

A QUANTITATIVE INVESTIGATION INTO MOTIVATION AND ORIENTATIONS OF FRESHMEN LEARNING EFL AT WOMEN'S COLLEGES IN JAPAN

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Abstract

Much of the variance in success for second language learners is attributable to motivation. This present investigation was in part a reaction to reports of an apparent lack of motivation in EFL classrooms. An expectancy-value approach was chosen as a framework for the study. The method involved self-reporting by learners from four classes at women's colleges in Japan. Questionnaires were administered at two different points in time during the first semester, in order to assess any changes: initially 90 students participated, and 69 of those students participated on a second occasion.

The aims of the study were to determine: the nature of learner orientations and motivation; differences in motivation and orientations across the learning contexts; and changes in motivation and orientations between two points in time. Participants reported a variety of orientations that are considered favourable for English learning, however reports of expectancy of success were disproportionately lower than other orientations. Furthermore, self-assessments of ability were found to be lower than expectancy of success in grades. I concluded that the differences in motivation and orientations reported across classes indicate a need to collect relevant information about learners to be used in the design of tasks aimed at improving learner self-confidence during performance, and consequently motivation.

INTRODUCTION

Motivation is generally considered to be one of the primary causes of success and failure in second language learning.

Richards and Schmidt (2002: 344).

Motivation in second language learning

The reasons behind different rates of success in L2 learning are of obvious relevance to the teacher, since only by understanding more about them can action be taken to increase success. To assume that the differences relate mainly to general ability, or possibly language aptitude, is also to assume that the less successful learner tried her best at the task. This fails to take account of the learner's 'desire' to participate in the related activities. A further potential failure is in seeing abilities and aptitudes as fixed rather than as dynamic and therefore changeable factors. In contrast to this, Noels, Pelletier, Clement, & Vallerand (2000) argue "affective variables, such as attitude, orientations, anxiety, and motivation, have been shown to be at least as important as language aptitude for predicting L2 achievement [citing] Gardner, (1985)" (in Noels et al., 2000 : 58).

Few of those involved in second language teaching would not see some benefits to having a greater understanding of the role that motivation plays. However, motivation cannot be seen directly, since it is a mental state, and what is more, as an internal concept, it is difficult to define. Not surprisingly, there are a variety of interpretations of it, and consequently, there are numerous different approaches to understanding motivation with different emphases on it. Dornyei (2001 : 8) defines motivation as concerning "the direction and magnitude of human behaviour" that is choice, persistence, and effort. Students choosing a class would on the whole be presumed by the teacher to be more motivated than ones in a mandatory one. Persistence and effort relate to actual performance: a learner who works long and hard at a task would be judged to be well motivated, regardless of actual achievement, since any failure would then be attributed to poor ability instead. Therefore since achievement is not directly related to motivation, it cannot easily be used to measure it. Most researchers would probably agree with Dornyei's definition and the implication that we can only truly observe motivation in the actions that follow it that is after its manifestation into behaviour.

Demotivation

A decline in general academic performance prompted a survey to be administered to national universities in Japan by the National Centre for University Entrance Examinations (NCUEE). 84.8% of the teachers surveyed chose "Motivation to tackle assignments voluntarily and willingly is lacking" as the main reason for this decline, (cited in Falout & Maruyama, 2004 : 3). Moreover, Falout & Maruyama (2004 : 7) found, in a comparative study of proficiency and learner demotivation among freshmen in Japanese colleges, reports of an increasing trend towards disliking English learning as students progressed

through secondary education. Despite this rather discouraging analysis, the two researchers still see hope in the fact that “the highest positive mark came in *attitude towards the L2 community*”, which was reported by the lower-proficient students (ibid). Such evidence shows that freshmen EFL learners in Japanese colleges generally hold some positive attitudes related to English learning for teachers to build interest on.

The main impetus behind English study in secondary education in Japan appears to be the need to pass the *juken* (university entrance examinations) and enter college itself. Only English plays a part in all types of *juken* (LoCastro, 1996; Benesse Kyoikukennkyuujō, 1988, in Kobayashi 2002:185). This strong common need naturally disappears once students enter college, and although the need to pass college examinations replaces it, for many students this, as discussed above, is evidently insufficient. Furthermore, the nature of much of the previous English study almost certainly creates certain expectations for future study. This change in prescribed goals for English study is only one of the problems to surface at college level. This general pedagogical change is potentially an asset for raising learner interest and participation since a shift can be made towards more communicative lessons. Nevertheless this can at the same time prove to be a challenge for teachers to implement.

Research aims

The scale of the lack of learner motivation, discussed above, is evidence of the need and urgency to look further into this situation. Trying to understand more about the nature and intensity of learner motivation and the reasons for it is a positive step that can be taken. It was for this reason that I chose to examine learner motivation amongst freshmen in my immediate teaching context in women’s EFL classrooms in colleges in Japan in the spring semester of 2004.

If we assume that motivation leads to action, observing behaviour may give an indication of the level of motivation, however, it does not reveal the type of motivation or the reasons behind it. One efficient method for collecting further relevant information (data) from the learner is self-reporting. Consequently, learner questionnaires were administered to the classes in this study. The study was timed to examine the period of the first semester at college, since the needs of students and the nature of the curricula change as students enter college. It was assumed that the students would need time to properly adjust to the change in goals for English study after entering college, therefore a second questionnaire was administered towards the end. This way any changes could be observed. The specific aims of the study were to do the following:

- to determine the nature of learner orientations and motivation amongst freshman studying EFL in four different learning contexts at women's colleges in Japan
- to determine any differences between the findings across these learning contexts
- to determine any changes that may occur over two different points in time during the period of the first semester at college.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

It is a virtual axiom that human action is a consequence of cognition and motivation, or put another way, knowledge (including skill and ability) and desire.

(Locke, 2000 : 409).

Tensions within motivational theory

In one of the founding motivational theories relating to language learning, Gardner (1985) made the distinction between 'motivation' and 'orientations' (in Dornyei, 2001 : 48). The former includes the attitudes and desires that a learner has towards learning the L2, and also the willingness she has to expend effort on it ('motivational intensity'), while the latter are the reasons for learning (otherwise known as 'goals'). Within this theory, orientations are antecedents of motivation and therefore they are most likely to lead to choices, while motivation leads to effort and persistence (*ibid*). Gardner at the same time introduced a dichotomy into motivational theory by differentiating between 'integrative orientation' and 'instrumental orientation'. The former "concerns a positive disposition to the L2 group and the desire to interact with and even become similar to valued members of the group", while the latter pertains "to the potential pragmatic gains of L2 proficiency" (p.49). These concepts have been carried over into other models, and this division is useful for research on motivation. However, in reality these two orientations to some degree overlap, and are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

There are two distinctly different main areas of inquiry into the causes of human behaviour in psychology. Gardner's model, discussed above, can be seen to be in the research tradition of social psychology, which follows the premise "attitudes exert a direct influence on behaviour", (Dornyei, 2001 : 29). In this branch of psychology, the influences of society on the individual's attitudes are considered more important, whereas in the other main area, motivational psychology, motivation is viewed from the perspective of the individual's cognitive or mental processes". The division is one of context that is the degree to which the influences of the environment on the individual should be taken into account. Relating to the issue of context, a further division can be made between "a

situated approach characterized by a micro perspective, in contrast to the macro perspective of the social psychological approach” (p.12). In the former, the affect on learner motivation of the immediate learning context is focused on, as opposed to the effects of society as a whole. Dornyei (p.20) comments that in motivational psychology: “the most influential conceptualizations during the last four decades have tended to adopt an expectancy-value framework”. He further comments that expectancy-value theories, like most cognitive theories, assume that humans have a natural desire to learn about their surrounding world, and consequently the focus is on “what shapes and directs their inherent motivation” (ibid). This contrasts with a focus on trying to answer what motivates them.

Expectancy-value theories

Within expectancy value theory “motivation to perform tasks is the product of two key factors:

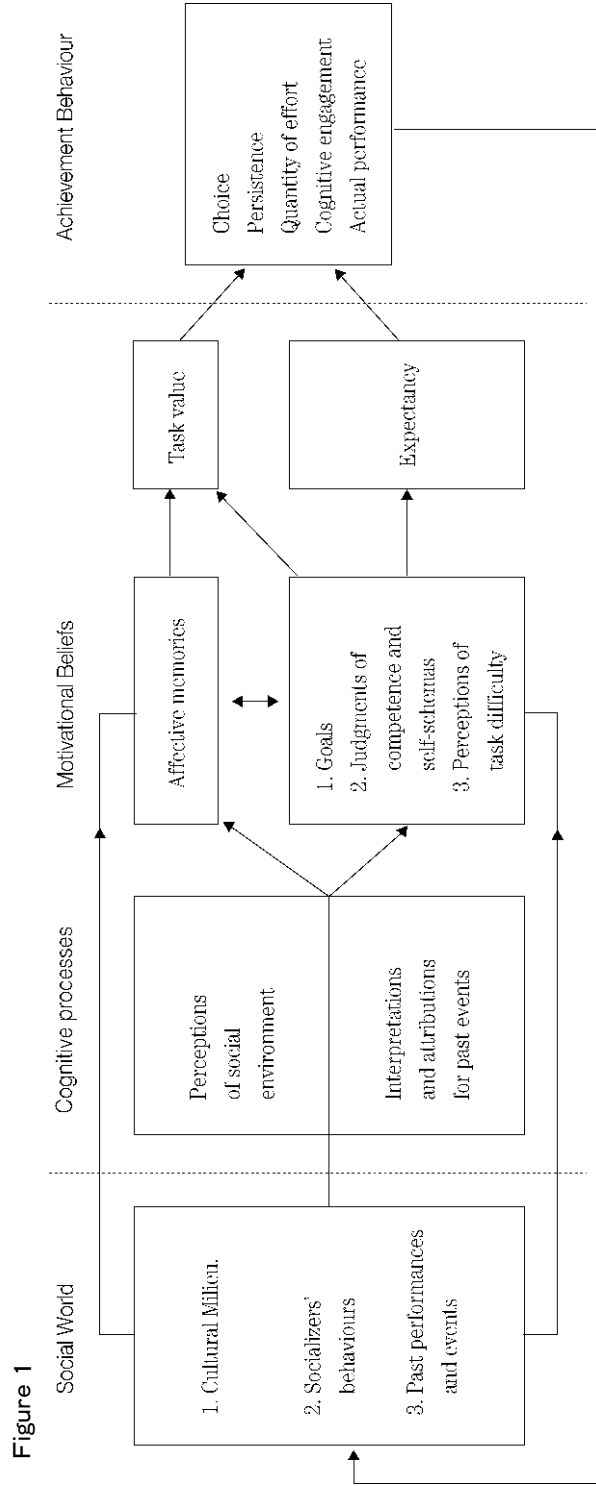
- the individual’s *expectancy* of success in a given task
- the *value* the individual attaches to success on that task”

(Dornyei, 2001 : 20).

Thus motivation depends on both seeing the relevance of doing something and feeling competent enough to do it. Not only are learner perceptions of competence important, since Weiner’s (1986) Expectancy principle proposes: “Changes in expectancy of success following an outcome are influenced by the perceived stability of the cause of the event” (in Pintrich & Schunk 2002 : 118). In other words if failure were attributed by the learner to a lack of ability, this would consequently be perceived as a stable cause and thereby outside her control. This would lead to a negative outcome. Whereas attributing failure to a lack of effort would be seen as internal, within her control, and thereby changeable. It is therefore the learner’s interpretation of the events that is significant, and that results in the motivational beliefs of “Task value” and “Expectancy”, which in turn have a direct effect on learner behaviour (see Figure 1).

Eccles and Wigfield and colleagues (for example Wigfield & Eccles, 1992, 2000), produced a social cognitive expectancy-value model of achievement motivation, which “focuses on the role of students expectancies for academic success and their perceived value for academic tasks” (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002 : 60). Within this model, choice, persistence, quantity of effort, cognitive engagement, and actual performance are “achievement behaviour” which are a consequence of “Task value” and “Expectancy”.

Many concepts reoccur in other theories on motivation, which often may have differing emphases. Gardner’s (1985) approach, discussed above, emphasised “the sociocultural



“A social cognitive expectancy-value model of achievement motivation” (Figure 2.2, in Pintrich & Schunk, 2002:61).

dimension of L2 motivation” and in doing so presented a macro perspective, which has the advantage of being able to focus on “the motivational patterns of whole language communities”, however, this is “less adequate for providing a fine-tuned analysis of instructed SLA [second language acquisition], which takes place primarily in language classrooms” (Dornyei, 2003a : 11). Other theories, for example Schumann’s (1986) acculturation theory, and Norton’s (2000) concepts of ‘learner identity’ and the learner’s ‘investment’ in language learning, similarly take environmental influences on the learner more into account. Whereas the former is less relevant to an EFL (English as a Foreign Language) environment since a high degree of acculturation to the L2 language community is not likely to occur, or to be necessary, however, both social distance and psychological distance are relevant to some degree. The latter theory remains applicable since learner identity within the classroom and investment of resources, such as time allocated for studying are also important for students.

The social cognitive expectancy-value model can be seen to be a potentially effective way to examine motivation in a formal classroom setting, since it combines social, cognitive, and situational perspectives, and there is more emphasis on tasks: *Task value, Expectancy, Cognitive Engagement, Actual Performance* and so on. In addition, “The expectancy construct, in various guises, is one of the most important mediators of achievement behaviour” (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002 : 89). The expectancy-value perspective offers a multifaceted approach to understanding motivation and can focus on academic success and the value of academic tasks. This approach, first applied to general education, was adopted for L2 learning, and therefore it follows that it should be appropriate for a formal EFL context where passing examinations is relevant. For this reason the focus on ‘expectancy of success’ is perhaps particularly relevant, and furthermore, the concept of ‘value’ is perhaps a convenient one in schools, where there are possibly a multitude of different learner orientations available for comparison.

THE STUDY

Participants

The four classes in the study can be described as a convenience sample, since they were each selected primarily as a matter of convenience from four different campuses belonging to two colleges that I was teaching at. As such the selection is also considered to be a non-probability sample in that it is not representative of the wider student population in Japan. This implies that any findings from this study cannot be used to generalise beyond the four classes involved. The participants were all female first-year students in higher education,

studying English in oral communication classes taught by four different native speakers of the target language. The learning contexts, although similar, were differentiated along the lines of the students' majors, that is their main focus of study differed, and whether they attended a four-year university or a two-year junior college. The teachers all have considerable experience in EFL teaching, three of them (in the case of UB, UE, JCE) each have around twenty years experience teaching EFL in Japan and hold masters degrees — one of them in TESOL (UE), and the other two in Asian studies.

Research methodology and materials

There are six factors in the instrument used in this study, two of which, *Value Components* and *Expectancy Components* are comprised of a number of variables (or scales). The rationale behind this particular instrument is based on the concept of clusters of questions or items called 'multi-item scales', or 'summative scales' (because the scores are summed to make a total before it is averaged to produce a mean: see appendix 1). A six-point Likert scale was used for the questionnaires to collect interval data from the learners. The scales can be interpreted as follows:

- *Integrative orientation*, statements about being able to interact with members of another cultural group
- *Interest in foreign languages and cultures*, in general (not a specific language)
- *Instrumental orientation*, statements concerning the financial, social, or other benefits of learning a language
- *Intrinsic motivation*, statements expressing enjoyment of language learning
- *Task value*, that is, the value of the language course
- *Language Requirement*, statements about the main reason for study being to fulfill course requirements
- *Expectancy*, statements concerning a student's belief that s/he will do well and receive a good grade in the course
- *Anxiety*, statements concerning test and speaking anxiety*
- *Language aptitude*, the student's own perception of her/his aptitude for grammar, pronunciation, and so forth
- *Motivational strength*, statements concerning one's intention to put one's best effort into learning the language, (to) keep up with the course, etc.
- *Competitiveness*, statements about doing better than other students and getting good grades
- *Cooperativeness*, statements concerning relationships with other students and the

teacher and learning in a cooperative environment.

(Schmidt & Watanabe, 2001 : 318-19).

* Since anxiety can be seen to have a negative affect on motivation, the *Anxiety* scale was reversed in order to form a positive score within the Expectancy Component.

Finally, the questionnaire was translated into L1, Japanese, along with a short introduction, explanation, and the instructions for answering, followed by an example question and answer. The questionnaires were administered at two different points in time in order to assess any changes in learner motivation. The first questionnaire (Q1) was administered near the start of the first semester. The second questionnaire (Q2) collected the same target information near the end of the semester, thus enabling a comparison to be made with Q1. Between April 23 and May 10, 2004, following an initial pilot questionnaire, Q1 was administered to a total of ninety students — University Humanities majors (UH): N=13; University English Culture and Language majors (UE): N=34; University Business majors (UB): N=22; and Junior College English majors (JCE): N= 21.

Multi-item scales and internal consistency

Next item analysis was carried out on the first available results obtained from the teachers (UH) in order to ensure the internal consistency of the scales that form the basis for the questionnaire, and thereby to ensure the reliability of the questionnaire in this learning context. Though the number of respondents in this class was low (N=13), the correlations between the retained items were high (see appendix 1). As a result of the findings of this analysis, the number of items was reduced to thirty-two. The data was coded and transferred into MS Excel files representing each of the scales. The subsequent analysis of the results was in the tradition of psychometric research. Naturally the investigation is limited by the questions asked and the assumptions of the approach employed.

DATA RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Responses to the Questionnaires

Descriptive statistics were used in the analysis of the quantitative data collected from the two questionnaires. The mean (average) scores of these responses are compared and contrasted in the analysis stage. The statistics were rounded to two decimal points for practical purposes, and on occasions, this may have resulted in 'rounding errors'. It is important to note that since descriptive statistics were used in the analysis of the data, the

results do not allow any general conclusions to be drawn that would go beyond the sample being investigated.

Overall analysis of the first questionnaire

This part of the study examines the combined data collected from the four classes at one point in time — near the start of the semester — in relation to the motivational components or factors. The overall mean answers for Q1 (N=90) are represented in the columns of the graph (Figure 2), and the relevant statistics are shown in Table 1 below.

From looking at the overall mean scores of the factors shown on the graph, we can see that the overall means fall within 3.16 (*Language Requirement*) and 4.58 (*Motivational Strength*) on the Likert scale. This is a wide range of 1.42. (I consider a difference of 1 point and above to be clearly quite substantial for these mean scores, since one point on the Likert scale represents a different choice or one sixth of the range of available choices.) Another notable disparity is between the scores of the *Expectancy Components* (3.29) and those of the other four scales. The latter fall within a narrower range of 0.40 that is

Figure 2

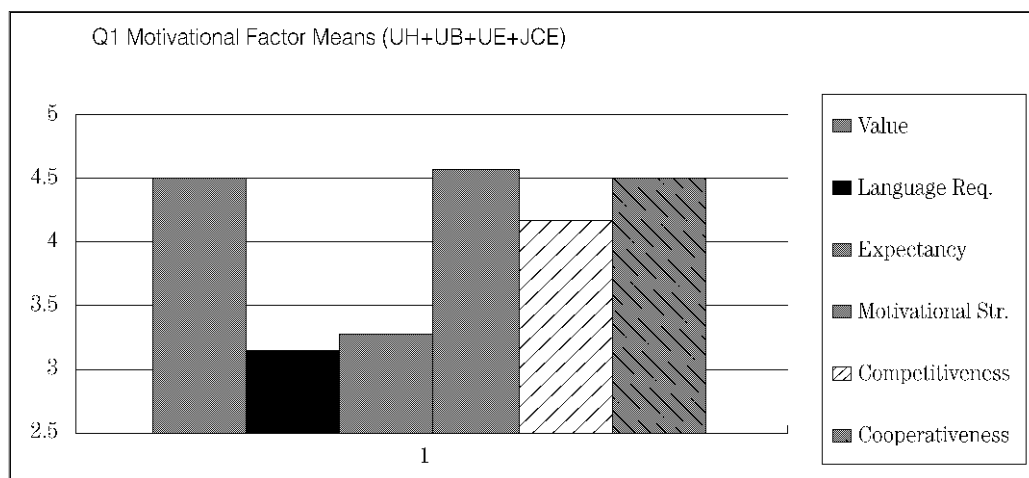


Table 1: Q1 Means (UH+UB+UE+JCE)

	UH	UB	UE	JCE	Overall	Range
Value Components	4.04	4.38	4.67	4.85	4.48	0.81
Language Requirement:	3.31	3.55	3.03	2.76	3.16	0.79
Expectancy Components:	3.03	3.25	3.53	3.35	3.29	0.50
Motivational Strength:	4.26	4.41	4.99	4.65	4.58	0.39
Competitiveness:	3.77	4.52	4.28	4.17	4.18	0.85
Cooperativeness:	4.51	4.93	5.10	3.56	4.53	1.54

between 4.18 (*Competitiveness*) and 4.58 (*Motivational Strength*).

Three points of interest can be raised from these scores: firstly, the relatively low score of Expectancy, secondly, the substantial difference of 1.32 between *Value* (4.48) and *Language Requirement* (3.16), and thirdly, the data appears to indicate some preference among the respondents for *Cooperativeness* (4.53) over *Competitiveness* (4.18), although 0.35 is not a very substantial difference. The second finding is perhaps to be expected, since studying mainly to fulfill course requirements can logically to some extent negate the need to attach any other kind of value to learning. The third finding is possibly a result of collaborative learning taking place in the classes or perhaps indicates that there exists the potential to exploit pairwork and groupwork more. The first finding alone is negative in so far that it is indicative of decreased motivation and effort, since according to expectancy-value theory both factors are important for motivation.

These scores derived from the data on learner statements seem to indicate that the respondents value English learning and are motivated, however, they are somewhat lacking in their belief of being successful at it. However, the possibility that the learners were modest in self-assessment of *Expectancy* cannot be ruled out. In order to say more about these findings, we need to examine a more detailed breakdown of the *Value* and *Expectancy Components* into their individual scales. This is shown in Table 2 below.

From looking at Table 2, we can compare the results for the scales that make up *Value Components*: *Integrative Orientation* (4.87) and *Interest in Foreign Languages and Cultures* (5.22) show the highest scores. These are substantially higher than both *Instrumental Orientation* (3.96) and *Intrinsic Motivation* (4.10), and to a lesser degree *Task Value* (4.27). The difference between the results for *Integrative Orientation* and *Instrumental Orientation* is somewhat surprising in an EFL context, where contact with native speakers is naturally quite limited.

Within the *Expectancy Components*, the *Expectancy* scale (3.53) and *Anxiety* scale (3.56 when reversed) show a negligible difference, whereas there is a disparity between them and *Language Aptitude* (2.78) of 0.75 and 0.78 respectively. The difference between these scales appears to indicate that learner reports of their beliefs about class grades and so on (*Expectancy*), together with those regarding test and speaking anxiety (the higher the score, the less anxiety) are noticeably stronger than their statements regarding their own perception of aptitude (*Language Aptitude*).

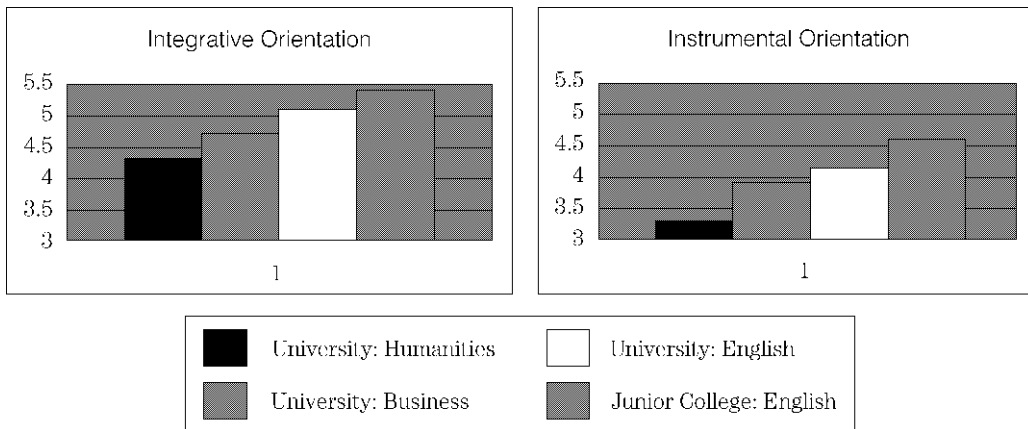
Cross-sectional analysis of the first questionnaire

This part of the study examines the data collected from individual classes at one point

Table 2: Q1 Means (UH+UB+UE+JCE)

	UH	UB	UE	JCE	Overall	Range
Value Components						
Integrative Orientation:	4.31	4.68	5.10	5.38	4.87	1.07
Int. in For. Lang. & Cult:	5.08	5.15	5.31	5.33	5.22	0.25
Instrumental Orientation:	3.27	3.89	4.13	4.57	3.96	1.30
Intrinsic Motivation:	3.52	3.93	4.41	4.52	4.10	1.00
Task value:	4.03	4.23	4.40	4.43	4.27	0.40
Expectancy Components						
Expectancy:	3.31	3.68	3.65	3.50	3.53	0.34
Anxiety [reversed] :	3.25	3.35	3.90	3.74	3.56	0.65
Language Aptitude:	2.54	2.73	3.04	2.81	2.78	0.50

Figure 3



in time and compared and contrasted it with the data from the other classes. The results from Q1 show that some differences, although not always substantial ones, exist between the individual mean scores for classes. Therefore, I can only make suppositions that are not necessarily conclusive. That said if we identify the differences between the highest and lowest scores, several patterns seem to emerge. These patterns give general impressions that distinguish the four classes from each other. One observation that can be made from examining these statistics overall (see Table 1) is that both groups of English major students show higher scores than the non-English majors for the *Value Components* and the scales within. Within the *Expectancy Components*, they score higher for *Anxiety*, which indicates less speaking anxiety. In contrast to this, the non-English majors score higher for *Language Requirement*. These findings are congruent with the idea that the two English major groups should have more ‘motivation proper’ since it is their chosen area of

study.

The class of Humanities major students (UH) stood out from the other classes in reporting lower scores for four out of six factors. In addition, UH showed the lowest scores for: all the scales within the *Value Components* (4.04), and all of the individual scales within (see Table 2); the Expectancy Components (3.03) and all of the scales within, which also means that UH reports the most anxiety (since this scale is reversed); *Motivational Strength* (4.26); *Competitiveness* (3.77). The largest disparity is in the case of *Instrumental Orientation*: UH scores 3.27, while JCE scores 4.57, which is a substantial difference of 1.30.

The class of English majors at university (UE) shows the highest scores for: *Language Aptitude* (3.04), although this is still low relative to compared with the other scores; *Motivational Strength* (4.99); and *Cooperativeness* (5.10). Interestingly, JCE scored lowest overall for *Cooperativeness* (3.96) — a substantial difference of 1.54 to UE. In spite of the positive impression given by most of these results, and the fact that they are English major students, together with my earlier assessment of this class as generally the most proficient of the four classes, it is surprising to find such low reported expectations for success (3.65) and even lower self-assessment of aptitude. Moreover, this is also a trend among the other three classes, which share similar findings for *Expectancy* and *Language Aptitude*. Considering the learning context and background of these learners in relation to English study (discussed above) two possible explanations for this are:

- modesty on the part of the respondents
- lack of confidence and/or ability relating to using English communicatively.

Since expectancy of grades was reported as stronger than aptitude, I conclude that modesty is less likely to be the main reason.

Longitudinal analysis of the first and second questionnaires

In this part of the study, I examine the data collected from three of the original four classes at a later point in time — near the end of the semester — for any changes in the overall responses. Unfortunately, the teacher of UB was unable to administer Q2 to her class, so when the combined responses were totaled for comparison, UB was therefore removed from the data on Q1. A total of 69 students answered Q2 between July 2 and July 8 — UH: N=12; UE: N=34; and JCE: N=23. The data showed virtually no changes from Q1 and Q2. The largest changes are the almost equal increases for *Competitiveness* (0.32) and *Cooperativeness* (0.35), although these are not substantial. A closer examination of the scales within the *Value Components* and *Expectancy Components* revealed little further evidence of change.

DISCUSSION

Learner orientations

Yashima (2002) comments that in comparison with integrative orientation “Research has shown that instrumental motivation is equally or more important in various foreign language learning contexts (Clement, Dornyei, & Noels, 1994; Dornyei, 1990; Samimy & Tabuse, 1992)” (in Yashima, 2002 :56). However in this study, the reverse was shown since *Integrative Orientation*, (and *Interest in Foreign Languages*) scored higher than *Instrumental Orientation* (and for *Task Value* and *Intrinsic Motivation*) for the overall population sampled. This can be interpreted as evidence that learner orientations can vary across different sociocultural contexts.

The stability of the responses over the duration of the semester (between the administration of Q1 and Q2) could have been anticipated, since Gardner, Masgoret, Tennant, & Mihic (2004: 31), conclude that general attitudes, which influence other factors such as the strength of motivation measured through the effort put into learning, are relatively stable over the course of a year, however, they also conclude that classroom experiences can influence the attitude towards the learning situation. The largest changes reported were the almost equal increases for *Competitiveness* (0.32) and *Cooperativeness* (0.35). Although these are not substantial, it is possible that they are due to the experience of doing activities in class during the course of the semester. However, they may be due in part to the approaching end of term tests.

Learner perceptions of ability

The substantial difference (1.32) reported between *Value* (4.48) and *Language Requirement* (3.16) is in agreement with Jacques’ (2001 :3) study which found that students who learn L2 “solely as a university requirement do not value language learning in and of itself”. Jacques also found that students who “place a high value on language learning” found ‘challenge’ to be positive, while anxious students did not (p:203-4). With regard to learner preferences for classroom activities, Schmidt, Boraie, and Kassabgy (1996) found that affect played an important role over whether students welcomed or rejected communicative classes. The most important finding from this present study, relates to the disparity between the *Value Components* and the *Expectancy Components* since expectancy-value theory places importance on both for learner motivation. Following a different theoretical approach, Yashima (2002 : 62) concludes that motivation is mediated by self-confidence in L2, which in turn directly influences the learners’ ‘Willingness to Communicate’. Therefore, from both perspectives, low perceptions of ability will naturally have a negative

effect on self-confidence, which will be a handicap to both motivation and classroom participation, particularly in oral classes.

Since the participants in my investigation were exclusively female, it is possible that my findings are in part a result of such a gender-related phenomenon. Kobayashi (2002) found that female high school students in Japan generally hold more positive attitudes to English study, and more desire to travel to English-speaking countries, than their male counterparts. In addition, she found that they associate English with acceptable careers for Japanese women. Although, *Instrumental Orientation* was reported to be weaker than *Integrative Orientation*, it is still possible that the disparity between *Value* and the *Expectancy* found in this study may also relate to gender in two ways: general lower perceptions of ability and at the same time, more positive attitudes towards English due to the marginalization of women in the Japanese workplace and the feminisation of English as a school subject, both referred to by Kobayashi.

In Falout & Maruyama's (2004) study, discussed in the introduction, demotivation was attributed to: "disappointment in performance, course contents & pace, and teacher" (p.7). Since the students in this present study appear to already hold positive attitudes towards studying, therefore the teachers concerned have some foundations to build on. The process of learning itself is surely the vehicle to improve expectancy and self-confidence, just as it can increase the value learners place on study.

CONCLUSIONS

Without knowing where the roots of motivation lie, how can teachers water those roots?
(Oxford & Shearin, 1994 : 15).

The nature of learner orientations and motivation

The important role that learner motivation plays in contributing success or failure in second language learning has been the central theme throughout this study. The most important findings from the questionnaires were that *Value* was reported as significantly stronger than *Expectancy*, and that much of this was attributable to the low mean scores for *Language Aptitude*. Therefore the view that English has a relatively high status in Japan has to some extent been confirmed by the findings of Q1. This is particularly relevant since according to Yashima (2002 : 63) "international posture influences motivation". Unfortunately, this is to some degree offset by reports of an overall low expectancy of success, and in particular an even lower self-assessment of ability reported. According to expectancy-value theory both factors are important for motivation, and consequently

learners would need to score highly for maximum learning potential. However, regarding self-assessment of aptitude, it is possible therefore that on the whole the participants viewed course grades as different to having communicative ability in English, and as a result to some degree lacked self-confidence when it came to actual communication.

Differences in motivation and orientations across the four different learning contexts.

The findings of the cross-sectional analysis of the first questionnaire revealed different patterns regarding the motivational factors. For example the class of Humanities major students (UH) stood out from the other classes in reporting lower scores for four out of six factors. In addition, UH showed the lowest scores for all the scales within *Value* and *Expectancy*. As could be expected, the English major students responded more positively overall. From a theoretical perspective, this pattern perhaps reflects the interrelatedness of these variables, however from a teacher's perspective, it is perhaps disturbing, since the disparity between some of these scores and the highest scores is substantial, particularly in the case of *Value*. Nevertheless, the most important finding is surely the differences in data across the classes, since this implies that the needs of the learners are different, regarding for example preferences for receptive tasks, degree of challenge and so on. There is a definite need to find appropriate tasks for different groups of learners.

Changes in motivation and orientations between two points in time during the first semester at college

My initial belief that the transition from English study in high school to more communicative approaches used in the college classroom, would facilitate change in learner orientations and motivation within a short period (the first semester) was disproved since the findings of the longitudinal investigation showed a lack of substantial change overall. However, it is also true that Q2 has verified the reliability of the collection of quantitative data from Q1 by time triangulation. Moreover, the stability of at least four of the six motivational factors has been shown over the duration of the study. The only changes to occur related to *Competitiveness* and *Cooperativeness*, and as discussed above, class related factors are considered more susceptible to change. From these overall findings, I concluded that any further longitudinal study should therefore be done over a much longer period, possibly over two years or more.

Implications for the EFL classroom

It was concluded that there is a need for teachers to find ways to encourage learners to

participate in class more actively, as a way to increase both communicative ability and self-confidence. This in turn should improve motivation, which in turn should lead to even greater participation. Knowing more about the learners can make any attempts at this more productive, therefore I suggest the use of carefully designed class surveys at the beginning of the semester to collect a resource of valuable information concerning the educational histories related to English learning of new students, their learning preferences, their personal aims, and from this the general needs and learning preferences of the class can be determined.

It was also concluded that the task is perhaps the main key to improving learner motivation. The findings of Q1 indicated that both *Intrinsic Motivation*, which relates to the process of learning and to a lesser degree *Task Value*, which relates to the course scored noticeably lower than *Integrative Orientation* and *Interest in Foreign Languages and Cultures*. This suggests that there is a need to try alternative tasks, since these learners do not appear to be finding them sufficiently motivating. Even though *Motivational Strength* emerged as the strongest factor in the overall analysis of Q1, this does not necessarily mean that this will be transformed into active learner participation. Benson (1991 : 34) comments on regarding “a generalised enthusiasm with an uncharacteristic lack of rigor and application” within similar classes.

The Expectancy principle states that expectancy of success can change as a result of the learner’s perception of the causes of an outcome, or more specifically, whether the causes of either failure or success are seen as stable or not (Weiner, 1986, in Pintrich & Schunk 2002 : 118). Then logically there should be steps that a teacher can take to influence learner expectancy. Yashima (2002 : 63) comments on the possibility of the process of learning a language being able to foster changes in learner attitudes towards the target language community, in addition to anxiety, and self-confidence. Therefore, it follows that the knowledge about students collected from surveys can be used to select or design appropriate tasks that will maximise learner motivation in the classroom.

Weaknesses of the research

Despite some faults, in my opinion, this instrument, overall, was broad enough in its questioning to do the job it was aimed at, that is, to facilitate multiple perspectives on the data concerning learner motivation. With regard to the instrument used, only having at times two items in a scale may have resulted in greater ‘swings’ in the scoring (see Appendix 1). For example, this may have caused a greater disparity between *Expectancy* and *Language Aptitude*. The expectancy-value approach allowed the complexity of

motivation to be examined within a manageable framework, nevertheless, the theory focuses primarily on the individual as opposed to effects of the social factors. Furthermore, the dynamic nature of motivation is not fully explored. For example, an investigation of specific classroom activities may have revealed more changes in attitudes towards them. In addition, the problem of motivated learners not showing positive behaviour towards learning was not fully addressed. In order to investigate these issues, other approaches rather than expectancy-value need to be employed.

The implications for future research

In order to find out more about learner motivations and orientations, a qualitative approach using interviews to collect data could provide insights unaccessible to this questionnaire study. Such an investigation would involve less participants but at the same time could provide a wealth of data for analysis.

The important thing is that learners are not only motivated but also put sustained effort into learning. Therefore since this investigation has shown that the learners in this study are motivated but at the same time appear to lack self-confidence in their ability to communicate in English, it is important to further investigate how *Expectancy* and, in particular, self-perceptions of communicative ability change with the performance of different activities in the classroom. In this way, the knowledge gained can be used to improve the quality of activities used in class, which are in turn aimed at improving learner confidence and motivation. Improvements in these areas should lead to higher rates of success in second language learning.

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APPENDIX 1

REVISED MULTI-ITEM SCALES AND INTERNAL CONSISTENCY

Factor 1: VALUE COMPONENTS (15 items)

Integrative orientation (3 items)

- .72 Q3: I want to make English-speaking friends.
- .88 Q11: I want to be more part of the cultural group that speaks this language.
- .82 Q12: I want to visit an English-speaking country.

.81 Average.

Interest in foreign languages and cultures (3 items)

- .89 Q1: I enjoy meeting and interacting with people from many cultures.
- .96 Q5: English is important to me because it will broaden my world view.
- .82 Q6: Studying foreign languages is an important part of education.

.89 Average.

Instrumental orientation (2 items)

.85 Q4: I am learning this language to understand films, videos, or music.

.88 Q41: I want to learn English because it is important to show my ability to others.

.86 Average.

Intrinsic motivation (4 items)

.86 Q9: I really enjoy learning English.

.86 Q13: My language class is a challenge that I enjoy.

.86 Q15: I would take this class even if it were not required.

.86 Q16: When class ends, I often wish that we could continue.

.86 Average.

Task value (3 items)

.88 Q14: I like the subject matter of this course.

.83 Q18: It is important to learn the course material in this class.

.78 Q19: What I learn in this course will help me in other courses.

.83 Average.

Factor 2: LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT (1 item)

N/A Q20: I mainly study this language to satisfy the university language requirement.

Factor 3: EXPECTANCY COMPONENTS (8 items)

Expectancy (2 items)

.89 Q21: I am certain I can master the skills taught in this class.

.84 Q22: I believe I will receive an excellent grade in this class.

.87 Average.

Anxiety (4 items) (The entire scale is reverse-coded within the Expectancy component.)

.80 Q24: I feel uncomfortable when I have to speak in this class.

.84 Q25: I don't worry about making mistakes when speaking in front of this class. (RC).

.75 Q29: I have an uneasy, upset feeling when I take an exam.

.80 Q31: I rarely have difficulty concentrating in this class. (RC).

.80 Average.

Language aptitude (2 items)

.89 Q30: In general, I am an exceptionally good learner.

.90 Q33: I can guess the meaning of new vocabulary words very well.

.89 Average.

Factor 4: MOTIVATIONAL STRENGTH (3 items)

.98 Q35: It is important to me to do my best in this class.

.91 Q36: Even when course materials are dull and uninteresting, I always finish my work.

.94 Q37: I work hard in this class even when I don't like what we are doing.

.94 Average.

Factor 5: COMPETITIVENESS (2 items)

.76 Q46: I learn best when I am competing with other students.

.89 Q47: Getting a good grade in this class is the most important thing for me now.

.82 Average.

Factor 6: COOPERATIVENESS (3 items)

.80 Q43: My teacher's opinion of me in this class is very important.

.96 Q44: My relationship with the other students in this class is important to me.
.84 Q45: I learn best in a cooperative environment.
.87 Average.