A Study of motivation in Japanese language learners at college

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Abstract

For English speakers, Japanese is regarded as one of the most difficult languages. Thus, someone who decided to learn Japanese over other options, such as French, German, and Spanish, are considered to be motivated learners. However, the attrition rate is not small. What kinds of factors affect their motivations while they are learning? This study aimed to examine students’ motivation in Japanese learning. In order to grasp fluid motivational movements this research featured qualitative study from questionnaire and interviews.

The results of the research presented students’ motivational changes, evolving constantly under the various internal and external influences. The study showed that students’ experiences in Japan do not correlate with their positive motivational status. On the contrary, the students who have never been to Japan may also increase their motivation through discovering and experiencing the usefulness of the Japanese they learned. Significantly, students’ appreciation towards peers, their perception towards their improvement, their interests in culture, and their perception of usefulness of learning were observed. The finding also demonstrated those factors did not exist discretely but continuously.

On the other hand, the finding also showed demotivating factors. The results from both the questionnaire and interviews demonstrated that the most significant demotivating factors came from beyond the L2 (Second Language) context. Some findings showed multi-facets of one factor of motivation.
First and foremost, I would like to thank the participants of this research. They willingly offered their precious time and provided me with their insights for this study. I believe that their honest narratives substantiated the significance of this study.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Dr. Yan Wang. She encouraged me and gave me faith in my abilities by giving me autonomy in designing courses, creating exams, and executing events. Her guidance and advice allowed me to improve as a Japanese teacher. As a committee chair, she sharpened my ideas and gave me sound advice. Without her guidance and persistent help, this thesis would not have been possible. I also sincerely appreciate the supports of my second committee member, Dr. Thomas Wolff. He provided me with advice from the insights of educational psychology.

Furthermore, I would like to thank Japanese students. It was a pleasure to instruct them for the past two years. Their dedicated attitudes to improve their skills impressed and motivated me. I will treasure each interaction with them all my life.
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Chapter 1
Introduction

Background

For English speakers, Japanese is regarded as one of the most challenging languages. According to the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) (n.d.), Japanese was classified as a Category Four language, along with Arabic, Chinese, and Korean, meaning that it takes English speaking students the longest time to acquire. This is contrary to Category One languages, such as Spanish and French. The FSI (n.d.) estimates that 2200 hours are needed for Category Four languages, while 575 to 600 hours are needed for Category One languages to achieve the same proficiency level (Thompson, 2004). Thus, many students who decided to learn Japanese over other options, such as French, German, and Spanish, are considered to be motivated learners.

Despite the language’s difficulty, Japanese language learners have been increasing in the United States. The Japan Foundation (2013) reported that the number of Japanese learners in the United States was 155,939 in 2012, which increased 10.4% from that of 2009. This rate of growth is higher than the average growth in the number of Japanese learners worldwide, which was 9.1%. Among them, 62,957 learners were from institutions of higher education, such as universities or community colleges (Japan foundation, 2013).

However, the attrition rate for Japanese learners is not small. Mills, Samuels, and Sherwood reported that the attrition rate was “as much as 80%” (Mills, Samuels, & Sherwood, 1987, p.19). Kataoka (1986) examined reasons for attrition of Japanese
language learners at three different universities. She discussed that 46% of students mentioned a heavy course load and/or conflict, 21% graduated and/or transferred from the school, and six percent gave poor performance as the most likely reason for discontinuing Japanese (Kataoka, 1986). For most students, Japanese is just one of the classes they take. Students have few opportunities to apply what they learned from Japanese classes in the United States, even though they spend time and make the effort to acquire the language. Saito-Abbott and Samimy (1997) argued that motivation is demonstrated as one of the crucial factors to predict attrition in Japanese classes (Saito-Abbott & Samimy, 1997). Also, many language teachers agree that motivation plays a significant role in language learning. Therefore, it is critical to examine students’ motivation.

Motivation for the Second Language Acquisition (SLA) has been researched for more than five decades (Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2012). The first theory for SLA was introduced by Gardner and Lambert (1972). They introduced two types of motivational orientations, instrumental and integration. Instrumental orientation refers to language learning for immediate or pragmatic goals, while integrative orientation refers to language learning for personal desire for growth and cultural enrichment (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). While Gardner and Lambert’s approach grasped the more general and stable aspects of motivation, Dörnyei (2001) claimed that motivation was not stable, but rather dynamic and argued that it is constantly evolving through various internal and external factors (Dörnyei, 2001).
Problems

Even though people acknowledge that motivation has a significant impact on language learning, none of the available motivational theories offered comprehensive overviews (Dörnyei & Skehan, 2005). Especially few research projects have been conducted to examine Japanese learners’ motivation, compared with the amount of research for commonly taught foreign languages, such as Spanish and French, or English as a Second Language (ESL). Therefore, it is critical to conduct studies on motivation for Japanese in order to examine effective language learning from the perspective of pedagogy.

Purpose of This Study

This study aimed to examine students’ motivation for Japanese learning. Findings were expected to be useful to Japanese language teachers for understanding students’ motivation and taking those into teaching practice. In order to examine the changes of student motivation, this study focused on the changes of students’ motivation over time. According to Ushioda (2001), qualitative research allows researchers to examine complex processes of thinking and to discover the nature of targeted subject (Ushioda, 2001). Therefore, it is appropriate to feature basic qualitative research in order to investigate movements in motivation. The samples were collected via anonymous questionnaires and follow-up interviews.

This research was held in a liberal arts college in a suburban area of the Midwest in the United States. The researcher had no intention of generalizing the results of this study. Instead, the emphasis here instead to analyze the motivational improvement and attrition of the students in this particular research setting in-depth.
Research Questions

The study aimed to explore students’ motivational change over time. Therefore, the research questions focused on investigating initial motivation, their changes over time, and what kinds of factors affected motivation. The study also questioned why motivation may vary depending on the learners’ proficiency levels of Japanese. Many students decide to learn Japanese because of their interests in culture, such as anime and video games. Moreover, some students study elementary levels of Japanese in order to complete the foreign language requirement for graduation. On the other hand, students in higher levels of Japanese take Japanese classes through their own initiative and have different views towards learning Japanese. Hence, differences in students’ motivation due to the level of Japanese proficiency were also examined. The research questions are listed below.

1. What is the initial motivation for American students to study Japanese?
2. How does their initial motivation change over time? What kinds of factors motivate students’ learning? What kinds of factors demotivate their learning?
3. Are there any correlations between the Japanese proficiency levels and types of students’ motivating factors?
Summary of This Chapter

This chapter introduced the topic and the background. Japanese language is known as one of the most difficult languages. Thus, students who decided to learn Japanese over other options, such as French, German, and Spanish, are considered to be motivated learners. However, the number of students who discontinues learning Japanese is not small. Many teachers agree that motivation play a significant role in language learning. Nonetheless, none of the available motivational theories offered comprehensive overviews (Dörnyei & Skehan, 2005). Especially few research projects have been conducted to examine Japanese learners’ motivation. Therefore, this study aimed to examine students’ motivation to learn Japanese in order to explore effective language learning from the perspective of pedagogy.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

In this chapter previous research related to the focus of this study will be presented. The purpose of this study is to examine the process of student motivation towards learning Japanese. The first phase discusses the definition of motivation according to educational psychology and the definition of motivation within the field of the Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Then the main theoretical backgrounds of motivation in the SLA are summarized. In the third phase, the theoretical frameworks are narrowed down to internal and external factors.

What is Motivation?

Many teachers agree that motivation is one of the most important aspects influencing students’ success or failure in learning. Nonetheless, none of the available motivational theories offered comprehensive overviews on motivation (Dörnyei & Skehan, 2005). The concept of “motivation” is abstract and can be defined in multiple ways. According to Dörnyei (2001), in educational psychology, ‘motivation’ is seen as a broad umbrella term that covers a variety of meanings, concerning why people decided to do something, how long they are willing to sustain the activity, and how much effort they are going to contribute (Dörnyei, 2001). Convington (1998) compared motivation to the concept of gravity, since it was easy to describe, but hard to define (Convington, 1998).

Similarly, even in second language acquisition, motivation lacks consensus on its definition among researchers. For instance, Gardener (1985) asserted that motivation is composed of four elements: a goal, a desire to attain the goal, favorable attitudes for
learning the language, and effortful behavior to the effect (Gardener, 1985). While Gardener also stressed that the goal has to be related to language learning, Oxford and Shearin (1994) pointed out that what is “related to language learning” definition is arguable (Oxford & Shearin, 1994). Dörnyei (2001) claimed motivation in SLA is necessarily multi-faced and needs particular care to define its core features. Nevertheless, researchers often take the concept of motivation for granted and refer to it without specifying its features, whether it is about affect, motivated behavior, set of beliefs, or motivation tests. This is because an absolute concept of 'motivation' does not exist (Dörnyei, 2001).

In summary, in the study of educational psychology, motivation lacks consensus of definition and covers a variety of meanings. This characteristic is reflected upon the studies on motivation in the SLA.

**Theories of Motivation in the Second Language Acquisition**

Research on motivation in educational psychology has been developing its theoretical frameworks in order to explain human behavior and explicit constructs of motivation in learning. Similarly in the SLA, motivation has been studied for over five decades.

Theories of motivation in the SLA were grounded by Gardner and Lambert (1972), who proposed the dichotomy or interplay of two motivational orientations: instrumental and integrative. Instrumental orientation refers to language learning for immediate or pragmatic goals, such as better career prospects or financial gains. On the contrary, integrative orientation refers to language learning for personal desire for growth
and cultural enrichment through contact with the target language community (Gardner & Lambert, 1972).

Also, influenced from the cognitive theories in educational psychology, researchers shifted to more situated analysis of motivation in specific learning settings. Dörnyei (1994) constructed the framework in terms of classroom settings. This was called the second language (L2) motivation oriented framework, which contained three different aspects: the language level, the learner level, and the learning situation level. The language level refers to motivational orientations, such as culture, community, and pragmatic goals, which were traditionally seen as the integrative and instrumental orientations from Gardner and Lambert (1972). The learner level concerns personal traits regarding learning processes, consisting of need for achievement (variation in performance depending on individual’s needs) and self-confidence (language use anxiety and self-evaluation of L2 proficiency). The learning situation level has three sub-components: the course-specific motivational components (teaching materials and the teaching method), teacher-specific motivational components (impacts from teachers), and group-specific motivational components (characteristics of the learner group) (Dörnyei, 1994).

Gardner and Lambert’s approach focused on the more general and stable aspects of motivation such as language attitudes, beliefs, and values. Also, the L2 oriented framework from Dörnyei (1994) did not depict the flow of motivation. However, more situated analysis of motivation in the classroom setting drew attention to the unstable nature of motivation during the learning process (Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2012).
Under this circumstance, Dörnyei (2001) introduced the process-oriented approach. He argued that motivation is not stable, but rather dynamic, evolving constantly under the various internal and external influences that the individual is exposed to (Dörnyei, 2001). Dörnyei (2001) defined the process-oriented approach with three phases: the first phase, ‘choice motivation’ refers to getting started and to setting goals; the second phase, ‘executive motivation’ refers to carrying out tasks to maintain motivation; and in the third phase, ‘motivational retrospection’ refers reconsideration for performances and determination for the future activities (Dörnyei, 2001).

The process-oriented approach assumed that each learning process occurred distinctively and attempted to draw the line between each phase. However, this made motivational research in SLA difficult to account for. Dörnyei (2012) claimed theoretical boundaries seen in the process-oriented approaches, developed a different framework and introduced the Dynamic System Approach (Dörnyei, 2012).

From the aspect of the Dynamic System approach, interaction is not only held between the individuals and learning situations, but among broader multiple components from individuals and social environments (Dörnyei, 2012). For instance, traditionally individual differences are seen as stable and monolithic characteristics. Thus, modifications in learning situations in response to individual differences are examined. On the contrary, in the dynamic system approach, development is seen by non-linear growth. Characteristics of individuals are constantly evolved by interactions with social contexts (Dörnyei, 2009b) In the pre-existing framework, the focus is interactions between individuals and learning situations, while in the dynamic system approach, the main issue is how individuals are transformed by facing and interacting with social
environments. Therefore, the pre-existing process-oriented approaches turned out to be irrelevant, and “self” representing individuals became the focus in the dynamic system approach.

Dörnyei (2009a) developed his theory within the last decade and proposed the L2 Motivational Self-System, which attempted to explain the broader complexities of language learning and language use (Dörnyei, 2009a). According to Dörnyei (2009a), the L2 Motivational Self-System is drawn from two aspects of self-theory in psychology: possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986) and self-discrepancy theory (Higgins, 1987). It holds two sets of “Self” components: the Ideal L2 Self and the Ought-to L2 Self as well as the L2 Learning Experience. The Ideal L2 Self represents desirable self-images as a second language user. The Ought-to L2 Self refers to future self-images, which come from pressure to meet expectations from others such as family or friends, or to potential negative outcomes to be avoided (Dörnyei, 2009a). Therefore, both the Ideal L2 Self and the Ought-to L2 Self present potential future images. The frameworks of the Ideal L2 and the Ought-to L2 Self reflect the Dynamic System Approach, whose focus is how individuals evolve themselves through the interaction with social contexts.

In summary, theories in the L2 motivation were grounded by Gardner and Lambert (1972). They introduced dichotomous motivational orientations: integrated and instrumentations. Influenced by trends in educational psychology, motivational study in SLA was shifted to specific learning settings. Dörnyei (1994) introduced the L2 motivation-oriented framework in terms of classroom perspectives. However, the introduction of this motivational study in SLA in the viewpoints of specific learning settings highlighted fluid rather than stable motivation. This triggered the process-
oriented approach from Dörnyei (2001), which showed development in motivation depending on individual differences and learning situations. Further, in order to explain interaction among multi-factors with the aspect of the Dynamic System Approach, Dörnyei (2009a) developed his theory and constructed the L2 Motivational Self-System.

**Theories of Motivation: Intrinsic and Extrinsic**

The dynamic system approach reflected how motivation can be evolved through interactions within the social context. While in Dörnyei’s L2 Motivational Self-System the focus is “Self,” this section focused on interactions from the domains of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

Deci and Ryan (1985, 2002) distinguished motivation based on the different reasons or goals to give rise to an action in the Self-Determination Theory. The basic distinction of motivation is intrinsic and extrinsic. According to Deci and Ryan, intrinsic motivation derives from inherent satisfaction for certain activities rather than external prods such as pragmatic goals, pressures from expectations, or rewards. Therefore, the intrinsic motivation lies in the relation between individuals and activities. On the other hand, the extrinsic motivation refers to motives from some separable outcomes, which contrasts with intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2002).

The Self-Determination Theory does not perceive the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as discrete but integrated. Extrinsic factors, such as social contexts, rewards, and communications or feedbacks from others can be internalized and enhance intrinsic motivation when three fundamental needs—autonomy, feelings of competence, and relatedness—are nurtured. Autonomy concerns the self-initiation and regulation on behavior. It can be nurtured in a variety of ways, such as providing appropriate choices,
promoting self-initiation, and minimizing the use of controls. The feelings of competence refer to the capacity to carry out actions effectively. It can be promoted by providing guidelines and feedbacks in order to help learners become more skillful and effective. Relatedness refers to a sense of belonging with others in community, involving a sense of affection and security. Deci and Ryan (2002) suggested that the internalization of the external factors is essential to maintain intrinsic motivation. People can become more self-determined through the internalization process (Deci & Ryan, 2002).

Noels (2001, 2009) stated that the Self-Determination Theory is useful to explain the L2 learning process. She argued significance of others for learners and described how people surrounding learners, such as teachers, family members, and members of the L2 community influence them (Noels, 2001, 2009).

Williams and Burden (1997) also perceived motivation from intrinsic and extrinsic perspectives. They argued that fundamentally motivation affects learners’ decision-making. The decisions learners make vary depending on their characteristics. In addition, extrinsic factors such as people surrounding leaners, society, and culture affect learners’ decision-making. Therefore, motivation is dynamically interactive. Williams and Burden (1997) constructed a theoretical framework in terms of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Williams & Burden, 1997). According to the framework, the most significant internal factors reflecting on learners’ decision-making have nine components, and each of them have sub-components respectively. There is no priority among the listed components. In addition to internal factors, learners are affected by external factors. External factors can influence each other. For instance, differences in learning environments reflect on significant others. If learners are from homeschooling,
significance of parents is larger in comparison with teachers and peers. Thus, interaction can occur among external factors. Also, those external factors can reflect on internal factors in a dynamic way. For instance, supportive learning environments may foster students’ wills to learn and enhance their internal motivation (Williams & Burden, 1997).
## Intrinsic factors

1. **Intrinsic interest of activity**
   - Arousal of curiosity
   - Optimal degree of challenge (zone of next potential)

2. **Perceived value of activity**
   - Personal relevance
   - Anticipated value of outcomes
   - Intrinsic value attributed to the activity

3. **Sense of agency**
   - Locus of causality (origin versus pawn)
   - Locus of control re process and outcomes
   - Ability to set appropriate goals

4. **Mastery**
   - Feelings of competence
   - Awareness of developing skill and mastery in a chosen area
   - Self-efficacy

5. **Self-concept**
   - Realistic awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses in skills required
   - Personal definitions and judgments of success and failure
   - Self-worth concern
   - Learned helplessness

6. **Attitudes**
   - To language learning in general
   - To the target language
   - To the target language community and culture

7. **Other affective states**

8. **Developmental age and stage**

9. **Gender**

## Extrinsic factors

1. **Significant others**
   - Parents
   - Teachers
   - Peers

2. **The nature of interaction with significant others**
   - Mediated learning experiences
   - The nature and amount of feedback
   - Rewards
   - The nature and amount of appropriate praise
   - Punishments, sanctions

3. **The learning environment**
   - Comfort
   - Resources
   - Time of day, week, year
   - Size of class and school
   - Class and school ethos

4. **The broader context**
   - Wider family networks
   - The local education system
   - Conflicting interests
   - Cultural norms
   - Societal expectations and attitudes

**Table 1. Williams and Burden’s (1997) Framework of L2 Motivation**
Williams and Burden (1997) claimed motivation is complex and characteristics of learners vary depending on individuals. Thus, taking those components into consideration, this study encouraged teachers to arouse learners’ curiosities, assigning challenging but encouraging tasks depending on learners, to involve learners in the process of decision making about their language learning, and to assist them to set their goals. As a result, it helps enhance students’ intrinsic motivation (Williams & Burden, 1997).

In summary, the L2 motivation study with the aspect of intrinsic and extrinsic is featured by various researchers. Deci and Ryan (1985, 2002) introduced The Self-Determination Theory, which argued the binary perspectives are not discrete but integrated. The integration with extrinsic motivation is essential to maintain intrinsic one. Noels supported (2001, 2009) the usefulness of the Self-Determination Theory to explaining the motivation of L2 learners. Williams and Burden (1997) also developed the L2 theoretical framework, based on the intrinsic and extrinsic perspectives, that argued those components can be integrated and developed in a dynamic way (Williams & Burden, 1997).
Summary of This Chapter

This chapter summarized the literature related to motivational studies in the SLA. The purpose of this study was to examine the fluid movement in motivation over time. In the beginning, the definition of the term ‘motivation’ is discussed. It is followed by the literature reviews of theoretical backgrounds and the L2 motivation research with the aspect of intrinsic and extrinsic focus on motivational changes over time.

The term ‘motivation’ allows various definitions, accounting for why people decide to initiate certain activities, how long they are willing to sustain them, and how hard they are going to achieve. The theory of the L2 motivation was grounded by Gardner and Lambert (1972). While the theory explained the temporal state of the motivation, Dörnyei (2001) regarded motivation as fluid, evolving various factors. He developed various theories such as the process-oriented approach (1994) and introduced the L2 Motivational Self-System (2009) in order to explain interactions among multifactors with the aspect of the dynamic system approach.

Deci and Ryan introduced (1985, 2002) the Self-Determination Theory: motivation theory in terms of intrinsic and extrinsic aspects. Noels claimed (2001, 2009) that the Self-Determination Theory is useful to explain the L2 motivation. Also, the L2 motivation framework from Williams and Burden coincides with the Self-Determination Theory in many aspects. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is not regarded as separate but intermingling. They can be internalized in a dynamic way.
Chapter 3

Methodology

This chapter will present the methods of data collection and analysis. The purpose of the study is to investigate the process of student motivation towards learning Japanese. A detailed description of the design, the role of the researcher, description of the data sources/participants, procedures, description of data collection methods, data analysis, and measures to address validity and reliability, follows.

Design

In this study, the basic qualitative research was taken. The focus is not to generalize the idea from samples, but to understand how fluid motivation changes over time. It was aimed to examine empirical factors reflected on students’ learning motivations. Merriam (2009) defined the major characteristics of qualitative research and stated, “The focus is on understanding the meaning of experience” (Merriam, 2009, p. 19). Also, Ushioda (2001) stated that motivation is not defined by observable and measurable activities, but is underlain in thinking and belief. By qualitative aspects, motivation will be viewed a complex of thinking processes, enabling the nature of its characteristics targeted movements (Ushioda, 2001). Therefore, the basic qualitative research is considered to be appropriate. The researcher collected the data by conducting the combination of anonymous questionnaires and the follow-up interviews.

Role of Researcher

The researcher was employed by a liberal arts college, where participants were studying. The researcher teaches upper-elementary and intermediate classes. 11 out of 34
questionnaire respondents have been or were taught by the researcher, while the other 23 participants have been or were taught by the other teachers. Among the 11 students, four have agreed to take interviews. The researcher has known those students through extra curricular activities, such as cultural events and club activities, but were not taught by the researcher.

**Data Sources and Participants**

Participants in the questionnaire and interview were students enrolled in elementary to advanced Japanese classes with the exception of one student who is not currently registered in Japanese but took it until the previous year. All of them are studying at the same small liberal arts college in a suburban setting. Questionnaire data was collected from 34 students during the first phase, and among them 11 students participated in the follow-up interviews. The demographic information of the participants is summarized in Tables 2 and 3 below.

*Table2. Summary of Demographic Information of Participants of Questionnaire  (N=34)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Female (14), Male (13), Others (7)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Freshman (12), Sophomore (12),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Junior (5), Senior (3), Others (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major</td>
<td>Japanese (7), Japanese &amp; others (5),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asian Studies (1),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asian studies &amp; others (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Others (19), Undecided (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class</td>
<td>Elementary (18), Upper-elementary (7),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intermediate (4), Advanced (4), Others (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever</td>
<td>Yes (10), No (24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>been to Japan?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.

Summary of Demographic Information of Participants of Follow-up Interview (N=11)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Female (7), Male (2), Others (2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Freshman (5), Sophomore (3),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Junior (2), Senior (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major</td>
<td>Japanese (3), Japanese &amp; others (3),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asian Studies (1), Others (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class</td>
<td>Elementary (5), Upper-elementary (3),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intermediate (1), Advanced (1), Others (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever been to Japan?</td>
<td>Yes (5), No (6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Procedures**

The questionnaire was conducted at the end of the semester. The reason for conducting the questionnaire was a way to collect the data, and to focus the main issues from a relatively larger number of participants rather than interviews. Potential participants were informed of the purpose of the research and the ethical consideration that personal information, such as individual names, age, the name of the school, and their year of school would not be disclosed through the document. The questionnaire was distributed as a form of optional homework for elementary, intermediate and advanced Japanese classes. In the upper-elementary class it was completed during class time. The participants took three to five minutes to complete the questionnaire.

For the follow-up interviews, the participants were recruited from the respondent of the questionnaire. In the questionnaire, students were asked to provide their name and email addresses if they were willing to participate in a follow-up interview.
Approximately three to five weeks after the questionnaire was conducted, the researcher contacted the participants who expressed interest in taking interviews via email, and individual in-person interviews were held based on the students’ consent.

**Description of Data Collection methods**

**Document Data: Questionnaire:**

The present study was organized into two phases. In the first phase, data was collected through a questionnaire. An anonymous questionnaire (See Appendix A) was designed. It consisted of three sections of questions: student brief demographic information, students’ initial motivation, and their current motivation. The researcher created multiple-choice questions for assessing students’ initial and current motivation for the convenience of categorizing data and the time saving for the respondents. In the second part, the researcher first asked participants to choose their initial motivation. Then, the researcher asked students to choose their level of the current motivation from “-2” to “+2” in comparison with their initial motivational level. Subsequently, if students regarded their levels of motivation as 0 to “+2,” they were asked to choose their motivating factors. On the other hand, if students regarded their levels of motivation as “-2” to “-1,” they were asked to choose from the demotivating factors. When students had multiple factors for their initial and current motivation, they were asked to choose up to three of their strongest. Additionally, free open space was provided in the questions of initial and current motivation to allow students to submit additional information freely.

**Oral Data: Individual Interview:**

In the second phase, the research was undertaken through interviews. The participants were recruited from the questionnaire. The follow-up interviews were semi-
structured. Interviews were initiated by the similar questions as the ones from the questionnaire. However, the following questions varied depending on the flow of the interviews. The interviews were approximately 20-60 minutes in duration. The interviews were audio recorded.

**Data Analysis**

According to Merriam (2009), one of the characteristics of qualitative research is inductive. Consistent with it, this research was also inductive, aiming to discover main themes from scattered personal empirical stories.

**Questionnaire Data Analysis:**

In the beginning, the researcher organized the information in the table based on the participants’ demographic backgrounds, such as classes they belonged to, year in school, major, and whether they have been to Japan. Subsequently, duplicate participants responses were highlighted and responses in the open space were examined in order to understand individual experiences. Ushioda (2001) claimed that even if the classification for data can be somehow arbitrary, it is necessary to classify descriptions in order to turn the mass of data to a meaningful one (Ushioda, 2001). Therefore, referring to Ushioda, all the responses from the questionnaire were classified and 11 dimensions emerged. The following tables (Table 4, 5) present components of each dimension in motivating and demotivating factors respectively.

1. Intrinsic interest of activity
2. Perceived value/a lack of value of activity
3. Feeling of competence/incompetence
4. Interests in culture/language
5. Feelings about Japanese-speaking countries or people
6. Identity factors
7. Significant others related to Japanese
8. Language-related enjoyment/liking/disliking
9. Personal goals
10. External pressures/incentives
11. Affective factors from beyond the L2(Second Language) context

Table 4. The Classification of Motivating Factors from the Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal factors</th>
<th>External factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Intrinsic interest of activity</strong></td>
<td><strong>7. Significant others related to Japanese learning</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Want to learn something challenging.</td>
<td>• Like the teacher of Japanese classes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Like people (particular person or not) who are learning Japanese in school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Perceived value of activity</strong></td>
<td><strong>8. Language-related enjoyment/liking</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Able to use what they learned in real situations.</td>
<td>• Enjoy the activities in Japanese class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Like tutoring sessions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Feeling of competence</strong></td>
<td><strong>9. Personal goals</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Able to see development in the Japanese language.</td>
<td>• Want to study abroad in Japan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Want to use Japanese in future career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Want to travel to Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. Interests in language/culture</strong></td>
<td><strong>10. External pressures/incentives</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be interested in culture (pop/traditional).</td>
<td>• Want to complete my language requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be interested in Japanese society (social norms/customs).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be interested in the Japanese language.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5. Feelings about Japanese-speaking countries or people</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Want to talk to Japanese friends or family using Japanese.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6. Identity factors</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be of Japanese heritage and want to know more about family roots.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Table 5. The Classification of Demotivating Factors from the Questionnaire**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal factors</th>
<th>External factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Perceived a lack of value of activity</td>
<td>8. Language-related disliking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Do not feel like they will be able to use</td>
<td>• Japanese has too much homework.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese outside classes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Just want to learn conversational Japanese, not</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>written.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Japanese language is difficult.</td>
<td>• Grade in Japanese will be bad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11. Affective factors from beyond the L2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Other classes are more interesting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Have concerns out of school.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Individual Interview Data Analysis:**

All interview data was transcribed after each interview. By referring to Merriam (2009), the qualitative analysis process was conducted. First of all, the transcripts were examined individually and assigned codes in order to organize the data. Merriam stated (2009) that “Coding is nothing more than assigning some sort of shorthand designation to various aspects of your data so that you can easily retrieve specific pieces of the data” (Merriam, 2009, p173). In accordance with this process, the data was reduced as a form of single words or short phrases, such as “interest in culture” or “Goal”. Then, repeated words among the responses were noted and similar codes were combined in order to form categories. This process was replicated across the data sources. Following this process, the researcher compiled and categorized those segments into more inductive concepts.

In the process of categorization, the researcher referred to the classification of motivating and demotivating factors from the questionnaire (Table 4, 5). After completing the categorization, an additional dimension was observed and several
different components from the result of the questionnaire emerged in the interviews. The classification of interview results is presented in Tables 6 and 7 respectively.
Table 6. The Classification of Motivating Factors from the Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal factors</th>
<th>External factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Intrinsic interest of activity</strong></td>
<td><strong>7. Significant others related to Japanese learning</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Want to learn something challenging.</td>
<td>• Like the teacher of Japanese classes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Like the teacher of Japanese classes.</td>
<td>• Like people (particular person or not) who are learning Japanese.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Perceived value of activity</strong></td>
<td><strong>8. Language-related enjoyment/liking</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Able to use what they learned in real situations.</td>
<td>• Enjoy the activities in Japanese class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Enjoy the activities in Japanese class.</td>
<td>• Like tutoring sessions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Like tutoring sessions.</td>
<td>• Homework is useful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Feeling of competence</strong></td>
<td><strong>9. Personal goals</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Able to see development in the Japanese language.</td>
<td>• Want to study abroad in Japan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Want to study abroad in Japan.</td>
<td>• Want to use Japanese in future career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Want to use Japanese in future career</td>
<td>• Want to live in Japan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. Interests in language/culture</strong></td>
<td><strong>10. External pressures/incentives</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be interested in culture (pop/traditional).</td>
<td>• Want to complete my language requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be interested in Japanese society (social norms/customs).</td>
<td>• Able to get good grades.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be interested in the Japanese language.</td>
<td>• Actively involved in Japanese club.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be interested in foreign languages in general.</td>
<td>• Add Japanese in minor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5. Feelings about Japanese-speaking countries or people</strong></td>
<td><strong>11. Desired levels of L2 competence</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Want to talk to Japanese friends or family using Japanese.</td>
<td>• Want to be proficient in Japanese.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Positive experiences of being in Japan or talking to Japanese people.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7. The Classification of Demotivating Factors from the Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal factors</th>
<th>External factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Feeling of competence</strong></td>
<td><strong>8. Language-related disliking</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Japanese language is difficult.</td>
<td>• Feel lost in classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Personal goals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Concern about successful study abroad.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. External pressures/incentives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Grade in Japanese will be bad.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Change in textbooks.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Withdraw oneself from Japanese club.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Received a scholarship.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Affective factors from beyond the L2 context</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Have concerns out of school.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Have so many things to do besides Japanese.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Do not get along with roommates.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be Distracted by other things.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Homesick</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the questionnaire, students were asked to mark up to three of their strongest motivating or demotivating factors. This only allowed participants to choose either motivating or demotivating factors. By contrast, in the interviews, the researcher coded and noted all the factors regardless of the number or the type of factors. Therefore, it is likely that some of the factors were taken as motivating and some were regarded as demotivating, even though those factors were from the same person.

In addition, in order to grasp changes in motivation over time, the process of changes from the beginning of learning Japanese and the current state were examined in the interviews. Thus, motivating/demotivating factors in the interviews included those participants who do not currently hold those views, but had experienced them before.
This is different from the results of the questionnaire, which approached discrete participants’ initial and current motivation factors. All the factors which emerged in the interviews were taken equally and categorized using the frameworks from Tables 6 and 7.

**Measure to Address Validity and Reliability**

Qualitative research could be criticized due to the ambiguity of the data and the subjective analysis compared to quantitative research, in which the data explicitly displays results of experiments using numbers. In this research, “member checks” (Merriam, 2009, p217): verification by participants, was conducted in order to assure whether transcriptions from interviews accurately matched the reality of participants’ responses. This confirmation process was held through exchanging emails with the participants.

In addition, generalizability concerning findings of one study can be applicable to the others, has been introduced to enhance the issues of validity and reliability (Merriam, 2009). This research is a small-scale exploratory study held in a liberal arts college in a suburban setting. The researcher has no intention of generalizing the results of this study. The emphasis here is to conduct an in-depth analysis of the development and attrition of the students’ motivation of Japanese-learning in this particular research setting. Thus, strategies to promote transferability were employed in order to reinforce the weakness of the generalizability. Merriam claimed (2009) detailed descriptions of the data, setting, and especially findings increase transferability, because detailed descriptions allow readers of the research to compare with their situations (Merriams, 2009). Hence, detailed descriptions about participants’ level in Japanese class, gender, year in school, and if they had been to Japan were included. Moreover, audio records from interviews allowed the
researcher to employ participants’ language and verbatim accounts when reporting findings as a form of direct quotes.

Related to generalizability and transferability, subjectivity, referring to “the process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher, the ‘human as [an] instrument’” (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, as cited in Merriam, 2009, p219), is another component to be considered in order to enhance validity and reliability. Two strategies were exercised to promote objectivity in the current study. A field log was kept as a way to document dates, times, places, and people involved. Also, during the data collection and analysis process, a reflex journal was kept in order to self-reflect the process of research and to control for researcher’s possible bias in the study into consideration.

Therefore, member checks, the detailed descriptions about the participants’ background, direct quotes from interviews, the field log, and reflex journal were employed in order to increase validity and reliability of the present study.
Summary of This Chapter

This chapter illustrated the methods of data collection and analysis. The basic qualitative research method was conducted in order to investigate movements in motivation. The samples were obtained via anonymous questionnaire and follow-up interviews in order to grasp main issues from the relatively larger population as well as to explore the movements of fluid motivation in-depth. In the questionnaire, the participants were asked their initial and current motivation discreetly with a form of multiple-choice questions. On the other hand, in the interviews, the participants were asked their process of changes from the beginning of learning Japanese and the current state. The key words from the collected data from the questionnaire and interviews were classified respectively in several groups. In the end of this chapter, the issues of validity and reliability were discussed. In order to enhance the validity and reliability, several strategies, such as member checks and direct quotes from interviews, were employed.
Chapter 4

Results

This chapter will present the findings derived from gathered data through the questionnaire and the interview. The purpose of this research was to examine the process of student motivation towards learning Japanese at a liberal arts college in the United States. The basic qualitative method was employed in order to approach empirical factors to examine participants’ learning motivations. The findings from the questionnaire and interviews were discussed separately due to the difference in sampling, analyzing process, and the results. Moreover, along with the induced data from the questionnaire and interviews, narratives, as a form of “direct quotes” will be provided. This is because narratives offer participants’ insights and perspectives without the interference of the researcher’s subjective categorizing process.

4-1. The Results from the Questionnaire

The following descriptions from 4-1-1 to 4-1-5 display the results from the questionnaire. Presented first are the overviews (4-1-1), followed by the detailed description about the components of students’ interests in culture and language (4-1-2), breakdown of students’ initial and current motivation by the class (4-1-3) and major (4-1-4), and descriptions about the demotivated students (4-1-5).
4-1-1. The Overview

The results of questionnaire suggested that 29 out of 34 students (85%) regarded themselves as motivated for learning Japanese in comparison with the time when they started learning. On the other hand, five students (15%) answered they were demotivated. The following table shows the details of the motivational status of the student body in different Japanese classes. Due to the demographic difference in students’ motivation status between motivated and demotivated students, the results of the questionnaire will be described respectively.

Table 8. Demographic Data Based on Students’ Motivational Status and Japanese Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Motivated (0~+2)</th>
<th>Demotivated (-1~-2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper-elementary</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9 demonstrates the comparison between initial and current motivation among the motivated students. Even though many students hold the same motivational dimension, the table shows that they also expanded their motives. While in the initial motivational factors there are 79 responses, the responses for current motivation increased to 84. This implies that participants developed their motivating factors in various dimensions.
While the motivational dimension of interests in culture/language occupied 65% (51 out of 79 responses) in the initial motivation, it decreased to 37% (31 out of 84 responses) in the current motivation. It does not mean that participants lost their interests in culture and language, but it may indicate that the priorities of the motivational factors have shifted from the interests in culture/language to other factors. The factors for personal goals, such as desire to travel to Japan, study abroad, and use Japanese for their future career increased from 15 to 20 responses (from 19 to 24%). Furthermore, 11 students (13%) reported that their feeling of competence increased in the current motivational status. This is followed by the significant others related to Japanese learning, which implies positive influences from teachers and friends.
4-1-2. Detailed Description about Components of Students’ Interests in Culture and Language

While Table 9 presented significance of students’ interests in culture and language, Table 10 demonstrates the breakdown of interests in culture and language. It shows that the strongest factor in both initial and current motivation is their interests in the language, which is followed by interests in culture and society.

*Table 10. The Breakdown of the Interests in Cultures and Languages Dimension*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Initial</th>
<th>Current</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To be interested in culture (pop/traditional)</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be interested in Japanese society (social norms/customs)</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be interested in the Japanese language</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- To be interested in culture (pop/traditional)
- To be interested in Japanese society (social norms/customs)
- To be interested in the Japanese language
4-1-3. The Differences of Motivating Factors Depending on Language Levels

The questionnaire results were analyzed carefully to see the correlation between the Japanese levels and their motivations. The liberal arts college, where the study was held, has a foreign language requirement for graduation that students take two semesters of any offered language. Thus, some of the students take the elementary level of Japanese courses for the purpose of completing this general educational requirement. On the other hand, students in the second year or higher make a decision in taking Japanese on their own. The higher the level of the class, the more likely students are to major, or at least minor, in Japanese. Hence, the correlation between the Japanese class and their motivation was considered. Although the findings show some differences depending on the class, it does not give enough evidence to conclude the correlation between the level of Japanese class and the motivation factors. Tables from 11 to 14 present the initial and current motivation depending on the level of Japanese class. The following graphs and their descriptions explain the details:
Table 11 - The Comparison between Initial and Current Motivation of the Motivated Students in Accordance with the Level of Japanese Class

**Table 11. Elementary Class**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Initial (N=18)</th>
<th>Current (N=18)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic interest of activity</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived value of activity</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling of competence</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interests in culture/language</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance others related to Japanese learning</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity factor</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language-related enjoyment/liking</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal goals</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External pressures/incentives</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 12. Upper-elementary Class**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Initial (N=18)</th>
<th>Current (N=18)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic interest of activity</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived value of activity</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling of competence</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interests in culture/language</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance others related to Japanese learning</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity factor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language-related enjoyment/liking</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal goals</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External pressures/incentives</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 13. Intermediate Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Initial (N=9)</th>
<th>Current (N=12)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic interest of activity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived value of activity</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling of competence</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interests in culture/language</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity factor</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant others related to Japanese learning</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language-related enjoyment/liking</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal goals</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External pressures/incentives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Initial (N=9)  Current (N=12)

Table 14. Advanced Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Initial (N=6)</th>
<th>Current (N=6)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic interest of activity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived value of activity</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling of competence</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interests in culture/language</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity factor</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant others related to Japanese learning</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language-related enjoyment/liking</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal goals</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External pressures/incentives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Initial (N=6)  Current (N=6)
Tables 11 to 14 show that students’ strongest initial motivation is their interest in culture/language in all the classes. Although this dimension is also the strongest in the current motivation in the elementary and intermediate classes, the personal goals became the strongest current motivation in the upper-elementary and advanced classes. Thus, the findings did not demonstrate a correlation between the level of Japanese language classes and their motivation.

On the other hand, in the elementary class, the feeling of competence, which means the students can see their development in language skills, and significance in other related Japanese learning increased. For the factor of the feeling of competence, eight responses out of 11 came from the elementary class. Moreover, although no students from the upper-elementary to advanced class chose the effects from their teachers and friends as their primary motivational factors, one student in the elementary class decided to take Japanese because of the recommendation from a friend and five responses in the elementary class showed that friends or teachers gave positive impacts on their learning in their current motivational status.

The findings showed that students’ motivation was modified over time. Although the table showed the attrition in students’ interests in culture and language, it may indicate that the priorities of the motivational factors shifted from the interests in culture/language to various directions over time. The breakdown of the motivational dimensions by class demonstrates that the motivation of the elementary and advanced students became more goal-oriented.

In contrast, the elementary students developed their motivation by cultivating their feelings of competence and their relationship with others. However, the findings do
not provide enough evidence to support the correlation between the level of Japanese classes and motivation. This may be due to a lack of samples, especially from the higher level classes.

4-1-4. The Differences of Motivating Factors Depending on Students’ Majors

The findings suggested that students’ majors affect their motivation. Table 15 and 16 show the initial and the current motivation among the students majoring in Japanese, Asian Studies, and other majors respectively. The Japanese major group includes students who double major with other subjects as well as single Japanese major. The other group included students who claimed their major was neither in Japanese nor in Asian Studies.

*Table 15. The Initial Motivation of Motivated Students Majoring in Japanese, Asian Studies, and Others.*
Table 16. The Current Motivation of Motivated Students Majoring in Japanese, Asian Studies, and Others.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Japanese Major Students</th>
<th>Asian Studies Students</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic interest of activity</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived value of activity</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling of competence</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interests in culture/language</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant others related to Japanese</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language-related enjoyment/liking</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal goals</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External pressures/incentives</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For Japanese major students, 22 responses (60%) of the initial motivational dimension were interests in culture and language. However, in the current motivation the interests in culture and language only occupy 10 responses (30%), which is less than a half of their initial responses. The motivational dimension of interests in culture and language was overtaken by the personal goal. This means that Japanese major students transformed their primary motivation factors dramatically and became more goal-oriented.

For the other students, interests in culture and language had 34 responses (66%) as their initial motivation. Similar to Japanese major students, this number in their current motivation sunk to 17 (41%), two thirds of their initial proportion. Instead, other
motivational dimensions, especially the feeling of competence, increased in their current motivation. However, the interests in culture and language were still the strongest. Due to the lack of samples for Asian Studies students, the results from Asian Studies major were not taken into account.

These results presented that Japanese major students developed their motivation towards a more personal goal-orientation. On the other hand, for the students who do not major in Japanese or Asian Studies, the significance of the interests in culture and language was found to be larger.

4-1-5. Demotivated Students

Among the 34 students, five (15%) answered they were demotivated in comparison with the time when they started learning Japanese. Table 17 shows their initial motivation. Initially, interests in culture/language was the most significant motivational dimension and was followed by the personal goals dimension, which is the same result as the initial motivation from the motivated students.

Table 17. Initial Motivational Dimension of the Demotivated Students
Table 18. Current Demotivating dimension from the Demotivated Students in Accordance with the Level of Japanese Class

Table 18 shows the current demotivating dimension from the demotivated students. According to the results, three respondents said that the demotivating factors came from beyond the L2 context learning. Two respondents from elementary and upper-elementary classes answered they had personal reasons that prevented them from making as much effort in Japanese learning as they would like to. One student from upper-elementary level of Japanese, minoring in Japanese said:

“I have been sick and as a double major [with a] double minor, it has been at the bottom of my ‘to do list’.”

On the other hand, one student from an advanced class stated that other classes are more interesting and she would prefer to focus on them. She explained the details as follows:

“I have changed my focus from linguistics to philosophy and so Japanese is no longer relevant to my career goals. I still enjoy learning about the language and the culture, but it is no longer a priority.”
Two respondents from elementary students chose the “feeling of incompetence”, which means that students regarded Japanese as difficult. One of them said:

“Learning the language requires a lot of memorization which is not my strongest area of study.”

Two respondents stated that they did not perceive the value in the activity. One response said, “I do not feel like I am able to use Japanese outside of class.” The other chose the factor that he just wanted to learn conversational Japanese, not written.

In addition to those attrition factors, the relation between students’ experiences in Japan and their motivational status is noteworthy. Table 19 presents students’ experiences in Japan and their motivational status.

*Table 19. Students’ Experiences in Japan and their Motivational Status*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have you ever been to Japan?</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivated (0 ~ +2)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demotivated (-1 ~ -2)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students’ experiences in Japan range from students’ individual personal short trips to study abroad programs that are almost one year at the longest. Among 34 students, ten of them had been to Japan. While motivation of eight out of ten participants increased, motivation of two decreased. This means one fifth of students lost their motivation even though they had been to Japan. On the other hand, 21 out of 24 participants regarded themselves as motivated, even though they had never been to Japan.
This suggested the fact that students have ever been to Japan is not a strong predictor that students’ motivation will increase.

Above all, the results of the questionnaire for the demotivating factors presented that demotivating factors were from beyond the L2 context as well as within the L2 context. Demotivating factors from beyond the L2 context derived from personal concerns and their interests in other subjects. By contrast, regarding demotivating factors from the L2 context, their perception for a lack of value in activity and feeling of incompetence were seen. Those results do not show any correlation between the level of Japanese classes and their demotivating factors. In addition, students’ experiences in Japan did not correlate with their motivational status either. Two out of ten became less motivated, even though they had been to Japan, while 21 out of 24 students who had never been to Japan became more motivated.

4-2. The Results from the Interviews

The following descriptions from 4-2-1 to 4-2-8 demonstrate the results from the interviews. Presented first are the overviews of the results (4-2-1), followed by motivating factors (4-2-2), and the demotivating factors revealed from interviews (4-2-3).

4-2-1. The Overview

The results from the interviews showed that students’ initial motivations are similar to the ones from the questionnaire. However, those motivational factors have been transformed dramatically through learning. Table 20 demonstrates students’ positive motivational dimensions between the beginning of the learning period and learning over time.
Similar to the results from the questionnaire, interests in culture/language in students’ initial motivational dimension was the strongest indicator in the results from the interviews. The second highest motivational dimension was personal goals. While in the questionnaire, the most significant initial motivational component was their “interests in language” (Table 10), in the interviews, it was students’ “interests in culture” (pop/tradition). Table 21 presents the breakdown of the initial motivational factors of interests in culture/language dimension from interviews. Interests in pop and traditional occupy 67%, while interests in language and society is composed of 17% and 16% respectively.
According to Table 20, the motivational dimensions expanded dramatically after students started learning. All the motivating dimensions, besides identity factor, which related to their family roots, have grown. On the other hand, while some students have grown only motivating dimensions, some have had demotivating experiences as well as motivating ones. Table 22 presents demotivating dimensions students experienced after they started learning.

The demotivating factors came from beyond the L2 context as well as within the L2 context. The breakdown of the demotivating dimensions from the L2 context was
composed of the feeling of incompetence in Japanese, language related disliking, which refers to negative evaluation towards Japanese learning experiences, personal goals, and external pressures related to the L2 context. The details of each dimension will be discussed later.

In summary, students expanded their motivational dimensions after they started learning Japanese. At the same time, some students had demotivating experiences as well as motivating ones.

**4-2-2. Motivating Factors**

Table 20 demonstrated that interests in culture/language were the strongest dimension from the beginning of the learning period and over learning time. However, each component of dimension showed different results. Table 23 shows motivating factors students indicated during the process of Japanese learning.

**Table 23. Detailed Motivating Factors Through Japanese Learning**
According to the results, students’ appreciation of peers who were learning Japanese was seen the most (ten responses), which is followed by students’ perception of the improvement in the Japanese language (nine responses). Then, interests in culture (pop/tradition) and perception of usefulness of what they learned in real situations (eight responses each) occurred. After that, students’ goal to use Japanese in the future career (six responses), their enjoyment of the class activities (six responses), and their desire to become proficient (five responses) were followed.

Motivating Factor 1: Students’ Appreciation of Peers Who Were Learning Japanese

The findings showed that peers had the strongest impacts on students’ motivation. Some students talked about the comfortable atmosphere in class:

“It’s nice because in class, um, if someone messes up, you know? We can kind of laugh and say, oh this is how, you know? We just help each other and have fun”

“I love the class, everyone in the class we’re like a family together. We helped each other with homework when we got confused”

Some mentioned tutors who help students outside the class:

“Tutoring was big help for everyone.”

“Being involved with Japanese tutors is a really great way to practice what I learned in class and they throw some 三年生 [Third year] level share own experiences”

Some found their friends from Japanese class:
“I’ve been a good friend who sits next to me the whole semester. So he and I have been helping each other learning Japanese. We do outside the class sometimes because we are both interested”

“We got friends together we can study with, we can just, have fun together learning and the more you learn, more you can use. So it’s like, it fills up. It’s like a snowball”

A student shared that she and her friends study together, encourage together, and sometimes even compete against each other in positive ways and said, “We push together between each other.”

These findings demonstrated that class atmosphere, tutors, and friends had huge impacts on students’ motivation. A welcoming class atmosphere made students comfortable and helped students learn together. Tutors play a significant role to enhance students’ interests as well as comprehension regarding classwork. In addition, the findings demonstrated that relationships cultivated among friends made more differences than merely helping their studies together. They encouraged each other and sometimes could push each other in positive ways. Those factors enabled students to stay motivated to learn.

Motivating Factor 2: Students’ Perception of the Improvement in the Japanese Language

Nine out of 11 students perceived their improvement in the Japanese language. This experience comes from inside and outside the classroom. Two students from elementary classes recalled their experiences before they started learning Japanese and said:
“Before [learning] when I was watching anime, I would have no idea what they were saying. But now I actually, like, make up sentences. And it’s exciting, kinda makes me wanna learn more”

“ I know a lot of vocabularies than I did in the past. I can talk about more topics besides just introducing myself. And I feel like I can hold at least small conversations in Japanese with someone”

A student from an intermediate class recalled her learning experiences and said:

“Motivation has increased, because now I am realizing how much I learned in two and a half years. It’s crazy. I started from nothing. And, like, it’s become, like, I never thought I can do so much in so little time”

Students looked back at their past and appreciated efforts they made and what they are able to do currently. The findings exemplified that positive self-evaluation towards their improvement stimulated their motivation.

**Motivating Factor 3: Students’ Interests in Culture (Pop/Tradition)**

Interests in culture (pop/tradition) were significant throughout students’ learning. However, some students experienced changes in the types of culture they were interested in.

“From the beginning it was more like, I was mildly interested in ‘something might be fun’ and now I really want to know more about, like its history and more beyond the pop culture.”

“I began interested in pop culture. As I begin learning more and more, and before I went to Japan, I began to be more interested in cultures and foods and other cultural aspects, like, way of living”
These examples demonstrated how students changed their types of interests in culture while they were learning Japanese. One student who initially started learning Japanese, because of her interests in pop culture, became more interested in history after taking Japanese classes. Another student expanded his interest to include various aspects of culture, such as foods and a way of living.

**Motivating Factor 4: Students’ Perception of Usefulness of What They Learned in Real Situations**

Eight students perceived usefulness of what they learned from class. Students who went to Japan experienced they could use what they had learned in class. One student recalled his experience in Japan and said, “This was a wakeup moment like, this is real!”

Besides that, some students mentioned usefulness of what they learned in spite of the fact that they have never been to Japan. One student mentioned that she could use what she learned from the class when she exchanges messages with her pen pal and said:

“When I message my pen pal, I could say simple phrases. Then, I wanna say something, then I think I do not know that yet. And the next lesson we learned, I would learn how to do that. So, being able to communicate with my pen pal and progressively learn these different sentences helped me keep going, because like one more thing I need to learn, one more thing. It’s still that way though; it helps me stay motivated”

This example shows that regardless of whether she had gone to Japan, she found things she learned to be useful. Her perception kept her motivated in order to communicate with her friend in Japanese more.
Some students said that they could use what they learned for teaching. One student said:

“Whenever I go home, I can teach to my friends. And that helps to solidify the knowledge as well, because if I am able to teach it, then I am able to understand a lot better on myself. And, I have some friends who know Japanese I keep contact with”

This demonstrated that she regarded what she learned as useful, because she could teach her friends what she learned, and it enabled her to solidify her knowledge. The same student also mentioned her idea to incorporate music education with Japanese.

“Since I know Japanese that [singing] helps me with pronunciations, and words help students and help them [learn the] meaning of the song, probably”

A student, who is working as a tutor said:

“Using my knowledge even things what I learned, like, recently like, the fourth year or third year Japanese, I can help. That is why the knowledge to teach Freshman, like, ‘You are learning this. I will give you a little hint!’ This you will learn later might be able to help them learn something now. And also, knowing what kanji they need to know, knowing what vocabularies need to know in the future, what’s important, what’s used the most, helps me determined to what to focus on in the tutoring”

This explains how her experiences as a learner helped her work when she became a tutor. She regarded what she learned as useful and tried to apply that in tutoring.

Above all, even students who have not been to Japan regarded what they learned as useful. While some found its usefulness for the purpose of communication with
friends, some found its usefulness when they taught others. One student also found it helped solidify her knowledge.

**Other Motivating Factors**

Following the motivating factors discussed in 4-2-3 to 4-2-6, students’ goal to use Japanese in the future career, their enjoyment of the class activities, and their desire to become proficient in Japanese were observed in the interviews. The factor of students’ goal to use Japanese in their future careers seems related to another significant factor, their desire to become proficient. Many students said they needed to be fluent or proficient, because they would go to Japan for study abroad or use Japanese in their future careers. One student said:

“I want to visit Japan maybe after a while like, having a sort of goal in mind? Someday I am able to hopefully speak completely fluently; not having issues or anything that”

Also, some students said they enjoyed the activities in class:

“It was playful. I really did not expect to be, like, laughing so much and having so much fun for foreign languages”

The examples above show how factors of students’ goal to use Japanese in their future career, their enjoyment of the class activities, and their desire to become proficient in Japanese were observed in interviews. One example showed that students’ motivating factors are mutually related to each other. A relation between the students’ goal to use Japanese in the future career and their desire to become proficient was observed.
4-2-3: Demotivating Factors

While learning Japanese, some students experienced demotivating experiences even though they regarded themselves as motivated overall. In Table 22, affective factors beyond the L2 context were observed as the most demotivating dimension. Table 24 presents the breakdown of the various factors beyond the L2 context that weaken students’ motivation to learn Japanese.

**Table 24. Affective Factors Beyond the L2 Context**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Number of responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concerns out of school I cannot make as much effort in Japanese</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy workload in other classes</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roommate problems</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being distracted by other things.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being homesick.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Furthermore, several examples showed that one factor which worked as a motivating factor can be a demotivating one. For instance, study abroad, which is regarded as a motivating factor in the Table 23 can give negative influence to the students. One student who changed her major from Japanese to Asian Studies looked back and said:

“When I had the idea of studying abroad, I felt like I have to have everything perfect to be able to be successful, but now I feel comfortable making mistakes too.”
Another student who received a scholarship from the school said she felt huge pressure as a recipient of the scholarship.

“My primary motivator has been I have a scholarship. Like, I have to prove they did not give it to the wrong person. Second semester there was still stress there, but [it] wasn’t like first semester. It was almost overwhelming stress, because I was just trying hard to catch up on top of everything.”

She was obliged to feel she had to contribute to the program in order to prove the school did not give the scholarship to the wrong person. She said this worked positively in the second semester, but worked negatively in her first semester.

In summary, while the results showed that demotivating factors from beyond the L2 context were most commonly observed, the breakdown presented various factors. Also, the results showed multi-facets of one factor of motivation. For instance, study abroad and scholarships could be both motivating and demotivating factors for certain participants.
Summary of This Chapter

This chapter presented the findings from the questionnaire and interviews. The findings were demonstrated respectively due to the differences in the number of participants, analyzing process, and the results.

The findings from both the questionnaire and interviews showed that the most significant motivational dimension in the beginning was students’ interests in culture and language. Afterwards, students’ initial motivations were expanded and evolved over time by internalizing various external factors. The most significant factor from the interviews was students’ appreciation of influences from their classroom atmosphere and peers. Subsequently, students’ appreciation for their improvements, their perception of the usefulness of what they learned, their interests in culture/language, their goal to use Japanese in their future career, their enjoyments towards activities in class, and their desire to become proficient were observed.

Regarding attrition factors, both results from the questionnaire and interviews demonstrated that the most significant factors of demotivation came beyond their Japanese learning. The findings also showed that students’ experiences in Japan do not correlate with their positive motivational status. Some students answered that their motivations decreased despite the fact they had been to Japan. Moreover, the results from the interviews also demonstrated multi-facets of one factor of motivation. Study abroad and scholarships can serve as motivating or demotivating factors for different students.
Chapter 5

Discussion

This chapter will deliberate conclusions based on the findings presented in the previous chapter. This study aimed to elucidate the process of student motivation towards learning Japanese at a liberal arts college in a suburb of a Midwestern city. Furthermore, it also aimed to observe some correlations between the level of Japanese language learning and the motivational status of students. The conclusion will be followed by the limitations of the study and further implications.

Conclusion

Research Question 1. What is the initial motivation for American students who are studying Japanese?

Both results from the questionnaire and the interviews found that the most significant motivational dimension in the beginning was students’ interests in culture and language. Each dimension was found to be composed of several factors. For instance, a dimension for “interests in cultures and languages” is composed of interests in language, culture, and society respectively. The results from the questionnaire demonstrated that the most significant factor was interests in language, followed by interests in culture and society. On the other hand, the results from the interviews demonstrated that the most significant factor was interests in culture. The results from both the questionnaire and the interviews showed that the second most common initial motivational dimension was students’ personal goals, for example, studying abroad, using Japanese for their future
career, and traveling to Japan. However, there was a significantly large gap between the first and the second dimension. The first dimension, interests in cultures and languages, is significantly higher than the second one, personal goals.

Research Question 2. How does students’ initial motivation change over time? What kinds of factors motivate their learning? What kinds of factors demotivate their learning?

The overview of the change in motivation over time. The findings from the questionnaire and interviews demonstrated how students’ expanded and evolved their initial motivation over time by internalizing various external factors. Therefore, the findings resulted in supporting the motivational theories which focus on the aspects of intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Interests in culture and language were the strongest motivational dimension throughout the time in the results from both the questionnaire and the interviews. However, careful observation of the data presented different aspects.

The results for the current motivational factors from the questionnaire demonstrated that students shifted their primary motivational factors from their interests in culture/language to personal goals, reflecting students’ desire to study in Japan, work using Japanese, and travel to Japan.

Regarding the results from the interviews, while interests in culture and language were the strongest motivational dimension over time, the most significant factor was students’ appreciation of their influences from their classroom atmosphere and peers. Subsequently, students’ appreciation of their improvement, their perception of the usefulness of what they learned, their interests in culture/language, their goal to use
Japanese in their future career, their enjoyments towards activities in class, and their desire to become proficient were observed. 

**Students’ appreciation towards their improvement.** The findings from the interviews showed that students perceived their improvement in Japanese in comparison with the time they started. Students recalled their past and appreciated efforts they made and the progress they achieved. Students’ perception for improvement came from their experiences outside and inside class activities. In the beginning, students had no understanding about Japanese language. However, through making appropriate efforts, students improved their proficiency and enabled themselves to do various activities. The findings exemplified that positive self-evaluation towards their improvement stimulated their motivation. This result coincided with the motivation research held in less commonly taught language classes, such as, Chinese, Japanese, and Russian, by Ueno (2005). The findings from Ueno’s research also showed students’ perception for their improvement in the L2. This improvement gave positive influences on students’ motivation (Ueno, 2005). Ushioda (1996) mentioned that real-life experiences, such as exposure to the language in the shape of television programs and the communications of people using the L2 had a significant impact on students’ perceptions. If students could follow much of a film dialogue without always looking at the subtitles or succeed in communicating with people using the L2, they induced feelings of confidence, satisfaction, and a sense of real progress in their learning (Ushioda, 1996).

**Influences from class atmosphere.** The results from the interviews indicated that class atmosphere had significant impacts on students. One student said she experienced a family atmosphere in class. Another student said that she did not feel stressed, even if she
made a mistake in front of everyone, because people in class were nice. Krashen (1982) proposed an affective filter hypothesis that tension, anxiety, or boredom may prevent learners from acquisition. Therefore, he promoted a safe, welcoming environment for language learning (Krashen, 1982). Also, Dörnyei (2001) suggested the importance of creating a pleasant atmosphere, quoting results from his research in English as a Second Language (ESL) class at Hungary. The results from the survey for the ESL classes demonstrated that classroom atmosphere was ranked as the second most influential factor for students (Dörnyei, 2001).

**Influences from peers.** Students mentioned that tutors and their friends had a significant role in improving their motivation. Deci and Ryan (1985; 2002) discussed motivation in terms of intrinsic and extrinsic aspects in their Self-Determination Theory. They argued that relatedness, referring to being securely connected to and esteemed by others as well as belonging to a community, is a fundamental need along with autonomy and feelings of competence, which are critical when extrinsic factors are internalized and enhance intrinsic motivating factors (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2002).

Students, who worked as tutors, provided insights as senior Japanese students as well as helped students’ comprehension. Many students who took tutoring sessions enhanced their comprehension and interests. Also, many students talked about the positive influences from friends. The findings demonstrated that students cultivated their bonds through studying, encouraging, and having fun time together. Hence, the findings exemplified how important the interactions with friends and tutors are for students.

**Expansion of interests toward various aspects of culture.** While both results from the questionnaire and interviews presented students’ high levels of interest in
culture and language in the beginning, several results from interviews also demonstrated changes in aspects of interests in culture over time. For instance, one student developed her interests from pop culture to history. Another who also started studying Japanese because of his interests in pop culture, expanded his interests to various aspects, such as Japanese foods, society, and way of life.

**Students’ perception of the practical usefulness of Japanese language.** Understandably, students who had chance to visit or study abroad in Japan perceived what they learned in Japanese classes as useful. However, students, who had never been to Japan, also acknowledged the practical usefulness of what they learned in Japanese classes. Some mentioned they could use what they learned for the purpose of communicating with friends in Japan, while some mentioned they could use it for teaching others. One student also realized that teaching also helped solidify her knowledge.

**Demotivating Factors.** Both results from the questionnaire and interviews demonstrated that the most significant factors of demotivation came from beyond their Japanese learning, such as personal concerns from outside the class.

The results from the questionnaire showed that five students (15%) perceived they were demotivated in comparison with the time when they started learning Japanese. Among them two regarded themselves as demotivated, despite the fact that they had been to Japan. This counts as 20% among students who had been to Japan, while the percentage for demotivated students among students who had never been to Japan was 12.5%. This means that the percentage of the demotivated students who had been to Japan was higher than that of the demotivated students who had never been to Japan. This
demonstrated that students’ experiences in Japan did not correlate with their positive motivational status.

On the other hand, the results from the interviews presented students who had both motivating and demotivating experiences during the process of Japanese learning. They also presented that multi-facets of one factor in terms of motivation. For instance, study abroad and scholarships serve as motivating or demotivating factors for different students.

Research Question 3. Are there any correlations between the Japanese proficiency levels and their motivations?

The liberal arts college, where the study was held, has a foreign language requirement that students are mandated to take two semesters for graduation. Thus, some students take the elementary level of courses for the purpose of completing their requirement. On the other hand, students in the second year or higher have made decisions in taking Japanese on their own. Hence, a possible correlation between the level and their motivation was considered. Although the findings from the questionnaire showed some differences in accordance with levels, it did not show explicit evidence to conclude that the correlation between the level of Japanese class and the motivational status existed. The breakdown of the motivational dimensions by class demonstrated that the motivation of the upper-elementary and advanced students became more goal oriented. In contrast, the elementary and intermediate students developed their motivation by cultivating their feeling of competence and their relationship with others. In terms of
the results from interviews, samples from 11 participants were too small to describe the motivational status depending on the level of students.

Limitations

Small samples. This research was held in a liberal arts college in suburban area of Midwest of the United States, where students were less able to access Japanese people and culture. The number of students who are learning Japanese is small. As a result, the number of samples in this study was 34 in the questionnaire and 11 in the interviews. This study attempted to demonstrate the development of fluid motivation in-depth, rather than attempting to generalize the results to other populations. Therefore, there are possibilities that different results might have been observed if this study were held in a different setting.

The researcher’s multiple roles. The researcher was also an instructor at the same liberal arts college, where the participants of this study were studying, which made it difficult to recruit students who had negative impressions towards the program and their Japanese learning experiences. Some participants, especially those who are not highly motivated students, were not willing to disclose their honest opinions, due to the fact that the data collector was the instructor from the same school. If the research was held by a third party, more critiques towards the curriculum and the program might have been raised.

The limitation of the participants. While the majority of students who answered the questionnaire regarded themselves as motivated, few demotivated students actually responded to the questionnaire. Furthermore, most students who agreed to take an
interview were motivated students. Thus, findings allowed the researcher to draw sufficient samples of motivated patterns, but are not appropriate to generalize in other populations. For instance, positive influences from peers and students’ perception towards their improvement enhanced their motivation. However, those positive influences from peers and students’ motivation do not guarantee to promote students’ motivation in other cases. Most students who participated in this research are willing to involve many activities with friends. On the contrary, it is also possible that there are some students who are not socialize with peers and are passive in participating in those activities.

**Implications**

The findings from the questionnaire and interviews resulted in supporting the motivational theories that focus on the aspects of intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Students modified their motivation over time through internalizing various factors from inside and outside class activities. The results presented the fact that students who have ever been to Japan is not a strong predictor that students’ motivation will increase. On the other hand, the students who have never been to Japan may also increase their motivation through discovering and experiencing the usefulness of the Japanese they learned. Significantly, students’ appreciation towards peers, their perception towards their improvement, their interests in culture, and their perception of usefulness of learning were observed.

The finding also demonstrated these factors did not exist discretely, but continuously. Two examples showed that impacts from peers affected other motivating factors and it made virtuous cycles for students’ learning. One example is observed in interactions between a student and a tutor.
As seen in Chart 1, a student mentioned what she learned in class was useful when she tutored other students. Another student who took tutoring sessions from this student also implied that the tutoring was a great opportunity to enhance interests as well as comprehension of Japanese. As a result, the student who took the tutoring sessions regarded that her proficiency improved through tutoring sessions and she frequently attended the tutoring afterwards. This interaction does not only allow the tutor to realize the usefulness and improvement of Japanese, but also improve their own Japanese-learning through teaching others. This example showed how interactions between a tutor and a student influenced other motivational factors and lead virtuous cycles.
Another example also presented positive impacts from friends. Chapter 2 demonstrates how interactions among friends results in virtuous cycle for students’ Japanese learning. Interactions among friends cultivated strong bonds as well as promoted their proficiency and comprehension. Then they perceived how useful their learning is and how they improved in Japanese. In brief, similar to tutoring activities, positive influences from friends also triggered students’ perception of practical usefulness of Japanese and improvements in their learning.

A student said, “we [friends and I] can just, have fun together learning and the more you learn, the more you can use. So it’s like, it fills up. It’s like a snowball.” This quote exemplified how strong bonds brought positive impacts for Japanese learning.

These two cases demonstrated virtuous cycles come from interactions with peers.

Although the findings presented virtuous cycles by influences from peers, it does not hold the sufficient samples to generalize this positive correlation to apply to other populations. It is possible that some students are not willing to interact with others.
Nevertheless, there may be a possibility that interactions with peers promote virtuous cycles in students’ learning.

For instructors, facilitating welcoming class atmospheres may help relieve stress of making mistakes and may encourage students to make strong bonds. It is also important to give students opportunities to know students from different levels of Japanese. This may allow beginner students to know how advanced students could be. This may become a big help for Freshmen who are struggling with a transition from high school. Also, for advanced students, sharing their ideas and supporting lower-level students’ studies may give them self-confidence in applying their Japanese in practical usages.

Together with that, it is crucial to provide students with opportunities to feel a sense of achievement with a regular basis in order to enhance their perception towards improvement and usefulness of their learning.

In addition to motivational promoting strategies, instructors need to pay attention to demotivating factors. Students showed both motivating and demotivating experiences. Also, some motivating factors can become demotivating factors. The findings demonstrated that the effect of pressures as a scholarship recipient and of study abroad could be positive as well as negative. Instructors need to be cautious about the students’ fluid motivational movements. The findings provided various hints to enhance students’ motivation. It is possible to take some of the strategies into practice discussed in this research and to adjust them depending on each student.
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Noels, K. A. (2009). The Internalisation of Language Learning into the Self and Social


Appendix

Questionnaire
1. Male • Female • Others
2. Freshman • Sophomore • Junior • Senior • Others ( )
3. What is your major and minor ?
   Major ( Japanese • Asian Studies • others • Undecided )
   Minor ( Japanese • Asian Studies • others • Undecided )
4. Which class are you taking right now ?
   JPN101 • JPN201 • JPN301 • JPN401
5. Have you ever been to Japan? Yes • No
   If yes, how long did you stay there ?
   Less than one month • One to six months • More than six month
   What was the purpose of staying in Japan ?
   Sightseeing • International Exchange Program • Studying Abroad • Others
   ( )
6. What was your initial reason to study Japanese ? If you start learning Japanese in high
   school or even before, please choose your initial reason. (If you have several reasons,
   please choose up to three strongest ones)
   A. I was interested in culture (pop/traditional).
   B. I was interested in Japanese society (social norms/customs).
   C. I wanted to learn something challenging.
   D. I was interested in the Japanese language.
   E. I wanted to study abroad in Japan.
   F. I wanted to use Japanese in my future career
   G. I wanted to talk to my Japanese friends or family using Japanese.
   H. I am of Japanese heritage and want to know more about my family roots.
   I. I wanted to complete my language requirements.
   J. My friend recommended taking Japanese.
   K. Others ____________________________

Please explain the details.


7. If you state your initial motivation as 0, how much has your motivation changed since then? Circle the number.

-2
-1
0
+1
+2

Very demotivated

Very motivated

8. If you answer #7 as 0, +1 or +2, what are the factors of your motivation right now? (If you have several reasons, please choose up to three strongest ones)

A. I am interested in culture (pop/traditional).
B. I am interested in Japanese society (social norms/customs).
C. I want to learn something challenging.
D. I am interested in the Japanese language.
E. I want to study abroad in Japan.
F. I want to use Japanese in my future career.
G. I want to talk to my Japanese friends or family using Japanese.
H. I am of Japanese heritage and want to know more about my family roots.
I. I want to complete my language requirements.
J. I am able to see my development in the Japanese language.
K. I feel I can use what I learned in real situations.
L. I think I can get good grades.
M. I enjoy the activities in Japanese class.
N. I like the teacher of Japanese classes.
O. I like people (particular person or not) who are learning Japanese at Carthage.
P. I like tutoring sessions.
Q. I like extra-curricular activities (the Cooking Event/the Performance Festival/lunch table)
R. Others ____________________________________________________________

Please explain the details.


9. **If you answer #7 as -1 or -2, what reduced your motivation?** (If you have several reasons, please choose up to three strongest ones)

A. Other classes are more interesting and I would prefer to focus on them.
B. I have concerns out of school. I cannot make as much effort in Japanese.
C. Japanese has too much homework.
D. Japanese language is difficult.
E. I think my grade in Japanese will be bad.
F. I am anxious about making mistakes in Japanese class.
G. I do not like the class activities.
H. I just want to learn conversational Japanese, not written.
I. I do not like the Japanese teacher.
J. I do not like the people (particular person or not) in Japanese class.
K. Others ____________________________________________

Please explain the details.

10. Are you thinking of taking Japanese next semester?  Yes  •  No

11. If you agree to participate in the follow-up interviews, please state your name and your email address.

Name ____________________________________________

Email address _______________________________________