AN INVESTIGATION OF ATTITUDES AND MOTIVATION OF COLLEGE EFL STUDENTS IN A JAPANESE UNIVERSITY

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INTRODUCTION

The issue of student attitudes and motivation is considered a topic of substantial importance by scholars; particularly those involved in research concerning L2 acquisition. The study of attitudes and motivation has been a topic originating from psychology and more recently educational psychology. Its application in L2 learning is most significantly accredited to the early works of Gardener and Lambert (1959), but it has always been a topic of interest for L2 educators. Attitudes and motivation have been extremely influential factors that can have either positive or even negative effects for L2 learners. A great deal of research has attempted to identify influential sources but there has not been any one key factor that has cultivated motivation or attitudes but rather numerous external and internal variables. There is no identifiable universal formula to explain the effects of these variables but rather varying combinations of sources influencing attitudes and motivation to different degrees, depending on the surroundings and the group or individual in question. This topic is extremely complex and many unidentifiable or inconclusive findings continue to persist in current research. The causes of attitudes and motivation, the significance, and the influence exerted in the L2 learning environment shall be examined. In this paper, I shall identify and discuss a selection of research that has produced relevant findings, investigate a small sample of my own L2 learners, and attempt to relate current literature in providing an explanation of the findings. It should also be noted that the definitions of attitudes and motivation are nearly indistinguishable and much earlier research had identified both factors as identical in some cases as noted by Ellis (1985). It is hoped that this paper shall provide valuable information and insight that will assist and encourage educators of the importance of student attitudes and motivation and the underlying aspects that accompany it when applied to a L2 setting.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Scholars and educators have understood the importance of attitudes and motivation as being extremely influential factors in the learning of a second or foreign language. Although everyone is in common agreement in
understanding the importance of attitudes and motivation, in understanding the
nature and role these factors have in language learning, a diversity of
contradictory and incompatible hypotheses and theories continue to discount
other findings causing periodic disagreement. The study and understanding of
attitudes and motivation, as these factors are applied to L2 acquisition, are still
in a developmental stage where some direction is predictable in certain cases,
but many obstacles continue to create difficulties in understanding. The
numerous problems that researchers confront exemplify the complexity of
these factors. In this paper, background research, particularly emphasizing
motivation, shall be examined initially with attention devoted to attitudes in a
later section. As earlier stated, the terms attitudes and motivation may overlap
due to their relative similarities of characteristics and the definition adopted by
various researchers in attempting to explain this concept. Therefore, it should
be acknowledged that in appropriate cases either term may be used in
accordance with the research being cited.

Dornyei (2001) defines motivation as relating to the direction and
magnitude of human behavior, such as, the choices one makes for a particular
action, the persistence and determination involved, and the effort exerted. A
simplified definition of motivation, as characterized by Brown (1994, 34) is
“...the extent to which you make choices about (a) goals to pursue and (b) the
effort you will devote to that pursuit.” These definitions present motivation as
an easily understandable concept, yet it is extremely complex involving
multiple variables in numerous contexts, as shall be explored.

Initial research concerning motivation was predominately studies involving
internal factors. The focus on individualistic perspectives in earlier
motivational psychology as a means to explain individual behavior without
regard to external or social factors resulted in inadequate research that was
often incomplete by ignoring primary and external variables that potentially
exerted substantial influence. Dornyei (2001, 15) states that humans are social
animals and their behavior is related to a variety of “physical and psychological
contexts, which considerably affect a person’s cognition, behaviour and
achievement.” Human motivation is shaped, to a large extent, by social context.
This dependence is even more prominent in L2 learning, due to the nature and
role of language itself (Dornyei 2001). The degree of emphasis between
internal and external factors assessed by researchers seems to be unique to each
particular study.

The origins of current L2 motivational theory and its development shall be
discussed. Mowrer (1950) in his study of L1 acquisition concluded that the
social-psychological factor of motivation in the form of a child’s need for
acquiring identity with both the immediate family and the community was the
primary motivating factor for obtaining L1 acquisition. In addition, Mowrer’s
conclusion may have also provided Gardener and Lambert (1959), most

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notable for their research into the significance of attitudes and motivation in
second language acquisition, with some direction to eventually establish
themselves as pioneers in this field with their study on the influential roles of
attitudes and motivation in language learning. Gardener and Lambert extended
the concept contrived by Mowrer and applied it to their own L2 research and
coined the term *integrative motivation* which referred to a language learner’s
need to identify with another ethnonlinguistic group. Eventually, recognizing
that many of their subjects were inclined to pursue L2 acquisition for such
personal improvements as career advancement, fulfilling an educational
requirement or simply increasing one’s prestige in the community, Gardener
and Lambert created the term *instrumental motivation* to define this concept of

The influence of Mowrer’s work is still evident in more current research.
According to Bronfebrenner (1993), an individual must adopt many of the
characteristics; behavioral and cognitive, of the TL community in order to
obtain proficiency in the TL. Williams (1994) adds that learning a foreign
language is different to learning other subjects in that a language belongs to a
person’s whole social being, i.e., one’s personal identity. Language learning
has a significant social impact on the learner since it involves altering one’s
self-image. In addition, a related study concluded that a correlation between
the L2 learners’ motivation to acquire native-like linguistic proficiency in a
language and the L2 learners’ self-identification with the linguistic ingroup and
their perception between differences in the linguistic in- and outgroups, state
Giles and Byrne as cited by Kelly et al. (1993). In addition to influencing
individual attitudes, values, aspirations, and ethnonlinguistic behaviors, Giles
and Byrne have included social identity as an important linguistic variable in
L2 attainment. In an attempt to explain the minority group’s inclination to
acquire the dominant ethnonlinguistic group’s language, Schumann (1978,
1986) applied his acculturation theory as a basis for explaining interethnic
variables. Schumann emphasizes the process of acculturation, the social and
psychological integration between the learner and the target language group.
The central factor from this perspective is that the social and the psychological
distance between the TL group will have an effect on the degree of success for a
L2 learner. Schumann argues that the learner will be successful in the L2 in
relation to the degree of social and psychological contact with the target
language group (Dornyei 2001). Schumann’s acculturation theory is an attempt
to provide us with the addition of a multitude of social conditions that would
either be classified as ideal or detrimental to L2 learning. His emphasis on
sociolinguistic and social psychological variables have directed attention into
these otherwise often neglected aspects that influence the L2 learning
environment.

In an attempt to identify if either integrative motivation or instrumental
motivation had a more positive effect on language learning, Gardener and Lambert studied several cases in Canada and the United States. They concluded that a language learner of either type of motivation could be as equally motivated as the other, however they hypothesized that integrative motivation would have a more sustained effect toward motivation in the long term.

Spolsky (1969) examined this phenomena on foreign students at US universities and concluded that a correlation existed between a students’ desire to be more like a speaker of English than a speaker from their own language and the students’ level of English proficiency. Spolsky points out that learning a second language is vital to entering a secondary society and the language learners’ motivation is congruent with the desire to join that group (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1992). Although Spolsky did reaffirm the findings suggested by Gardener and Lambert, the initial conclusions of integrative motivation dominance over instrumental motivation would soon be challenged.

Contrary to Gardner and Lambert’s earlier suggestion that integrative motivation would be better suited for SLA than instrumental motivation, results from several subsequent studies challenging their findings convinced the researchers to redefine their original hypothesis. They cited two studies in particular, one in the Philippines and one in North America for members of linguistic minority groups. The researchers’ reassessment narrowly defined cases of instrumental motivation superiority over integrative motivation in situations that involved a severe necessity to acquire a second language (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1992). Despite the adjustments made by Gardener and Lambert in their original assessment of their hypothesis, an increasing number of research continued to provide conflicting results leading many to view their statement explaining cases of instrumental motivation superiority over integrative motivation as indeed not limited to circumstances involving an urgency to obtain mastery of a second language.

As research on both instrumental motivation and integrative motivation began to mount, so did the evidence that a problem existed in Gardner and Lambert’s original and modified conclusions. Many of the problems that were encountered by discrepancies in research results could be attributed to simply a vague definition of instrumental motivation and integrative motivation, according to Clement and Kruidenier (1983). In addition, Clement and Kruidenier make reference to another concern about the discrepancy in the results that have challenged Gardner and Lambert in the previously mentioned studies, contextual factors. The classification and degree of either instrumental or integrative motivation will less likely be determined by some generalized principle, but more on contextual factors (Noels et al. 2003).

Gardner (1979) states that a linear relationship existed and that attitudes influenced motivation that in turn influenced SLA. Therefore, Gardener came to the conclusion that attitudes do have an important but indirect effect on SLA.
Numerous studies have since examined the importance of attitudes and its influence in motivation. In a study of American college students studying German, Scherer and Wetheimer (1964) found a positive correlation in instances when proficiency in German were consistent with positive attitudes toward Germans and toward themselves speaking German (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1992). Similar results were found by Oller, Hudson and Liu (1977) in their study of Chinese-speaking foreign students in the United States. Their results seemed to confirm the other numerous studies showing students successful in SLA were more inclined to have positive attitudes toward the TL and the TL group. It should be mentioned that in certain situations, the role of an individual’s attitude toward the TL and the TL group is relatively insignificant. One such example is a study conducted by Oller, Baca, and Virgil (1977) in an examination of different subjects, Mexican-American women living in New Mexico. Despite their positive attitudes toward Americans, the women had a rather dismal proficiency level in the TL. Oller and his colleagues examined this discrepancy between the two studies and they concluded that the differences were attributed to socioeconomic factors. The Chinese were from a high socioeconomic class and they were studying English in the USA by choice, in comparison to the Mexican-American women who were in the lower socioeconomic class and they needed to learn English to improve their socioeconomic conditions. Oller, Baca, and Virgil state that the Mexican-American women may have felt a degree of resentment with their inability to learn English proficiently and they may have attributed this inability as the source of their socioeconomic problems. This attitude of resentment in being in a lower socioeconomic class may be overshadowed by their need to improve their socioeconomic conditions by learning the TL (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1992). The differences in the results of these studies exemplify the complexity of forming any generalization in a universal model to predict behavior in all social contexts.

Chihara and Oller (1978) examined the attitudes of Japanese EFL students in Osaka in an effort to expand this study to a foreign language context. The results of the study indicated mostly a weak correlation between the degree of positive or negative attitude and the level of EFL proficiency. A related study conducted by Cooper and Fishman (1977) on Israelis learning English had similar findings, attitudes toward TL speakers were insignificant in relation to the English proficiency level of the language learner. Gardner (1980) argues that the discrepancies in these studies are due largely to the varying social contexts, in which they were taken place, thus influencing the results. In a setting where opportunities for contact between learners and TL speakers exist, such as, Gardner’s Canadian Anglophone students learning French as a second language in a bilingual context, the influence of attitudes would be quite significant. In comparison, a foreign language setting where opportunities for
contact with TL speakers are severely limited, the influence of attitudes would
be, in turn, limited (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1992).

In research on Spanish-speaking children learning English in an American
classroom, Strong (1984) found a correlation between the level of integrative
motivation and the level of their proficiency in the English language. Strong
attempts to explain these findings by stating that motivation was a result of
acquisition, not the more common viewpoint that motivation simply promotes
acquisition. Strong concluded that language students that had positive results in
SLA become more motivated to study (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1992). The
results of the Okinawa Christian Junior College questionnaire indicate that a
generally high-level of integrative motivation exists. It is unclear if either
success in learning the L2 language was spurred by motivation or the reverse,
as in the Strong study. It should be noted that in a recent study conducted by
Masgoret and Gardner (2003) correlations between achievement and
motivation were found to be very high. In addition, achievement and
integrativeness, attitudes toward the learning situation, and integrative and
instrumental orientation were also found to have correlations, but not as strong
as that of the achievement and motivation correlations.

In a study of a group of 750 German children in an EFL program, Hermann
(1980) found that positive attitudes toward the TL group were more prevalent
among students who have been studying English for at least five years than
students only beginning to study English. In addition, the learners with a lower
level of English proficiency showed significantly more prejudice against the
target culture than the learners with a higher level of English proficiency.
Hermann explains these findings as a result of possibly a satisfaction derived
from the learners’ achievement in language learning which may have
influenced their attitude of the target culture and possibly resulted in a change
of attitude (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1992). It should be interesting to note
that in the Japanese education system, all students are required to complete six
years of English education. As in the Hermann study, these students have been
exposed to the study of English for a long period of time. This may suggest that
many of the students in the Okinawa Christian Junior College study may have
accumulated positive attitudes from long-term exposure and success in
language learning. Hermann’s explanation of language learner achievement
having an effect on attitude change could also form a basis for understanding
research conducted by Savignon (1972) which resulted in finding no initial
correlation between attitudes and language achievement at the early stages of
American college students studying French during their first semester at the
University of Illinois. Despite the initial results, Savignon was able to find a
correlation develop between attitudes and achievement in French as the
students became more proficient in the TL (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1992).
The results of these studies suggest that success, in learning the TL itself, may
influence student attitude and motivation.

There has been a great deal of attention focused on the language learner’s view of the TL group in research concerning attitudes and SLA. Despite this commonality, the degree of influence may vary significantly under certain conditions, as mentioned earlier, but we should also focus attention to other variables, arguably more influential to a language learner’s attitude and motivation in certain situations. Spolsky (1969) argues that there are a number of individuals that may influence one’s attitude significantly, including parents, teachers, peers, and other speakers of the language who may exert some degree of influence to the learner’s motivation to acquire the TL (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1992). More recently, Dornyei (2001) states a nearly identical position in that a significant influential element in student motivation is the role of the educational environment including parents, teachers, peer groups and the school. McInerney and his colleagues (1997) have conducted an extremely large-scale empirical research project on student motivation involving 2,800 participants in five cultural groups. They have identified ten motivational factors, half of which were socially determined: competition with peers; power, in relation to positions of authority like group leadership; affiliation, cooperation with peers; social concern, caring for others, and; recognition, the desire to please teachers and receive admiration from them along with friends and parents (Dornyei 2001). Further explanation concerning the influence of these individuals or groups shall follow.

As mentioned, there are several categories of individuals that may influence one’s attitude to a significant degree, however parental influence seems to be the strongest. Studies investigating parental influence on the attitudes of language learners have revealed reflective attitudes of their parents toward speakers of the TL. In research on Anglophone students learning French in Montreal as a second language, Gardner (1960) found that parental attitudes towards French Canadians were identical to that of their children. Feenstra (1969) had similar findings to Gardner in revealing that Anglophone Canadian children had identical attitudes as their parents toward the French Canadian community. Additionally, these attitudes influenced the level of success among the children learning French. In a similar study on children studying in Welsh schools, Stern (1967) found that parental attitude toward the Welsh language had a direct effect on the success of the children studying the Welsh language (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1992). In a more recent study, Gardener (1985) investigated parental influence on L2 motivation and applied it as a major component to his social psychological theory. According to Gardener, parental influence towards the learning process of their children was established in two categories: an active role, involving encouragement, support and monitoring, and; a passive role, involving indirect modeling and communicating attitudes related to L2 learning and the L2 community. The
passive role, if relating negative attitudes toward the TL group or L2 could be
detrimental to student language learning. Continuing to investigate this
phenomenon, Gardner et al. (1999) found that the development of attitudes
towards the L2 learning situation and motivation of children was associated
with parental encouragement. Colletta et al. (1983) were able to confirm
Gardner’s dual influence hypothesis in their empirical survey measuring
community and parental influence of Anglophone students in a French
immersion program. They had similar findings as Gardner in identifying a
substantial impact of parental influence exerted on students’ linguistic
self-confidence (Dornyei 2001). Although, I did not address parental attitudes
in the questionnaire presented in this paper, the influence of parental attitudes
would be an interesting variable to include in a more comprehensive study.

As stated earlier, research concerning attitudes and motivation has shifted
from initially internal to presently external factors. One significantly influential
factor is that of peers. Action conducted within groups, as Swezey et al. (1994)
argue, may display motivational characteristics originating not from individual
members but from the group as a social unit. This statement actually contradicts
the majority of theories concerning motivation since traditional explanations
have depended on an individualistic perspective (Dornyei 2001). In research
investigating the influence of the attitudes of peers in the acquisition of a
second language, Shuy, Wolfram, and Riley (1967) identified peers as a
substantial factor in the formation of dialect patterns that were unique to
different groups based on age, sex, and socioeconomic status in their study of
social dialects in Detroit (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1992). Although the
influence of peers cannot be ignored, it should be mentioned that the potential
for influence is limited to an individual’s characteristics, a more substantial
factor in determining the degree of influence of external variables.

The learning situation is seen as one factor that has an influential role in the
attitudes and motivation of language learners. Attention towards the learner
group has yielded, in research conducted by Clement et al. (1994), that
motivation of the L2 learner was significantly influenced by group
cohesiveness in the classroom. These findings have focused attention to
learner groups within the classroom and formed the empirical basis for
including group-specific motivational components, which consist of goal
preference, the norm and incentive system, and group cohesion and classroom
goal organization (Dornyei 2001). The importance of group influence in the L2
classroom environment in Japan is certainly obvious to experienced educators.
In planning and implementation of the L2 class, teachers should take this factor
into account. In a related topic, the influence of the entire school towards
student motivation has been suggested to be an influential factor to some
degree. This is a rather recent topic in educational psychology. Dornyei (2001)
states that although the school does exert some degree of influence towards
student motivation, empirical evidence has yet to be produced. Furthermore, Dornyei suggests that certain school characteristics have influenced differences in certain language-learning contexts, such as, student success in developing L2 competence in private versus public institutions. It should be mentioned that although this argument may seem convincing at first, it tends to simply generalize and overlook many of the other influential variables that could directly have an effect on students in any L2 classroom, such as, the quality of the teachers and students, and socio-economic background, for example.

A significantly more influential factor in the learning situation is that of the teacher. There is a broad range of features that characterize the ability of teachers to influence student motivation including varying combinations of personality, enthusiasm, professional knowledge/skills, and classroom management style. Any combination of these traits has exhibited equally effective results in the classroom. Based on the varying characteristics of teachers and the variety of means, in which they can exert influence on students in the L2 classroom, they have a complex and key role in shaping student motivation (Dornyei 2001). As stated earlier, researchers have acknowledged that a variety of factors have some degree of influence in shaping attitudes which in turn effect motivation, but the teacher has a central and critical role, although extremely challenging, that can be used to promote positive attitudes and encourage and develop motivation leading to a more productive L2 learning environment.

As mentioned earlier, the information and analysis of the results from the questionnaire presented in this paper is limited and it attempts to simply provide some general insight to several aspects of current student attitudes and motivation within a small sample group of college students. Additional research would be needed to verify results and examine other influential variables and aspects of attitudes and motivation as applied to L2 learning. One such aspect that was not discussed is that of a language learner’s motivation is continually changing throughout the process of L2 acquisition. Although it is obvious that student motivation does not remain constant, very little research has attempted to examine this phenomena of L2 motivational change. It is quite surprising since the study of a language usually involves several years of intensive study. Added to the fact, motivation is not a stable emotional or metal state, especially when it applies to L2 acquisition. Motivation involves several phases including, initial planning and goal setting, intention formation, task generation, action implementation, action control and outcome evaluation. The importance of time can be exemplified by seeing contradictory results by measuring the same subjects at different phases of the motivation process. It should also be mentioned that the sustained, long-term process of mastering a L2 would rarely show a stable constant level of motivation throughout the entire process, most likely involving years of study. Since motivation is a
continuously changing condition, it seems that the majority of research 
concerning this topic only offers a snapshot of subjects in a certain point and 
time. It seems that there exists a need for more long-term studies to evaluate 
individual progress throughout the process of L2 proficiency to find more 
reliable answers in an area where inconsistencies seem abundant (Dornyei 
2001). More comprehensive research would be needed to verify results and 
examine other influential variables and aspects of attitudes and motivation as 
applied to the L2 learning situation.

THE STUDY

This research paper was conducted in order to access the current state of 
college students’ attitudes and motivation toward the study of the English 
language with a small sample group in the region of Okinawa, Japan. Data was 
taken from college sophomores from two English classes at Okinawa Christian 
Junior College. The students participated in a questionnaire, written in 
Japanese, which was formulated to provide an approximation of their attitudes 
and motivation. Data extracted from the questionnaire should provide insight to 
a variable that is believed to be of considerable significance by scholars in the 
field of language education. Information concerning the attitudes and 
motivation that students have toward the study of the English language will 
assist educators in organizing a more effective approach in teaching. Student 
attitudes and motivation are only a small part of a number of factors, but they 
are certainly crucial factors that play a central role in student performance. It 
should be mentioned that the results of this study are simply presenting a 
generalized overview of current student attitudes and motivation from within 
this sample group. Since the only practical means to acquire such data is 
severely limited to questionnaires and interviews, it is subjective to criticism 
due to the fact that self-assessment may vary significantly between individuals. 
This obstacle should not prevent us, at the very least, to make an attempt to 
gather information concerning such a crucial variable in second language 
acquisition. Although this research is subjected to skepticism because of the 
unreliability in the precision of using questionnaires for individual assessment, 
it is believed that information concerning student attitudes and motivation, 
admittedly a generalization, will in fact assist educators to some extent in better 
understanding students in the region of Okinawa, Japan.

PARTICIPANTS

In October of 2007, students from two classes in Intermediate 
Communication at Okinawa Christian Junior College were asked to complete a 
questionnaire that was designed primarily to determine individual attitudes and
motivation toward the study of the English Language. A total of 42 students participated in the questionnaire. The majority of the students were female with only two males in the sample. All of the subjects were majoring in English. These students were in their second and final year at the junior college. The majority of the students have a level of English proficiency generally in the higher-beginner to lower-intermediate range. It should be mentioned that Okinawa Christian Junior College conducted entrance examinations, interviews, and a review of high school transcripts to determine placement and entry into the college and eventually this course, ensuring a similar level of English proficiency among all students.

MATERIALS

The survey consisted of 11 statements, each one composed to gather information being sought in several categories: importance of English in general; significance of English and internationalization; English in an international context; intrinsic value of English; social distance; and, motivation to learn English. An attitude questionnaire utilized by Matsuda(2000) served as a model for several components and statements used in the survey. The Likert technique was used to formulate the questionnaire on a five-point scale where subjects would rate statements to the degree that they agreed or disagreed with them. The option of being undecided was also included as in the usual Likert scale format.

RESULTS

The first item in the questionnaire to be addressed was an attempt to determine the intrinsic value of English. This item was one of several critical elements in research conducted by Tachibana, Matsukawa, and Zhong (1996) to influence Japanese students’ interest in English. Two statements were placed in the questionnaire to determine this: (1) In comparison to all other foreign languages, English is the best language to study; and, (2) I think English is a beautiful language. In reviewing the first statement, there was no clear indication of a consensus from the results as the majority of the students 45% chose undecided while students agreeing or disagreeing with the statement showed only a slight preference toward disagreement. Only 5% strongly agreed and 12% agreed, as opposed to, 24% disagreed and 14% strongly disagreed. The second statement concerning the intrinsic value of English was simple and direct. There were nearly identical responses in comparison to the first statement with 50% of the students choosing undecided. In terms of either choosing agreement or disagreement with the statement, the students tended to
agree with the statement. The respondents stated a strong agreement at 21% and an agreement with the statement at 24%. The percentage of respondents indicating disagreement was only 5% disagreeing and none strongly disagreeing. In the second statement, as seen in the chart below, there is a clear favoritism toward the response. As mentioned earlier, the majority of the students were undecided in both statements concerning the intrinsic value of English. Since there is no clear indication of agreement or disagreement, but rather an indifference indicated by the majority of undecided responses, this may indicate that the students have a low intrinsic value of English or simply that the research gathering methods were too limited.

In an attempt to evaluate the importance of English that the students valued, a total of three statements were placed in the questionnaire to determine this: (1) English proficiency is more useful in Japan than proficiency in any other foreign language; (2) English should be learned by all Japanese; and, (3) English is essential to enter a good university. In the first statement, the majority of the students tended to agree with 43% choosing strongly agree and 49% choosing agree. Only 10% of the respondents were undecided and even fewer choose disagree 5% and strongly disagree 2%. Interestingly enough, the second statement had rather differing results with only 14% strongly agreeing and 7% agreeing with the statement. The majority of 48% of the students were undecided and 14% disagreed and 17% strongly disagreed with the statement. However, the third statement had rather similar results to that of the first statement. The importance of English among the students was positive according to the results of the third statement as a large number of the students agreed with the statement 21% and the majority strongly agreed with the statement 35%. None of the students strongly disagreed with the statement and only 5% disagreed with the statement while 19% were undecided. In examining the importance of English, three statements were presented in the questionnaire. There was strong agreement in two of the statements while one of the statements could be classified as being neutral, a near equal number of
respondents agreeing and disagreeing with majority undecided. According to these results, with the majority of respondents indicating a strong agreement in two of the three statements, it is evident that the students place a high value on the importance of English.

The next item that was investigated was the importance of English as it is applied to internationalization. Two statements were used in the questionnaire: (1) I use English when talking to Americans; and, (2) English proficiency is important in understanding foreigners and their culture. Both statements tended to have a positive correlation of students agreeing. In the first statement, an equal amount of students, 38%, both strongly agreed and agreed with only 12% selecting undecided as their choice. A slight 2% disagreed with the statement and only 9% strongly disagreed with the statement. In the second statement, there was an overwhelming amount of agreement with 71% strongly agree and 17% agree while 12% were undecided. None of the students chose disagree or strongly disagree. An overwhelming majority of the students agreed with the two statements in this category. The results from the statements inquiring about the importance of English as it is applied to internationalization have clearly indicated that students are very supportive of this variable.
In regard to social distance, a variable that has received considerable attention from Schumann (1978, 1986), two statements were included in the questionnaire: (1) Japan will improve as a country if we accept American values; and, (2) I like Americans. In the first statement, a nearly equal amount of students agreed or disagreed. A small fraction of only 5% indicated that they strongly agreed while 19% of the students indicated that they agreed. The highest percentage of students were indifferent to the statement, as 40% chose undecided. In regard to those opposed to the statement, 26% disagreed and 9% strongly disagreed. In the second statement, there were dissimilar results with an overwhelming 55% indicating that they strongly agreed and 29% stating that they agreed to the statement. Students that responded as undecided consisted of 12%. Disagreement to the statement was nearly nonexistent with only 2% stating they disagreed and none of the respondents strongly disagreed. In regard to social distance, similar positive results were seen with responses to one of the statements while the other statement had answers that were quite evenly dispersed. Since the results are contradictory, no definite conclusion can be deducted from this information.

The final item that was examined in the questionnaire was the motivation to learn English. There were two questions regarding this issue: (1) I would not
take English if it were not a mandatory subject in school; and, (2) I do not like learning English. The two items are negative statements concerning the motivation to learn English and, on both statements, the vast majority of students tended to disagree. In the first statement, none of the students strongly agreed and only 5% agreed. The amount of students indicating disagreement with the statement was high, 36% disagreed and 59% strongly disagreed. None of the students were undecided. In the second statement, none of the students selected the choices of strongly agree or agree. Students indicating disagreement was also high with 33% stating they disagreed and 45% suggesting they strongly disagreed with the statement. Those choosing undecided were 21%. The results from both of the statements clearly indicate that the students are extremely motivated to learn English.

It should be mentioned that this questionnaire was quite limited in terms of the number of statements included and the variables examined. It seems that a more comprehensive questionnaire would have enabled additional verification of questionable or inconclusive findings, especially as seen in the differing results of the importance of English and social distance.

CONCLUSION

The significance of student attitudes and motivation in the L2 learning environment has been exemplified repeatedly in numerous studies attempting to identify influential factors critical in the language learning process. Although disagreement and unpredictability in the identification of internal and external components and the degree of influence have continued to puzzle researchers, there is common agreement that these two seemingly simple yet complex variables are of considerable importance in L2 learning. Individual beliefs are of extreme importance to L2 learning as previously mentioned scholars have stated repeatedly in their research. The questionnaire, although limited in content, may allow us to gain a general idea of the current attitudes and
motivation of the students. It is hoped that information from these findings will provide some insight into student perceptions that may offer an indication of their attitudes and motivation and allow educators to plan and adjust their classes accordingly.
### QUANTATIVE DATA FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRE

#### Importance of English and Internationalization

5. I use English when talking to Americans.

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number</strong></td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>%</strong></td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
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8. English proficiency is important in understanding foreigners and their cultures.

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>30</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
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<td>71</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### Intrinsic Value of English

1. In comparison to all other foreign languages, English is the best language to learn.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>%</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. I think English is a beautiful language.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>%</strong></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Importance of English

2. English proficiency is more useful in Japan than proficiency in any other foreign language.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>43</td>
<td>40</td>
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<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
# AN INVESTIGATION OF ATTITUDES AND MOTIVATION OF COLLEGE EFL STUDENTS IN A JAPANESE UNIVERSITY

## 7. English should be learned by all Japanese.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>Agree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
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</table>

## 11. English is essential to enter a good university.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Social Distance

### 3. Japan will improve as a country if we accept American values.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>19</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 9. I like Americans.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>55</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>12</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Motivation to Learn English

### 4. I would not take English if it were not a mandatory subject in school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>59</td>
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</table>

### 10. I do not like learning English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>19</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
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