183 respectively. This clearly indicates that mean values for all the items are greater than 5 which towards agree to strongly agree. The JFL students were highly integrated and instrumentally motivated to learn Japanese although their integrative motivation appeared to be a little higher than their instrumental motivation. These results were attributed to the JFL students' interest to know more about the Japanese people and to learn about their society and culture and their strong positive attitudes towards Japanese people. Moreover, they had

positive attitudes toward learning situations which are the JFL teacher and the course. As well, their level of motivation to learn Japanese was high. The table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of the variables.

Table 1: The Descriptive statistics of the variables

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Integrativeness	2.96	6.00	5.1137	.62888
Attitudes	2.35	6.00	5.4370	.61546
Instrumentality	2.00	6.00	5.0586	.75666
Motivation	2.60	6.00	5.3183	.53462

However, students may have different motives when learning a language as a foreign language in Sri Lanka since their expectations are different. The purpose of learning a second language and foreign language may differ. As well, sometimes their motive might change during the period of learning Japanese (Matsumoto & Obana, 2001). In order to examine the relationship between motivation and other variables (integrativeness, attitudes toward learning situation and instrumentality), the Pearson correlation analysis was done. The correlations among the variables are shown in table 2.

Table 2: The correlation between integrativeness, attitudes toward learning situation (ALS), instrumentality and motivation

	Motivation	Integrativeness	ALS	Instrumentality
Pearson Correlation	1.000	.579**	.613**	.382**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
N	273	273	273	273

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results shows that there is a correlation between motivation and integrativeness $r=.579$, $p<0.001$. The coefficient for the relationship between motivation and attitudes towards the JFL learning context, $r=.613$, $p<0.001$ and compared to other variables it has the highest value. As well, the coefficient for the variables of motivation and instrumentality has the value: $r=.382$, $p<0.001$. All of the correlation coefficients were significant at $p<.001$.

This study discovered that there are significant relationships between integrativeness, attitudes toward learning situation (ALS), instrumentality and JFL student's motivation to learn Japanese. From the results obtain by the study; the highest correlation coefficient belongs to the relationship between motivation and attitudes towards learning situation. All the relationships were significant ($p<0.001$) and were in moderate level. The findings show that JFL students have both types of motivation though the integrativeness has a strong correlation with motivation. In other words, JFL students have favorable attitudes toward Japanese language and Japanese people which results in motivating them to learn Japanese. Further, they have positive attitudes toward their JFL teachers and the language course. However, the weakest correlation

among the relationships can be seen between motivation and instrumentality but in a moderate level which means that JFL students' integrative motivation was slightly higher than instrumental motivation. But the findings of this study contrasts with the previous findings of the research conducted with JFL university students in Sri Lanka (Silva, 2015). As discussed earlier it can be assumed that different motives may be found in different age groups, different settings for language learning, and even in different target languages. Therefore, it may be unique to university students.

The findings of empirical studies conducted by Gardner and Lambert (1959, 1960, 1972), Gardner and Smythe (1974), and Gardner (2001) agrees with the findings in this study that favorable attitudes towards the language and its' community will positively contribute to the learners' motivation to learn the language. Furthermore, these results go alongside with the empirical findings of Gardner and Smythe (1982), Gardner (1985), Gardner, Lalonde, Moorcroft and Evers (1987), which discovered that the variable of attitudes towards learning situation was strongly related with motivation and grades in English. Therefore, it is understandable that the integrative motivation is more powerful among the JFL students in secondary school level but the findings contrast with the research conducted in Australia which identified that JFL students had instrumental motivation. Therefore, JFL may offer different aspects of motivation in other contexts where Japanese is taught.

7. Conclusion

This study may contribute knowledge to JFL teachers' in Sri Lanka to understand the JFL learners' attitudes and their motivational types for designing and implementing various techniques which can change students' attitudes positively toward target language learning. Therefore, teachers should apply appropriate and effective teaching strategies that enhance students' motivation. In the same time, teachers should adjust their teaching strategies based on the students' type of motivation. Further, when designing a language course or a lesson, the teachers must take into consideration that each learner has different interests and expectations according to their need of learning.

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