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# Dynamicity of Motivational Change in Learning Japanese as a Foreign Language

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DYNAMICITY OF MOTIVATIONAL CHANGE  
IN LEARNING JAPANESE AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

A Thesis submitted to  
the Graduate College of  
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In partial fulfillment of  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts

English

by

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Approved by

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Marshall University  
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## **Abstract**

Enhancing students' motivations could lead to the improvement of students' academic achievement in second language acquisition. Many scholars have discussed changes and outcomes of motivation over the language learning process to examine the relationship between attitudes, motivation, and language learning outcome. The present study examines how some high school student learners of Japanese in an American high school have changed or maintained their motivational levels toward learning Japanese, as well as how their motivation in their second language learning can be influenced by classroom activities. The results of the questionnaire data, the classroom observation data, and the interview data indicate that students' positive past learning experience in the instructional setting is an important factor in their motivational level change toward language learning. Finally, this study suggests that teachers should understand the functions and causes of motivations for more effective teaching.

*Keywords:* motivation, attitude, achievement, second language learning, Japanese language, teaching activities

## Chapter I. Introduction

Motivation is an important factor in second language learning. Many studies have been conducted to discover types of motivation and the consequences of different types of motivation on language learning outcome (Bandura, 1986; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Gardner et al., 2004; Spolsky, 1989). In the earlier phase of motivation studies and language learning, intrinsic and extrinsic motivations were examined in detail: intrinsic motivation is an inner desire, such as learning a second language for pure interest in the target language, culture, or for feelings of enjoyment in learning; and extrinsic motivation is based on outside sources, such as learning a second language for a future career or material rewards (Gardner et al., 2004). More recently, motivational studies have moved to examine and categorize antecedents of motivation (Ortega, 2009) and how different activities are related to learner motivation, such as world-connected activities, cultural activities, kinesthetic activities, etc. (Boyd, Williams-Black, & Love, 2009; Matsumoto, 2007; Rule, Dockstader, & Stewart, 2006). The commonly accepted view is that the more motivated learners are, the more likely they are to achieve a higher level of language learning (Spolsky, 1989; Yue et al., 2008).

Those previous studies focused on specific types of motivation and possible learning outcomes; however, the reality is more complicated than a clear-cut correlation between motivation and second language acquisition (hereafter SLA), due to a variety of learner factors, contextual influence, and instructional settings. The latest development in motivation study and SLA has shifted focus to the dynamic view of motivation under a variety of personal, social, and instructional factors; learners in the same classroom could

be either homogeneous or heterogeneous in terms of their age, L1 background, cultural influence, previous learning experience, etc. The complexity of how these factors might co-influence the ongoing learner motivation and their subsequent learning behaviors has begun to receive attention in the field (Euch, 2010; Ortega 2009; Papageorgi et al., 2010).

The current study focuses on a participant group of high school students, whose first language is English, learning Japanese as a foreign language in the U.S. The goal of this research is to answer why students are motivated to learn a particular foreign language and how their instructional experience might influence their motivational change towards learning a foreign language.

Being a high school teacher of Japanese, I have witnessed both encouraging and disheartening changes from this demographic of language learners, and I am eager to study the reasons behind such changes and what we, as classroom practitioners, could do to help students to learn more about the Japanese language and enjoy learning itself. My personal experience has also indicated that teachers may have their beliefs and perspectives on what is best for students, but these assumptions might or might not meet students' expectations. This has brought me to conduct this study to examine motivational factors held by learners of Japanese as a foreign language (hereafter JFL) and what teachers could do in class to provide a positive experience to maintain and enhance their motivational levels.

The present study involves a total of twenty-four L1 English high school students and how their motivations have changed after a two-month Japanese learning experience. Data for this study is the result of two questionnaires from students, twelve classroom

observations, and twelve interviews (ten students and two Japanese instructors), to answer three research questions:

1. What are some of the motivation factors held by this group of JFL Learners?
2. Have their motivational levels and factors changed after a two-month period of instructional experience? If so, how and why? Which classroom activities have motivated/de-motivated their language learning?
3. Are there gaps between students' perception of motivational classroom activities and teachers' beliefs in such activities? What are they?

The findings suggest that classroom instruction influences students' motivational levels and types. Positive learning experiences in terms of a match between students' expectations and the actual instructional activities could enhance students' motivation for language learning. Although motivating classroom activities are different for individual students, depending on their age, proficiency level and initial reasons to learn the language, activities that could enhance the intrinsic motivation of learners and connect culture/world and language use are commonly deemed as motivational activities. The initial motivational factors held by individual students, together with the specific classroom activities they have experienced, have an influence on learners' subsequent motivational levels and types. After exploring the dynamic relation between students' motivational change and different classroom activities, this study then makes some pedagogical suggestions on how language instructors could design teaching activities to motivate their students.

## Chapter II. Literature Review

### 1. Overview of Motivation

Motivation has been studied frequently in the field of SLA. Gardner, one of the most well-known SLA researchers, introduced motivation as part of a socio-educational model to address how learning could be influenced by multiple factors (Gardner et al., 2004). The theory proposed four variables of motivation: “integrativeness, attitudes toward the learning situation, integrative orientation, and instrumental orientation” (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003, p. 123). The co-influence of these elements could result in motivational changes and related learning outcomes. In addition, previous learning experience is deemed to be another factor that influences learners’ motivation. Among the various factors of learning experience, language teachers might be the most influential, as most language learners spend a considerable amount of time learning a foreign or second language in the formal instructional setting. Thus, teachers are able to influence students’ motivation through classroom activities. If pedagogical activities increase language learning motivation, students might achieve at a higher level when they enjoy their learning experience (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003).

The word ‘motivation’ originally “derived from the Latin verb *movere*, which means to move” (Pintrich, 2003, p. 669). Motivation has been defined by many researchers with different foci. Table 1 on the next page summarizes these multiple definitions of motivation.

Table 1: Definitions of Motivation

Researchers	Definition of motivation
Rugutt & Chemosit	Motivation refers to innate energy and desire toward a particular task. (2009).
Ortega	“Motivation is usually understood to refer to the desire to initiate L2 leaning and the effort employed to sustain it, and in lay terms we all understand it to be a matter of quality, as in the everyday observation that some learners are highly motivated and others have little or no motivation.” (2009, p. 168)
Taylor	“Motivation was considered an impetus for cognitive processing in the underlying assumption that people are motivated to have good and stable beliefs about themselves and the world.” (1998, p. 70)
Pittman	“Motivation, the activation of internal desires, needs, and concerns, energizes behavior and sends the organism in a particular direction aimed at satisfaction of the motivational issues that gave rise to the increased energy.” (1998, p. 549)

Gardner and his associates introduced a scheme of motivation, with the main argument that motivation of language learning is a combination of three features: attitudes toward learning the second language, desire to learn the language, and effort made to learn the language (Gardner et al., 2004). The summary of Gardner’s motivation scheme is illustrated in Figure 1 on the next page. The figure shows a dynamic motivational relationship in terms of causes and possible outcome. Attitudes, desire, and effort could trigger one or all types of motivation: global/situational/task motivations as defined later. When these types of motivations are activated, the motivation subsequently influences achievement. In reality, for example, a single factor alone or a combination of

any two factors, such as a stronger attitude towards language learning, or a stronger desire of making high achievement, or more effort invested in language learning, could make learners more motivated. Higher motivation is more likely to lead to higher achievement.



Figure 1: Overview of Cause and Effect in Motivation

Among the factors in Figure 1, attitude is considered the most important for motivation (Ortega, 2009). It is defined as “the individual’s reaction to anything associated with the immediate context in which a language is taught” (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003, p. 127). The source of attitude could be “collective values, beliefs, and even behaviors that are rewarded and modeled for the learner in the communities in which he or she participates, be it a classroom, the family or the wider environment of neighborhoods and institutions” (Ortega, 2009, p. 174). Additionally, Dörnyei and Kormos (2000) reported that a positive learning experience was a critical factor to motivate students. Therefore, proper classroom activities might form students’ positive



attitudes towards their learning experience, which is an important link in the whole dynamic system of motivation.

## 2. Motivation Types

Earlier studies of motivation identified different types of motivations. First of all, motivation has been divided into different types (see Figure 2). The broadest classification is to categorize motivation into three groups: global motivations, situational motivations, and task motivations. Each type of motivation influences the other types, and all types are required in successful learning of a second language (Van Aacken, 1999). First, global motivations refer to individual orientation toward the goal of SLA in general, which incorporates mastery goals and ego goals (Van Aacken, 1999). Mastery goals refer to a learner's desire to increase competence through effort, which is "intrinsically motivating, self-referenced rather than based on normative comparison"; while ego goals are "extrinsically motivated with success determined in reference to others and concerned with displaying competence for others to see" (Rugutt & Chemosit, 2009, p. 116).

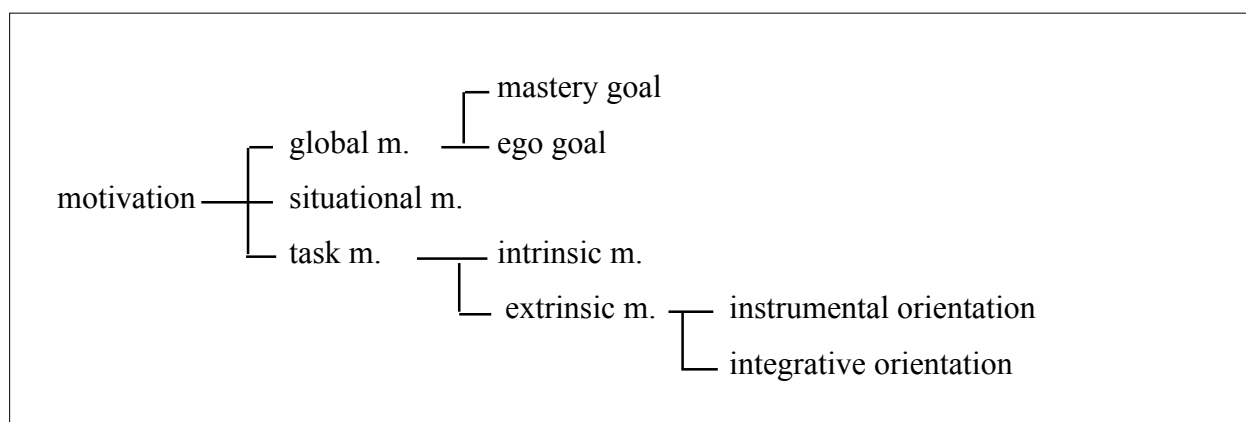


Figure 2: Motivation Types

Note: Motivation: m.

Next, situational motivations refer to how learners' motivations change under the influence of environmental factors such as comfort and discomfort toward learning settings, risk-takings, or interactions (Van Aacken, 1999).

Last, task motivations refer to the relevance of classroom tasks toward individual needs and goals, which could be either intrinsic or extrinsic motivations (Van Aacken, 1999). Learners with intrinsic motivations have “no apparent reward except satisfaction in the performance of the activity itself”; whereas learners with extrinsic motivations tend to “work for an external reward such as money, prizes, grades, positive feedback or to avoid punishment” (Van Aacken, 1999, p. 115). Intrinsically motivated learners usually develop their motivation through extrinsic motivations or other motivations, while extrinsically motivated learners tend not to develop other motivations but mainly rely on their extrinsic motivation sources (Lei, 2010). According to Covington (2000), there are situations where intrinsic motivations are strengthened when learners “(a) are achieving their grade goals; (b) when the dominant reasons for learning are task oriented reasons, not self-aggrandizing or failure-avoiding reasons; and (c) when what they are studying is of personal interest” (p. 24).

Extrinsic motivations are further categorized into instrumental and integrative orientations (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003). Instrumental orientations refer to learning the L2 for practical reasons, which involves no interest in communicating in the target language community (Spolsky, 1989) or less willingness to join the community other than use the language as a tool for their goals, such as for promotion or better grades (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003). Although tangible rewards for enhancing extrinsic motivation might be effective when the task is boring or challenging, the tangible rewards

might also decrease learners' attention toward their integrative motivation (Covington, 2000).

On the other hand, learners with integrative motivation show favorable and open attitudes toward the second language community, where the ultimate purpose is to join the community (Spolsky, 1978). Learners tend to feel challenge and enjoyment about the target language or its community (Abuhamdeh & Csikszentmihalyi, 2009). Their satisfaction comes from the learning itself, such as the feeling of a challenge or a personal curiosity in getting new information (Covington, 2000). The immersion goal in integrative motivation was reported as one of the most important factors for successful language learning (Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005).

### **3. Motivation and SLA**

This section discusses the relationship between motivation and learner performance. Gardner's meta-analyses showed a relationship between motivation and achievement in SLA. For instance, people who would like to join the target language community are intrinsically motivated and are more likely to succeed than those who do not desire to do so (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003). This theory was supported by Spolsky (1989) in his framework which states how motivation and attitude influence the possible achievement:

- 1) The greater a learner's aptitude, the faster he or she will learn all parts of the second language.
- 2) The more motivation a learner has, the more time he or she will spend learning an aspect of a second language.

- 3) The more time spent learning any aspect of a second language, the more will be learned. (p. 148)

Thus, motivation has an indirect but significant influence on the success of SLA via naturally increased amount of effort and time that learners invest on specific learning tasks (Spolsky, 1989).

#### **4. Antecedents of Motivation**

In the late 1980s, studies of motivation and SLA have gradually shifted from identifying the types of motivation to identifying a variety of elements that could trigger motivation. Previous studies suggest that environmental changes can affect motivation levels (Bandura, 1986; Spolsky, 1989), while recent research shifts its focus to multiple motivational antecedents such as attitudes towards the L2 community and its speakers, integrativeness, attitudes towards instructional setting, social support, inter-group contact, ethnovitality, self-confidence when using the language, and orientations (Ortega, 2009). Other groups of motivational antecedents are integrativeness and the whole learning environment (Spolsky, 1989). Integrativeness, in this case, refers to attitudes toward specific or broad ideas of language, whereas the whole learning environment refers to instructors and curriculums; meaning that although attitude itself does not directly influence possible learning outcomes, it certainly contributes to possible motivation changes.

Dörnyei and Csizér (1998) also examined antecedents of motivation. They outlined advice for instructors as ‘Ten commandments for motivating language learners’ (additional explanations are presented in the parenthesis):

- 1) Set a personal example with your own behavior. (Be a role-model for the students.)
- 2) Create a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom.
- 3) Present the task properly. (Increase the expectancy of task fulfillment by setting realistic goals and offering effective strategies in reaching those.)
- 4) Develop a good relationship with the learners.
- 5) Increase the learners' linguistic self-confidence.
- 6) Make the language classes interesting.
- 7) Promote learner autonomy.
- 8) Personalize the learning process. (The L2 course should be personally relevant to the students.)
- 9) Increase the learners' goal-orientedness.
- 10) Familiarize learners with the target language culture.

(pp. 215-217)

These 'Ten commandments' summarize the past and present studies of motivation antecedents.

Matsumoto's (2007) research focuses on Peak Learning Experiences (hereinafter PLEs), which is a motivation related theory, with the argument that experiences could trigger learning motivation. In other words, learners' previous experiences could make them either motivated or de-motivated in their subsequent learning. Matsumoto explains positive PLEs as "(1) being understood by native speakers, (2) the enthusiasm and patience of the teachers, (3) classroom immersion in authentic materials, and (4) use of authentic materials in the classroom" (2007, p. 195). The most common 'negative' Peak

Learning Experiences (NLEs) for students are when they fail to see any progress in their learning. PLEs theory has revealed a clear dynamic relationship between motivational level and multiple motivation antecedents. The dynamicity in motivational changes, in particular, the relation between learners' motivational change and their previous classroom experiences, is of great research potential in terms of its pedagogical implication in how to provide positive classroom learning experience to language learners.

Katz and Assor (2007) proposed a self-determination theory (hereafter SDT) to study how learner autonomy enhances learner motivation. SDT is “a macro theory of human motivation concerned with the development and functioning of personality within social contexts” (Katz & Assor, 2007, p. 430). Learning outcome can be strengthened through students' understanding of the engaging tasks as valuable or relevant to their identities such as individual goals, interests, or needs. The theory explains that choices are made out of three intrinsic needs: autonomy, relations of tasks and goals, and enhancement of competence. Reeve (2009) also argues that learner autonomy triggers motivation. In order to increase students' autonomy, teachers could avoid controlling language and choose invitation forms such as interrogative forms, as well as assign students “responsibility for their own learning, comment on progress, discuss strategies, offer feedback, ask questions, address motivational and behavioral problems, and generally converse with students” (p. 170).

Other specifics of motivation triggers were exemplified by Hong (2010), who introduces and suggests that “the encouraging, supportive, friendly, and open-classroom learning environment” should be created to enhance positive attitudes among students (p.

1984). These types of positive environments inspire learners to develop their academic, professional, and personal achievement (Papageorgi et al., 2010). One of the obvious learning environments that increase motivation is classroom instruction. Jang's (2008) study shows that providing rationale of class activities helps students to a) control themselves and focus on the task, b) find ways to entertain themselves or be comfortable with the given tasks, and c) try to individualize the meaning of the task for themselves. Other environmental factors to enhance motivation can be enjoyable activities or beneficial/rewarding outcomes of instruction for learners (Siegle & McCoach, 2005).

Furthermore, Gardner believes that both inside and outside classroom environment could influence the learner's attitude toward language learning (Gardner et al., 2004). For example, students are likely to be de-motivated when there are anxieties, such as fear of making mistakes, but likely to be motivated when they feel optimistic after holidays (Covington & Müeller, 2001). Rugutt and Chemosit (2009) investigated in-class environment on how teacher-student and student-student relationships could impact students' motivations in a university setting. Their findings suggest that better teacher-student and student-student relationships are related to higher motivation. Hence, motivation, anxiety, and learning environment perceived by individual learners relate to each other and influence the learner's attitude in general.

## **5. Previous Studies on Motivation in SLA**

Motivation is one of the most commonly studied factors in SLA. This section will briefly discuss some studies in this area. Kim (2011) conducted a qualitative study about two Korean ESL immigrants in Toronto, Canada for ten months from 2004 to 2005. Both

participants were in their early 30s, graduated from universities in South Korea, and had full-time jobs in Korea (financial manager and video/film editor). Both arrived in Canada in 2004 with advanced English proficiency. The research questions focused on the influence of environmental changes toward their motivational developments. The data collection includes monthly semi-structured interviews in Korean, language-learning autobiographies, stimulated recall tasks, and classroom observations.

The findings in Kim's study suggest that, based on motivational decrease of both participants over the study period, change in the learning setting from a non-English speaking country such as Korea to a 'better' ESL environment with many English native speakers does not necessarily correlate to learners' language motivation development. One of the participants initially came to Canada to seek a doctoral degree and get a job. Although his motivation was high at the beginning of the research, he became de-motivated in language learning ten months later. The participant stated that understanding the language community was more important than learning language itself in order to get a better job. The other participant came to Canada to 'enrich' her life and enjoy the cultural diversity. Although she kept her motivation high until she left this ESL environment, she was de-motivated after realizing that her English proficiency did not result in a better job or salary. In addition, the lack of corrective feedback from her worksite convinced her that her language proficiency is not as important as completion of job-related tasks. By the end of the research, she also showed de-motivation in English learning because of the lack of direct language instruction or clear need to learn. Kim's study showed that one of the difficulties that learners might face in a target language



speaking community could relate to gaps between the learner's expectations and the surrounding reality/environment.

Macaro and Wingate (2004) investigated the motivational change of German language learners at Oxford who transitioned from sixth form schools (secondary schools) to the university. The participants were nineteen state educated (public school) students who took German language courses at Oxford University but scored low in an entrance examination of German language. One of the researchers conducted semi-structured interviews for a total of four weeks regarding students' motivation while students applied to German courses at Oxford and followed their transitional experiences from the sixth form schools. The interview data on students' demand, students' perception toward courses, and effectiveness of the two-week intensive course show that there is a gap between curriculums in the sixth form schools and those at Oxford. This resulted in decreased student confidence in language learning: although they thought they were skilled learners, they were not qualified for the grammar translation-based Oxford curriculum. This study has discovered the "undermined" thoughts of students and provided information from students' point of view as a reference for revising school curriculums. The implication of the study is that school curriculums influence motivation as well.

Nikolov (1999) conducted an eight-year pilot research on syllabus development, focusing on children's motivation in learning English in Hungary. The participants were 84 Hungarian children between six and fourteen. Forty-five children remained in the study at the end of the eight-year research. The researcher followed three cohorts from 1977-85, 1985-93, and 1987-95 respectively. The data collection included questionnaires

issued to the participants once a year in the Hungarian language utilizing open-ended questions regarding participants' attitude and motivation toward language learning. The researcher who was also the participants' teacher took notes after speaking with the children or getting feedback from them. Nikolov concluded that an intrinsically motivating learning environment is especially effective to motivate younger children/learners. In other words, students who have experienced 'fun' and 'enjoyable' activities tend to show better participation with encouraging and motivating teachers who show more patience and concentration. Instrumental orientations have also emerged as children grow when they understand that their effort is meaningful and worthwhile.

Gardner, Smythe, and Brunet (1977) examined relationships of attitude toward language learning and length of studying, with sixty-two Ontario high school students learning French as a second language for five weeks. In the earlier stage of the intensive camp, students were divided into three groups—beginners, intermediate, and advanced—according to a placement test. The researchers provided students with questionnaires containing twenty-three questions on six occasions throughout the course in order to measure the individual need of achievement, comfort/discomfort, cultural point of view, etc. The results indicate that their goals and attitudes differ depending on students' achievement levels: the intermediate students had the highest motivation for achievement. In terms of learning anxiety, the beginners tend to be more anxious than the advanced learners. Gardner and his associates (Gardner et al., 1977) conclude that those students' attitudinal changes over the study period are strongly and clearly related to their language classroom experiences. They are most likely to become more motivated in language learning after positive, encouraging and compatible classroom instructions.

## 6. Effective Classroom Activities to Enhance Motivation

Since classroom experience influences learners' subsequent motivational types and levels significantly, it is essential to provide a positive classroom experience to ESL and EFL learners. There are many pedagogical suggestions about how to use different activities to motivate students in SLA learning. Britcher (2009) argues that there is not one single classroom activity or set of activities that could satisfy the needs of learners of different ages and proficiency levels. Britcher further suggests that for elementary school learners, making books with a variety of materials or games, or introducing topics related to pop-cultures, such as television shows and video games, are more effective. For middle school and high school students, the activities should be more functional and tasks should be practical in real situations, such as ordering food or having a conversation with customer service operators. Rosevear (2009) introduces some specific fun classroom activities. Table 2 is based on Rosevear (2009, p. 59) and provides a brief summary of these activities.

Table 2: Fun Activities

Activity	Description of Activity
Flyswatter	"To play, divide the class into two teams. Write ten vocabulary words across the chalkboard and give one rep from each team a flyswatter. Read aloud a definition of one of the words. The first student to hit the correct word with her flyswatter earns a point for her team."
Review Obstacle Course	"Create two mazes with desks that go from the front to the back of the room. After writing a math problem on the board, one student from each team runs through the obstacle course to the front of the room and attempts to answer the problem. The student with the

	<p>first correct answer wins a point for his team. If the student answers incorrectly, he has to run back through the obstacle course and tag the next person in line to run up to the board and try to answer correctly before the other team does.”</p>
Group Spelling Bee	<p>“Pick a conjugation of a verb for students to spell in French (for example, the "we" form of the verb to run, which in French is courir). Students spell out the conjugation while sitting on their desks. If a student makes a mistake, she has to sit back on her chair. Continue to give different verbs and conjugations. The last person sitting on his desk is the winner.”</p>
Slap That Desk	<p>“Students create three review questions each for homework (one easy, one medium, one difficult). The teacher collects all the questions before the game starts. (Remind kids to write their names on their questions so you don't wind up asking them a question they created.) Divide the class into two teams. For each round, call one student from each team up to the front desk. After you ask a review question, the first person to "slap that desk!" gets the first chance to answer. The student must respond within five seconds or the other student gets a turn. Whoever gets it right earns a point for the team. If neither contestant gets it right, no one gets the point, but you can open the question to the entire class to see if anyone else knows.”</p>
Review Basketball	<p>“Divide the class into four teams. For each round, one player from each team tries to answer a test review problem on the board. To prevent the strongest students from dominating the game, don't allow collaboration between the team members. The first student with the correct answer earns a point for her team. If the answer is wrong, that team loses a point and another team can jump in and answer. When a student answers a question correctly, she can earn an extra point by making a basket from a set point in the room.”</p>

A study conducted by Dember, Galinsky, and Warm (1992) showed that providing options in activities was effective to motivate students. In this study, university students could choose to perform either ‘easy’ or ‘difficult’ tasks, but in fact the tasks they performed were the same. The results show that choices may motivate and demotivate students depending on the quality and quantity of their selections. More importantly, each choice should be relevant to individual goals, with a reasonable number of choices to meet students’ proficiency level, interests and goals.

Van Aacken (1999) studied first-year university students using CALL kanji (Chinese characters used phonetically in the Japanese writing system) program. The computer creates a non-threatening environment by not judging students when they make mistakes or repeatedly ask similar types of questions, which results in a low emotional filter among students. The results show that CALL kanji learning is effective especially for beginners in an encouraging and optimistic environment to practice the program.

Boyd et al. (2009) introduces a motivating activity for graduate students: writing a letter to Jean Alicia Elster, the author of “the Joe-Joe” books. This study emphasizes ‘real-world connections’— connecting classroom tasks to the world outside. In this study, students choose one of the collections of Elster’s books, have class discussions, write a letter to Elster, and receive personal e-mails from Elster as a response. Although this study does not include students’ evaluations of the activities, the tasks that connect students to the outside world have clearly motivated students.

Hu and Jiang (2008) studied film usage in university EFL classes. First, the participating students receive abundant background knowledge about the film history, actors, and directors; second, they receive transcripts and audio recording of the film, and

listen to the audio for the first time while underlining new words and phrases they are not familiar with; third, the students may look up the new words in dictionaries; fourth, students listen to the audio for the second time and read the transcript; fifth, students listen to the audio for the third time, but they are not allowed to read the text; sixth, the class has discussions; seventh, students take a quiz; eighth and last, only students who could get more than 70% of the answers are allowed to watch the movie. The results indicate that their satisfaction of watching a film in a target language has motivated the students. Also, through the given steps, students are able to learn vocabulary, phrases, grammar, history, and culture. Besides being intrigued by the film they will watch, the satisfaction of engaging with authentic materials highly motivates those students.

Previous research on motivation indicates that environment is an important factor to motivate/de-motivate students. Classroom-related activities account for the majority of reasons for motivation/de-motivation compared to teacher-related, external, or utilitarian reasons (Nikolov, 1999). Classroom activities that make connections to the world in a supportive environment with challenging tasks could motivate students. However, the types of classroom activities which might motivate/de-motivate students and how students and teachers perceive their classroom activities in SLA have not received enough attention. As this chapter has explained, learning motivation is not fixed or stable, but changes all the time as a result of previous learning experience, contact with the target language community and speakers, and most importantly, their classroom learning experience. The dynamic view of motivation means that we should more closely examine the connection between a variety of antecedents and motivational change. Since classroom setting is one of the most important environments for language learning, the

impact of classroom activities on students' motivational change needs to receive more attention.

## **Chapter III. Study**

### **1. Research Setting**

The research was conducted in the Spring 2012 semester at a United States high school in West Virginia. In 2011, 1845 students enrolled in that high school, and 32 students enrolled in Japanese classes. That school has three Japanese instructors who teach the Japanese courses offered at the school, which are divided into four levels based on fluency: JPN1, JPN2, JPN3, and JPN4. The Japanese classes meet Monday to Friday for 50 minutes each day. The students need to pass the previous level of the course before they can take the class at the next level. The school has a graduation requirement that includes completion of two years of foreign language classes. Additionally, participants' exposure to the L2 community is extremely limited. The participants typically do not have Japanese peers while their instructors – all the instructors are Japanese native speakers – are their only daily contact with Japanese native speakers.

### **2. Research Questions**

This study aims to answer the following three research questions.

1. What are some of the motivation factors held by this group of JFL Learners?
2. Have their motivational levels or motivation factors changed after a two-month period of instructional experience? If so, how and why? Which classroom activities have motivated/de-motivated their language learning?



3. Are there gaps between students' perception of motivational classroom activities and teachers' beliefs in such activities? What are they?

### **3. Participants**

Out of 32 students who take Japanese as a foreign language at the participating high school, 24 of them agreed to participate in this study. All of the participating students, ranging in age from 14 to 18 years old, were born and raised in the United States. The numbers of participants from each year of study are: 9 out of 17 total students for the first year of learning Japanese (JPN 1); 12 out of 12 total students for the second year of learning Japanese (JPN 2); 1 out of 1 total students for the third year of learning Japanese (JPN 3); and 2 out of 2 total students for the fourth year of learning Japanese (JPN 4). The research was conducted at the beginning of the second semester, which means that every participant has at least one semester of experience in learning Japanese. Although only two years of foreign language class are required for graduation, students can voluntarily take the advanced JPN3 and 4 classes out of personal interest.

Of the three Japanese instructors in that high school, two participated in this research. One of them is language instructor K, whose teaching focuses on language skills. The other instructor is cultural instructor Y, whose teaching focuses on introducing Japanese culture to the students. Y participated in this research as a Japan outreach coordinator at Marshall University. Y occasionally comes to school in order to introduce Japanese culture to those students who take Japanese as their foreign language. The third instructor is the researcher, so my own data was excluded from this study for reliability and validity purposes.

The Japanese curriculum separates culture classes from the language classes. The cultural instructor visits the school as a guest lecturer with the sole purpose of introducing Japanese culture to those high school Japanese learners. In both language and cultural classes, the primary language of instruction is English. Japanese is more likely to be used as the language of instruction when the class level increases.

#### **4. Procedure**

In order to enhance the validity of this study, triangulated data were collected: questionnaires were issued to the participating students, classrooms were observed, and focused interviews were conducted on both students and teachers. Each student responded to the first and second questionnaires to convey his/her initial motivations and whether or not their motivational level of learning Japanese changed. According to their responses about motivational level in both questionnaires, ten of the students were chosen as focused interviewees in order to analyze possible factors of motivational change or lack of such change. The classroom observation data were used to cross-validate students' reported data regarding motivating and de-motivating class activities. The timeline of each data collection is shown in Figure 3. The first questionnaire was issued at the beginning of the research, and the second questionnaire was issued two months after the first questionnaire. In the time between these questionnaires, classroom observations were conducted for two months. Finally, ten students and the two instructors were interviewed following the second questionnaire.

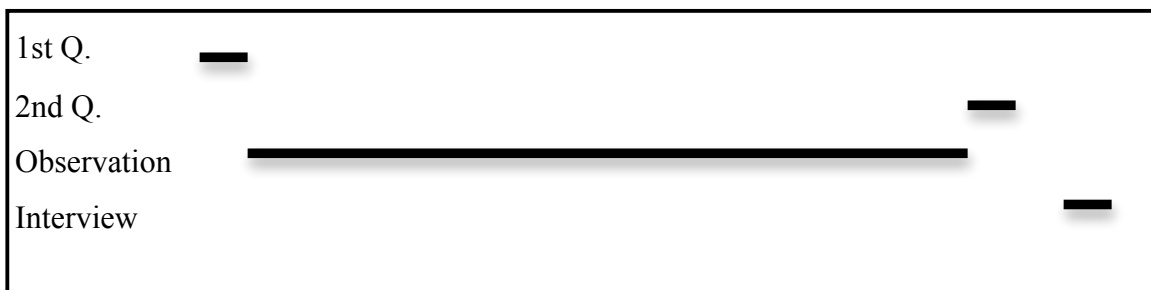


Figure 3: Data collection timeline

Note: Questionnaire: Q.

#### 4.1. The First Questionnaire

At the beginning of the Spring 2012 semester, the participants completed the first questionnaire answering why they chose to learn Japanese (see Appendix A). The first questionnaire included 50 questions on a 6-point scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = moderately disagree, 3 = slightly disagree, 4 = slightly agree, 5 = moderately agree, and 6 = strongly agree. Based on Ortega's (2009) categorization (see Table 3 on the next page), the questions were grouped into thirteen types of motivational antecedents. One of the antecedents, 'orientations' includes general orientation (e.g. I plan to continue studying Japanese as long as possible.), intrinsic orientation (e.g. I want to learn Japanese so well that it will become natural to me), and extrinsic orientation (e.g. Studying Japanese is important because I will need it for my career). The intrinsic orientations and extrinsic orientations are counted separately in order to specify the patterns. Students received individual codes and were instructed to write down the codes on the questionnaire instead of their names. The questionnaires were adapted from Schmidt, Boraie, and Kassabgy (1996), which was originally used to investigate motivation among EFL learners.

Table 3: Motivation Antecedents

Antecedent	Comments
Attitude toward the L2 Community and its Speakers	“They are grounded in the sociocultural milieu of the learners, with its shared values, beliefs, norms and practices; oftentimes researchers also include questionnaire items about socially based attitudes toward a number of interrelated dimensions, for example, attitudes toward French Canadians, European French people, the learning of foreign languages in general and bilingualism as a societal value” (Ortega, 2009, p. 172).
Attitudes toward instructional setting	“They include attitudes toward teachers and curriculum, where a good part of the learning takes place; more recently attitudes toward peers and group dynamics have also been explored” (Ortega, 2009, p. 172).
Attitude toward language learning	General interest in language learning. (e.g. I love learning Japanese.)
Orientations	“These are reasons for learning the L2, which in turn may influence the intensity and quality of motivation of learner’s experience” (Ortega, 2009, p. 172).
Orientations (Intrinsic motivation)	Intrinsic orientations
Orientations (Extrinsic motivation)	Extrinsic orientations
Social support	“Support from significant others (including parents, siblings, peers and teachers, since believing that they want one to learn the language creates rewards and reinforcements that may be important in boosting motivation” (Ortega, 2009, p. 172).
Self-confidence when using the language	“It includes communicative anxiety and self-perception of communicative competence” (Ortega, 2009, p. 172).

#### **4.2. The Second Questionnaire**

Two months after the first questionnaire, the second questionnaire was issued to the participants which examined their current motivational level of language learning and the possible activities that might lead to such changes. The participants were instructed to put down the same one to six grading code given to them earlier. In addition to the fifty questions included in the first questionnaire, the second questionnaire also included eight open-ended questions which ask students to describe motivating or de-motivating classroom activities in detail (e.g. Tell me at least two classroom activities that motivate/de-motivate you? What do you expect from Japanese classes? – see Appendix B). These open-ended questions were designed to find out specific motivational or de-motivational classroom activities, which were unable to be revealed from the predetermined closed questions. These open-ended questions were also based on the researcher's teaching experience and classroom observation questions.

#### **4.3. Classroom Observation**

During the two months between the two questionnaires, I observed two Japanese instructors' classes, language instructor K and the cultural facilitator, Y. The observation dates were chosen based on preferences of the instructors. K taught JPN1 and JPN4 and both classes were observed once a week every Tuesday for four weeks. In all, eight class observation data sets of K's lessons were collected. Y taught the Japanese culture class once every two weeks in two classes (JPN1&2 and JPN3&4; classes are combined to JPN1 and 2, as well as JPN3 and 4), so only four of Y's classes were observed during the same period of time. Thus, a total of twelve classes were observed with the focus on the types of teaching activities. In each observation, a chart was used to tally the frequency

and count duration of different activities, such as grammar instruction and cultural explanations. The chart was based on Van Olphen, Hofer, and Harris' (2011) grouping of activity types. Table 4 provides detailed information of these classroom activities.

Table 4: Observation Data: Activity Types

Grammar	Culture
Lecture	High Culture
Writing	Low Culture
Reading	Value
Speaking	History
Integrative	Tradition/Custom
Listening	Viewing
Viewing	Speaking
Kinesthetic	Integrative
	Kinesthetic

Note: High culture refers to the 'mainstream' of the culture, which is often accepted as artistic or aesthetic (Bolognani, 2011), whereas low culture is also called popular culture, which refers to a culture that represents that "the people are all part of a whole" (e.g. folksong) (Goodall, 1995).

#### 4.4. Interview

The comparison of students' responses to the first question of the 50 predetermined questions "My motivation to learn Japanese is very high" in the first and the second questionnaire indicated that some students' motivational levels have increased, some have decreased, and some remained the same. Based on this, ten students were chosen as focused interviewees. Of those ten students, five of them did not change their motivational level (non-change group), two increased their motivational level (higher motivation group), and three decreased their motivational level (lower motivation

group). The interviews were semi-structured, which involves the same questions on the open-ended questions in the second questionnaire. The interview data were recorded and later transcribed. The interviews focused on detailed comments from the students and their reflections upon the changing motivation and possible reasons for that (see Appendix B).

The two instructors were also interviewed to get their perspectives on what activities are more effective in their language teaching. They were asked to answer what types of activities they used to motivate their students to learn Japanese in general and the rationales for their activity choices. The interview questions directed toward the instructors serve to answer the third research question – possible gaps between students' and instructors' perceptions toward motivating/de-motivating activities (see Appendix C). They were also asked to reflect upon two effective/non-effective classroom activities they used to motivate their students and the rationale for those activities. Similarly to the students, instructor interviews were semi-structured, where the data were recorded and later transcribed.

## Chapter IV. Data Analysis and Findings

This section will discuss analysis of the 6-point scale questions and open-ended questions in the two questionnaires, the interview, and the classroom observation data. Each type of data serves different purposes to answer different research questions. The two questionnaires serve to track 1) possible motivational changes of the students' Japanese learning and 2) the nature and extent of such changes. The open-ended questions serve to provide a general description of what classroom activities are collectively regarded as the motivating or de-motivating activities from all participating students. The interviews of the selected ten students found more in-depth reasons for their changing motivational level or the lack of such changes, with possible implications for classroom instruction. This analysis is then cross-validated with the classroom observation data, which serves to confirm the reported data from the students and reveal patterns not shown in the students' reported data. Lastly, interviews with the two instructors serve to elicit the instructors' perspectives on classroom activities and strategies they have employed to motivate their students' learning.

The first research question asks why students are motivated to learn Japanese as a foreign language. To answer this question, the 50 questions (on 6-point scale) in both questionnaires were examined. Overall, the participants were initially motivated to learn Japanese for both intrinsic motivation factors – such as their curiosity and general interest in Japan and Japanese culture – and extrinsic motivation factors, such as getting better grades or being able to communicate with Japanese people. Nonetheless, the extrinsic motivation factors were slightly more common than intrinsic motivational factors, as



shown in the first questionnaire. The open-ended questions in the second questionnaire revealed one unique finding: ten students indicated that Japanese animation (hereafter Anime) was a major factor in motivating them to study Japanese. This media influence as a motivational trigger may be unique to learners of Japanese. Many students expressed a strong interest in engaging with or working in the field of Anime. Japanese animation skill has been known for its quality and popularity, which makes Japan the leader in this field. Thus, many students put this as a motivational factor. This focus on Anime has not been discovered in previous studies on motivation to learn other languages.

The second research question reviews whether there is any motivational change after classroom instruction and possible causes for that. A comparison of the two questionnaires, open-ended questions, and detailed analysis of the interview data help to answer this question. This comparison of students' responses in the two questionnaires suggest that overall motivational levels have increased after the two-month learning experience, though some individual students became de-motivated in their language learning. In addition, some students became more intrinsically motivated to learn Japanese from their previously held dominant extrinsic motivational factors. The detailed analysis of the interview data shows that many students expect their teachers and Japanese classes to offer intrinsically motivating activities. This pattern is mostly found in students who have remained highly motivated, or increased their motivational level.

The third question is designed to find out a possible match or mismatch between students' expectations and instructors' perspectives. To answer this question, students' and teachers' interview data were compared. The results suggest that there are gaps between students' expectations and needs in regards to intrinsically motivating activities

and teachers' recognition when implementing such activities in their teaching.

## **1. Questionnaire**

This section discusses in detail the similarities and differences between the first and second questionnaires.

To ensure the validity of students' responses, some questions in the questionnaires were asked then restated differently. Basically, the same concepts were asked twice in different ways, once as a positive construct and once as a negative construct. For example, one of the questions asks the students to grade the statement "I love learning Japanese." Another question, which occurs later in the questionnaire, asks the students to grade the same construct with a negative expression "I don't enjoy learning Japanese." The assumption is that students who respond "strongly agree" to the first question should respond "strongly disagree" to the second question. In case their responses to these two questions are both "agree" or "disagree," their responses are invalid and not counted.

Since some of the questions were designed this way, answers to those questions were coded reversely. For example, when a student marked 1 (strongly disagree) to the question "I don't enjoy learning Japanese, but I know that learning Japanese is important for me," the response was coded as 6. When a student marked 6 (strongly agree) to the question "I enjoy learning Japanese," the response was coded as 6.

### **1.1. The First Questionnaire**

Data analysis of the first questionnaire suggests that in comparison, interpersonal factors could have more significant motivational antecedents than personal factors among the participants. The results were calculated in the following steps: firstly, numerical

values were assigned to their responses (e.g. strongly agree, 6; moderately agree, 5; slightly agree, 4; moderately disagree, 3; slightly disagree, 2; strongly disagree, 1); secondly, the numerical values of each question were averaged and grouped under the thirteen antecedents; lastly, those antecedents were ranked according to the average numerical values (see Table 5 for specific value).

Analysis of the first questionnaire suggests that external factors, such as ‘attitude toward language and language community’ or learning environments in general, are more influential factors on the students’ motivation compared to internal factors, such as orientation or self-confidence. This pattern is shown in Table 5.

Table 5: The First Questionnaire

Rank	Motivation factor	Result
1	Attitude toward language learning	5.29
2	Attitude toward the L2 community and its speakers	5.10
3	Attitude toward instructional setting	4.92
4	Social support	4.84
5	Orientation (extrinsic motivation)	4.76
6	Orientation (intrinsic motivation)	4.64
7	Orientations	4.56
8	Self-confidence when using the language	4.29

Note: Results are rounded off to 2 decimal points.

## 1.2. The Second Questionnaire

The second questionnaire is analyzed with the same calculation method. The motivational factors and their ranks are shown in Table 6. The average scores in the second questionnaire are generally higher than those in the first questionnaire for each

group. This suggests that overall, the participants became more motivated to study Japanese after this two-month instruction.

Table 6: The Second Questionnaire

Rank	Motivation factor	Result
1	Attitude toward language learning	5.50
2	Attitude toward the L2 community and its speakers	5.50
3	Orientation (intrinsic motivation)	5.45
4	Attitude toward instructional setting	5.43
5	Social support	5.35
6	Orientations	5.13
7	Orientation (extrinsic motivation)	5.05
8	Self-confidence when using the language	4.47

Note: Results are rounded off to 2 decimal points.

The first research question, “What are some of the motivation factors held by this group of JFL Learners?” was answered by analyzing the two questionnaires. Overall, their motivational factors include intrinsic factors such as attitude toward the language itself and extrinsic factors such as attitude toward the speakers, language community and instructional settings.

### 1.3. Comparison of the Two Questionnaires

The comparison of the different motivational groups from the two questionnaires suggests that, in general, the value of each group of motivational factors has increased slightly from the first to the second questionnaire, which implies a slightly higher motivation among this group of students following the two-month learning experience. In addition, two patterns remain the same: in both questionnaires, students’ attitude towards

language learning itself ranks number 1 and their attitude towards the speakers and the language community ranks number 2.

The comparison of the first and second questionnaires is illustrated in Table 7 lower on this page. As shown in the table, shifts in rank between the first and second questionnaires are illustrated by arrows. For example, one “up” (↑) arrow indicates that the category became one rank higher in the second questionnaire, and two “up” arrows indicate that the increase in rank was two. Table 7 clearly shows that intrinsic motivation has increased from rank 6 in the first questionnaire to rank 3 in the second questionnaire; extrinsic motivation has decreased from rank 5 in the first questionnaire to rank 7 in the second questionnaire. This result suggests that overall, students might be more intrinsically oriented to learn Japanese after this two-month learning experience, which is a positive change.

Table 7: Changes of the Impact of Types of Activity

Changes	1st questionnaire	2nd questionnaire	Types of activity
→	1	1	Attitude toward language learning
→	2	2	Attitude toward the L2 community and its speakers
↑↑↑	6	3	Orientation (intrinsic motivation)
↑	3	4	Attitude toward instructional setting
↑	4	5	Social support
↓	7	6	Orientations
↓↓	5	7	Orientation (extrinsic motivation)
→	8	8	Self-confidence when using the language

Note: ↑: increased, →: no change, ↓: decreased

## 2. Questionnaire (Open-ended Questions)

The open-ended questions in the second questionnaire found possible motivational reasons and classroom activities uncovered from the 6-point scale questions. As discussed earlier, this section has revealed one unique finding: Anime is a strong motivational antecedent for some Japanese learners. Some open-ended questions asked students to reflect upon the motivating or de-motivating classroom activities they have experienced. Altogether, students nominated fun activities, such as games, hands-on activities, and cultural activities, as motivational activities, which were not revealed in the closed portion of the questionnaire. Their responses were then categorized into different groups: grammar, culture, lecture, writing, reading, speaking, interactive, listening, viewing, and kinesthetic activities. In this section, ‘games’ are counted as kinesthetic activities because games usually include physical acts, such as running, acting, or dancing. Some students’ responses include more than one factor or activity. In this case, such responses were counted depending on the types of questions. For example, to the question “why did you choose Japanese as your second/third language,” one of the students responded, “My credit, to learn more, to stay with my friends,” which includes both intrinsic (“to learn more”) and extrinsic (“my credit; to stay with my friends”) factors. In that case, the student’s responses were coded into multiple groups.

The findings show that there are two main activity types that motivate students: seventeen students responded that language-based learning (e.g. games, dictations, etc.) motivated them and fourteen students responded that world-connected activities (e.g. culture, interactions, etc.) were motivating. However, the same activity can both motivate and de-motivate different students at the same time. Some students reported that

language-based activities were challenging (motivating), but others reported these as demotivating factors. The following sections are the findings from those open-ended questions.

### **2.1. World-connected Motivating Activities**

Fourteen out of twenty-four students responded that world-connected activities motivated them to learn Japanese. The activities that students mentioned in the open-ended part of the questionnaire include learning Japanese traditional and pop culture, eating and cooking Japanese food (e.g. sushi, natto, etc.), working in Japan, planning to study abroad, watching/reading media (e.g. videos, movies, Manga, TV shows, TV games, etc.), meeting Japanese people, and having conversation with Japanese speakers. Additionally, most students expressed that they would like to use their communication skills in the future, such as speaking Japanese when traveling or living in Japan. This result might indicate that world-connected activities are commonly identified as motivating activities by the students.

Some of the responses could easily be categorized into either intrinsic motivations (e.g. “It seemed fun.”) or extrinsic motivations (e.g. “To get the school credit.”). However, when detached from context, the majority of their responses were hard to categorize in that way. To solve this problem, the responses were divided into culture-oriented responses (e.g. “I love anime.” and “I like the culture.”) or language-oriented responses (e.g. “I want to know the language.” and “I want to communicate with Japanese people.”).

Overall, the most common motivating classroom activities indicated by students relate to communication, interaction, followed by kinesthetic activities such as games, as well as writing activities (e.g. dictations, worksheet, etc.).

## **2.2. Differences in Motivation between Beginners and Advanced Students**

When learning experiences and proficiency levels are taken into consideration, the findings point out that those higher-level language learners in the JPN3 and 4 classes tend to choose more language learning oriented activities rather than culture-based activities as motivating teaching practices. The JPN3 and 4 students voluntarily take Japanese classes beyond their graduate requirement, which could indicate their higher motivation to learn the language well. In contrast, JPN1 and 2 students are still under the graduation requirement to take one foreign language class for two years, so they may not be as intrinsically motivated as those higher-level learners. This could explain their preference for ‘fun’ culture-based activities. In addition, it could also be the case that beginners need to overcome the initial barrier of language learning, as the language itself is intimidating to them due to the linguistic distance between Japanese and English. The lower-level learners might be hindered by the formal linguistic features of Japanese. This could be the reason why the lower-level learners tend to be more motivated by cultural activities.

## **2.3. Motivating/De-motivating Activities**

The above section explained the general tendency of student motivation, and the next section will focus on motivating and de-motivating activity patterns.



### ***2.3.1. Motivating Fun Environment***

Fourteen students indicated that they expect their teachers to facilitate their learning by creating a friendly and comfortable atmosphere. For example, some students responded “(I expect teachers/Japanese classes) to make it easy to learn/fun/helpful.”

Specifically, Anime and Manga (Japanese style comic book) have been mentioned as two of the most common motivating reasons to learn Japanese.

“When I know that I want to go into animation, and the Japanese have really good animation skills.”

“I am a big fan of Anime.”

Thus, these expectations to learn in a ‘fun’ environment suggest that students want an environment that could motivate their language learning intrinsically.

### ***2.3.2. De-motivation***

In addition to motivating factors, several de-motivating factors also emerged from the open-ended questions. First of all, seven students reported that they are de-motivated learning Japanese because of their confusion about the language instruction. The result indicates that there are various sources of confusion such as when they did not understand the instruction, when they did not know how to answer or reply, or when they did not know how to express meanings in Japanese. Some actual responses from the students are provided here:

I am de-motivated when:

“I rarely know what’s going on due to lack of English (usage in classroom).”

“I could not come up with stories.”

“we do activities with vocabulary I wasn’t very familiar with and not understanding worksheets.”

Personal problems were also reported as one of the de-motivating factors. For example, some students responded that they took a break between their language classes and this made it harder for them to learn Japanese. Five students indicated that their personality causes them to easily become distracted, depressed, or tired which is a major factor in hindering their language learning.

Four students indicate that environmental issues (e.g. “School starts too early and desks are very uncomfortable.” “Friends said I should take Spanish rather than Japanese.” “My classmates are too noisy.”) de-motivate their language learning.

In all, the open-ended questionnaire suggests a range of student attitudes and preferences toward learning styles and motivating/de-motivating classroom activities. For instance, some students take Japanese class because of school requirements, or because they lack interest in learning languages other than Japanese. Those extrinsically motivated students are more likely to become de-motivated later on, as the interview and the questionnaire data indicate. In comparison, those who choose to take Japanese classes for strong intrinsically oriented reasons, such as for pure joy or the challenge of language learning, are more likely have increased motivation after a two-month period of receiving formal language instruction.

### **3. Classroom Observation**

Classroom observation data served to determine activities in the observed Japanese classes to cross-validate participants’ reported data. A total of twelve classes

were observed. The observed classroom activities were first broadly categorized as grammatical or cultural activities, with fine-tuned categorization in each group: lecturing, writing, reading, speaking, interacting, listening, viewing, kinesthetic, low-culture, high-culture, etc. (see Table 3 above). The results indicate that instructors have designed different teaching activities according to both their teaching goals and the language levels of the students. It goes without saying that the language instructor's focus was on grammatical instruction, whereas the culture instructor's was on cultural introduction. The patterns which emerged indicate that lower-level classes tend to use more kinesthetic and non-world-connected activities, while higher-level classes tend to use more world-connected activities such as communicative and culture-related activities.

One challenge in analyzing the data of observed classroom activities is that some activities could be categorized in multiple ways. For example, a greeting at the beginning and the end of the class period could be placed as a cultural activity (for the tradition/custom), an interactional activity (as a part of communication), and a kinesthetic activity (standing up and bowing to each other). It is thus tallied three times. As some activities are counted more than once under different activity types, the total sum of time for each class period could be longer than the actual class time of 50 minutes. Table 8 illustrates this pattern of various classroom activities.

Table 8: Observed Class Activities Example (JPN4; 4th observation)

Activity Type		Specific Activity	Time (Frequency)
Grammar	Lecture	vocabulary and grammar review	20 min. (7)
	Writing	copy, translation, worksheet	10 min. (3)

	Reading	worksheet	9 min. (2)
	Speaking	creating sentences	7 min. (3)
	Interactive	Q&A	21 min. (7)
	Listening	example sentences	5 min. (3)
	Viewing		
	Kinesthetic		
Culture	High Culture		
	Low Culture	instructor's personal story	2 min. (2)
	Value		
	History		
	Tradition/Custom	greeting, manner	1 min. (2)
	Viewing		
	Speaking		
	Interactive	greeting	5 min. (2)
	Kinesthetic	greeting	1 min. (2)

Greeting is of particular value to create a harmonious classroom atmosphere by showcasing the Japanese culture and reducing distance between instructors and students. The pattern of K and Y's class routines to greet students at the beginning and the end of the class is shown in Figure 5 and Figure 6 on pages 43 and 44. The greetings, "Yoroshikuonegaishimasu (Please treat me nice)" at the beginning and "Sayoonara (Good bye)" at the end, serve triple functions in terms of tradition/custom, interactive, and kinesthetic categories. These classroom activities naturally increase the amount of exposure to the Japanese culture in class. Normally, there is not much cultural introduction in JPN1 and JPN2 classes. Greeting, in a certain sense, provides opportunities for language learners to experience Japanese culture and ritual. When students bow back to the instructors, they also greet their instructors in Japanese at the

same time. To the lower-level learners, this activity might make them feel they are experiencing Japanese culture by behaving as Japanese students would do in a native Japanese education environment. This may have influenced learners' increased motivation to learn Japanese due to the fact that 95% of the students responded that they would like to go to Japan and use their language skill.

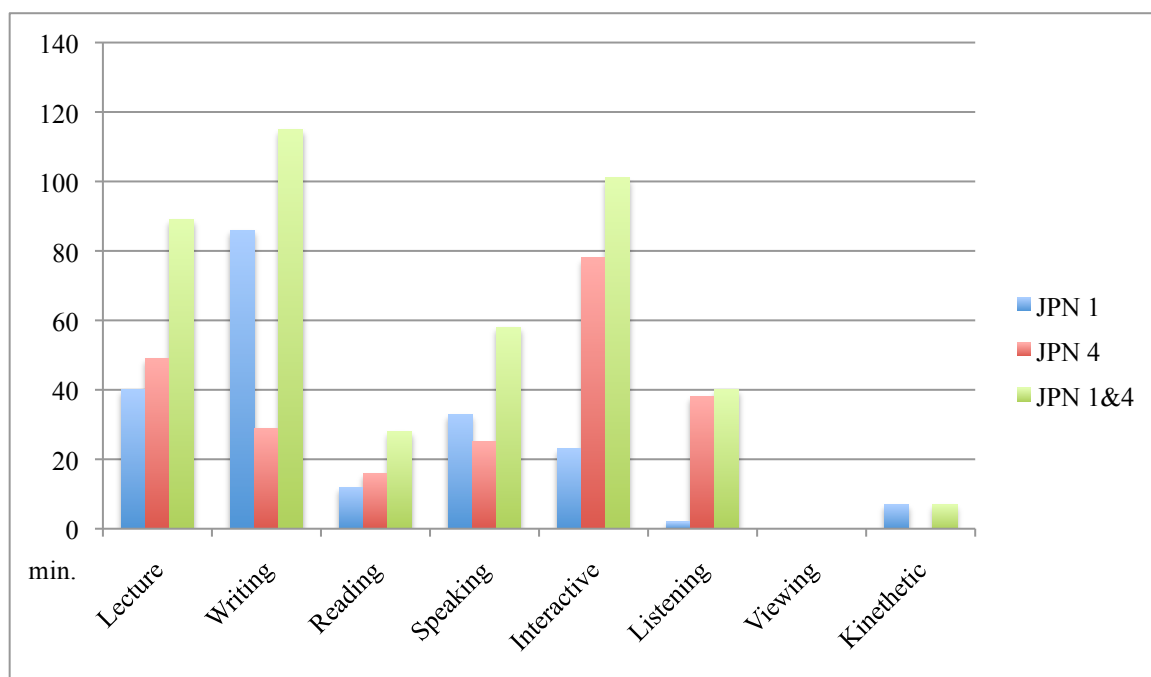


Figure 4: Total Time of Classroom Observation: Language Instructor K (Grammar)

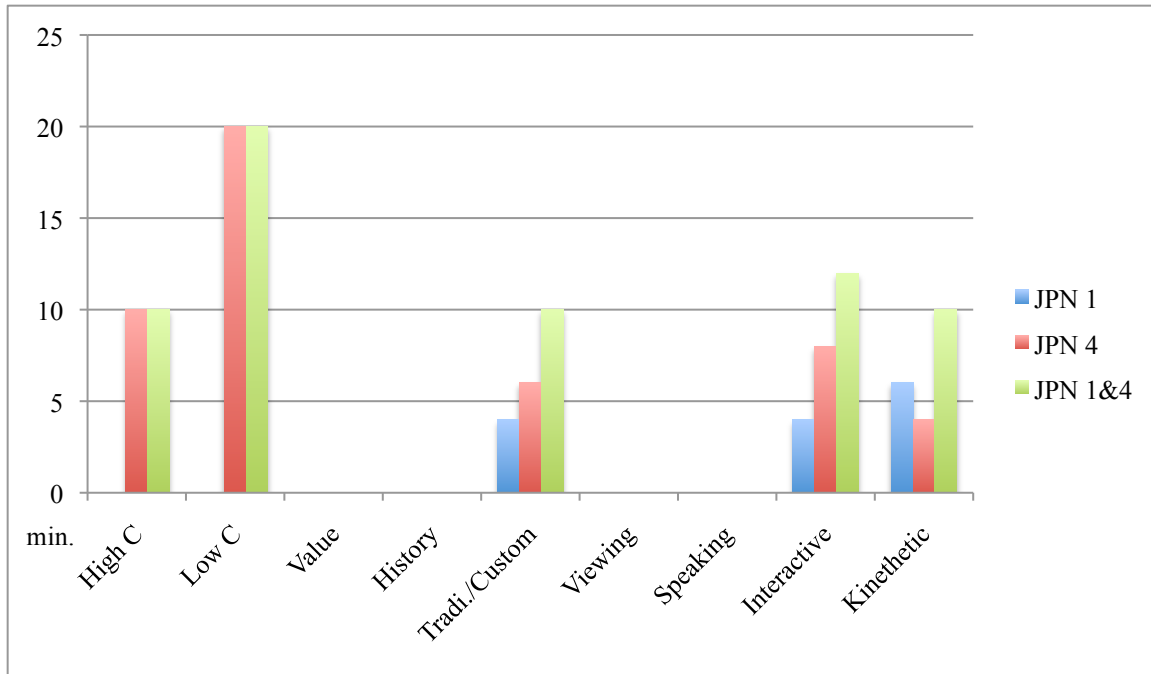


Figure 5: Total Time of Classroom Observation: Language Instructor K (Culture)  
 Note: culture: C, traditional: tradi.

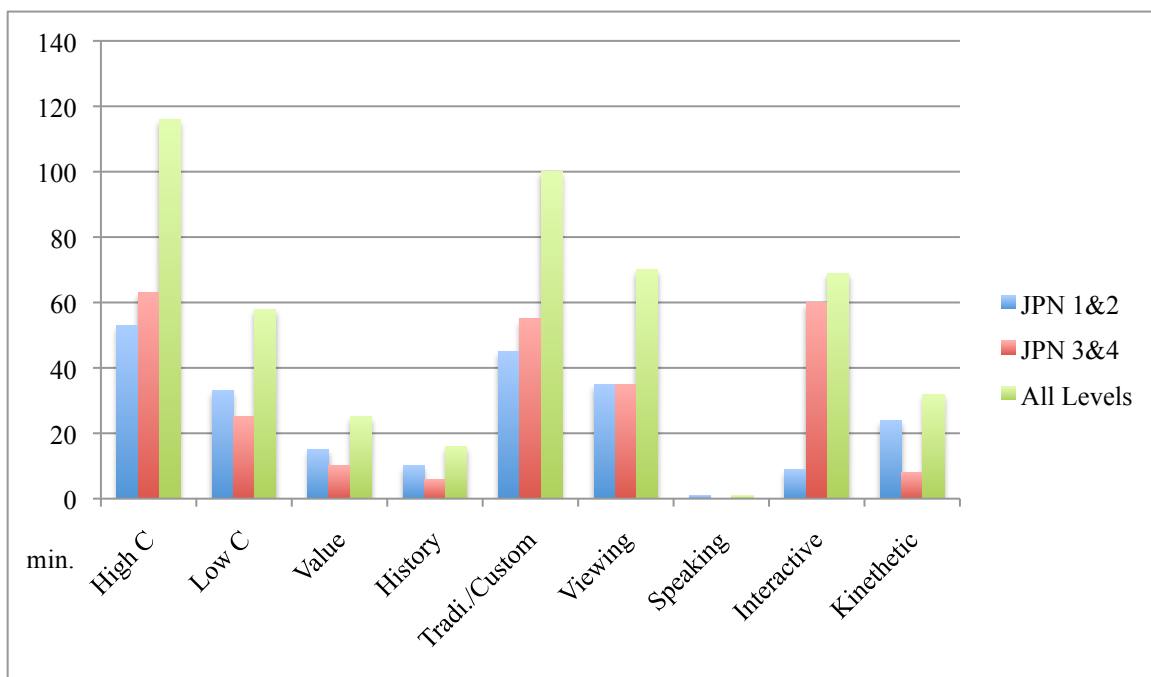


Figure 6: Total Time of Classroom Observation: Cultural Instructor Y  
 Note: culture: C, traditional: tradi.

Figure 4 and 5 reveal three main findings. First, that language instructor K spent a considerable amount of time with grammar and writing while spending less time on other activities, specifically viewing activities and kinesthetic activities during the grammar teaching session. There are significant differences between K's activity practices between JPN1 and JPN4. For grammar-focused activities, K spent about 85 minutes on writing in JPN1, in comparison to the 35 minutes spent in JPN4. Additionally, K spent about 20 minutes on interactive activities in JPN1, but 100 minutes in JPN4 class. Also, K introduced both high and low culture in JPN4 but provided no cultural explanation in the JPN1 class.

The above results could be explained in the following way: the level of students and the number of students in the class influenced the instructors' classroom activity choices. A smaller number of students with higher-level proficiency in JPN4 (two students) as opposed to JPN1 (seventeen students) might make interactive activities easier and more necessary, which, for class time to be used productively, could lead to conversations about cultural topics rather than solely relying on grammatical explanation. Naturally, students' age and language levels could have influenced the instructor's pedagogical choices of cultural topics. JPN4 students are more intrinsically motivated to learn Japanese language as they seek additional instruction beyond graduation requirements to improve their Japanese. This should make them appreciate the connection between cultural knowledge and language usage more. In contrast, JPN1 students are mostly freshmen, and can easily forget that they are in a language class when they are immersed in cultural explanations by overlooking the grammar of the language.

Therefore, students' proficiency level could also have an influence on the instructor's choice of pedagogical activities.

In contrast to language instructor K, the cultural instructor Y did not spend any time on grammar teaching but focused only on cultural activities, as shown in Figure 6. In Y's class, overall, high culture and tradition/custom-related activities are the primary activities, and there are no apparent differences between her JPN1 and JPN4 classes in general. Despite the lack of differences here, the time of interactional activities in JPN3 and JPN4 in Y's class is almost six times more than that in the JPN1 class. Also, the time on kinesthetic activities in her JPN1 class is almost three times more than that in her JPN4 class. Again, the goals and environment of instruction have clearly influenced the instructors' decisions on different pedagogical activities. First of all, it is not surprising that Y did not spend time on grammar instruction due to the nature of her class: cultural introduction. Even though Y's lesson plans for JPN1 and JPN2 are the same for her JPN3 and JPN4 class, Y spent more time on interactional activities, possibly because one of the classes is easier to interact with than the other: a smaller number of students with higher language skills versus a larger number of students with lower Japanese language skills. When combined with the interview and questionnaire data, the results suggest that in lower-level classes, Y's pedagogical decision to frequently implement kinesthetic activities has met students' expectations for more hands-on activities.

Findings in K and Y's classroom observation data can be related to those participating students' responses to the open-ended questions in the second questionnaire. The open-ended questions indicate that lower-level students tend to expect 'fun' activities, such as games, while higher-level students tend to expect to have world-



connected activities, especially conversational activities. Parallel to the expectations from different levels of students, both K and Y have applied more kinesthetic activities in the lower-level classes and interactive activities in higher-level classes. The observation results indicate that both language instructor K and cultural instructor Y have intuitively attempted to make accommodations in their teaching to meet learners' needs, although they have not elicited such student feedback prior to their teaching. This suggests that the instructors' general awareness and effort to meet students' expectations by including cultural, interactional, and kinesthetic activities are dependent upon students' ages and language levels.

#### **4. Interviews**

The interview data were collected to understand students' and instructors' detailed thoughts about motivating and de-motivating classroom activities, and to reveal possible gaps between student expectations and instructor overall assumptions, as well as students' perceptions of different classroom activities. The interview data show that some change their motivation levels throughout the learning process. This is later compared to the classroom observation data and instructors' interview data in order to see the dynamic relationships between learners' expectations, classroom practices, and instructors' teaching practices.

##### **4.1. Motivational Factors**

When the two questionnaires were compared, it was found that some students became more motivated (motivated group), some less motivated (de-motivated group) and some remained unchanged (non-change group), according to their responses to one

6-point scale question, “My motivation to learn Japanese is very high.” Based on this, five students were randomly chosen from the non-change group (JPN1: two, JPN2: two, JPN4: 1). As only two students increased their motivational level and three students decreased their motivational level, they were chosen as the interviewees for the motivated and de-motivated group: two students in JPN2 as the motivated group interviewees; two students from JPN2 and one student from JPN3 as the de-motivated group interviewees.

Table 9 illustrates fourteen students whose motivational level remained unchanged after this two-month experience. A higher number indicates a higher motivational level.

Table 9: Motivational Levels of the Non-change Group

class	Motivational level	Number of students
JPN1	6	6
	5	2
	4	1
JPN2	6	4
	5	4
JPN4	6	1
	5	1

Note: The one JPN3 student is not here due to the student’s motivational level change.

Figure 7 indicates that participants in JPN1 are more likely to be strongly motivated. Also, JPN2 and JPN4 students are either motivated or strongly motivated. Figure 7 also shows the motivational-level changes of five students who became more motivated or less motivated after the two-month learning experience; two JPN2 students increased their motivational levels while two of the JPN2 students and one of the JPN3

students decreased their motivational levels. The results indicate that matches in personal motivational reasons and classroom activities could contribute to maintain or increase his/her motivational level.

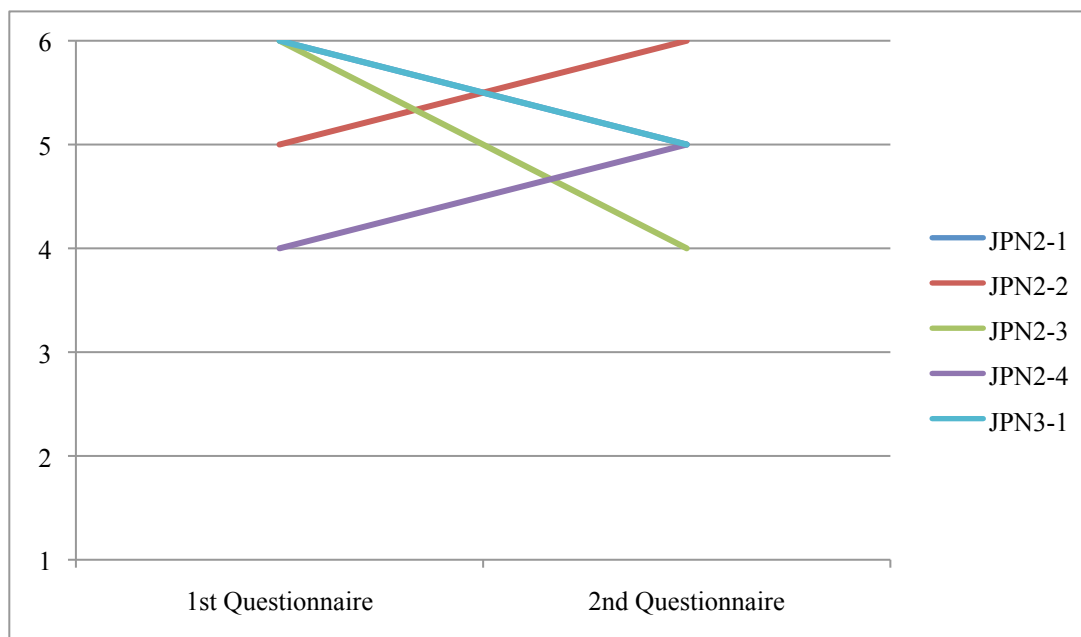


Figure 7: Motivational Changes

#### ***4.1.1. Japanese Media as a Motivation Factor***

The interview data indicate that there are a variety of patterns in students' expectations and thoughts. One unique finding arising out of this study is that Anime is a strong indicator of motivation for those students to learn Japanese. Students are also interested in Japanese media other than Anime (e.g. Manga, TV games, etc.). As responses to motivating factors in general, five students have indicated that media motivates them to learn Japanese. Students who identified Anime as their primary motivation to learn Japanese are more likely to be in either the 'non-change' or 'less motivated' groups later in their learning. Nonetheless, two of the more motivated students

who have identified their initial motivation to learn Japanese as Anime later indicated that their motivational source has shifted to language learning itself.

It was also interesting to see that there were no classroom activities utilizing Anime from either the observation data or the instructors' interview data. There is a mismatch between students' expectations and their actual learning experience. Instructors seem to show no interest in the inclusion of Anime-related topics in their teaching, which could explain why some students are less motivated when their expectations and their actual experience do not correspond to each other.

#### ***4.1.2. Japanese Culture as a Motivation Factor***

Cultural activities are also commonly mentioned in students' responses as an activity that could motivate their learning. Some of them wrote:

“Culture day. Games, race to the board.”

“I really liked the movies that you showed us, Erin, because it shows all the different things in Japan, like schools are so different and you get ideas.”

“I like Y comes [sic], and she shows us all the culture and all the festivals and activities in Japan.”

When the interview data were associated with the open-ended part of the second questionnaire, they suggest that lower-level students are more likely to choose cultural activities as their primary motivating activities. The classroom observation data supported the higher frequency of cultural activities in Y' classes but a lower frequency of such activities in K's class. K, not being a cultural instructor, only includes greeting in his higher-level class, while Y uses most of the class period to introduce and practice Japanese culture. K seldom included cultural activities or information in his low-level

classes which does not connect with the students' reported expectations of cultural activities in a foreign language class. Therefore, the match and mismatch between students' beliefs of motivating activities and the corresponding instruction they have received explains why some students have kept their motivation high or increased their motivational level, but other students have become de-motivated.

#### ***4.1.3. Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation***

Another similar pattern across motivational levels is that the majority of the students reported both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational reasons in their interview responses. For example:

“I wanted to learn more about it and found it very interesting (intrinsic). When I heard that this school offer [sic] learning Japanese, I decided to learn it. Anime was the first one I was interested in Japanese (extrinsic).”

“Seemed interesting to me, and I wanted to learn more about culture and stuff (intrinsic). The Japanese characters are very cool, and I wanted to read them in TV, video games, and Manga (extrinsic).”

However, close analysis of individual student responses indicates that the de-motivated students tend to rely more on extrinsic factors as their motivating elements. The following are the three de-motivated students' responses to the question “What motivates you to learn Japanese in general?”:

“Anime books that says [sic] something I don't know make me curious.”

“To graduate, requirements.”

“I hope to travel there someday and I want to watch all the anime movies that I love in Japanese.”

The above responses indicate that some students are motivated by extrinsic factors, such as Anime, graduation requirements, or a trip to Japan. However, the classroom observation data indicated that there were fewer activities relating to these extrinsic factors. When extrinsically motivated students' expectations were not met with classroom instruction, they were likely to be de-motivated. This corresponds to previous findings that extrinsic motivation is less important than intrinsic motivation to help achieving higher language skills (Yue et al., 2008; Hayenga & Corpus, 2010). This finding emphasizes that the gap between classroom activities and students' interest might de-motivate students; and extrinsically motivated students can easily become de-motivated when they do not get help to foster their motivational factors.

#### ***4.1.4. 'Fun' Environment***

Many of the students interviewed expressed an expectation to learn Japanese in a fun environment:

“Have fun and learn our vocabs.”

“Teach me and make the class entertaining.”

The same pattern was also found from the open-ended questions. Regardless of their motivational levels, the participants in general feel more motivated to study when they are in an exciting environment. Although students' definitions of 'fun' vary depending on their individual's values and preferences, the interviewees who stated that 'fun' activities are motivating activities also included cultural, as well as hands-on and kinesthetic activities as examples of motivating activities.

Interviews with the two instructors showed both matches and mismatches between the students and instructors' perceptions of 'fun' activities in class. First, the

cultural instructor Y believed that kinesthetic activities could motivate students. To some students, kinesthetic activities might mean ‘fun.’ Several students explicitly expressed that they look forward to Y’s class. These motivated students might be those who have experienced ‘fun’ classroom activities with Y’s kinesthetic activities.

On the other hand, there might be a gap between K’s interpretation of ‘fun’ and that of the students. As students’ interview data revealed, students expect to have ‘fun’ in games and cultural activities. However, instructor K, when interviewed, did not mention these specific activities as motivational factors or mention ‘fun’ activities as motivational activities. His interpretation of ‘fun’ activities includes the joy of using language in real context, and this interpretation seems to be different from the students’ expectation of ‘fun’ activities. The classroom observation data of K’s class also showed a lack of games or cultural activities in the lower-level classes. Thus, there seems to be a mismatch between the views held by the JPN1 students’ view of fun activities and K’s views on ‘fun’ activities. Conversely, JPN4 students expressed that they enjoy interactional activities when they could have conversations with native Japanese speakers. This clearly matches the instructor’s understanding of ‘fun’ activities. Therefore, it can be assumed that JPN4 students may have sustained their motivational level because their expectation of having ‘fun’ in class and the instructors’ belief of ‘fun’ activities matched. Some lower-level (JPN1 and JPN2) students’ motivation possibly becomes lower because of the mismatch between their expectation of ‘fun’ and the instructors’ pedagogical practices. It is not my intent here to judge which definition of ‘fun’ learning is right or wrong. This finding simply points out that a mismatch between students’ expectations and teaching activities could lead to de-motivation of language learning.

#### ***4.1.5. World-connected Activities***

World-connected activities relate to actual communication or the actual language speakers' world. These differ from cultural activities in that world-connected activities focus on the communicative nature language and its acquisition. Some of the participating students identified world-connected activities as their motivational trigger:

“More speaking activities, actual conversation practices.”

“Watch movies.”

“Eat natto.”

These students' interest in world-connected activities can be related to students' responses in the open-ended questions in the second questionnaire, which showed that the majority of them wish to go to Japan for a short/long visit and speak Japanese. Moreover, both instructors strongly believe that one of their most important goals is to help students understand Japanese language and culture, as well as to be able to communicate with native Japanese speakers. In the observation data, Y had fewer interactional activities in JPN1 and JPN2 compared to her JPN3 and JPN 4 classes, but her class activities are almost entirely world-connected activities. This match between students' motivation and teaching activities could explain why her classes are popular and motivating among lower-level learners. However, the amount of world-connected activities in K's JPN1 class is only one fourth of that in his JPN4 class, despite the students' strong desire to be able to connect the language to the world. In practice, this possible mismatch between students' expectations and their actual experience in the class could lead to de-motivated language learning behavior.



## 4.2. De-motivational Factors

Roughly two different types of de-motivating reasons are revealed from the student interview data: language and personal de-motivation reasons.

### 4.2.1. *Language Related De-motivation Reasons*

More than half of the students reported that de-motivating activities are often related to language difficulty. The same students could be more motivated to learn the language when they are introduced to the cultural factors, but they could become de-motivated simply due to the difficulty of learning the Japanese language.

“I don’t like listening worksheet. I understand the questions but the page seems like scrambled. There is a problem in the worksheet organizations. I don’t get used to the multiple choices, and they confuse me.”

“Only tests. Stressful. Dictation. I don’t like writing a lot.”

“When teacher talk only Japanese and I don’t know what it was.”

“Maybe vocabulary memorizations.”

“Different origin from English. Hard to get used to it.”

The classroom observation data indicated some activities used by the instructors are listed by the students as their de-motivating activities, such as dictations, listening exercises, and vocabulary memorizations. However, the understanding of what is a de-motivating activity differs between the instructors and the students. For instance, K believed that copying grammatical sentences from the white board, simply repeating sentences after the instructor, and other non-communicative activities were de-motivating activities, while Y believed that lectures, discussions, and other less kinesthetic tasks could de-motivate students. These were not indicated by the students. Thus, there are gaps between

students' belief and instructors' belief about valuable classroom activities, which could arise due to a lack of communication between instructors and students. What is more important here is that in terms of specific language teaching, instructors should take students' opinion into consideration when they design actual language-related classroom activities. This might help ease the difficulty level of learning Japanese as a foreign language.

#### ***4.2.2. Personal Reasons***

Some students named de-motivating activities based on their personal reasons. These activities could be very different:

“I don't like to get in front of class because I am very shy.”

“Speeches, I don't like to get up and go in front of people.”

“Other students in the classroom are noisy.”

“Out-loud speaking, I become nervous when I come to speak and hesitate.”

“I took a long break between classes and it was hard to get back to.”

“Staying with someone I don't know well in a classroom.”

The interview with the instructors did not reveal their awareness of a variety of personal de-motivating reasons: students' personal reasons as motivating/de-motivating factors are not mentioned by K and only briefly expressed once by Y. However, it is understandable that instructors could not understand each single de-motivating personal reason. It is also impractical to ask the instructor to take each individual personal factor into consideration while designing classroom activities.

## 5. Summary

When connecting classroom observation data, questionnaire data, and interview data, the ultimate findings suggest that language learners are more likely to increase their motivation or remain at the same motivational level when their expectations have been mostly met from their classroom learning experience. In terms of studying language motivations, we should no longer think of motivation as segmental or stable. A dynamic understanding of motivation should be considered when classroom practitioners design their teaching activities.

Comparisons of the first and the second questionnaires suggest that even though the participants' motivational level has increased in general, this happened mostly out of the positive learning experiences. The two most motivating antecedents are 'attitude toward language learning' and 'attitude toward the L2 community and its speakers,' and the least motivating antecedent is 'self-confidence when using the language.' Nonetheless, 'orientation (intrinsic motivation)' has increased as a motivating antecedent after those students' two-month class instruction. More participants identified world-connected activities as their motivational factors in the second questionnaire. This shows that overall, the students became more intrinsically motivated. This seems to suggest that a positive learning experience could make students more intrinsically motivated in their language learning. In alignment with the dynamic view of learner motivation, the matches between students' expectations and classroom activities could possibly alter students' motivations from extrinsic to intrinsic. Though most students have identified intrinsic orientation as their motivation to learn Japanese, some students take the

Japanese class simply for school credit and graduation requirement. It poses a challenge for language instructors to think about how to motivate this group of language learners.

Secondly, some activities are more likely to motivate students. These are listed in descending order of frequency as reported:

- a. world-connected activities
- b. culture-related activities
- c. kinesthetic activities, especially games and hands-on activities, and
- d. interactional activities

Thirdly, the participants have named some de-motivating activities and related factors. These are listed in a descending order of frequency:

- a. confusion/anxiety (e.g. not understanding classroom instructions, not sure how to phrase their ideas in Japanese, not sure what they want to say, etc.)
- b. difficulty level of language itself (e.g. vocabulary memorization, quizzes, etc.)
- c. personal issues (e.g. shy, language interval, tired, etc.).

Data from both student interviews and open-ended questions suggest that there are many more varieties of de-motivating factors than motivating factors. Although the above list includes the common de-motivating reasons, there are more unique/less-common factors nominated by individual students.

Nonetheless, the collectively nominated motivating and de-motivating classroom activities by the students could serve as a reference when teachers design their lessons. It can be seen that most of the motivating activities transcend the scope of discrete grammatical point instruction or practice, and some of the de-motivating activities

mentioned by the students are within the limited definition of traditional grammar exercises. This limited definition has posed a challenge in terms of foreign language instruction. After all, grammar is an important and essential part of language instruction and acquisition. The pedagogical implication of this point will be discussed in the next chapter.

In all, the questionnaire data, the class observation data, and the interview data suggest that students' expectations and their learning experiences, as well as teachers' goals, are dynamically connected to each other. A match of classroom activities and students' motivational antecedent is more likely to motivate students, while the mismatch may cause some students to become de-motivated in their language learning. In order to successfully motivate students, teachers should attempt to understand the motivational factors of their students and design classroom activities accordingly. When this has happened, students are more likely to engage in the learning experience, which would facilitate their language learning in the long run.

## **Chapter V. Pedagogical Implication and Conclusion**

One of the most significant findings of this research is the connection between motivational change and students' previous learning experience in that positive learning experience could enhance students' motivation for language learning. Though the definition of positive learning experience varies for individual students, it is safer to assume that a match between students' expectations and initial motivational factors and classroom activities is more likely to create such a positive learning experience. Moreover, as this study and previous studies show (Turner & Patrick, 2008), the needs and motivations of individual students change constantly, thus creating a dynamic relationship between previous learning experience, motivation, and subsequent learning behaviors. Hence, it is essential for instructors to constantly adjust their teachings in order to better accommodate the students, with the hope of maintaining or enhancing language learners' motivational level. It is also important to note that, in practice, classroom activities not only motivate students but also de-motivate them (Van Aacken, 1999). For this reason, instructors must gauge what particular classroom activities might motivate and de-motivate the particular group of students in their classes.

The findings also suggest that other than classroom activities, other environmental elements, though trivial or beyond instructors' control, could also influence students' motivational level of language learning. Such environmental elements may include individual personality and learning preferences, as well as school settings, such as the starting time of the class or uncomfortable chairs. Lastly, this study points out that the needs and goals of language class may vary depending on learners' age groups and class

levels. A general awareness of this aspect of teaching could also help teachers design proper pedagogical activities to facilitate learning.

Students are not simply motivated by attending class every day. They need positive learning experiences in order to increase their motivational levels (Guay et al., 2010). In alignment with the dynamicity of motivation, this study bears pedagogical implications and suggests that in order to provide positive learning experiences, in terms of teaching activities and students' motivational changes, teachers should constantly elicit feedback from students to adjust their teaching practices to fit students' needs. The next section will discuss some suggested activities in this sense.

## **1. Notice the Gap**

Instructors normally have a limited understanding of the particular group of students in their classes at the beginning of the school year. The first step that teachers should take is to gather student input, with the hope of noticing possible gaps between their own belief and students' expectations via, for example, questionnaires and interviews. It is an important first step to help create positive learning experiences for students, because students who have failed in the early stages of language development tend to remain beginners throughout their studies; and once students fail, it is difficult for them to catch up (Perry, Stupnisky, Hall, Chipperfield, Weiner, 2010). Rather than using personal judgment to determine which activities will most motivate students, instructors should take students' expectations into consideration when designing teaching activities to avoid the possible mismatch between their belief and students' expectations.

Understanding motivational factors held by students serves to help instructors design

proper activities to include students' motivational factors and to exclude de-motivational factors.

## **2. Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation**

Many researchers have proved that intrinsic motivation is more important and sustainable than extrinsic motivation (Prabhu, Sutton, & Sauser, 2008; Covington & Müeller, 2001; Guay et al., 2000). One of the reasons is that learners with intrinsic motivation can also be easily motivated with extrinsic factors. Their intrinsic motivation can motivate them to study harder for material rewards or career purposes. On the other hand, it is harder for learners with extrinsic motivation to be easily motivated intrinsically. That is to say, intrinsically motivated students are generally more flexible and motivated than extrinsically motivated students (Covington & Müeller, 2001).

The results of the questionnaire indicate that intrinsically motivated students are more likely to maintain a high motivational level. On the other hand, most of those extrinsically motivated students are not as motivated initially and are likely to decrease their motivational level over time. Teachers should more thoroughly consider different means of motivating those extrinsically motivated students using a proper teaching plan. Covington and Müeller (2001) argue that extrinsically motivated students tend to be easily de-motivated because of the lack of attention to their extrinsic antecedents by the teachers. In this study, extrinsic factors are often related to Anime, graduation requirements, and a trip to Japan. However, no classroom activities are related to Anime, and this factor alone could cause those students whose primary motivation of learning Japanese is Anime to become de-motivated. The instructors should take those extrinsic



motivational factors more seriously to help those students maintain interest and motivation in language learning. Though rare, some students could change their primary motivational factors from extrinsic to intrinsic, as shown in this study. Those rare cases occur when the students' extrinsic motivation factors have been met in classroom teaching. This suggests that even though some students might start their language learning with pure extrinsic motivation, instructors' efforts to meet students' expectations not only motivate them to study more, but also help them to enjoy language learning without external rewards. This significant shift could be a turning point in their learning experience as intrinsic motivation has been proved to be more effective than extrinsic motivation in terms of learning.

The following sections list some suggestions on how to match classroom experiences and students' expectations of learning a foreign language. World-connected, kinesthetic, and cultural activities are discussed specifically here.

### **2.1. World-connected Activities**

Previous research supports the idea that connecting classroom activities to the real world is one of the most effective ways to motivate students' language learning (Boyd et al., 2009). World-connected activities relate to actual communication or the actual language speakers' world. Regardless of motivational levels and types, most students tend to show interest in language usage beyond classroom discourse. In order to maintain students' motivations, a connection should be made to relate language instruction to the outside world, such as watching Anime or planning a hypothetical sightseeing trip in Japan. These activities could help students to understand or find out the meaning of learning Japanese and help motivate them. Also, alternative world-connected activities could

include writing letters or creating opportunities for students to interact with Japanese native speakers, as suggested by Boyd et al. (2009).

## **2.2. Kinesthetic Activities**

Many articles show the effectiveness of kinesthetic activities in language learning (Carson, 2009; Rule et al., 2006). The present research also indicates that younger or lower level students prefer intrinsically motivating activities that they can experience as ‘fun’ activities (e.g. games, culture, etc.). Though kinesthetic activities may not be appreciated by learners of all ages or levels, as a general rule, such activities tend to make younger students enjoy language learning more. In practice, when teaching younger learners, instructors could use games to teach those language points or concepts that students tend to have difficulties with. For example, memorizing Japanese vocabulary is one of the most common challenges among students. To help students’ vocabulary improve, instructors may include practice games with words, phrases, Kanji, etc. One of the most popular kinesthetic activities among students was Takenoko-nyokkikki, a counting game which was introduced in a Japanese show, Nepu-league by Fuji-TV. To start the game, all the participants must sit down and say “Takenoko-takenoko-nyokkikki,” then, one by one, they should say “[number] + nyoki” (the number should increase from lower number to higher number in numerical order) and stand up with a ‘bamboo gesture’, raising their palms together above the head. For example, while performing the bamboo gesture, the first person says “ichi-nyoki” (one-nyoki) and the second person says “ni-nyoki,” (two-nyoki) and so on. The game ends and should start over when two or more students say the same number or make a mistake in counting, such as skipping numbers. In Japanese language class, counters often confuse students.

Counters are used along with numbers; all numbers that describe the amount of noun must be followed by different specific counters, depending on the types (e.g. shapes, size, etc.) of noun (Crump, 1992). Although basic counting in Japanese is simple: ‘ichi (one),’ ‘ni (two),’ ‘san (three),’ and so on, counting nouns in Japanese is complicated and requires memorization. For example, to count pencils, the regular rule is number of pencil plus counter, hon, which is a counter for long cylindrical objects. Therefore, two pencils in Japanese is ‘ni-hon,’ but one pencil and three pencils in Japanese are irregulars: ‘ippon’ and ‘san-bon.’ In practice, learners need to memorize different counters for different types of nouns, as well as corresponding irregular pronunciations nearly every time they come across new counters, such as the different counters for people, age, desk, paper, etc. The game Takenoko-nyokkikki helps learners to understand proper orders of counting and practice accurate pronunciation of each word with kinesthetic activities. For younger learners, this activity should be more effective than mere rote memorization.

### **2.3. Cultural Activities**

For more mature or higher-level learners, incorporation of the cultural element is essential to motivate students. Examples of cultural activities could relate either to high culture or low culture. This study has found out that the majority of students are strongly interested in both the high and low cultural aspect of Japan. Cultural activities help students understand how the target language is used in real cultural context, which allows them to appreciate the authenticity of language, such as the values and perspectives engendered in the language (Johnson & Nelson, 2010).

Cultural activities that include high culture include putting on a Kimono (Japanese traditional clothes), writing a Haiku (Japanese style poem), watching Nou

(Japanese traditional play), or listening to Koto (Japanese musical instrument), or low cultural information such as Anime, TV games, and Manga.

The researcher argues that although those types of activities are commonly used in language teaching, in order to facilitate learner interest in the language, detailed explanations on the origin of, changes about or stories behind those cultural rituals need to be provided to students, with relevant focus on and connection with certain grammatical features. For example, in a cultural activity with wearing Kimono, the steps can be explained in Japanese. Putting on Kimono involves at least 50 small steps, and the instruction could be provided in the Japanese expression ‘[te-form]+ kudasai (please do something).’ In practice, instructors might need to introduce vocabularies first (e.g. tie, rotate, etc.) to demonstrate how to put on a Kimono. The special lexis related to this part of Japanese culture, the origin of this cultural ritual and the occasion/holiday all need to be a part of the lesson plan. Also, there are different verbs to express ‘put on’ in Japanese, and this should be introduced to language learners as grammar points embedded in cultural information. For example, “kaburu” is the word when one puts something on the head, and “haku” is the word to be used when one puts on something on the foot. The cultural relevance to account for the choice of different verbs could be that Japanese people are more interested in the manner of putting on clothes, hence, the varied verb choice (Tohno & Lu, 2003).

Another example of cultural discussion and choice of words is related to ‘rice.’ In Japanese, there are multiple words to express ‘rice,’ for example, ‘ine,’ ‘kome,’ ‘meshi,’ ‘gohan,’ etc. The choice of the proper “rice” word is closely related to the ritual/occasion of language use. This pragmatic distinction indicates stronger interest and connection

between rice and the Japanese way of life (Tohno & Lu, 2003). Only when cultural information is closely related to language use, will the students be able to appreciate the value of cultural background in language use. Cultural information should not be presented as a static fact, but as an integral part of language.

### **3. Grammar**

This section will discuss some activities that could be used to motivate students when the focus of instruction is on grammar. After all, grammar is one of the most important parts of language learning. However, discrete grammar instruction such as worksheets or lectures tends not to be as effective among younger learners. As a strategy, grammar instruction and practice should be delivered in some intrinsically motivating activities and be connected to contextual factors. When grammar activities are introduced as discrete points, it tends to lower learners' motivation because of the separation between real language use and cultural context. On the other hand, when cultural information is incorporated with specific linguistic features, it connects the understanding and practice of the language point, making it easier to learn and more meaningful. For example, honorific 'o' in 'omizu' is taught as a feature of formal speech or female speech. The explanation of 'o' can be related to Japanese culture in that the 'lower' social status people, such as women or employees, are supposed to respect the 'higher' social status people such as men or employers. 'O' is an honorific marker in the Japanese language for these purposes. Nonetheless, nowadays, informal situations often do not put a strict requirement on this aspect of language use compared to the past, though it is still true that women are expected to use more honorific forms than men. Other related words

with the honorific marker “o” could be introduced to the students in the same class period; or students could be instructed to find a similar pattern from the materials provided to them, after receiving the explicit instruction of this. Learners who ignore such a social and cultural factor of language use might be judged as being rude.

Whenever possible, grammar points or explanations should always be supported or contextualized with cultural information. This not only creates world-connection beyond classroom instruction, but also makes language learning fun and meaningful.

#### **4. Summary: Varieties of Activities**

As there are various motivational triggers and expectations held by language learners, incorporation of a variety of activities will be more likely to help meet students’ expectations (Guay et al., 2010; Rule et al., 2006). Learner preference depends on the individual learner and his or her specific environment. Some are motivated to learn the language because of intrinsic factors such as understanding more of the outside world and becoming a better person, while others are less motivated to learn the language or are only motivated to learn the language for extrinsic rewards. Thus, using different types of activities should help meet students’ expectations and preferences. Instructors must take students’ opinion into consideration in designing classroom activities. From time to time, instructors should try to elicit the current motivational factors of students, as motivation of learning a particular language does not remain stable, but changes under the influence of their previous experience. When such up-to-date information is obtained, instructors enjoy the advantage of changing, modifying or even keeping the original design of their teaching activities. This information also enables instructors to create flexibility in the

individual instructors' pedagogy to better match their instructions to students' expectations.

## **5. Limitation of the Study**

Though this study has confirmed the dynamic view of learner motivation and the relationship between classroom activities and changing motivations, due to time constraint and some practical concerns, it is limited in several ways. First, the research was limited to particular learners and instructors. The students were volunteer students from one high school in the U.S. As a general rule, volunteer students are typically more motivated than are non-volunteers. It is possible that those students who did not volunteer to participate in this study are de-motivated or less motivated and show a different pattern. Additionally, the data excluded the third Japanese language instructor, who is the researcher of this study. The lack of observation data from the researcher/teacher's class could be problematic, as all the students who have changed their motivational levels also took her class in the same semester.

Due to time concerns, classroom observations were only conducted within a two-month period. If more time had been allotted, more classes would have been observed. This would have helped to improve the validity of the study. Also, the observation should have been done on different days of the week. Instructor K's class was observed on Tuesdays only, which means that the data collection does not provide K's weekly class design for an entire unit. In fact, a casual talk with K indicated that K normally did more grammar and language instruction on Mondays and Tuesdays, but more communicative and interactive activities for the rest of the week.

Another limitation of the study was that it was conducted in the Spring semester, rather than the Fall semester. In the Fall semester, some students are true beginners to learning Japanese; while in the Spring semester, they have at least one semester's experience learning Japanese. If the study had been conducted in the Fall semester, the results might have been quite different.

Finally, this research only collected students' opinion on their motivational change without collecting real language samples from the students to study whether their motivational changes influence their language learning outcome and if so, how. Once again, due to time constraints, I could not find time to analyze these types of data, which is a major drawback of the study.

## **6. Conclusion**

The goal of this study was to identify the changes of motivational level held by high school learners of Japanese as a foreign language, and to identify specific activities that motivate/de-motivate students, and possible gaps between students' expectations and their learning experiences. The findings suggest that first, students' motivations are not stable, and are influenced by various classroom activities. Second, specific motivating/de-motivating activities differ for individual students. However, overall, intrinsically motivating activities such as world-connected, kinesthetic, and cultural activities are more likely to motivate students. Third, gaps between students' expectations and their classroom experience are more likely to de-motivate them, but matches between students' expectations and their experience in the classroom are more likely to motivate students.



The dynamic relationship between motivational change and teaching activities in the language class has been revealed via questionnaire data, class observation data, and interview data. In order to trigger motivation or sustain students' high level of motivation, instructors need to consistently and actively gather feedback from students and design teaching activities that better cater to and more closely reflect students' motivational changes. Language instructors should provide positive learning experiences for students to make their classroom instruction more effective and meaningful.

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## Appendix A

Questionnaire:

Code #: \_\_\_\_\_

In answering this question, you should have circled one alternative. Some people would have circled Strongly Disagree, others would have circled Strongly Agree, while others would have circled any of the alternatives in between. Which one you choose would indicate your own feeling based on everything you know and have heard. Note: there is no right or wrong answer.

		Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
1.	My motivation to learn Japanese is very high.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	I love learning Japanese.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	Learning Japanese is a hobby for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4.	I don't get anxious when I have to answer a question in my Japanese class.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5.	I don't enjoy learning Japanese, but I know that learning Japanese is important for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6.	I have a strong desire to know all aspects of Japanese.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7.	I feel very much at ease when I learn Japanese.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8.	I enjoy the activities of our Japanese class.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9.	Studying Japanese is important because it will enable me to better understand and appreciate the Japanese way of life.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10.	I want to learn Japanese so well that it will become natural to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11.	I like my Japanese class so much, I look forward to studying more Japanese in the future.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12.	My Japanese teacher is a great source of inspiration to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13.	I make a point of trying to understand all the Japanese I see and hear.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14.	I wish I could have many native Japanese speaking friends.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15.	Studying Japanese is important because I will need it for my career.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16.	The main reason I take Japanese class is to meet the graduate requirement of my school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17.	Studying Japanese is important because it will allow me to be more at ease with people who speak Japanese.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18.	If I can speak Japanese, I will have a marvelous life.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19.	I wish I could read newspapers and magazines in many foreign languages.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20.	My parents feel that it is very important for me to learn Japanese.	1	2	3	4	5	6
21.	Most native Japanese speakers are so friendly and easy	1	2	3	4	5	6

	to get along with; we are fortunate to have them as friends.						
22.	Studying Japanese is important because it will allow me to meet and converse with more and varied people.	1	2	3	4	5	6
23.	Studying Japanese is important because it will make me more educated.	1	2	3	4	5	6
24.	I look forward to going to class because my Japanese teacher is so good.	1	2	3	4	5	6
25.	My parents feel that I should continue studying Japanese all through school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
26.	I tend to give up and not pay attention when I don't understand my Japanese teacher's explanation of something.	1	2	3	4	5	6
27.	I don't pay much attention to the feedback I receive in my Japanese class.	1	2	3	4	5	6
28.	I am learning Japanese because I want to spend a period of time in Japan.	1	2	3	4	5	6
29.	Studying Japanese is important because other people will respect me more if I know Japanese.	1	2	3	4	5	6
30.	It is important to me to do better than the other students in my class.	1	2	3	4	5	6
31.	My relationship with the teacher in this class is important to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
32.	One of the most important things in this class is getting along with the other students.	1	2	3	4	5	6
33.	I want to well in this class because it is important to show my ability to my family/friends/supervisors/others.	1	2	3	4	5	6
34.	This Japanese class will definitely help me improve my Japanese.	1	2	3	4	5	6
35.	If I do well in this course, it will be because I try hard.	1	2	3	4	5	6
36.	I expect to do well in this class because I am good at learning Japanese.	1	2	3	4	5	6
37.	Native Japanese speakers are very sociable and kind.	1	2	3	4	5	6
38.	The Japanese are conservative people who cherish customs and traditions.	1	2	3	4	5	6
39.	I feel comfortable if I have to speak in my Japanese class.	1	2	3	4	5	6
40.	It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my Japanese class.	1	2	3	4	5	6
41.	I don't like to speak often in Japanese class because I am afraid that my teacher will think I am not a good student.	1	2	3	4	5	6
42.	I am afraid other students will laugh at me when I speak Japanese.	1	2	3	4	5	6
43.	I think I can learn Japanese well, but I don't perform well on tests and examinations.	1	2	3	4	5	6
44.	I often have difficulty concentrating in Japanese class.	1	2	3	4	5	6
45.	If the fees for this class were increased, I would still	1	2	3	4	5	6

	enroll because studying Japanese is important for me.						
46.	My attendance in this class will be good.	1	2	3	4	5	6
47.	I plan to continue studying Japanese as long as possible.	1	2	3	4	5	6
48.	After I finish this class, I will probably take another Japanese course.	1	2	3	4	5	6
49.	I often think about how I can learn Japanese better.	1	2	3	4	5	6
50.	I can honestly say that I really put my best effort into trying to learn Japanese.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Schmidt, R., Boraie, D., & Kassabgy, O. (1996). Chapter 2, Foreign language motivation: Internal structure and external connections.

## Appendix B

Open-ended questionnaire/Student interview Questions:

1. Why did you choose Japanese as your second/third language?  
(eg. food, culture, movie, anime, TV game, manga)
2. What motivates you to learn Japanese in general? Why?
3. Tell me at least two classroom activities that have motivated you to study Japanese?  
Which one was the best? Why?
4. What might have de-motivated you to learn Japanese in general? Why?
5. Tell me at least two classroom activities that have de-motivated your Japanese study.  
Which one was the worst? Why?
6. What activities do you expect from your Japanese classes? These could be some activities that your teacher has never done in class.
7. What do you expect from your Japanese teachers and lessons?
8. Do you want to use Japanese in the future? How? Why?

## Appendix C

Teacher interview Questions:

1. What activities might motivate your students to learn Japanese in general? Why?
2. Tell me at least two effective classroom activities that you have used to motivate your students. Which one is the best? Why?
3. What might de-motivate your students to learn Japanese in general? Why?
4. Tell me at least two classroom activities that have de-motivated your students. In your view, which one is the worst? Why?
5. What activities do you wish to do in your Japanese class to foster/maintain students' interest in learning Japanese? These could be some activities that you have not tried yet.

## Appendix D



Office of Research Integrity  
Institutional Review Board  
401 11th St., Suite 1300  
Huntington, WV 25701

FWA 00002704

IRB1 #00002205  
IRB2 #00003206

December 20, 2011

Jun Zhao, Ph.D.  
English Department

RE: IRBNet ID# 282597-1

At: Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral)

Dear Dr. Zhao:

**Protocol Title:** [282597-1] Classroom Activities and Language Learning

**Expiration Date:** December 20, 2012

**Site Location:** MU

**Submission Type:** New Project APPROVED

**Review Type:** Expedited Review

In accordance with 45CFR46.110(a)(7), the above study and informed consent were granted Expedited approval today by the Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral) Chair for the period of 12 months. The approval will expire December 20, 2012. A continuing review request for this study must be submitted no later than 30 days prior to the expiration date.

This study is for student Ayaka Komori

If you have any questions, please contact the Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral/Educational) Coordinator Michelle Woomer, B.A., M.S at (304) 696-4308 or woomer3@marshall.edu. Please include your study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.