

# Investigating Motivations of Learning Languages Other Than English: A Case of Learners of Japanese in Thailand

**JENJIRA JITPAIBOON**

*School of Liberal Arts, King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang, Thailand*

**ATICHAT RUNGSWANG\***

*School of Liberal Arts, King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang, Thailand*

**YUKI MIYAMOTO\*\***

*School of Liberal Arts, King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang, Thailand*

**\*Corresponding author email: atichat.ru@kmitl.ac.th**

**\*\*Essentially intellectual contributor: miyamoto.yu@kmitl.ac.th**

Article information	Abstract
<b>Article history:</b> Received: 30 May 2023 Accepted: 29 Sep 2023 Available online: 7 Mar 2024	Current theories about learning a second language might not fully explain why people want to learn languages other than English (LOTE) in the context of globalization and multilingualism. This study adopted and adjusted Huang's (2021) motivational dimensions for LOTE learners, specifically focusing on those who learn LOTE as a third language (L3), as is common in Thailand. It aimed to explore the motivations of 167 Thai students in higher education when choosing to study Japanese, using a questionnaire and a focus group. The findings indicate that Culture/Community Interest and Instrumentality-Promotion significantly influence motivation. On the other hand, Instrumentality-Prevention and Intended Learning Effort are closely related and exhibit the least influence. The findings also showed that students' motivations change depending on their year of study. Third- and fourth-year students valued practical benefits the most, while second-year students were more interested in the culture and community of the target language. In addition, the research also examined students' perceptions of multilingual learning. This research helps educators, linguists, and policymakers understand why students want to study Japanese and to create effective teaching strategies tailored to students' interests.
<b>Keywords:</b> Learners of languages other than English (LOTE) Language learning Cross-linguistic influence Third language acquisition	

## INTRODUCTION

It is widely recognized that motivation is a crucial factor in achieving success in learning a second language (L2) (de Burgh-Hirabe, 2019). The topic of L2 motivation has received considerable attention (Bui & Teng, 2019). In this area of research, Gardner (1985) is considered a pioneer (Yang & Chanyoo, 2022). Gardner (1985) points out, L2 motivation consists of three aspects: 1) the level of motivation, 2) the willingness to learn the language, and 3) the attitude toward the process of learning the language.

However, according to Huang's (2021) viewpoint, the existing theories regarding L2 acquisition may not adequately address the underlying motivation behind learning languages other than English (LOTE). When studying LOTE, Howard and Oakes (2021) propose a classification based on linguistic demography. In L1-English contexts, LOTE are typically acquired as a L2, whereas in non-L1-English contexts, LOTE are primarily learned as a third language (L3) after English, which is learned as a L2. Huang (2021) and the present study both adopt the definition of LOTE as L3 in the given context.

According to Bui and Teng (2019), studying L3 motivation poses challenges as it requires capturing the interplay of multiple motivational forces in multilingual learning, which is not adequately addressed by current theoretical frameworks rooted in a single L2 motivational system. However, research on LOTE motivation is limited (Ham, 2008; Siridetkoon & Dewaele, 2018; Huang, 2021). Ham (2008) points out that existing studies primarily focus on motivation in L2 acquisition, particularly in cases where students are compelled to learn another language, while recent research has predominantly explored gender issues rather than investigating the underlying factors influencing language choices. Similarly, international research has also tended to emphasize gender-related aspects and the study of LOTE, with Siridetkoon and Dewaele (2018) noting that previous studies on L3 motivation often highlighted the increasing global significance of English, which may dampen motivation to study L3s or even native/local languages.

In modern times, many individuals acquire proficiency in multiple languages, and some people must learn a second language while simultaneously using their native language (Nur et al., 2023). In Thailand, for instance, the national and official language is Thai, and it serves as the medium of instruction in the country's educational system (Fujiwara, 2012). However, due to economic and social factors as well as globalization influencing education practices (Coyle et al., 2010), English has become the primary foreign language taught at all levels of education in Thailand (Fujiwara, 2012).

In addition to English, there has been a surge in popularity for Japanese language education in Thailand (Damrongchai, 2013). The study of this language dates back to 1947 when basic Japanese courses were offered at the secondary level. Subsequently, in 1965, a tertiary level Japanese course was introduced at Thammasat University, and in 1971, the first full-time undergraduate major in Japanese was established at Chulalongkorn University (Kakazu, 2010). This rise in popularity is evidenced by the increase in private Japanese language teaching institutes and the numerous Japanese-related programs available at universities throughout the country (Damrongchai, 2013).

According to a survey conducted by the Japan Foundation, as reported by Chitranondh (2021) in *The Japan Times* newspaper, the number of Thai students studying Japanese within Thailand has been steadily increasing. In 2018, this figure jumped to approximately 184,962 individuals, which represents a 42.7% increase from the 2012 count of 129,616 people. The article also highlights a growth in the number of Japanese language institutions in Thailand, which rose from 606 in 2015 to 659 in 2018.

Accordingly, this study aims to explore the motivations of LOTE among Thai students in a higher educational setting, in the context of globalization and multilingualism. The students majoring in Japanese for Business at School of Liberal Arts, King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang (KMITL), Bangkok campus, Thailand were selected as the participants of the study since the program has been in operation for over 20 years, and students' motivations of learning Japanese have never been explored. This study is designed to answer the following research questions:

1. What motivations inspire Thai students to pursue learning Japanese instead of opting for the globally dominant English language?
2. How do students perceive the process of multilingual learning?

This study offers valuable insights for educators, linguists, and policymakers in understanding students' motivations for learning the Japanese language and in developing effective teaching methodologies. While the results are context-specific, they can serve as a guiding framework for researchers exploring bilingualism, multilingualism, and cross-linguistic influence in different contexts.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **1. Understanding multilingualism and third language acquisition**

The multifaceted nature of multilingualism has captured the interest of many scholars, with an increasing focus on how learners perceive and navigate the process of L3 acquisition. Unlike L1 and L2 acquisition, third language learning introduces unique complexities as learners interact with multiple linguistic systems. This layered experience provides a rich foundation for investigating learners' perceptions of the multilingual journey. Building on this, Cenoz et al. (2001) identified that L3 acquisition differs substantially from its predecessors. Individuals acquiring a L3 have the advantage of leveraging two base languages, which in turn offers them a broader array of linguistic strategies and understanding. In this web of linguistic interplay, bilingualism itself emerges as a potent factor. Bilingual individuals tend to showcase heightened general proficiency, metalinguistic awareness, and improved communicative abilities. However, this proficiency in a L3 is not simply the addition of individual monolingual competences; it interacts with both native and second languages in myriad, complex ways (Cenoz, 2003).

Delving deeper into this interaction, the relationship between the languages manifests bidirectionally. Each language can influence and, in turn, be influenced by others, a phenomenon underscored by Kellerman (2001). Central to this discussion is the concept of transfer or cross-linguistic influence. This transfer can take various forms: from positive linguistic transfers, avoidance based on linguistic disparities, varied developmental rates, alternative acquisition routes, to instances of overproduction based on linguistic semblances (Benson, 2002). Murphy (2003) emphasized how factors such as proficiency, typology, and language mode play determinative roles in this cross-linguistic interaction.

Recent studies, like those conducted by Bardel and Falk (2007), have emphasized the significant role of L2 in shaping the L3 acquisition process. Often, L2 acts as a filter through which L3 is accessed, adding another layer to the intricate linguistic interplay. Bui and Teng's (2019) work further illustrate this, where acquiring Japanese as an L3 not only influenced participants' proficiency in English (their L2) but also led to observable stagnation in their English language development.

However, it is vital to understand that every process of language acquisition holds distinct characteristics. While acquiring the first language feels innate and largely effortless, the acquisition of a second language demands a more conscious and deliberate approach, especially beyond the age of 12 where the process necessitates heightened cognitive effort (Mittal, 2015). The complexity only escalates with third language acquisition due to the amplified language awareness, advanced language learning strategies, and the potential for intricate cross-linguistic interactions, as highlighted by Wrembel et al. (2020).

## 2. Motivational dimensions for LOTE

Recent studies investigating L2 motivation suggest that current theories greatly influenced by the evidence gathered from English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners may not adequately explain the factors that motivate individuals to learn LOTE (Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017; Oakes & Howard, 2019; Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2017). Huang (2021) adds that through the lens of the Second Language Motivational Self System (L2MSS), L2 learners' motivation can be clarified by the difference between their present and future perceptions of themselves, related to the L2 in both the aspirational sense (*Ideal Self*) and the obligation (*Ought-To Self*). He also clarifies that while Gardner's (1985) categorization of integrative and instrumental motivation provides a valuable understanding of why L2 learners study a language, it was not initially theorized to encompass a compulsory academic subject that can have a significant impact on students' future achievements.

With these limitations, Huang (2021) proposes seven motivational dimensions for L3 learners adapted from Dörnyei (2009), Huang (2019), Huang et al. (2015), Huang and Chen (2016) and Warden and Lin (2000). They include *Ideal Self*, *Ought-To Self*, *Learning Experiences*, *Instrumentality-Promotion*, *Instrumentality-Prevention*, *Culture/Community Interest*, and *Intended Learning Effort*, with the hope of multidimensional dimensions obtained. The descriptions of each motivational dimension are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
**Huang (2021)'s motivational dimensions of LOTE learners**

Motivational dimensions	Explanations
Ideal Self	Learner's vision of himself or herself as a competent user of the target language. For example, " <i>I can imagine myself using LOTE with international friends or colleagues.</i> "
Ought-To Self	The characteristics that a learner believes he or she should possess and is based on the socially constructed ideas of what is expected and desired. For example, " <i>Studying LOTE is what I have to do.</i> "

Motivational dimensions	Explanations
Learning Experiences	A learner's attitudes toward language learning, which can be influenced by factors such as the learning environment, past experiences of successful learning, and situation-specific motives. For example, <i>"I like the atmosphere in my LOTE classes at school."</i>
Instrumentality-Promotion	The regulation of learning behavior by positive utilitarian benefits associated with learning languages. For example, <i>"Studying LOTE is important to me because I'll need it for further studies."</i>
Instrumentality-Prevention	The regulation of learning behavior from a sense of duty and obligation to study languages and the fears of negative consequences. For example, <i>"I have to study LOTE because I don't want to get bad marks in it."</i>
Culture/Community Interest	A learner's interest in the cultural products of the target language's culture (such as music, movies and magazines) and how much he or she wants to visit the countries of the target language. For example, <i>"I want to travel to LOTE-speaking countries."</i>
Intended Learning Effort	A learner's anticipated effort in language learning. For example, <i>"I am working hard at learning LOTE."</i>

### 3. LOTE motivational studies in Thai context

Due to limited research on students' motivation toward L3 learning in the Thai context, particularly in higher education settings, this section encompasses all the available research conducted in Thailand that pertains to the subject matter of the present study. In their research, Siridetkoon and Dewaele (2018) conducted interviews with a group of seven Thai university students who were studying English as an L2 and additional L3s, such as Chinese, Japanese, and Korean to explore the students' experiences and motivations, particularly focusing on their ideal and ought-to selves. The findings revealed that motivation levels and types can differ across languages among multilingual learners, and English does not necessarily hinder interest in other foreign languages. The study also found that the *Ideal Self* and *Ought-To Self* concepts overlapped to some extent in both English and L3s, as learners internalized their perceived obligations to the point where they aligned with their *Ideal Self*. In addition, Praneetham et al. (2022) utilized online questionnaires to investigate the decisions and motivations behind high school students' choices to study foreign languages. The study included a sample of 108 students who had opted to study various foreign languages, namely Korean, Chinese, Japanese, French, and German. The findings revealed that the students' interest in a particular language was the most influential factor in their decision to study it. Additionally, other significant factors included the desire to travel to a country where the target language is spoken, the opportunity to communicate with native speakers, the aim to enhance foreign language skills, and the aspiration to learn about the society and culture associated with the language. Chanyoo (2022) adopted a mixed-methods study to investigate different motivating factors of Thai undergraduate students who took foreign language courses at a Thai university in the Greater Bangkok area, using Dörnyei's (2009) L2MSS as a study framework. The findings revealed that English and Korean students reported the Ought-to L2 Self as their primary source of motivation, while French, Chinese, and Japanese students reported the Past L2 Learning Experience. In addition, Yang and Chanyoo (2022) conducted another mixed-methods study

to examine the motivation of Thai undergraduate students in learning three East Asian languages: Chinese, Japanese, and Korean. The researchers measured motivation using intended effort, drawing on Dörnyei's (2009) L2MSS theory and five additional predictors. The findings indicated a strong linear relationship between L2 learning experience and the ideal L2 self-component across all three languages studied. Moreover, the factor of intended effort displayed a positive relationship with *Instrumentality-Promotion*, international posture, and *Cultural/Community Interest* among Chinese learners, *Cultural/Community Interest* among Japanese learners, and international posture among Korean learners. However, a negative relationship was observed between *Instrumentality-Prevention* and *Intended Effort* among Japanese learners. Building on this line of inquiry, the most recent research was conducted by Zhang and Laohawiriyanon (2023). This study, grounded in the revised 2x2 model of future self-guides, examined Thai university students' motivations to learn English and Chinese. Through questionnaires and interviews, it became evident that future self-guides, particularly the "Ideal L2 Self from own standpoint," played a crucial role in shaping their language learning motivations. Interviews underscored the importance of instrumental values, significant others' expectations, and self-obligations in driving their motivation.

The studies reviewed share a focus on the motivation behind Thai learners studying a L3, involving participants learning languages like English, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, French, and German. They examine motivational factors affecting language learning, guided by Dörnyei's L2MSS theory, and particularly investigate how learners' self-concept influences motivation. Key motivational drivers include the concepts of *Ideal Self* and *Ought-To Self*, with learners matching their duties and goals to their *Ideal Self*. Data collection mainly uses questionnaires and interviews, but gives less attention to factors like cultural interests, study length, and the status of learners majoring in LOTE. Consequently, this study aims to address these underrepresented elements in order to comprehensively explain the motivational dimensions of L3 learning.

## METHODS

### 1. Research participants

The study involved students from the second to fourth year, excluding first-year students due to their potential lack of experience in addressing research inquiries. The participants in this study were Japanese-major students, which differs from Huang's (2021) study, where the participants were non-LOTE majors taking elective courses. Therefore, this study could shed light on the motivating role played by classroom assessment in a more diverse range of contexts. Table 2 presents an overview of the research participants' personal profiles and their LOTE background.

**Table 2**  
**Summary of participants' profile and LOTE(s) background**

Profile	Category	N (167)	%
Gender	Male	32	19.16
	Female	130	77.84
	Others	5	3.00
Age	18	2	1.20
	19	43	25.75
	20	45	26.95
	22	62	37.13
	23	13	8.97
Year of study	second	53	31.74
	third	61	36.52
	fourth	53	31.74
Years of Japanese learning experience	1	1	0.60
	2	12	7.19
	3	14	8.38
	4	34	20.36
	5	44	26.35
	6	36	21.55
	7	16	9.58
	8	7	4.19
	9	2	1.20
	20	1	0.60

Table 2 provides information on the participants of the study, which consisted of 167 Thai students, including 130 females, 32 males, and 5 participants whose gender was unidentified. Among the participants, the largest age group was 22 years old, comprising 37.13% of the sample, followed by 20-year-old students (26.95%), 19-year-old students (25.75%), 23-year-old students (8.97%), and 18-year-old students (1.2%). The majority of participants were in their third year of study, accounting for 36.52%, with an equal number of students in the second and fourth years, each representing 31.74% of the sample.

The students in the study had different durations of Japanese language study, ranging from 1 to 20 years. Among them, 44 or 26.35% students had been studying Japanese for 5 years, while one student had been studying Japanese for 20 years.

In the field of English language learning and teaching, Cunningham (2019) highlights the extensive discussion regarding terminology used to describe the languages that emerging multilingual children associate themselves with. The traditional notion of “first language” or L1 becomes problematic when children regularly speak multiple languages at home, as they often become bilingual simultaneously, making it challenging to identify a definitive “first language.” In the current study, a student who has been learning Japanese for 20 years, was born in Japan but later moved to Thailand and primarily uses both Thai and Japanese with their parents identifies Thai as their L1 when asked about it.



## 2. Data collection and analysis

In this study, data collection was conducted using a questionnaire adapted based on Huang's (2021) questionnaire that aligned with the shared objective of exploring students' motivation in studying a third language. Huang's (2021) questionnaire underwent a rigorous development process, including strong construction, piloting, refinement, and reliability assessment through the calculation of Cronbach alpha values, which ranged from 0.65 to 0.95. Furthermore, exploratory factor analysis was performed to examine the questionnaire's validity.

Huang's questionnaire comprises 27 LOTE motivation questionnaire items, encompassing seven constructs: *Ideal Self*, *Ought-To Self*, *Learning Experiences*, *Instrumentality-Promotion*, *Instrumentality-Prevention*, *Culture/Community Interest*, and *Intended Learning Effort*. In this research, however, one item – “If a LOTE course is offered in the future, I would like to take it” – under *Intended Learning Effort* was omitted. This removal was necessary as the item pertains to elective courses, whereas in this study, the Japanese language is a mandatory academic subject for Japanese-major students. Consequently, the revised questionnaire contains 26 LOTE Motivation Questionnaire items (See Appendix A). Additionally, 6 items were added to gather participants' background information relevant to this study, such as gender, age, current year of study, duration of studying Japanese, other languages studied besides English and Japanese, and the reasons for choosing the Japanese major. The demographic information was analyzed using percentages. For the LOTE Motivation Questionnaire Items, students were asked to provide their opinions via a five-point Likert scale, ranging from “*Strongly agree*” to “*Strongly disagree*.” The interpretations of the scale based on statistical formulas were as follows:  $\bar{x} = 4.20-5.00$ : “*Strongly agree*”,  $\bar{x} = 3.40-4.20$ : “*Agree*”,  $\bar{x} = 2.60-3.40$ : “*Neutral*”,  $\bar{x} = 1.80-2.60$ : “*Disagree*”,  $\bar{x} = 1-1.80$ : “*Strongly disagree*.”

Additionally, an interview session utilized an 8-point interview guide created by Huang (2021, p. 79) (See Appendix B). This study's interview approach diverged slightly from Huang's original 2021 method. Instead of one-on-one sessions, a focus group format was employed. The focus groups consisted of fifteen students: five students each from the second, third, and fourth years. Students were grouped by their academic year, resulting in three distinct focus group sessions. Each session brought together five students from the same year. The language used during the interviews was Thai. All responses were later recorded and translated into English by the researchers. The researchers opined that this structure enabled students to exchange views, providing richer feedback for each question. Emphasis during these focus groups was also on reinforcing and expanding upon the quantitative findings, while examining students' multilanguage learning experiences more closely. This study embraced both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies, accentuating the benefits of an integrated approach to glean a holistic understanding of the subject matter, rather than solely leaning on one method.

The data collection was implemented during the second semester of academic year 2021. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic in Thailand, the data collection was conducted online using *Google Forms* for self-report questionnaires and the *Zoom* application for focus groups. After the invitations were sent to 237 second–fourth year Japanese-major students at KMITL, 167 students



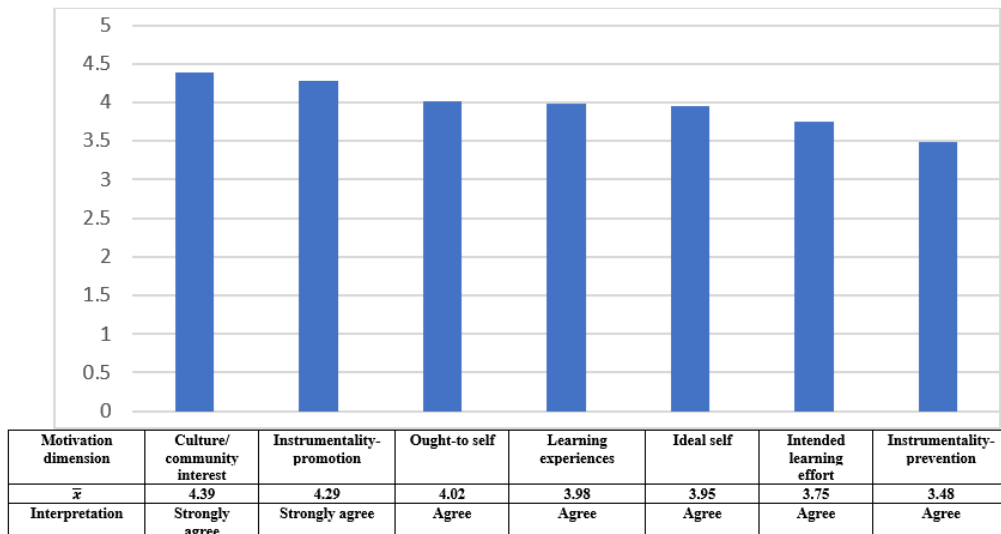
gave their consent and participated in this study. Both questionnaires and focus groups were conducted in the learners' L1, Thai.

The questionnaire data was analyzed using SPSS, which involved calculating percentages, means, and standard deviations. The interviews underwent analysis, focusing on specific keywords and concepts associated with the seven motivational dimensions for LOTE identified by Huang (2021), as well as keywords pertaining to their perceptions toward multilingual learning.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 1. Quantitative findings

In this section, the quantitative results are presented. Figure 1 presents the overall ratings of the grand means for motivational factors that influence students' decision to study Japanese.



**Figure 1** The overall ratings of the grand means

The overall average rating in Figure 1 shows that interest in *Culture/Community* is the top motivation, followed closely by *Instrumentality-Promotion*, which is only 0.10 points behind. These are the only two dimensions ranked at the 'Strongly Agree' level. *Ought-To-Self*, *Learning Experiences*, and *Ideal-Self* are ranked in third, fourth, and 5th places, respectively, with a minimal difference of 0.03-0.04 points between them. *Intended Learning Effort* comes next, while *Instrumentality-Prevention* ranks as the lowest.

To mitigate the potential influence of varying numbers of students' opinion statements in each category on the overall mean score, the opinions of all students within each category were rearranged into rankings as illustrated in Table 3. This approach offers a triangulated perspective on the previously presented results.

**Table 3**  
**The overall rating across categories**

Rank	Items	Mean (SD)	Level of agreement	Categories
1	I want to travel to Japanese-speaking country.	4.63 (0.707)	Strongly agree	Culture/Community Interest
2	Learning Japanese can be important to me because I think it will someday be useful in making money or getting a good job.	4.61 (0.600)	Strongly agree	Instrumentality-Promotion
3	I want to make friends with Japanese speakers.	4.35 (0.911)	Strongly agree	Culture/Community Interest
4	Learning Japanese is important to me in order to achieve a special goal (e.g., to get a degree or scholarship).	4.29 (0.872)	Strongly agree	Instrumentality-Promotion
5	I should be able to use Japanese effectively for listening, speaking, reading, and writing.	4.28 (0.937)	Strongly agree	Ought-To Self
6	I find learning Japanese very interesting.	4.24 (0.859)	Strongly agree	Learning Experiences
7	Compared with other subjects, I am more willing to spend time studying Japanese.	4.22 (0.926)	Strongly agree	Intended Learning Effort
8	I like the Japanese-related songs, magazines, newspapers, or books, etc. that tell me more about its culture.	4.19 (0.911)	Agree	Culture/Community Interest
9	I would like to have more Japanese lessons.	4.15 (0.986)	Agree	Learning Experiences
10	Learning Japanese is something I should do.	4.14 (0.914)	Agree	Ought-To Self
11	I can imagine myself using Japanese for communicating with people.	4.12 (0.904)	Agree	Ideal Self
12	Even if I am not required, I am willing to learn Japanese.	4.11 (0.921)	Agree	Intended Learning Effort
13	I like the atmosphere of my Japanese classes.	4.10 (0.826)	Agree	Learning Experiences
14	Learning Japanese is necessary for me because I don't want to get a poor score in proficiency tests.	3.96 (1.077)	Agree	Instrumentality-Promotion
15	I can imagine myself using Japanese I am learning in future activities I engage in.	3.95 (1.005)	Agree	Ideal Self
16	Learning Japanese is important to me because I need it for further studies.	3.95 (1.082)	Agree	Instrumentality-Promotion
17	When I think of my future career, I can imagine myself using Japanese.	3.87 (1.067)	Agree	Ideal Self
18	I can imagine myself using Japanese effectively for listening, speaking, reading, and writing.	3.86 (1.086)	Agree	Ideal Self
19	I am working hard at learning Japanese.	3.77 (0.890)	Agree	Intended Learning Effort
20	I always look forward to Japanese classes.	3.77 (0.986)	Agree	Learning Experiences
21	When I have a problem about Japanese, I immediately ask for help.	3.67 (1.032)	Agree	Intended Learning Effort
22	Learning Japanese is important to me in order to gain the approval of my peers/teachers/family.	3.63 (1.163)	Agree	Ought-To Self
23	I really enjoy learning Japanese this semester.	3.62 (0.943)	Agree	Learning Experiences
24	If my Japanese ability is poor, I may be viewed negatively by others.	3.35 (1.317)	Neutral	Instrumentality-Promotion
25	Learning Japanese is important to me because I would feel ashamed if I got bad grades.	3.13 (1.276)	Neutral	Instrumentality-Promotion
26	Compared with my classmates, I think I study Japanese relatively hard.	2.98 (1.070)	Neutral	Intended Learning Effort

Table 3 highlights that students strongly agreed with only seven of the 26 statements. The top-rated statement is “*I want to travel to a Japanese-speaking country,*” categorized under the *Culture/Community Interest* dimension. Closely following is the statement “*Learning Japanese can be important to me because I think it will someday be useful in making money or getting a good job,*” which falls within the *Instrumentality-Promotion* dimension. Statements within these two dimensions also occupy the third and fourth positions.

This table also underscores the importance of the *Ought-To-Self* and *Learning Experiences* dimensions in student motivation. Notably, the statement “*Compared with other subjects, I am more willing to spend time studying Japanese,*” categorized under the *Intended Learning Effort* dimension, falls within the ‘*Strongly Agree*’ tier. This disagrees with the overall rating, where the *Intended Learning Effort* dimension ranks sixth out of seven, settling into the ‘*Agree*’ tier. These results highlight the nuanced factors influencing students’ motivation to learn LOTE, indicating a complex interplay of motivations behind their learning endeavors.

Among the 26 statements in Table 3, only three are categorized at the ‘*Neutral*’ level. Two of these statements are associated with the *Instrumentality-Prevention* dimension, and one pertains to the *Intended Learning Effort* dimension. This distribution aligns with the overall trends depicted in Figure 1, confirming its findings. However, there is a notable disagreement in the ratings: the statement “*Compared with my classmates, I think I study Japanese relatively hard,*” which is under the *Intended Learning Effort* dimension, is rated the lowest in Table 3. This stands in contrast to Figure 1, where the lowest overall rating is attributed to the *Instrumentality-Prevention* dimension. This discrepancy further emphasizes the interplay of various factors on students’ motivations in learning languages.

In order to examine potential significant differences, the quantitative data is meticulously categorized based on the students’ year of study. In Table 4, the grand mean of students’ opinions from each year is represented by the bold number, whereas the italicized number denotes the rank across categories.

**Table 4**  
**Comparison of students’ motivations to learn Japanese by year of study**

Items	2nd year		3rd year		4th year	
	(SD)	Rank	(SD)	Rank	(SD)	Rank
<b>Ideal Self</b>						
1. I can imagine myself using Japanese for communicating with people.	4.36 (0.811)	5	4.02 (0.957)	12	4.00 (0.899)	11
2. I can imagine myself using Japanese effectively for listening, speaking, reading, and writing.	4.21 (0.906)	16	3.66 (1.209)	22	3.75 (1.036)	17
3. When I think of my future career, I can imagine myself using Japanese.	4.21 (0.863)	15	3.70 (1.202)	17	3.72 (1.026)	19
4. I can imagine myself using Japanese I am learning in future activities I engage in.	4.26 (0.902)	13	3.84 (1.052)	16	3.77 (0.993)	16
<b>Grand mean</b>	<b>4.25</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3.80</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3.81</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Ought-To Self</b>						
1. Learning Japanese is something I should do.	4.17 (0.826)	17	4.31 (0.807)	6	3.92 (1.071)	13

Items	2nd year		3rd year		4th year	
	(SD)	Rank	(SD)	Rank	(SD)	Rank
2. I should be able to use Japanese effectively for listening, speaking, reading, and writing.	4.30 (0.911)	11	4.39 (0.900)	4	4.13 (1.001)	7
3. Learning Japanese is important to me in order to gain the approval of my peers/teachers/family.	3.66 (1.143)	23	3.67 (1.207)	18	3.57 (1.152)	22
<b>Grand mean</b>	<b>4.04</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4.12</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3.87</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Learning Experiences</b>						
1. I like the atmosphere of my Japanese classes.	4.34 (0.732)	6	3.95 (0.865)	14	4.04 (0.831)	10
2. I find learning Japanese very interesting.	4.43 (0.694)	3	4.15 (0.946)	8	4.15 (0.886)	6
3. I always look forward to Japanese classes.	3.94 (0.795)	19	3.66 (1.153)	19	3.74 (0.944)	18
4. I really enjoy learning Japanese this semester.	3.85 (0.794)	21	3.52 (1.089)	23	3.49 (0.869)	23
5. I would like to have more Japanese lessons.	4.32 (0.728)	8	4.10 (1.207)	10	4.04 (0.919)	9
<b>Grand mean</b>	<b>4.18</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3.88</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3.90</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Instrumentality-Promotion</b>						
1. Learning Japanese can be important to me because I think it will someday be useful in making money or getting a good job.	4.51 (0.639)	2	4.74 (0.513)	1	4.57 (0.636)	1
2. Learning Japanese is important to me because I need it for further studies.	4.30 (0.890)	12	3.95 (1.071)	13	3.58 (1.167)	21
3. Learning Japanese is important to me in order to achieve a special goal (e.g., to get a degree or scholarship).	4.32 (0.915)	10	4.33 (0.870)	5	4.21 (0.840)	4
<b>Grand mean</b>	<b>4.38</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4.34</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4.12</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Instrumentality-Prevention</b>						
1. If my Japanese ability is poor, I may be viewed negatively by others.	3.55 (1.153)	24	3.36 (1.354)	24	3.13 (1.415)	24
2. Learning Japanese is necessary for me because I don't want to get a poor score in proficiency tests.	4.15 (1.045)	18	3.87 (1.204)	15	3.87 (0.941)	14
3. Learning Japanese is important to me because I would feel ashamed if I got bad grades.	3.45 (1.186)	25	3.11 (1.266)	25	2.81 (1.316)	26
<b>Grand mean</b>	<b>3.72</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3.44</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3.27</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Culture/Community Interest</b>						
1. I like the Japanese-related songs, magazines, newspapers, or books, etc. that tell me more about its culture.	4.32 (0.827)	9	4.18 (0.904)	7	4.08 (0.997)	8
2. I want to travel to Japanese-speaking country.	4.72 (0.568)	1	4.62 (0.687)	2	4.55 (0.845)	2
3. I want to make friends with Japanese speakers.	4.42 (0.745)	4	4.44 (0.904)	3	4.17 (1.051)	5
<b>Grand mean</b>	<b>4.49</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4.41</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4.27</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Intended Learning Effort</b>						
1. I am working hard at learning Japanese.	3.91 (0.791)	20	3.66 (0.947)	21	3.77 (0.912)	15
2. Compared with other subjects, I am more willing to spend time studying Japanese.	4.34 (0.876)	7	4.08 (1.085)	11	4.25 (0.757)	3
3. Compared with my classmates, I think I study Japanese relatively hard.	2.94 (0.929)	26	2.89 (1.097)	26	3.11 (1.171)	25

Items	2nd year		3rd year		4th year	
	(SD)	Rank	(SD)	Rank	(SD)	Rank
4. Even if I am not required, I am willing to learn Japanese.	4.25 (0.897)	14	4.13 (1.008)	9	3.96 (0.831)	12
5. When I have a problem about Japanese, I immediately ask for help.	3.66 (0.898)	22	3.66 (1.167)	20	3.70 (1.011)	20
<b>Grand mean</b>	<b>3.82</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3.68</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3.76</b>	<b>6</b>

The grand mean still confirms that students across the second to fourth years strongly agreed that *Culture/Community Interest* had the highest influential impact on their motivation to learn Japanese. Likewise, students from all academic years identified *Instrumentality-Promotion* as another high motivating factor. However, the second-year students prioritized the *Ideal Self* as their third motivational factor, whereas the third-year students emphasized the *Ought-To Self*, and the fourth-year students highlighted *Learning Experiences* as their third motivational factor. The results exhibited variations for the fourth and fifth motivational factors. However, there was a consensus among students from all years regarding the sixth and seventh motivational factors, namely *Intended Learning Effort* and *Instrumentality-Prevention*, which coincided with the grand mean of the total rating results. *Instrumentality-Prevention* received a neutral perception from fourth-year students, while third-year students rated it at a nearly ‘Neutral’ level. In contrast, second-year students rated *Instrumentality-Prevention* at the ‘Agree’ level.

The opinions of the students within each category presented in italicized number in Table 4 were further examined, and the top three motivations were extracted and illustrated in Table 5 below.

**Table 5**  
**Top 3 motivational factor across categories**

2nd year students	3rd year students	4th year students
1. I want to travel to Japanese-speaking country. ( <i>Culture/Community Interest</i> )	1. Learning Japanese can be important to me because I think it will someday be useful in making money or getting a good job. ( <i>Instrumentality-Promotion</i> )	1. Learning Japanese can be important to me because I think it will someday be useful in making money or getting a good job. ( <i>Instrumentality-Promotion</i> )
2. Learning Japanese can be important to me because I think it will someday be useful in making money or getting a good job. ( <i>Instrumentality-Promotion</i> )	2. I want to travel to Japanese-speaking country. ( <i>Culture/Community Interest</i> )	2. I want to travel to Japanese-speaking country. ( <i>Culture/Community Interest</i> )
3. I find learning Japanese very interesting. ( <i>Learning Experiences</i> )	3. I want to make friends with Japanese speakers. ( <i>Culture/Community Interest</i> )	3. Compared with other subjects, I am more willing to spend time studying Japanese. ( <i>Intended Learning Effort</i> )

Table 5 is consistent with the findings presented in the previous tables, yet it offers a clearer perspective on students’ motivations for learning Japanese. Specifically, it reveals that the second-year students place more importance on the opportunity to travel to Japanese-speaking countries, whereas third- and fourth-year students emphasize the utility of Japanese for financial and employment prospects.

In addition to these common motivations, each year group exhibits unique interests: second-year students are particularly engaged by the learning experience, finding the study of Japanese very interesting. Third-year students also prioritize making friends with Japanese speakers. In contrast, fourth-year students are more focused on academic comparisons, showing a greater willingness to dedicate time to studying Japanese compared to other subjects.

Table 6 displays the three lowest-rated motivational factors identified by students across different years of study, based on the findings from Table 4.

**Table 6**  
**Three factors with the lowest ratings**

2nd students	3rd year students	4th year students
1. Compared with my classmates, I think I study Japanese relatively hard. (Intended Learning Effort)	1. Compared with my classmates, I think I study Japanese relatively hard. (Intended Learning Effort)	1. Learning Japanese is important to me because I would feel ashamed if I got bad grades. (Instrumentality-Prevention)
2. Learning Japanese is important to me because I would feel ashamed if I got bad grades. (Instrumentality-Prevention)	2. Learning Japanese is important to me because I would feel ashamed if I got bad grades. (Instrumentality-Prevention)	2. Compared with my classmates, I think I study Japanese relatively hard. (Intended Learning Effort)
3. If my Japanese ability is poor, I may be viewed negatively by others. (Instrumentality-Prevention)	3. If my Japanese ability is poor, I may be viewed negatively by others. (Instrumentality-Prevention)	3. If my Japanese ability is poor, I may be viewed negatively by others. (Instrumentality-Prevention)

Table 6 reinforces the findings regarding the limited influence of *Intended Learning Effort* and *Instrumentality-Promotion* on students' motivations for learning Japanese. It is highlighted in this table, as well as previously noted, that the three statements discussed are among the least motivational factors, as shown in Table 3. Specifically, the data reveals that second and third-year students do not regard competition with classmates as a significant motivator. Conversely, fourth-year students do not view grades as a crucial factor in their motivation to learn Japanese. This differentiation underscores the evolving priorities and motivations of students at different stages of their language learning journey.

## 2. Qualitative findings

The analysis of students' interview transcripts focused on identifying recurring keywords associated with the seven dimensions, which served to reinforce the findings obtained from the quantitative phase. Additionally, students' perceptions regarding multilingual learning were explored, leading to the identification of several themes that are reported in this phase.

### Culture/Community Interest and Instrumentality-Promotion

The quantitative results demonstrate that both *Culture/Community Interest* and *Instrumentality-Promotion* are factors that serve as the primary motivations for students across all seniority groups to choose Japanese. This finding was further reinforced by the interviews conducted



with students from various years of study. These results differ from the findings of Huang (2021), who observed consistently high ratings of *Learning Experiences* among learners of L3 languages such as Spanish, German, French, Japanese, Korean, Thai, Vietnamese, and Malay/Indonesian, across various timeframes and seniority groups. In the study conducted by Praneetham et al. (2022), the desire to travel to a country where the target language is spoken was identified as a factor influencing students' motivation; however, it should be noted that it was not the primary reason mentioned by the students. Nevertheless, the findings of the current study align with those of Yang and Chanyoo (2022), which revealed a positive association between *Cultural/Community Interest* and Japanese learners.

The results in the current study suggest that factors influencing students' motivations for language learning can vary across different studies, contexts, and learner characteristics. It highlights the need for a nuanced understanding of motivational factors and the recognition that students' motivations are multifaceted and unique to their personal interests and experiences. Furthermore, the findings of this study corroborated the survey conducted by *The Japan Times* newspaper in 2018, which highlighted the strong allure of the Japanese language among younger and middle-aged Thais, particularly those residing in urban areas. The language was seen as a gateway to gaining a deeper understanding of Japanese culture and accessing well-compensated career opportunities with Japanese employers (Chitranondh, 2021).

#### *Culture/Community Interest*

In the present research, all students shared that their enthusiasm for learning Japanese originated from their love for anime. Specifically, second-year students identified their passion for anime as the main driving force behind their Japanese language studies. Among them, one student revealed that their interest initially sparked from watching Thai-dubbed anime, but later evolved into a desire to watch anime in its original Japanese version and comprehend the spoken language. On the other hand, fourth-year students expressed their enjoyment of anime, especially those without subtitles, which ignited their interest in becoming translators to bridge language gaps.

Additionally, all students discussed their fascination with various aspects of Japanese culture, including traditions, cuisine, and clothing. Notably, some second- and third-year students had the opportunity to visit Japan and immerse themselves in the local culture and community. They explicitly expressed that their passion for the Japanese language grew even stronger upon their return from Japan. Apart from that, both second- and third-year students mentioned an affinity for the lovely sounds of the Japanese language as well as Japanese character, which sparked their interest in learning more.

Overall, students seem to enjoy discussing *Culture/Community Interest*, and various elements within these topics can influence students' interest. This is evident in the following excerpt from a second-year student:

*"I have been studying Japanese since I was very young, starting in kindergarten. I really liked watching anime. It was fun back then and it is still fun for me now. At first,*



*I watched anime dubbed in Thai. But as I got older, I wanted to listen to the original Japanese voices. I also thought the Japanese writing was cute. Seeing the Katakana characters, which looked adorable to me, made me want to learn more."*

### *Instrumentality-Promotion*

During the quantitative phase of the study, it became apparent that Instrumentality-Promotion held greater significance for third- and fourth-year students. This emphasis could be attributed to their nearing transition into the job market, reflecting their awareness of the potential career benefits associated with learning Japanese. An illustrative example from a fourth-year student showcased a shift in motivation:

*"In the first and second years, all the courses were quite basic, but upon entering the third year, the difficulty escalated significantly, shifting to a more business-oriented focus. This change ignited my passion for learning and motivated me to excel in Japanese, driven by the realization that I need it for my career and to achieve a high salary."*

However, in the qualitative phrase, all students, not only third- and fourth-year students, agreed that their motivation to learn Japanese stemmed from the belief that it would eventually prove beneficial in terms of earning money or securing a good job. They explicitly expressed their motivation to study Japanese with the aim of improving job prospects, advancing their careers, securing higher salaries, and accessing diverse job opportunities. One fourth-year student emphasized their motivation to learn Japanese as a way to acquire a third language, aligning with a second-year student who highlighted the prevalence of English language learners. To stand out from the crowd, they sought to excel in another language, specifically Japanese.

Interestingly, third- and fourth-year students mentioned their motivation to learn Japanese in order to pass the Japanese-Language Proficiency Test (JLPT), which they perceived as a challenging goal. This motivated them to strive for a higher level of proficiency in the language.

### **Ought-To Self**

*Ought-To Self* also stands out as another top motivation for students learning Japanese. The results revealed that the majority of students learn Japanese based on socially constructed ideas of what is expected and desired. For instance, one second-year student disclosed that she would experience a sense of fulfillment if her community recognized her efforts in learning Japanese. The approval and recognition from her neighborhood held significance and served as a motivating factor for her language learning journey. This suggests that knowing a foreign language, such as Japanese, holds a prestigious status within Thai context.

Another student shared a similar experience, where her passion for fashion was influenced by her mother's suggestion to study Japanese. The mother believed that studying Japanese could open doors to pursuing fashion studies in Japan. Another second-year student expressed a desire to showcase her language skills and knowledge of Japanese to their peers, indicating that social recognition and admiration served as a driving force for her language-learning endeavors.

The weight of social expectations on students is clearly illustrated in the following excerpt:

*“My mother always purchases products made in Japan and requests that I read and translate the product descriptions for her. She had the expectation that I would be able to understand them. Initially, I did not grasp the content, but I made efforts to read and learn more so that I could make my mother proud.”*

### **Learning Experiences**

The results in qualitative phase confirmed that factors such as the learning environment, past experiences of successful learning, and situation-specific motives can influence students' motivations. Many students chose to continue studying Japanese in university primarily because they found their high school studies enjoyable. A third-year student mentioned, *“As I began learning Japanese in high school, I found it enjoyable and realized I could learn Japanese better than English; therefore, I continued studying it because I wanted to understand and master the language.”*

Interestingly, one second-year student provided an additional insight, mentioning that the course materials in their first and second year primarily focused on building a strong foundation in Japanese, which made the language manageable and not excessively challenging. As a result, their passion for studying Japanese remained unwavering, and they expressed a strong commitment to continue their language-learning journey and further expand their knowledge.

Two students from the third year recently returned from summer training in Japan, and expressed how this experience reignited their passion for studying Japanese. Both of them used to feel discouraged due to the challenges of the Japanese level test, but their time in Japan renewed their enthusiasm and reminded them of the more enjoyable aspects of learning Japanese. One of them shared, *“The experience in Japan made me feel better about myself as I witnessed that I could really use what I have learned in practical situations, and it was effective. Therefore, I want to learn more so that I can gain more knowledge to apply in everyday scenarios, which makes me want to tackle more difficult levels of Japanese.”*

### **Ideal Self**

During focus group discussions, students occasionally described their vision of themselves as proficient users of the target language. Therefore, the concept of the *Ideal Self* is confirmed to be an additional motivational factor, though at a lower priority level for the students in the current study.

Their visions were primarily connected with other dimensions, notably *Culture/Community Interest* and *Instrumentality-Promotion*. For instance, a second-year student imagined herself being able to listen to and understand her favorite Japanese idol. A fourth-year student expressed a strong desire to achieve fluency in Japanese, aiming to use the language as proficiently as a native speaker.

Two third-year students discussed their goals of incorporating Japanese into their future careers, underscoring the significance of Japanese language skills for their professional growth. One of them mentioned, *“I want to be a multilingual interpreter, so I envisioned myself being able to use multiple languages, including Japanese.”*

### Intended Learning Effort

In the quantitative phase, *Intended Learning Effort* secured the sixth position in terms of the grand mean of the total rating, making it almost the lowest motivational factor for students learning Japanese. However, all students strongly agreed with one statement within this dimension: *“Compared with other subjects, I am more willing to spend time studying Japanese.”* Meanwhile, another statement, *“Compared with my classmates, I think I study Japanese relatively hard,”* received the lowest rating, falling to the ‘Neutral’ level.

During a focus group discussion, the anticipated effort students were willing to put into language learning, particularly in comparison to other subjects, was markedly evident. Many specifically contrasted their experiences with English, which is a mandatory foreign language subject in Thailand. A second-year student shared their perspective:

*“I pay more attention in Japanese class compared to English class because I think I can grasp Japanese tenses better than English tenses. I find Japanese easier, and its pronunciation easier to understand, even though I’ve been learning English for V. many years.”*

In contrast, some students perceive Japanese as more challenging than English, yet they chose to pursue it. A third-year student expressed this sentiment, stating, *“I think the English subject is more difficult than Japanese, but I am more willing to study Japanese because I believe a lot of people are good at English. I really want to have a third language that will make me stand out in the future.”*

The finding regarding the statement *“Compared with my classmates, I think I study Japanese relatively hard,”* which received the lowest impact on their motivation, was also explored. Interestingly, all students across different academic years expressed the belief that they did not work as hard as their peers. The second-year students specifically mentioned feeling pressured and demotivated when compared to their classmates. Furthermore, some fourth-year students attributed this perception to a cultural aspect of Japanese humility, suggesting that it influenced their perspective on their own efforts in studying Japanese. Therefore, it is evident that for the group of students in the current study, comparing themselves with classmates has no positive impact and, in fact, can demotivate rather than motivate them in learning Japanese.

### Instrumentality-Prevention

*Instrumentality-Prevention* was identified as having the least impact on students’ motivation to learn Japanese in the overall rating as presented in Figure 1. Students generally held a neutral stance toward certain factors, such as *“Learning Japanese is important to me because*

*I would feel ashamed if I got bad grades,”* particularly among the fourth-year students. Similarly, the statement, *“If my Japanese ability is poor, I may be viewed negatively by others”* within this dimension was also perceived neutrally, with a consensus among all students that it had the third least impact on their motivation.

During the study’s qualitative phase, the impact of grades or scores emerged as a significant theme, being identified as both sources of motivation and demotivation among students. This sentiment was particularly pronounced among second-year students. For instance, one student reflected, *“After seeing my exam scores, I felt I could have done better with more time. Although sometimes discouraged by my scores, I’m still happy and eager to learn Japanese.”*

Diverging viewpoints were present, as another student expressed a contrasting experience: *“I’m the opposite of my friend. I don’t feel like studying, but I want good grades to share on Instagram. Getting D or D+ led to my mom scolding me for low grades, leaving me feeling burnt out.”* This account highlights how social perceptions and parental expectations can also serve as demotivating factors.

Another narrative from a second-year student offered a blend of discouragement and optimism: *“I was hard on myself and failing made me feel bad. But seeing my mistakes sometimes made me feel good because I could learn from them.”*

A fourth-year student shared her journey, noting a critical period during her third year, she doubted her path in studying Japanese due to low grades and feeling burnt out.

Thus, this exploration reveals that grades can act as dual forces, propelling students forward or holding them back, mirroring the ‘Neutral’ sentiment presented in Table 3’s quantitative analysis.

Motivation driven by the fear of negative perception by others aligns with the *Ought-To Self* dimension, which reflects students’ recognition of external expectations and their aspiration to excel in learning Japanese. Accordingly, students acknowledged the expectations from their community, neighborhood, peers, and family, as discussed earlier in the context of the *Ought-To Self* dimension. When this insight is combined with findings from the quantitative phase of the study, it suggests that while students are influenced by others’ expectations, the fear of being viewed negatively can serve as both a motivational and demotivational factor, resulting in a ‘Neutral’ rating in Table 3.

### **Perceptions of multilingual learning**

A prominent challenge in multilingual learning appeared to be the tendency to mix languages, both in their theoretical understanding and practical application of languages.

Since Thai students have been studying English from a young age, Japanese is introduced as an additional foreign language, ranking significantly behind English in their language studies. Consequently, most of them reported that when they began studying Japanese, they struggled with mixing English and Japanese words.

One third-year student highlighted, *“The problem becomes even more apparent when we have just finished an English language class and switched to a Japanese class; we encounter difficulties due to using English during Japanese classes.”*

Regarding grammatical structure, students noted that English and Japanese have completely different structures, making it easier to distinguish between the two and avoid mixing them up during learning.

One third-year student clarified, *“English structure follows a subject-verb-object pattern, whereas Japanese structure is subject-object-verb. This clear distinction helps in usage.”* However, some students argued that these differences actually make learning more challenging. They observed that while Thai and English share similar structures, Japanese differs from both, requiring them to learn a completely new system.

Furthermore, the Thai language (L1) also influences students’ learning of Japanese. A second-year student highlighted the impact of Thai on their pronunciation, noting, *“There are some Japanese characters that sound similar to Thai characters, making them hard to differentiate.”* Unlike those students who use English as a base for forming Japanese sentences, some students also employ Thai as a foundation when constructing sentences. In addition, one second-year student highlighted her tendency to mix up between Japanese and Thai languages, particularly in terms of word order.

Culture also influences language learning significantly. Students observed that English is typically more direct, while Japanese is more indirect, requiring thoughtful selection of words. For example, a fourth-year student cited the phrase お先に失礼します (Osaki ni shitsureishimasu), which is a respectful way of excusing oneself in Japanese. It serves to express gratitude toward those still working and indicates a polite intention to leave, rather than merely saying ‘goodbye’ as one might in English. This example underscores the subtle yet significant differences in cultural expressions between the languages.

Some students have found ways to turn this challenge into an advantage by leveraging their English knowledge. Another third-year student shared, *“When I speak Japanese and don’t know the Japanese vocabulary, I find the English equivalent and convert it into Katakana. For example, when I don’t know the word ‘cut’ in Japanese, I use the English word ‘cut’ and transform it into Katakana as ‘Katto’ (カット). So, I believe English can also be useful in this situation.”*

One fourth-year student discovered a solution to manage multiple languages effectively. He imagines his brain as a bookshelf, with each language assigned to a separate section. By mentally creating a switch, he can consciously activate the specific language he wishes to focus on when studying. However, he acknowledged that the language he uses most frequently tends to surface more readily, and there is a risk of forgetting previously learned languages, as observed in his peers.

## CONCLUSION

The research findings provide evidence regarding the motivations of Japanese learners and their implications. *Culture/Community Interest* emerged as the highest-rated motivational factor, highlighting its primary significance. *Instrumentality-Promotion* also held notable importance, especially for third- and fourth-year students. On the other hand, *Instrumentality-Prevention* was seen as the least motivating factor. Notably, a specific statement within the *Intended Learning Effort* dimension received the lowest score, indicating a potential link between these two factors. Data from both the quantitative and qualitative phases indicate that these factors can serve as both sources of motivation and demotivation.

The study's results underscore the importance of *Culture/Community Interest* and *Instrumentality-Promotion* in motivating students to pursue Japanese and other LOTE. These findings emphasize the need for understanding motivational factors, as motivations for language learning can differ across contexts and studies. Furthermore, the allure of the Japanese language among Thai students, particularly among younger and middle-aged individuals, is evident, driven by aspirations for improved job prospects, career advancement, and a deeper appreciation of Japanese culture. Personal connections, such as relationships and travel experiences, also play a significant role in shaping students' motivations. The research findings align with the notion that all motivations are interconnected and possess a strong relationship with students' overall motivation to learn LOTE.

The study also highlights the challenges of language mixing in multilingual learning, both in theoretical understanding and practical application. The challenges faced by Thai students in learning Japanese alongside English highlight the intricate dynamics of multilingual education. The blending of languages, particularly in contexts where students switch from studying English to Japanese, underscores the cognitive load and linguistic confusion that can arise. These issues are compounded by grammatical and phonetic similarities and differences among the languages, as well as by the cultural aspects that influence language use and comprehension. Students' inventive strategies to mitigate language mixing, such as leveraging English vocabulary in Japanese contexts, point to the adaptability and resourcefulness required in multilingual settings.

The findings have practical implications for language educators, linguists, and curriculum developers, informing instructional strategies to help students navigate and effectively manage multilingual environments. As an illustration, language educators should not limit their instruction to skill-based content alone; they should also incorporate cultural-based lessons and activities tailored to the learners' interests. In doing so, instructors effectively acquaint their students with the cultural aspects that align with their personal preferences and inclinations. In the realm of curriculum development, there should be a proactive emphasis on learner-centered approaches. This approach involves the comprehensive design of courses, teaching models, as well as evaluation and assessment methods that prioritize the individual needs and interests of the learners.

## LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The limitations of this study are comprised of two issues including representativeness and methodological constraints. Firstly, the study's findings may be limited by representativeness since the sample size was specific. A small sample of Thai LOTE students learning Japanese at a university might not capture the full range of experiences and motivations, limiting the generalizability of the findings. Lastly, relying solely on questionnaires and interviews may yield limitations in terms of multidimensional perspective of data obtained. Questionnaires may be subject to static information, and interviews may be influenced by participants' self-presentation.

Future studies can address these concerns by including a larger and more diverse sample of Thai students learning Japanese as their third language to enhance generalizability and incorporating additional data collection methods such as classroom observations or language proficiency assessments for a more comprehensive understanding.

## THE AUTHORS

**Jenjira Jitpaiboon** teaches undergraduate courses in the School of Liberal Arts at King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang, Thailand. Her fields of interest include English for specific purposes (ESP), corpus linguistics, public relations, and applied linguistics.

[jenjira.ji@kmitl.ac.th](mailto:jenjira.ji@kmitl.ac.th)

**Atichat Rungswang**, Ph.D. is an assistant professor at the Department of Languages, School of Liberal Arts, King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang. His research interests include intercultural communication, discourse analysis and language and gender.

[atichat.ru@kmitl.ac.th](mailto:atichat.ru@kmitl.ac.th)

**Yuki Miyamoto** is currently working as a Japanese lecturer at the School of Liberal Arts, King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang. His areas of research are Japanese language teaching and Japanese linguistics.

[miyamoto.yu@kmitl.ac.th](mailto:miyamoto.yu@kmitl.ac.th)

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## Appendix A

### Self-evaluation of learning languages other than English (LOTE)

This questionnaire aims at investigating motivations in learning languages other than English. There are two parts including 1) learners' personal information and 2) Self-evaluation of learning languages other than English.

Your personal information and answers will be kept in confidential and anonymous findings will be used to report the results in publications.

#### Part 1: Personal information

**Directions:** Please put ✓ on the choice of your personal information and answer the following questions.

1. Sex ☐ male ☐ female ☐ other
2. Age \_\_\_\_\_
3. How long have you been studying Japanese? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What other languages are you studying other than English and Japanese? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Why did you choose studying Japanese? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What is your grade of English 2? \_\_\_\_\_

#### Part 2: Self-evaluation on motivations in learning languages other than English

**Directions:** Please put ✓ on the choice of your agreement.

(5 = Strongly agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly disagree)

Motivational Dimensions for LOTE Learners	Level of Agreement				
	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Ideal Self</b>					
1. I can imagine myself using LOTE for communicating with people.					
2. I can imagine myself using LOTE effectively for listening, speaking, reading, and writing.					
3. When I think of my future career, I can imagine myself using LOTE.					
4. I can imagine myself using LOTE I am learning in future activities I engage in.					
<b>Ought-to Self</b>					
5. Learning LOTE is something I should do.					
6. I should be able to use LOTE effectively for listening, speaking, reading, and writing.					
7. Learning LOTE is important to me in order to gain the approval of my peers/teachers/family.					
<b>Learning Experiences</b>					
8. I like the atmosphere of my LOTE classes.					
9. I find learning LOTE very interesting.					
10. I always look forward to LOTE classes.					
11. I really enjoy learning LOTE this semester.					
12. I would like to have more LOTE lessons.					
<b>Instrumentality-Promotion</b>					
13. Learning LOTE can be important to me because I think it will someday be useful in making money or getting a good job.					
14. Learning LOTE is important to me because I need it for further studies.					

Motivational Dimensions for LOTE Learners	Level of Agreement				
	1	2	3	4	5
15. Learning LOTE is important to me in order to achieve a special goal (e.g. to get a degree or scholarship).					
<b>Instrumentality-Prevention</b>					
16. If my LOTE ability is poor, I may be viewed negatively by others.					
17. Learning LOTE is necessary for me because I don't want to get a poor score in proficiency tests.					
18. Learning LOTE is important to me because I would feel ashamed if I got bad grades.					
<b>Culture/community Interest</b>					
19. I like the LOTE-related songs, magazines, newspapers, or books, etc. that tell me more about its culture.					
20. I want to travel to LOTE-speaking countries.					
21. I want to make friends with LOTE speakers.					
<b>Intended Learning Effort</b>					
22. I am working hard at learning LOTE.					
23. Compared with other subjects, I am more willing to spend time studying LOTE.					

## **Appendix B**

### **Interview questions**

1. What motivated you to learn the languages?
2. How do you spend your time learning the languages? Please provide examples.
3. How do you usually feel when you learn the languages? Please give in-class and after-class learning examples respectively.
4. What do you consider as the most important factors in learning the languages? Why?
5. What do you consider as the most difficult challenges? Why?
6. What are your short-term (within two years) and long-term (five years and beyond) goals for the languages you study? Why?
7. What do you know and think about the native speakers of these languages and their communities?
8. What kind of person do you think you will become? What roles do the languages you are learning play in your future?