



ELSEVIER

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

System

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/system](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/system)

# Students' self-determined and integrative orientations and teachers' motivational support in a Japanese as a foreign language context



Maya Sugita McEown<sup>a,\*</sup>, Kimberly A. Noels<sup>b,1</sup>, Kristie D. Saumure<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Department of Psychology, University of Alberta, P361 Biological Sciences Building, Edmonton, Alberta, T6G 2E9, Canada

<sup>b</sup> Department of Psychology, University of Alberta, P349 Biological Sciences Building, Edmonton, Alberta, T6G 2E9, Canada

<sup>c</sup> Wellington, New Zealand

## ARTICLE INFO

### Article history:

Received 16 January 2013

Received in revised form 2 June 2014

Accepted 5 June 2014

Available online 4 July 2014

### Keywords:

Foreign language learning

Teaching style

Integrative orientation

Intrinsic motivation

Japanese

Self-determination theory

## ABSTRACT

To support students' motivation to learn a foreign language, teachers should understand the reasons why their students wish to learn the language and incorporate this information in their teaching practice. The survey of 128 Canadian learners of Japanese focused on three questions: What are students' orientations for wanting to learn Japanese, and how are these orientations interrelated? Do orientations differently predict learning engagement and academic outcomes on the one hand, and language community engagement, on the other? What aspects of teachers' support best facilitate students' self-determination and intercultural integrativeness? The results showed that self-determined orientations were the best predictors of learning engagement and academic outcomes, but cultural knowledge development and intercultural interaction best predicted Japanese community engagement. Students who perceived their teacher as supporting competence and relatedness also reported greater self-determination. These results underscore the motivational significance of self-related and integrative orientations for learning a foreign language, even in settings where there is little opportunity for interaction with members of the target language community. These findings emphasize that foreign language teachers can foster students' motivation by supporting their sense of competence, relatedness and cultural understanding, although these supports may differ in their importance depending on the students' level of self-determination.

© 2014 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

## 1. Introduction

There is a consensus among many researchers that motivation is a major factor for success in language learning, and befitting its central role, there is a growing body of theoretical writing and empirical research that strives to better articulate and understand this complex process (Mercer, Ryan, & Williams, 2012; Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2012). In recent years, much of this research has emphasized the importance of the self and identity in language learning motivation (e.g., Dörnyei, 2005; Norton, 2000; for recent overviews, see Csizér & Magid, 2014; Mercer & Williams, 2012). Although these newer frameworks provide

\* Corresponding author. Tel.: +1 780 492 3360.

E-mail addresses: [msugita@ualberta.ca](mailto:msugita@ualberta.ca) (M.S. McEown), [knoels@ualberta.ca](mailto:knoels@ualberta.ca) (K.A. Noels), [kristiesaumure@gmail.com](mailto:kristiesaumure@gmail.com) (K.D. Saumure).

<sup>1</sup> Tel.: +1 780 492 4717.

new insight into motivation, there has been a simultaneous tendency to eschew older models of motivation that highlight the importance of intercultural understanding and of developing students' knowledge of the specific target culture. We argue that this trend fails to recognize that these concerns are an important aspect of many students' motivation for language learning, even in contexts where there is little opportunity for interaction with the target language community, as is the case for learning Japanese in some regions of North America.

Accordingly, this research examines motivation in light of one theoretical framework which outlines the role of the self in motivational processes, self-determination theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 1985; for an extended description of SDT in the language learning context, see Noels, 2009; Sugita McEown, Noels, & Chaffee, 2014), and another that emphasizes the importance of positive attitudes and a desire to interact and integrate with the target language community (Gardner, 1985, 2010). We examine whether these frameworks can usefully predict different kinds of variables (e.g., learning and language community engagement, academic outcomes). We also consider how teachers can enhance their students' engagement. We maintain that it is important that teachers understand the reasons why their students wish to learn the language and incorporate this information in their teaching practice. With this information, teachers can better foster students' motivation by supporting students' developing sense of self as users of the target language and their developing cultural knowledge and skills.

## 2. Self-determination and learning engagement<sup>1</sup>

Recent models of language learning motivation posit an important role for the self, and one such model is self-determination theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 2012). As framed by Noels (2001a), any group of language learners can be described as holding a diversity of orientations, or reasons, for engaging in language learning. These orientations are important for understanding motivation because they indicate the purpose for and manner by which learners learn a language. Some orientations may be more predictive than others of motivated engagement in the learning process, and ultimately a diversity of linguistic and non-linguistic outcomes. Within the SDT framework, orientations provide an index of the extent to which a student is learning a language because learning that language is personally important and integral to their sense of self.

SDT assumes that if people feel that an activity is consistent with their sense of self and is helpful in achieving personally important goals, they will voluntarily choose to engage in that activity when given the opportunity (Deci & Ryan, 2012). With regard to language learning, then, the more a person feels that learning and using a language is congruent with other aspects of their life and can help them to reach personally relevant aspirations, the more motivated they will be to learn and use the language. This orientation is termed *identified regulation*, and is reflected in statements such as “I am learning Japanese because I think that it is good for my personal development”.

Other learners<sup>3</sup> might learn a language not because they personally think it is important for them to do so, but because they feel they ought to do so. They might feel that they should learn the language because other people, such as their teachers, parents or peers, have stressed the value of that language. Engaging in language learning helps them to avoid feelings of shame for not doing well or allows them to experience pride for meeting and surpassing social standards. This ego-oriented form of regulation is termed *introjected regulation*, and is reflected in statements such as “I am learning Japanese because I would feel embarrassed or ashamed if I did not know the language”.

Still other learners may not have any personal reason for learning a language other than obtaining the benefits and/or avoiding negative consequences associated with learning or not learning the language. Once these contingencies are lifted, it might be expected that engagement in language learning would decline. Because the regulation of motivation is perceived to be controlled by circumstances external to the person in a case like this, this orientation is termed *external regulation*, and is typified by statements such as “I am learning Japanese solely because I want to complete an academic requirement”.

These motivational orientations vary in the extent to which the regulation of action is self-determined. SDT proposes another motivational orientation that emphasizes that humans also have “an inherent tendency to seek out novelty and challenges, to extend and exercise our capacities, to explore, and to learn” (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 70). The process of learning a language could be experienced as being a pleasurable process in and of itself; a person might not necessarily feel that the activity is tied to their sense of self, but simply enjoy engaging in the activity for its own sake. Such a person would be expected to endorse the statement “I am learning Japanese because I enjoy it”. This experience of *intrinsic motivation*, then, is distinct from the other more or less self-determined forms of regulation that are subsumed under the term extrinsic motivation. Like more self-determined forms of extrinsic motivation, however, intrinsic motivation is associated with activities in which one voluntarily engages and feels competent, and thus it can be described as a highly self-determined orientation.

In contrast with both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, some people feel that there is really no good reason to learn another language. Such an experience might arise when a person feels that their efforts are disconnected from the desired consequences, or that they lack the capability to carry out the activity, or they simply do not value the activity. A person who feels *amotivated* in this way might endorse the following statement: “I don't know, I cannot come to understand why I am studying the language.” For these people, learning another language is an aversive experience, which they may actively resist (cf., Norton, 2000). In sum, SDT suggests that learners can display a variety of orientations (or amotivation) when learning a language, and these orientations can be described as relatively internally or externally regulated depending on how integral the activity is to a person's sense of self.

Research shows that more self-determined motivational orientations are associated directly or indirectly with better learning engagement and academic outcomes including: metacognitive awareness (Spratt, Humphreys, & Chan, 2002;

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/373346>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/373346>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)