


1                   **AN INVESTIGATION OF ATTITUDES AND**  
2                   **MOTIVATION OF COLLEGE**  
3                   **EFL STUDENTS IN A JAPANESE UNIVERSITY**

4                     
5                   *Norman Fewell*

6  
7                   **INTRODUCTION**

8  
9                   The issue of student attitudes and motivation is considered a topic of  
10                  substantial importance by scholars; particularly those involved in research  
11                  concerning L2 acquisition. The study of attitudes and motivation has been a  
12                  topic originating from psychology and more recently educational psychology.  
13                  Its application in L2 learning is most significantly accredited to the early works  
14                  of Gardener and Lambert (1959), but it has always been a topic of interest for  
15                  L2 educators. Attitudes and motivation have been extremely influential factors  
16                  that can have either positive or even negative effects for L2 learners. A great  
17                  deal of research has attempted to identify influential sources but there has not  
18                  been any one key factor that has cultivated motivation or attitudes but rather  
19                  numerous external and internal variables. There is no identifiable universal  
20                  formula to explain the effects of these variables but rather varying  
21                  combinations of sources influencing attitudes and motivation to different  
22                  degrees, depending on the surroundings and the group or individual in question.  
23                  This topic is extremely complex and many unidentifiable or inconclusive  
24                  findings continue to persist in current research. The causes of attitudes and  
25                  motivation, the significance, and the influence exerted in the L2 learning  
26                  environment shall be examined. In this paper, I shall identify and discuss a  
27                  selection of research that has produced relevant findings, investigate a small  
28                  sample of my own L2 learners, and attempt to relate current literature in  
29                  providing an explanation of the findings. It should also be noted that the  
30                  definitions of attitudes and motivation are nearly indistinguishable and much  
31                  earlier research had identified both factors as identical in some cases as noted  
32                  by Ellis (1985). It is hoped that this paper shall provide valuable information  
33                  and insight that will assist and encourage educators of the importance of  
34                  student attitudes and motivation and the underlying aspects that accompany it  
35                  when applied to a L2 setting.

36  
37                  **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

38  
39                  Scholars and educators have understood the importance of attitudes and  
40                  motivation as being extremely influential factors in the learning of a second or  
41                  foreign language. Although everyone is in common agreement in

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1 understanding the importance of attitudes and motivation, in understanding the  
2 nature and role these factors have in language learning, a diversity of  
3 contradictory and incompatible hypotheses and theories continue to discount  
4 other findings causing periodic disagreement. The study and understanding of  
5 attitudes and motivation, as these factors are applied to L2 acquisition, are still  
6 in a developmental stage where some direction is predictable in certain cases,  
7 but many obstacles continue to create difficulties in understanding. The  
8 numerous problems that researchers confront exemplify the complexity of  
9 these factors. In this paper, background research, particularly emphasizing  
10 motivation, shall be examined initially with attention devoted to attitudes in a  
11 later section. As earlier stated, the terms attitudes and motivation may overlap  
12 due to their relative similarities of characteristics and the definition adopted by  
13 various researchers in attempting to explain this concept. Therefore, it should  
14 be acknowledged that in appropriate cases either term may be used in  
15 accordance with the research being cited.

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

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

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

1 notable for their research into the significance of attitudes and motivation in  
2 second language acquisition, with some direction to eventually establish  
3 themselves as pioneers in this field with their study on the influential roles of  
4 attitudes and motivation in language learning. Gardner and Lambert extended  
5 the concept contrived by Mowrer and applied it to their own L2 research and  
6 coined the term *integrative motivation* which referred to a language learner's  
7 need to identify with another ethnolinguistic group. Eventually, recognizing  
8 that many of their subjects were inclined to pursue L2 acquisition for such  
9 personal improvements as career advancement, fulfilling an educational  
10 requirement or simply increasing one's prestige in the community, Gardner  
11 and Lambert created the term *instrumental motivation* to define this concept of  
12 a language learner's motivation (Noels, et al. 2003).

13 The influence of Mowrer's work is still evident in more current research.  
14 According to Bronfenbrenner (1993), an individual must adopt many of the  
15 characteristics; behavioral and cognitive, of the TL community in order to  
16 obtain proficiency in the TL. Williams (1994) adds that learning a foreign  
17 language is different to learning other subjects in that a language belongs to a  
18 person's whole social being, i.e., one's personal identity. Language learning  
19 has a significant social impact on the learner since it involves altering one's  
20 self-image. In addition, a related study concluded that a correlation between  
21 the L2 learners' motivation to acquire native-like linguistic proficiency in a  
22 language and the L2 learners' self-identification with the linguistic ingroup and  
23 their perception between differences in the linguistic in- and outgroups, state  
24 Giles and Byrne as cited by Kelly et al. (1993). In addition to influencing  
25 individual attitudes, values, aspirations, and ethnolinguistic behaviors, Giles  
26 and Byrne have included social identity as an important linguistic variable in  
27 L2 attainment. In an attempt to explain the minority group's inclination to  
28 acquire the dominant ethnolinguistic group's language, Schumann (1978,  
29 1986) applied his acculturation theory as a basis for explaining interethnic  
30 variables. Schumann emphasizes the process of acculturation, the social and  
31 psychological integration between the learner and the target language group.  
32 The central factor from this perspective is that the social and the psychological  
33 distance between the TL group will have an effect on the degree of success for a  
34 L2 learner. Schumann argues that the learner will be successful in the L2 in  
35 relation to the degree of social and psychological contact with the target  
36 language group (Dornyei 2001). Schumann's acculturation theory is an attempt  
37 to provide us with the addition of a multitude of social conditions that would  
38 either be classified as ideal or detrimental to L2 learning. His emphasis on  
39 sociolinguistic and social psychological variables have directed attention into  
40 these otherwise often neglected aspects that influence the L2 learning  
41 environment.

42 In an attempt to identify if either integrative motivation or instrumental

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1 motivation had a more positive effect on language learning, Gardner and  
2 Lambert studied several cases in Canada and the United States. They concluded  
3 that a language learner of either type of motivation could be as equally  
4 motivated as the other, however they hypothesized that integrative motivation  
5 would have a more sustained effect toward motivation in the long term.  
6 Spolsky (1969) examined this phenomena on foreign students at US  
7 universities and concluded that a correlation existed between a students' desire  
8 to be more like a speaker of English than a speaker from their own language and  
9 the students' level of English proficiency. Spolsky points out that learning a  
10 second language is vital to entering a secondary society and the language  
11 learners' motivation is congruent with the desire to join that group  
12 (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1992). Although Spolsky did reaffirm the findings  
13 suggested by Gardner and Lambert, the initial conclusions of integrative  
14 motivation dominance over instrumental motivation would soon be challenged.

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

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

40 Gardner (1979) states that a linear relationship existed and that attitudes  
41 influenced motivation that in turn influenced SLA. Therefore, Gardner came  
42 to the conclusion that attitudes do have an important but indirect effect on SLA.

1 Numerous studies have since examined the importance of attitudes and its  
2 influence in motivation. In a study of American college students studying  
3 German, Scherer and Wetheimer (1964) found a positive correlation in  
4 instances when proficiency in German were consistent with positive attitudes  
5 toward Germans and toward themselves speaking German (Larsen-Freeman  
6 and Long 1992). Similar results were found by Oller, Hudson and Liu (1977) in  
7 their study of Chinese-speaking foreign students in the United States. Their  
8 results seemed to confirm the other numerous studies showing students  
9 successful in SLA were more inclined to have positive attitudes toward the TL  
10 and the TL group. It should be mentioned that in certain situations, the role of  
11 an individual's attitude toward the TL and the TL group is relatively  
12 insignificant. One such example is a study conducted by Oller, Baca, and Virgil  
13 (1977) in an examination of different subjects, Mexican-American women  
14 living in New Mexico. Despite their positive attitudes toward Americans, the  
15 women had a rather dismal proficiency level in the TL. Oller and his colleagues  
16 examined this discrepancy between the two studies and they concluded that the  
17 differences were attributed to socioeconomic factors. The Chinese were from a  
18 high socioeconomic class and they were studying English in the USA by  
19 choice, in comparison to the Mexican-American women who were in the lower  
20 socioeconomic class and they needed to learn English to improve their  
21 socioeconomic conditions. Oller, Baca, and Virgil state that the  
22 Mexican-American women may have felt a degree of resentment with their  
23 inability to learn English proficiently and they may have attributed this inability  
24 as the source of their socioeconomic problems. This attitude of resentment in  
25 being in a lower socioeconomic class may be overshadowed by their need to  
26 improve their socioeconomic conditions by learning the TL (Larsen-Freeman  
27 and Long 1992). The differences in the results of these studies exemplify the  
28 complexity of forming any generalization in a universal model to predict  
29 behavior in all social contexts.

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

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1 contact with TL speakers are severely limited, the influence of attitudes would  
2 be, in turn, limited (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1992).

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

19 In a study of a group of 750 German children in an EFL program, Hermann  
20 (1980) found that positive attitudes toward the TL group were more prevalent  
21 among students who have been studying English for at least five years than  
22 students only beginning to study English. In addition, the learners with a lower  
23 level of English proficiency showed significantly more prejudice against the  
24 target culture than the learners with a higher level of English proficiency.  
25 Hermann explains these findings as a result of possibly a satisfaction derived  
26 from the learners' achievement in language learning which may have  
27 influenced their attitude of the target culture and possibly resulted in a change  
28 of attitude (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1992). It should be interesting to note  
29 that in the Japanese education system, all students are required to complete six  
30 years of English education. As in the Hermann study, these students have been  
31 exposed to the study of English for a long period of time. This may suggest that  
32 many of the students in the Okinawa Christian Junior College study may have  
33 accumulated positive attitudes from long-term exposure and success in  
34 language learning. Hermann's explanation of language learner achievement  
35 having an effect on attitude change could also form a basis for understanding  
36 research conducted by Savignon (1972) which resulted in finding no initial  
37 correlation between attitudes and language achievement at the early stages of  
38 American college students studying French during their first semester at the  
39 University of Illinois. Despite the initial results, Savignon was able to find a  
40 correlation develop between attitudes and achievement in French as the  
41 students became more proficient in the TL (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1992).  
42 The results of these studies suggest that success, in learning the TL itself, may

1 influence student attitude and motivation.

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

23       As mentioned, there are several categories of individuals that may  
24 influence one's attitude to a significant degree, however parental influence  
25 seems to be the strongest. Studies investigating parental influence on the  
26 attitudes of language learners have revealed reflective attitudes of their parents  
27 toward speakers of the TL. In research on Anglophone students learning  
28 French in Montreal as a second language, Gardner (1960) found that parental  
29 attitudes towards French Canadians were identical to that of their children.  
30 Feenstra (1969) had similar findings to Gardner in revealing that Anglophone  
31 Canadian children had identical attitudes as their parents toward the French  
32 Canadian community. Additionally, these attitudes influenced the level of  
33 success among the children learning French. In a similar study on children  
34 studying in Welsh schools, Stern (1967) found that parental attitude toward the  
35 Welsh language had a direct effect on the success of the children studying the  
36 Welsh language (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1992). In a more recent study,  
37 Gardener (1985) investigated parental influence on L2 motivation and applied  
38 it as a major component to his social psychological theory. According to  
39 Gardener, parental influence towards the learning process of their children was  
40 established in two categories: an active role, involving encouragement, support  
41 and monitoring, and; a passive role, involving indirect modeling and  
42 communicating attitudes related to L2 learning and the L2 community. The

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1 passive role, if relating negative attitudes toward the TL group or L2 could be  
2 detrimental to student language learning. Continuing to investigate this  
3 phenomenon, Gardner et al. (1999) found that the development of attitudes  
4 towards the L2 learning situation and motivation of children was associated  
5 with parental encouragement. Colletta et al. (1983) were able to confirm  
6 Gardner's dual influence hypothesis in their empirical survey measuring  
7 community and parental influence of Anglophone students in a French  
8 immersion program. They had similar findings as Gardner in identifying a  
9 substantial impact of parental influence exerted on students' linguistic  
10 self-confidence (Dornyei 2001). Although, I did not address parental attitudes  
11 in the questionnaire presented in this paper, the influence of parental attitudes  
12 would be an interesting variable to include in a more comprehensive study.

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

28 The learning situation is seen as one factor that has an influential role in the  
29 attitudes and motivation of language learners. Attention towards the learner  
30 group has yielded, in research conducted by Clement et al. (1994), that  
31 motivation of the L2 learner was significantly influenced by group  
32 cohesiveness in the classroom. These findings have focused attention to  
33 learner groups within the classroom and formed the empirical basis for  
34 including group-specific motivational components, which consist of goal  
35 preference, the norm and incentive system, and group cohesion and classroom  
36 goal organization (Dornyei 2001). The importance of group influence in the L2  
37 classroom environment in Japan is certainly obvious to experienced educators.  
38 In planning and implementation of the L2 class, teachers should take this factor  
39 into account. In a related topic, the influence of the entire school towards  
40 student motivation has been suggested to be an influential factor to some  
41 degree. This is a rather recent topic in educational psychology. Dornyei (2001)  
42 states that although the school does exert some degree of influence towards



1 student motivation, empirical evidence has yet to be produced. Furthermore,  
2 Dornyei suggests that certain school characteristics have influenced differences  
3 in certain language-learning contexts, such as, student success in developing L2  
4 competence in private versus public institutions. It should be mentioned that  
5 although this argument may seem convincing at first, it tends to simply  
6 generalize and overlook many of the other influential variables that could  
7 directly have an effect on students in any L2 classroom, such as, the quality of  
8 the teachers and students, and socio-economic background, for example.

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

23 As mentioned earlier, the information and analysis of the results from the  
24 questionnaire presented in this paper is limited and it attempts to simply  
25 provide some general insight to several aspects of current student attitudes and  
26 motivation within a small sample group of college students. Additional  
27 research would be needed to verify results and examine other influential  
28 variables and aspects of attitudes and motivation as applied to L2 learning. One  
29 such aspect that was not discussed is that of a language learner's motivation is  
30 continually changing throughout the process of L2 acquisition. Although it is  
31 obvious that student motivation does not remain constant, very little research  
32 has attempted to examine this phenomena of L2 motivational change. It is quite  
33 surprising since the study of a language usually involves several years of  
34 intensive study. Added to the fact, motivation is not a stable emotional or  
35 mental state, especially when it applies to L2 acquisition. Motivation involves  
36 several phases including, initial planning and goal setting, intention formation,  
37 task generation, action implementation, action control and outcome evaluation.  
38 The importance of time can be exemplified by seeing contradictory results by  
39 measuring the same subjects at different phases of the motivation process. It  
40 should also be mentioned that the sustained, long-term process of mastering a  
41 L2 would rarely show a stable constant level of motivation throughout the  
42 entire process, most likely involving years of study. Since motivation is a

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1 continuously changing condition, it seems that the majority of research  
2 concerning this topic only offers a snapshot of subjects in a certain point and  
3 time. It seems that there exists a need for more long-term studies to evaluate  
4 individual progress throughout the process of L2 proficiency to find more  
5 reliable answers in an area where inconsistencies seem abundant (Dornyei  
6 2001). More comprehensive research would be needed to verify results and  
7 examine other influential variables and aspects of attitudes and motivation as  
8 applied to the L2 learning situation.

### 9 10 **THE STUDY**

11  
12 This research paper was conducted in order to access the current state of  
13 college students' attitudes and motivation toward the study of the English  
14 language with a small sample group in the region of Okinawa, Japan. Data was  
15 taken from college sophomores from two English classes at Okinawa Christian  
16 Junior College. The students participated in a questionnaire, written in  
17 Japanese, which was formulated to provide an approximation of their attitudes  
18 and motivation. Data extracted from the questionnaire should provide insight to  
19 a variable that is believed to be of considerable significance by scholars in the  
20 field of language education. Information concerning the attitudes and  
21 motivation that students have toward the study of the English language will  
22 assist educators in organizing a more effective approach in teaching. Student  
23 attitudes and motivation are only a small part of a number of factors, but they  
24 are certainly crucial factors that play a central role in student performance. It  
25 should be mentioned that the results of this study are simply presenting a  
26 generalized overview of current student attitudes and motivation from within  
27 this sample group. Since the only practical means to acquire such data is  
28 severely limited to questionnaires and interviews, it is subjective to criticism  
29 due to the fact that self-assessment may vary significantly between individuals.  
30 This obstacle should not prevent us, at the very least, to make an attempt to  
31 gather information concerning such a crucial variable in second language  
32 acquisition. Although this research is subjected to skepticism because of the  
33 unreliability in the precision of using questionnaires for individual assessment,  
34 it is believed that information concerning student attitudes and motivation,  
35 admittedly a generalization, will in fact assist educators to some extent in better  
36 understanding students in the region of Okinawa, Japan.

### 37 38 **PARTICIPANTS**

39  
40 In October of 2007, students from two classes in Intermediate  
41 Communication at Okinawa Christian Junior College were asked to complete a  
42 questionnaire that was designed primarily to determine individual attitudes and

1 motivation toward the study of the English Language. A total of 42 students  
2 participated in the questionnaire. The majority of the students were female with  
3 only two males in the sample. All of the subjects were majoring in English.  
4 These students were in their second and final year at the junior college. The  
5 majority of the students have a level of English proficiency generally in the  
6 higher-beginner to lower-intermediate range. It should be mentioned that  
7 Okinawa Christian Junior College conducted entrance examinations,  
8 interviews, and a review of high school transcripts to determine placement and  
9 entry into the college and eventually this course, ensuring a similar level of  
10 English proficiency among all students.

## 11 12 **MATERIALS**

13  
14 The survey consisted of 11 statements, each one composed to gather  
15 information being sought in several categories: importance of English in  
16 general; significance of English and internationalization; English in an  
17 international context; intrinsic value of English; social distance; and,  
18 motivation to learn English. An attitude questionnaire utilized by  
19 Matsuda(2000) served as a model for several components and statements used  
20 in the survey. The Likert technique was used to formulate the questionnaire on  
21 a five-point scale where subjects would rate statements to the degree that they  
22 agreed or disagreed with them. The option of being undecided was also  
23 included as in the usual Likert scale format.

## 24 25 **RESULTS**

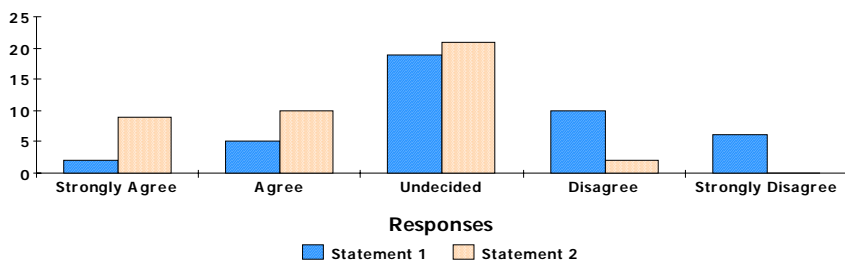
26  
27 The first item in the questionnaire to be addressed was an attempt to  
28 determine the intrinsic value of English. This item was one of several critical  
29 elements in research conducted by Tachibana, Matsukawa, and Zhong (1996)  
30 to influence Japanese students' interest in English. Two statements were placed  
31 in the questionnaire to determine this: (1) In comparison to all other foreign  
32 languages, English is the best language to study; and, (2) I think English is a  
33 beautiful language. In reviewing the first statement, there was no clear  
34 indication of a consensus from the results as the majority of the students 45%  
35 chose *undecided* while students agreeing or disagreeing with the statement  
36 showed only a slight preference toward disagreement. Only 5% *strongly*  
37 *agreed* and 12% *agreed*, as opposed to, 24% *disagreed* and 14% *strongly*  
38 *disagreed*. The second statement concerning the intrinsic value of English was  
39 simple and direct. There were nearly identical responses in comparison to the  
40 first statement with 50% of the students choosing *undecided*. In terms of either  
41 choosing agreement or disagreement with the statement, the students tended to

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1 agree with the statement. The respondents stated a *strong agreement* at 21%  
2 and an *agreement* with the statement at 24%. The percentage of respondents  
3 indicating disagreement was only 5% *disagreeing* and none *strongly*  
4 *disagreeing*. In the second statement, as seen in the chart below, there is a clear  
5 favoritism toward the response. As mentioned earlier, the majority of the  
6 students were undecided in both statements concerning the intrinsic value of  
7 English. Since there is no clear indication of agreement or disagreement, but  
8 rather an indifference indicated by the majority of *undecided* responses, this  
9 may indicate that the students have a low intrinsic value of English or simply  
10 that the research gathering methods were too limited.

11

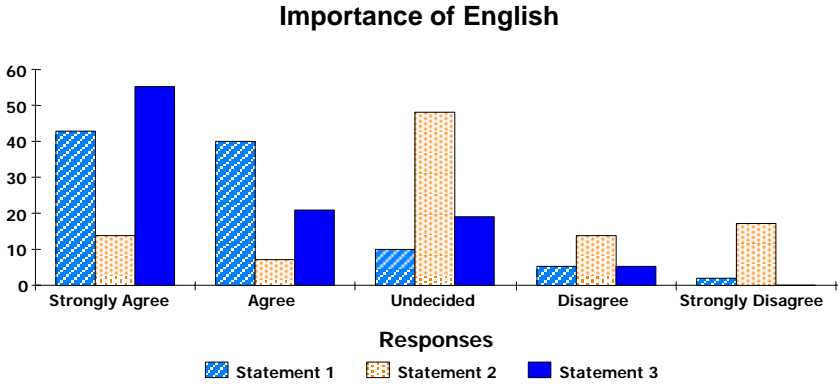
### Intrinsic Value of English



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14 In an attempt to evaluate the importance of English that the students valued,  
15 a total of three statements were placed in the questionnaire to determine this:  
16 (1) English proficiency is more useful in Japan than proficiency in any other  
17 foreign language; (2) English should be learned by all Japanese; and, (3)  
18 English is essential to enter a good university. In the first statement, the  
19 majority of the students tended to agree with 43% choosing *strongly agree* and  
20 49% choosing *agree*. Only 10% of the respondents were *undecided* and even  
21 fewer choose *disagree* 5% and *strongly disagree* 2%. Interestingly enough, the  
22 second statement had rather differing results with only 14% *strongly agreeing*  
23 and 7% *agreeing* with the statement. The majority of 48% of the students were  
24 *undecided* and 14% *disagreed* and 17% *strongly disagreed* with the statement.  
25 However, the third statement had rather similar results to that of the first  
26 statement. The importance of English among the students was positive  
27 according to the results of the third statement as a large number of the students  
28 *agreed* with the statement 21% and the majority *strongly agreed* with the  
29 statement 55%. None of the students *strongly disagreed* with the statement and  
30 only 5% *disagreed* with the statement while 19% were *undecided*. In  
31 examining the importance of English, three statements were presented in the  
32 questionnaire. There was strong agreement in two of the statements while one  
33 of the statements could be classified as being neutral, a near equal number of

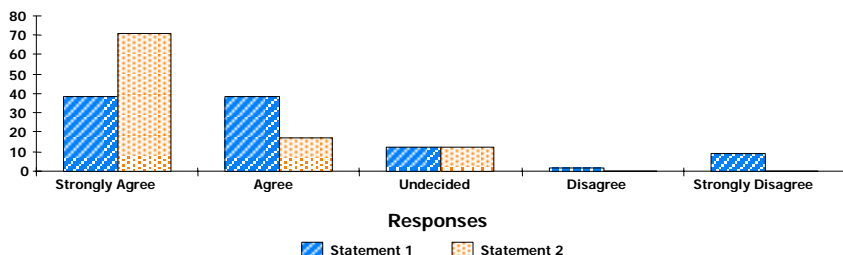
1 respondents agreeing and disagreeing with majority undecided. According to  
 2 these results, with the majority of respondents indicating a strong agreement in  
 3 two of the three statements, it is evident that the students place a high value on  
 4 the importance of English.  
 5



6  
 7  
 8 The next item that was investigated was the importance of English as it is  
 9 applied to internationalization. Two statements were used in the questionnaire:  
 10 (1) I use English when talking to Americans; and, (2) English proficiency is  
 11 important in understanding foreigners and their culture. Both statements tended  
 12 to have a positive correlation of students agreeing. In the first statement, an  
 13 equal amount of students, 38%, both *strongly agreed* and *agreed* with only  
 14 12% selecting *undecided* as their choice. A slight 2% *disagreed* with the  
 15 statement and only 9% *strongly disagreed* with the statement. In the second  
 16 statement, there was an overwhelming amount of agreement with 71% *strongly*  
 17 *agree* and 17% *agree* while 12% were *undecided*. None of the students chose  
 18 *disagree* or *strongly disagree*. An overwhelming majority of the students  
 19 agreed with the two statements in this category. The results from the statements  
 20 inquiring about the importance of English as it is applied to internationalization  
 21 have clearly indicated that students are very supportive of this variable.  
 22

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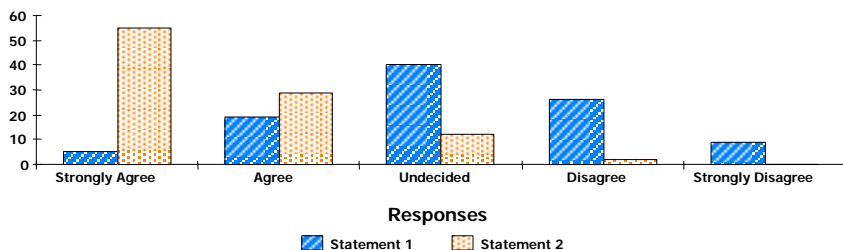
## English and Internationalization



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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 deduced from this information.

## Social Distance

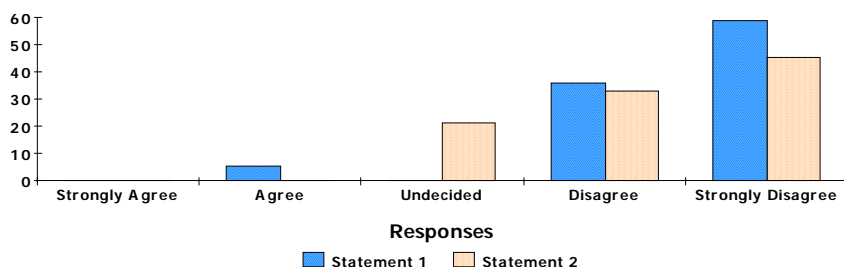


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The final item that was examined in the questionnaire was the motivation to learn English. There were two questions regarding this issue: (1) I would not

1 take English if it were not a mandatory subject in school; and, (2) I do not like  
 2 learning English. The two items are negative statements concerning the  
 3 motivation to learn English and, on both statements, the vast majority of  
 4 students tended to disagree. In the first statement, none of the students *strongly*  
 5 *agreed* and only 5% *agreed*. The amount of students indicating disagreement  
 6 with the statement was high, 36% *disagreed* and 59% *strongly disagreed*. None  
 7 of the students were *undecided*. In the second statement, none of the students  
 8 selected the choices of *strongly agree* or *agree*. Students indicating  
 9 disagreement was also high with 33% stating they *disagreed* and 45%  
 10 suggesting they *strongly disagreed* with the statement. Those choosing  
 11 *undecided* were 21%. The results from both of the statements clearly indicate  
 12 that the students are extremely motivated to learn English.  
 13

**Motivation to Learn English**



14  
 15 It should be mentioned that this questionnaire was quite limited in terms of  
 16 the number of statements included and the variables examined. It seems that a  
 17 more comprehensive questionnaire would have enabled additional verification  
 18 of questionable or inconclusive findings, especially as seen in the differing  
 19 results of the importance of English and social distance.  
 20

21 **CONCLUSION**

22  
 23 The significance of student attitudes and motivation in the L2 learning  
 24 environment has been exemplified repeatedly in numerous studies attempting  
 25 to identify influential factors critical in the language learning process. Although  
 26 disagreement and unpredictability in the identification of internal and external  
 27 components and the degree of influence have continued to puzzle researchers,  
 28 there is common agreement that these two seemingly simple yet complex  
 29 variables are of considerable importance in L2 learning. Individual beliefs are  
 30 of extreme importance to L2 learning as previously mentioned scholars have  
 31 stated repeatedly in their research. The questionnaire, although limited in  
 32 content, may allow us to gain a general idea of the current attitudes and

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1 motivation of the students. It is hoped that information from these findings will  
2 provide some insight into student perceptions that may offer an indication of  
3 their attitudes and motivation and allow educators to plan and adjust their  
4 classes accordingly.  
5



QUANTATIVE DATA FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRE

*Importance of English and Internationalization*

5. I use English when talking to Americans.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Number	16	16	5	1	4
%	38	38	12	2	9

8. English proficiency is important in understanding foreigners and their cultures.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Number	30	7	5	0	0
%	71	17	12	0	0

*Intrinsic Value of English*

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

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Number	2	5	19	10	6
%	5	12	45	24	14

6. I think English is a beautiful language.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Number	9	10	21	2	0
%	21	24	50	5	0

*Importance of English*

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

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Number	18	17	4	2	1
%	43	40	10	5	2

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1 7. English should be learned by all Japanese.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Number	6	3	20	6	7
%	14	7	48	14	17

2  
3 11. English is essential to enter a good university.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Number	23	9	8	2	0
%	55	21	19	5	0

4  
5 *Social Distance*

6  
7 3. Japan will improve as a country if we accept American values.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Number	2	8	17	11	4
%	5	19	40	26	9

8  
9 9. I like Americans.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Number	23	12	5	1	0
%	55	29	12	2	0

10  
11 *Motivation to Learn English*

12  
13 4. I would not take English if it were not a mandatory subject in school.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Number	0	2	0	15	25
%	0	5	0	36	59

14  
15 10. I do not like learning English.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Number	19	14	9	0	0
%	45	33	21	0	0

16

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