

# Motivation in Chinese Learning

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Keyword : motivation, Chinese learning, Japanese learners, factor analysis, questionnaire

## 1. Introduction

In foreign language learning, learners' motivation is one of the most important factors. In the past there have been many studies focused on motivation, and it is clear that the environment surrounding the learners has had a big effect on success.

In Japan, the number of Chinese learners has increased. In this context, there is an urgent need to investigate Japanese learners' motivation variables when learning Chinese in Japan. The purpose of this paper is to clarify the types of motivation Japanese learners have when learning Chinese and propose some suggestions for Chinese education in Japan.

## 2. Review of some main studies

### 2.1 Studies on motivation in foreign language learning

At first, I will review some main studies on motivation in foreign language learning. The studies on learners' motivation started with Gardner & Lambert (1972). In this study, learners' motivation was divided into two types. One was called "integrated motivation", and the other was called "instrumental motivation". As for the former, learners want to know about the culture and the language, finally becoming one of the members of the speech community. On the other hand, learners of the latter want to raise their own social status, or want to make use of the ability of the foreign language for work, in other words, they learn a language as a kind of tool to achieve their own purposes.

Gardner & Lambert (1972) established a fundamental base for later studies. However, according to the later studies, the viewpoint of binary opposition, so-called "integrated motivation" and "instrumental motivation", cannot explain all phenomena in every language acquisition. For example, Oxford & Shearin (1994) pointed out that "elitism" was another important motivation as well as the two mentioned above. Nuibe (2001) classified learners' motivation into "outer motivation" and "inner motivation".

In addition, according to the research on learners' motivation in foreign language learning in particular countries or areas, it became clear that motivation varies in every country and area. (see Guo & Okita (2001), Nuibe & Karino & Ito (1995), Narita (1998)).

The researches mentioned above proved that motivation in foreign language learning is influenced by environment or the cultural background of the learners, and it is also influenced by the learners' individual preferences, interests, and sense of values.

## **2.2 Studies on Japanese learners' motivation in Chinese learning**

Recently, in the domain of the Chinese education, studies on learners' motivation are advancing. The results of research on learners' motivation in foreign language learning mainly in English learning could not be applied to Japanese learners, because all the verbalization is kanji. It is different from other foreign languages learning for Japanese learners who already have the knowledge of kanji. (see An (2003,2004), Hosaka (2003), Guo&Liu (2007)) .

Above all , An(2003,2004) pointed out that there was another kind of motivation named "negative motivation" besides "integrated motivation" and "instrumental motivation" mentioned in the studies in English learning, and treated it as a unique motivation in Chinese learning of the Japanese university students.

## **3. Summary of this research**

### **3.1 Purpose**

The purpose of this paper is to clarify the types of motivation Japanese learners have when learning Chinese.

### **3.2 Participants**

199 students (153 female students, 46 male students) who are studying Chinese at Ibaraki Christian University completed a questionnaire.

### **3.3 Time**

This research was carried out in December, 2007.

### **3.4 Method**

I gave a questionnaire made up of 30 items to participants and asked them to select one of five answers. The five grades score from one point to five points. As follows:1=Absolutely disagree, 2=Slightly disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Slightly agree, 5=Absolutely agree

### **3.5 Results**

I analyzed the result of the investigation with factor analysis (using principal factor method and promax rotation). Of the 30 items, item 9 was deleted soon, because it was not applicable.

Item 9) I just want to learn a new foreign language .

Then, I analyzed the rest of the 29 items with factor analysis again (using principal factor method and promax rotation). Finally 7 factors were extracted. I used items which factor loading is 0.30 and above 0.30 for the interpretation of factor naming. The analysis gave the following results.

Table 1 Factor patterns (using principal factor method and promax rotation)

item	factor1	factor2	factor3	factor4	factor5	factor6	factor7
8	<b>0.738</b>	0.006	0.102	-0.011	-0.007	-0.144	0.034
21	<b>0.697</b>	-0.025	0.145	-0.018	0.119	-0.053	-0.036
24	<b>0.619</b>	0.151	-0.123	0.221	0.041	-0.041	-0.045
17	<b>0.609</b>	0.047	-0.038	0.02	0.122	-0.046	-0.025
26	<b>0.522</b>	-0.217	0.227	0.106	0.135	0.069	0.092
5	<b>0.463</b>	0.091	0.242	-0.257	-0.128	0.026	0.125
6	<b>0.34</b>	0.035	0.053	-0.174	-0.116	0.092	0.118
14	<b>0.337</b>	0.132	-0.01	-0.102	0.172	0.118	-0.025
11	0.042	<b>0.748</b>	-0.045	-0.041	0.005	0.003	-0.133
3	-0.016	<b>0.679</b>	-0.047	0.008	0.011	-0.083	0.433
2	-0.036	<b>0.633</b>	-0.078	-0.143	0.255	-0.038	0.072
19	0.034	<b>0.479</b>	0.099	0.138	-0.08	0.087	-0.209
29	-0.014	<b>0.303</b>	0.164	0.267	-0.105	0.01	-0.022
20	0.098	<b>0.301</b>	0.12	0.094	0.104	0.148	-0.01
25	0.351	-0.099	<b>0.657</b>	0.061	-0.068	-0.084	-0.089
1	0.116	0.045	<b>0.525</b>	-0.05	-0.112	0.078	0.066
28	0.007	-0.069	<b>0.484</b>	0.078	0.051	0.011	0.223
30	-0.05	0.352	<b>0.383</b>	0.121	-0.075	-0.018	-0.095
7	0.034	-0.019	<b>0.353</b>	-0.04	-0.096	0.226	0.026
23	-0.007	0.054	0.17	<b>0.719</b>	0.051	-0.106	0.048
18	0.025	-0.054	-0.224	<b>0.616</b>	0.01	0.081	0.164
16	0.157	-0.04	-0.122	<b>0.426</b>	-0.069	0.207	-0.073
27	-0.216	0.004	0.203	<b>0.417</b>	0.185	-0.01	0.194
15	0.145	0.019	-0.146	-0.013	<b>0.808</b>	0.066	0.091
22	0.114	0.098	-0.014	0.14	<b>0.655</b>	0.027	-0.154
13	-0.096	0.004	0.066	0.089	0.065	<b>0.931</b>	-0.07
12	-0.028	0.064	0.349	-0.173	0.159	<b>0.412</b>	0.038
4	0.114	-0.089	-0.135	0.228	-0.152	0.134	<b>0.589</b>
10	-0.018	-0.048	0.187	0.027	0.084	-0.15	<b>0.551</b>

As above, 7 factors were extracted from 29 items. Therefore, I used the items with higher factor loading for factor naming. Table 3 is the result of factor naming. Table 4 is average, standard deviation, Cronbach's coefficient alpha of each factor.

Table 2 Inter-factor correlations

factor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	————	0.459	0.538	0.003	0.274	0.487	0.056
2	0.459	————	0.448	0.305	0.318	0.394	0.144
3	0.538	0.448	————	0.019	0.247	0.421	0.128
4	0.003	0.305	0.019	————	0.139	0.066	0
5	0.274	0.318	0.247	0.139	————	0.063	-0.133
6	0.487	0.394	0.421	0.066	0.063	————	0.133
7	0.056	0.144	0.128	0	-0.133	0.133	————

Table 3 Factor naming.

items	factor	factor name
8, 21, 24, 17, 26, 5, 6, 14	factor1	China&Chinese understanding factor
11, 3, 2, 19, 30, 29, 20,	factor2	work & qualification factor
25, 1, 28, 30, 7, 12	factor3	language acquisition factor
23, 18, 16, 27	factor4	influence factor from other persons
15, 22	factor5	internationality & future factor
13, 12	factor6	interchange factor
4, 10, 3	factor7	comparison factor with other languages

Table 4 Average, standard deviation, Cronbach's coefficient alpha

factor name	score range	average	standard deviation	Cronbach's coefficient alpha
China&Chinese understanding	8~40	27.40	5.760	0.825
work & qualification	7~35	17.93	4.908	0.765
language acquisition	6~30	21.43	4.131	0.760
influence from other persons	4~20	10.00	3.263	0.614
internationality & future	2~10	7.54	1.969	0.759
interchange	2~10	7.12	1.718	0.682
comparison with other languages	3~15	9.68	2.176	0.526

In order to compare the score averages of the seven factors between first-year students and second-year students, I carried out a t-test. Table 5 is the result.

Table 5 Score averages between first-year students and second-year students

factor name	grade	N	average	standard deviation	t
China&Chinese understanding	1	110	27.3273	5.78849	-0.189
	2	89	27.4831	5.75664	
work & qualification	1	110	18.2545	5.09621	1.038
	2	89	17.5281	4.66147	
language acquisition	1	110	21.5545	4.03332	0.464
	2	89	21.2809	4.26665	
influence from other persons	1	110	10.5000	3.17603	2.433*
	2	89	9.3820	3.28047	
internationality & future	1	110	7.5545	1.93275	0.134
	2	89	7.5169	2.02323	
interchange	1	110	7.1455	1.56121	0.272
	2	89	7.0787	1.90230	
comparison with other languages	1	110	9.8182	2.15960	1.008
	2	89	9.5056	2.19568	

\* $p < 0.05$ .  $df = 197$ .

Similarly, to compare the score averages of the seven factors between female students and male students, I also carried out a t-test. Table 6 is the result.

Table 6 Score averages between female students and male students

factor name	sex	N	average	standard deviation	t
China&Chinese understanding	F	153	27.3137	5.48739	-0.371
	M	46	27.6739	6.64682	
work & qualification	F	153	17.8366	4.72042	-0.487
	M	46	18.2391	5.53046	
language acquisition	F	153	21.6013	4.03821	0.1054
	M	46	20.8696	4.42522	
influence from other persons	F	153	10.0654	3.14281	0.514
	M	46	9.7826	3.66311	
internationality & future	F	153	7.4183	1.95547	-1.566
	M	46	7.9348	1.98217	
interchange	F	153	7.1307	1.66501	0.226
	M	46	7.0652	1.90207	
comparison with other languages	F	153	9.4510	2.06774	-2.732**
	M	46	10.4348	2.37255	

\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .  $df = 197$

## 4. Discussion

### 4.1 Analysis of the result

In this paper, I gave a questionnaire made up of 30 items to Japanese learners who are learning Chinese at Ibaraki Christian University in Japan, and asked them to select one from five answers. Then, I used factor analysis to analyze the data by principal factor method and promax rotation. At last, 7 factors were extracted.

I called them as following,

- factor 1, “China & Chinese understanding factor”,
- factor 2, “work & qualification factor”,
- factor 3, “ language acquisition factor”,
- factor 4, “ influence factor from other persons”,
- factor 5, “internationality & future factor”,
- factor 6, “ interchange factor ”,
- factor 7, “comparison factor with other languages”.

First, factor 1, named “China & Chinese understanding factor”, it is an important motivation in Chinese learning. It is related to 8 items in the questionnaire. For example,

- Item 8 “I really want to understand Chinese cultural background and want to know about Chinese behavior and thought deeply.”
- Item 24 “To get information of politics , economy and society in China.”
- Item 17 “I am interested in the relationship between Japan and China.”
- Item 26 “As a part of international understanding and the cross-cultural understanding.”
- Item 5 “I want to know the history, tradition ,manners ,and customs in China.”
- Item 6 “I am interested in Chinese literature and want to read it in Chinese,” etc.

Learners praise the culture of the target language, that is to say, Chinese, and want to know the culture and the language. Their final purpose is to be one of the language speech community. Therefore, “China & Chinese understanding factor” is similar to “integrated motivation”, which is a traditional classification in foreign language learning.

About factor 2, named “work & qualification factor”, it is related with 7 items in the questionnaire. For example,

- Item 11 “I want to get a job using Chinese in the future”

Item 2 “Because I can get more chances to find employment in the future.”

Item 3 “I could get more respect if I can speak Chinese .” etc.

Learners want to raise their social status, or they want to make use of the ability of the foreign language for work. Therefore, “work & qualification factor” is similar to “instrumental motivation”, which is another traditional classification in the foreign language learning .

Furthermore, factor 3, named “language acquisition factor”, is related with 6 items in the questionnaire. For example,

Item 25 “I am interested in Chinese the language itself.”

Item 1 “Chinese seems to be interesting, and studying Chinese is pleasant.” etc.

As for this factor, there is some similarity to “integrated motivation”, but I think it is better to consider it as a new independent motivation: “language acquisition motivation”.

Factor 4, “influence factor of other persons” has high factor loading from 4 items. For example,

Item 23 “Because now it is popular to learn Chinese.”

Item 18 “Because it is recommended by my parents or my seniors.”

Item 27 “Because there are a lot of persons studying Chinese.”

Item 16 “Because I have Chinese relatives or Chinese friends, and I want to speak with them in Chinese.”

I think this factor is a unique motivation of the Japanese university student. Choosing Chinese is not by the learner himself but was influenced by his parents or seniors. Or Learning Chinese is popular and so on. It can be seen as fashionable. Therefore, I think it is better to consider it as a new independent motivation, namely as “influence motivation from other persons”.

Factor 5 “internationality & future factor” is related to only 2 items. For example,

Item 15 “In the world, China is becoming stronger”.

Item 22 “Because China is becoming more and more important in the world.”

It reflects Japanese learners’ interest in the increase of economic progress and social development of China , their Asian neighbor.

In addition, factor 6, “interchange factor” has high factor loading from only 2 items. For example,

Item 13 “Because I can make a lot of Chinese friends”.

Item 12 “Because when I travel to China I can understand what they are saying”.

Since factor 5 and factor 6 do not have a lot of items, so I think it is better to consider them next time in the future. This time I decided to place them in the “instrumental motivation” category.

Finally, factor 7, “comparison factor with other languages” has high factor loading from 3 items. For example,

Item 4 “It is easy to get academic credit from a Chinese class.”

Item 10 “There are a lot of *kanji* in Chinese, and it is easy to master than other languages.”

Item 3 “Because people will think I am intelligent if I could speak Chinese.”

This kind of motivation is named “negative motivation” and treated as a unique motivation in Chinese learning of the Japanese university students mentioned by An (2003, 2004). But I think it is not negative but rather comparative. Because all the verbalization of Chinese is *kanji*, to Japanese learners, who already have the knowledge of the *kanji*, the learning of Chinese is different from the learning of the other foreign languages, including English.

Therefore, as an independent motivation, I want to classify it as “comparative motivation with other languages”. However, I think it is better to consider it again in the future, because its Cronbach’s coefficient alpha is only 0.562.

Then, I can classify motivation in Chinese learning of the Japanese university students into 5 types as follows.

1. integrated motivation: “China & Chinese understanding factor”
2. instrumental motivation: “work & qualification factor”, “interchange factor”, “internationality & future factor”
3. language acquisition motivation : “language acquisition factor”
4. influence motivation from other persons : “influence factor from other person”
5. comparative motivation with other languages : “comparative factor with other languages”

Particularly, I think 3, 4 and 5 are unique motivation to Japanese university students when learning Chinese.



## 4.2 Analysis of t-test

In order to compare the score averages of the seven factors between first-year students and second-year students, I carried out a t-test. (see Table 5) As a result, the score average of first-year students was significantly higher than second-year students in “influence factor from other person”. In the other factors, the differences between first-year students and second-year students were not seen.

That is to say, first-year students are more influenced by their parents or seniors. It is not themselves who want to learn Chinese. They are told or expected to choose Chinese lessons.

And from the items we can see another feature ,that is, it is popular to learn Chinese and it is better to follow the fashion.

Similarly, to compare the score averages of the seven factors between male students and female students, I also carried out a t-test. (see Table 6 ) As a result, the score average of male students was significantly higher than female students in “comparison factor with other languages”. In the other factors, the differences between male students and female students were not seen.

It can be thought as a kind of gender difference in Chinese learning. Of course, I think it is better to analyze it in the future, because this time the number of female students is bigger than male students.

## 4.3 Some suggestions for Chinese education in Japan

From the result above I can point out that there are various motivations in Chinese learning in Japan. Besides the traditional classifications, such as “integrated motivation” and “instrumental motivation”, I found three other types of unique motivation in Chinese learning of the Japanese university students. They are “language acquisition motivation”, “influence motivation from other persons”, “comparison motivation with other languages”.

“China & Chinese understanding factor”, which I placed into “integrated motivation”, gives a very important suggestion to Chinese education. Learners are interested in China the country and the people, they want to learn more about them. So when we consider about Chinese teaching methods, Chinese teaching materials, and course design and curriculum design, learners’ needs will be an important key indicator.

In addition, “work & qualification factor” “interchange factor”, “internationality & future factor”, which I placed into “instrumental motivation”, I think it is a reflection of the Chinese learning boom in Japan now. Under such a situation, the development of Chinese teaching materials, which fit the needs of Japanese learners in Japan, and the development of the flexibility of the teaching methods, are becoming an urgent business for Chinese education in Japan.

About “language acquisition motivation”, “influence motivation from other persons”, “comparative motivation with other languages”, I think they are unique motivation in Chinese learning of the Japanese university students. But more research is needed to investigate it again in the future, not only among university students but other learners as well.

## 5. Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to make it clear that “what kind of motivation do the Japanese learners have in Chinese learning ?” As a result, 7 factors were extracted.

Comparing them with traditional classification, I classified Japanese learners’ motivation in Chinese learning into 5 types as follows.

1. integrated motivation: “China & Chinese understanding factor”,
2. instrumental motivation: “work & qualification factor”, “interchange factor”, “internationality & future factor”,
3. language acquisition motivation : “language acquisition factor”
4. influence motivation from other persons : “influence factor from other person”
5. comparative motivation with other languages : “comparison factor with other languages”

Particularly , 3, 4, 5, I think they are unique motivation in Chinese learning in Japan.

To know the current state of motivation in Chinese learning, it is necessary to investigate not only the learners at universities, but also learners at junior and senior high schools, as well as learners at adult institutes in Japan. In addition, this time I was not able to analyze the difference of motivation by sex, because the number of female students was greater than male students this time. I hope I could do this assignment next time in the future.

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## 中国語学習に対する動機

任 利

本稿では、アンケートを行い、量的なアプローチから日本人大学生の中国語学習に対する動機づけを探ることを目的とした。調査の結果を主因子法・プロマックス回転による因子分析を行い、「中国・中国人理解因子」、「仕事・資格獲得因子」、「語学習得因子」、「他者からの影響因子」、「国際性・将来性因子」、「交流の手段因子」、「他言語との比較因子」という7つの因子が抽出された。外国語学習動機づけに関する従来の伝統的な分類としての「統合的動機づけ」と「道具的動機づけ」といった二分法と照らし合わせて、日本人大学生の中国語学習に対する動機づけの構成要素は以下のように分類できた。

1. 統合的動機づけ；
2. 道具的動機づけ；
3. 語学習得動機づけ；
4. 他者からの影響動機づけ；
5. 他言語との比較動機づけ

特に、「語学習得動機づけ」、「他者からの影響動機づけ」、「他言語との比較動機づけ」は、日本人大学生の中国語学習に対する独特の動機づけであると考えられる。

また、一年生と二年生別の各因子の得点平均値を比較し、t検定を行った結果、「他者からの影響因子」においては、一年生の得点が有意に高かった。その他の因子においては、一年生と二年生の差が見られなかった。同じく、男子学生と女子学生別の各因子の得点平均値を比較し、t検定を行った結果、「他言語との比較因子」においては、男子学生の得点が有意に高かった。その他の因子においては、男子学生と女子学生の差が見られなかった。

今回の調査結果を分析することにより、日本人中国語学習の動機づけの多様さが指摘し、日本における中国語教育現状を明らかにし、今後効果的な中国語教育への示唆を探ることができた。

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