

**THE IDEAL L2 SELVES OF JAPANESE LEARNERS OF  
ENGLISH**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis attempts to reinterpret language learning motivation through a consideration of the possibilities of applying theories of the self to L2 motivation theory. There were two overriding aims guiding my research; firstly to empirically test theoretical proposals suggesting that the concept of an ideal L2 self may represent a more effective base for understanding L2 motivation, and secondly to explore the possibilities suggested by this approach within the context of the Japanese English learning context.

The study was designed using a mixed methods approach, with a primary quantitative research instrument being supported by secondary qualitative data. The main quantitative instrument was a large-scale ( $n= 2,397$ ) nationwide attitudinal questionnaire. The qualitative data was collected from three sets of semi-structured interviews with a total of 23 learners of English in Japan.

Analysis of the quantitative data provided convincing support for claims that the ideal L2 self represents a viable and improved base from which to understand the motivation to learn English. The data showed the ideal L2 self to be the central element of the learner's sense of emotional identification with the values associated with a language and its speakers and also to be one of the principal variables affecting efforts to learn. The research also found that in the Japanese English learning context, a significant factor in the construction of learners' ideal L2 self beliefs and motivated behaviour was perceived conflicts between national identity beliefs and English abilities; conflicts which manifested themselves in the provision of English education and learners' immediate social relationships.

## **Acknowledgements**

Many years ago when I first began considering the possibility of committing to a PhD, I spent some time looking through numerous theses in order to give me some idea of what would be involved. One of the most striking features of all those theses was the moving acknowledgements sections. To be honest, I found this quite intimidating as I could not imagine myself experiencing the degree of commitment or gratitude that was immediately apparent. I still doubt my ability to write movingly about my own experience but I am certainly indebted to so many people for their help, support and encouragement. This research certainly does not feel like a solo effort. The list is far too extensive to fit into the space I have available.

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**PART 1**

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

## **CHAPTER 1**

### ***INTRODUCTION***

#### **1.1 ORIGINS OF THE STUDY**

When I first arrived in Japan as a language teacher in 1991, I was immediately fascinated and more than a little confused by what seemed to be occurring in my classroom. I regularly encountered an apparently contradictory mixture of raw enthusiasm and extreme apathy. This was not simply a case of some students in the class appearing highly motivated and others not; some individuals seemed highly motivated to learn at times and then at others the same individuals would appear incredibly demotivated. My initial reaction to this phenomenon was to head for the escape labelled ‘cultural differences’, to blame everything on my own unfamiliarity with local customs and practices.

As a relatively inexperienced, somewhat idealistic teacher, another instinct was to assume responsibility for everything that occurred in my class; problems in the class must be a product of my limitations as a teacher and could be rectified only by an improvement in my teaching techniques. Over the years, I set about developing both an understanding of Japanese cultural norms and my skills as a practising language teacher.

I probably improved as a teacher but the puzzling behaviour of my students persisted. Students would sometimes display a great determination and interest in improving their English abilities but then suddenly seem to lose all enthusiasm. It seemed a highly unpredictable phenomenon. After class, students would ask for advice on how to develop their English skills, often in highly emotional terms, suggesting that English

learning was a vital concern for them. The same students would on other occasions appear to show no interest in English nor any inclination to make efforts to learn. At first I found this behaviour both perplexing and confusing as it seemed to confound models of language learning that I was familiar with, however, over time I came to be captivated by what I was observing, for it seemed to be raising important questions about the nature of language learning, or perhaps I should specify English language learning, not only in Japan but also in other parts of the world where contact with a nominal L2 community is minimal. Naturally enough, I began seeking answers to some of those questions.

In my capacity as a teacher and later as an interviewer of prospective university students, I would regularly ask students why they wanted to learn English and the answer was almost invariably, “Because I like English.” Whenever I pressed the question, further elaboration was rarely forthcoming. At first, I attributed this vagueness to the fact that I was asking the questions in English and students were inhibited by their inability to express complex ideas in a foreign language. However, as my own Japanese language ability developed, I still encountered the same unwillingness to expand on the theme. The phrase seemed to offer so much yet explain so little; for young Japanese learners it seemed to explain everything yet it told me almost nothing.

It was this that stimulated my interest in second language learning motivation and persuaded me to begin reading – in a very uncritical manner – articles relating to motivation theory. As I became aware of various theories of motivation, and especially L2 motivation, I attempted to apply these ideas to what I was observing in my classes but

found it very difficult. Initially, my uncritical approach led me to believe that the problem was with my classes rather than with the theory; eventually I came to the conclusion that perhaps it was the theory that needed reconsideration.

## **1.2 GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

This thesis is my attempt to investigate the above concerns in a methodical and systematic manner and I would like to outline some of the fundamental considerations that have shaped my approach.

One of the great challenges for almost any research in the social sciences is to relate the individual to social context. In its early years, the study of motivation focused on motivation as an individual, mental trait; some people – for whatever reasons – were motivated and others were not. In recent years, greater consideration has been given to the dynamic, social nature of motivation, looking at how motivation changes over time and in response to social context. Both approaches have brought valuable insights, yet there is a tendency to portray these approaches as in some way contradictory and exclusive. One of my primary aims in this thesis is to adopt a research framework that rejects what I consider to be false dichotomies and seeks to respect the integrity of previous research coming from a variety of perspectives.

Many of the most important advances in L2 motivation theory have resulted from research concentrating on a single aspect of the motivation process, but in this thesis I wish to contribute to building a framework that considers the broader picture of language learning motivation, how a range of factors encompassing the individual learner, the learning situation, and the socio-cultural context in which the learning is taking place interact to affect efforts to learn. Inevitably, when trying to cover an experience as broad

as that of learning a foreign language, decisions have had to be made about which areas to prioritise and in making these decisions I have made every effort to be guided by my original research aims, to stay as close as possible to the immediate concerns of the learning context with which I am most familiar.

The individual-social continuum inevitably has implications for the methodologies of L2 motivation studies and as a ‘consumer’ of L2 motivation research I have often been left with a sense of alienation by the approaches of some researchers. On the one hand, there are those within the quantitative tradition who often appear more concerned with statistical rigour and innovative procedures than the human stories behind their numerical data. On the other, there are studies within the qualitative tradition that seem to reveal far more about the concerns of the individual researcher than the participants involved in the research.

Intellectually and temperamentally, my sympathies generally lie with those researchers working within a qualitative framework, yet as an individual educated within a post-war Western educational system that values ‘objective’ analysis of ‘facts’, I retain an almost intuitive ‘trust’ in the authority of quantitative research. One of the aims of this thesis is to show that this approach is, in fact, neither inconsistent nor contradictory; instead it represents a pragmatic and principled framework for research into a complex phenomenon.

A final – or should that be initial? – concern in the planning of any research must be its ultimate purpose. Surely, for research to be meaningful, there must be some wider purpose beyond the satisfaction of the researcher’s own curiosity. As Dörnyei (2007, p.

9) rightly points out:

A good researcher also has a sense of *social responsibility*, that is, accountability to the field and more broadly, to the world. Research is not done for its own sake, but to generate knowledge and to further our understanding. This means that the good researcher needs to learn to communicate his/her findings with others ...

This view is echoed by Ortega (2005, p. 430), who argues that research “ought to be judged not only by internal criteria of methodological rigor as understood by the particular epistemological models adopted, but also ultimately on the basis of its potential for positive impact on societal and educational problems.” In this thesis I will interpret my responsibilities as twofold: firstly to contribute to the understanding of L2 motivation in a manner consistent with current theoretical concerns within the field of applied linguistics and secondly to maintain a relevance to the needs of the socio-educational context that has informed the study – English language learning in Japan. For the most part, these twin responsibilities co-exist harmoniously, but there are occasions when theoretical and methodological ambition must be tempered by a desire to preserve accessibility and communicate my findings to my immediate working environment.

### **1.3 ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS**

The first part of the thesis consists of a literature review that addresses three main areas. The first area covered in the literature review is that of the Japanese educational context. In this thesis, I will argue that the educational context is important not only as background information; it plays a leading role in shaping learners’ attitudes not only to the learning of English but only towards the values associated with the language itself. Many of the contradictions outlined in this introduction can be traced to aspects of the



provision of English education in Japan. The second part of the literature review looks at motivation theory, with a particular emphasis on the development of L2 motivation and how it has been approached in the Japanese context. The final section of the literature review considers how theories of the self may be incorporated into L2 motivation theory in order to provide a more complete framework that takes us away from the reductionist models of the past.

In Chapters 5 and 6 I discuss and explain my research methods and the rationale behind the design of my research instruments. This thesis attempts to mix both quantitative and qualitative methods. In these chapters I explain some of the major considerations affecting my approach and justify why this is a legitimate and principled strategy as opposed to a haphazard application of random techniques.

The next part of the thesis is concerned with a presentation of the findings. The results are presented in five separate chapters. The first results analysis chapter offers a general overview of the findings of the principal quantitative research instrument. The following three chapters focus on specific issues emerging from this initial analysis. The final results chapter offers a qualitative perspective that is intended to supplement and support the quantitative findings.

My hopes are that this thesis will contribute to both a greater understanding of English education in the Japanese context and to the development of L2 motivation theory. It is not an exaggeration to state that Japan is rapidly approaching a critical point in its relations with the outside world; the post-second world war international order afforded Japan a position that allowed the nation to partake in international economic

systems while maintaining a relatively high degree of cultural isolation, but as this order breaks down Japan is forced to reassess how it relates to others. English represents both a means of relating with the outside world and a symbol of it. With respect to L2 motivation theory, I believe this thesis offers a framework that moves away from reductionist linear relationships towards a more complete picture of the language learner as a person existing in a social context, a person whose motivation to act in certain ways changes over time and in response to that social context.

## CHAPTER 2

### *THE JAPANESE EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT*

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I will discuss the Japanese education system and in particular the role of English education within that system. My purpose in doing so is not merely to present this as a neutral background to the main themes of the research, but I will argue that aspects of the provision and presentation of English language education in Japan play a significant role in affecting learner motivation; many of the factors that influence learners' attitudes to English, the English-speaking world and English language learning have their roots in the nature of the Japanese education system.

In the first part of the chapter, I will present a broad sketch of the Japanese educational system and will then move on to focus more specifically on the area of English education within the higher education sector. The reasons for the concentration on the tertiary sector are twofold. Firstly, from a personal point of view, my own interest in language learning motivation was originally stimulated by a description of Japanese universities as a 'motivational wasteland' (Berwick & Ross, 1989, p. 206). On the one hand, this phrase seemed to perfectly encapsulate my own experiences in a Japanese university classroom, but in so many other ways, it seemed a woefully inadequate simplification of the attitudes and behaviour of English learners in Japan. The need to explore and explain this apparent contradiction lies at the heart of this research. Secondly, I will argue that English language learning at the tertiary level in Japan is fundamentally different from that encountered at the secondary level. At the secondary

level, English represents an essentially mental form of knowledge used only in classrooms and examinations, whereas at the tertiary level the learning of English is a far more complex process involving issues of personal development and identity. University students in Japan, like anywhere else in the world, are constantly developing notions of who they are and how they relate to the social world; for many university students in Japan the learning of English is an integral part of this process.

## **2.2 STRUCTURE AND PROVISION OF EDUCATION**

### **Historical development and reform**

The historical starting point for this discussion of the Japanese education system will be 1945, for this marks a clear departure with the past and the establishment of the current system. At the end of the second world war, the pre-war education system was immediately identified as a contributory factor to Japanese imperial and military expansion and their disastrous outcome. Schoppa (1990, p. 32) describes the changes made to the education system in the wake of defeat in the second world war as “swift and substantial” and marking a clear break with what had gone before: “Teachers and education officials were purged; textbooks and courses in Japanese history, geography and morals were banned.” That a nation defeated and devastated by war should attempt a separation from its discredited past is in no way unusual; far more unpredictable is what happens once the immediacy of that defeat has passed and the changes that have occurred in its wake are reassessed. In many respects the wartime legacy still exerts a powerful influence over how English education is presented and perceived in Japan. The fact that the current education system was externally imposed as a consequence of defeat makes the system somehow ‘un-Japanese’ in the eyes of some. In the case of English,

there is a special resonance, for not only is English a part of this 'un-Japanese' education system, it is also a readily identifiable symbol of the victorious power – the US – and the outside, non-Japanese world.

Issues relating to how Japan comes to terms with its wartime defeat are highly controversial yet essential to an understanding of contemporary Japanese society, however, they are far too numerous and complex to be discussed profitably here. For the purposes of this discussion it is sufficient to observe that Japan's attempts at English language education are illustrative of the nation's wider relationships with the outside world: a tangle of apparent cooperation and contradiction with roots firmly entrenched in the experience of wartime defeat.

It can be difficult for those unfamiliar with events in Japan to fully appreciate the extent of the permanent sense of crisis surrounding discussions of educational matters. In any developed society education is a controversial and highly sensitive political issue and Goodman (2003) highlights a continual series of crises in Japan dating back to the violent student demonstrations of the late 1960s and early 70s. This era marks the point where Japan first begins to assess its post-war development and the series of crises or moral panics, which Goodman observes follow a predictable two-year pattern, represent a form of questioning of the relationship between youth and society; society is asking itself how did we get to here and where are we going. Typical examples of the types of crises Goodman is referring to are the 'crisis' of violence by children against teachers in the late 1990s, which was preceded by a 'crisis' of school refusal and before that it was bullying in schools. Schoppa (1990) argues that these crises are integral to Japan's

‘immobilist’ politics of education. According to Schoppa’s analysis, these crises help to keep educational reform high on the political agenda and in the public eye, with opposing forces for reform cancelling each other out and thereby preventing the prospect of actual change. A simplified description of these opposing forces would place on one side ‘conservative’ voices pressing for change and a return to true ‘Japanese’ educational values, and on the other side the ‘progressives’ resisting change and concerned with protecting the ‘gains’ of the post-war period.

The immediate post-war period saw Japan absorbed in economic reconstruction and discussions of national identity were postponed until the foundations of economic recovery were established. As a measure of prosperity returned, the debates concerning issues of national identity resurfaced. Those debates still continue to this day and the field of education remains one of the principal battlegrounds.

### **Descriptions of education in Japan**

#### **(a) *Primary and secondary education***

English language accounts of Japanese education tend to present two extremes. There are those who idealise the Japanese education system praising its egalitarianism and high standards, often in terms of ‘what the West could learn’; Nakata and Mosk (1987, p. 377) acclaim the products of the Japanese education system - the labour force - as “one of the best – if not the best – educated in the world.” In contrast, there are those accounts that emphasise its punishing nature, regarding Japanese schools as lacking in creativity or originality. A typical account from popular Western literature holds that: “... after a blissful two or three years of freedom in infancy, Japanese children are thrown into one of the most gruelling education systems in the world” (Lonely Planet, 2000, p.

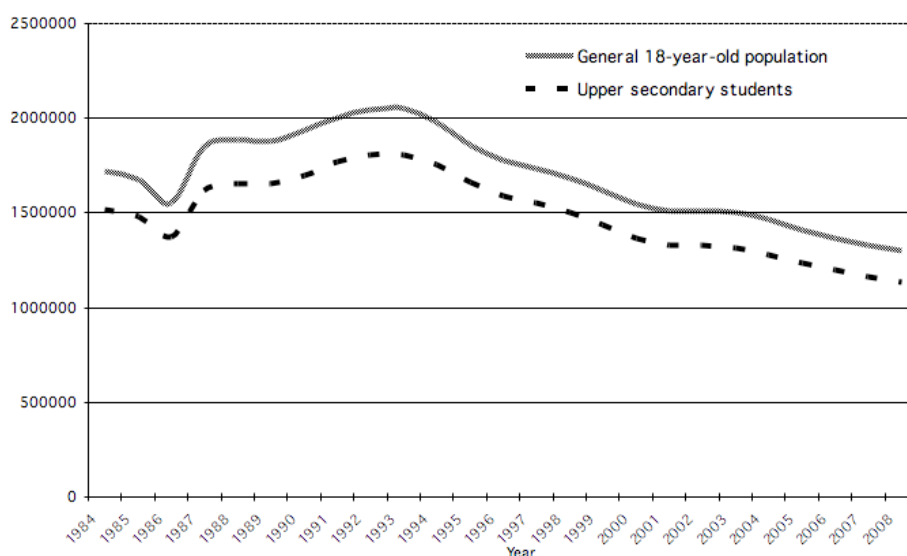
32). As a complement to the portrayal of exhausting workloads usually come images of classrooms populated with passive students giving complete obedience to the fount of all knowledge, the teacher (see Littlewood, 2000).

As with all simplifications, the reality is somewhat more complex. Goodman (2003, p. 17) recognises an element of truth to these familiar descriptions, observing a basic principle of education where the child is regarded a “*tabula rasa* who learns through imitation and effort.” However, Le Tendre (1999) paints a less uni-dimensional picture of education in Japan, “On a par with basic literacy and numeracy, group living is a central part of the Japanese elementary curriculum.” Okano and Tsuchiya (1999, p. 4) refer to this as a “hidden curriculum” designed to “instil particular values and behavioural dispositions.” A broad simplification of accounts of the Japanese pretertiary education system would be that praise and positive comments are easier to find at the earlier years – the first years of primary education- and that negative potrayals and demonising of the system are much more common in analyses of secondary schools.

The Japanese education system is based on the US 6-3-3 model. In Japan, compulsory education begins at age six and lasts for nine years: six years of primary education (elementary school) and three years at the lower secondary level (junior high school). Although not compulsory, the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) records the rate of advancement to the upper secondary level in 2003 as being 97.7% (MEXT, 2005). Figure 2.1 shows that the number of people attending high school as a proportion of the general school age population has remained constant over an extended period of time. This high rate of advancement to the

upper secondary level and the fact that it has continued over such an extended period suggests that it is possible to include this upper secondary level, though not compulsory, as a part of the general pretertiary education system; we can consider upper secondary education as almost universal.

**FIGURE 2.1:**  
**Population of 18-year olds and upper secondary students**

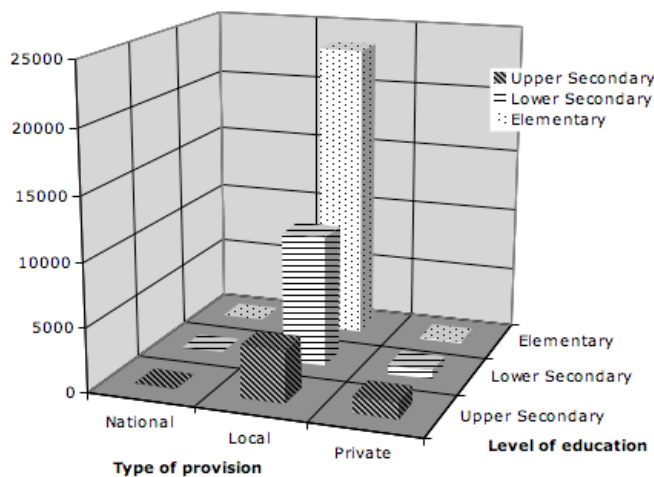


National, local and private bodies all play a role in the provision of education, but it is the local authorities that play the most significant role at all levels; this is visually represented in Figure 2.2. Almost all children in Japan go to an elementary school run by a local authority; it should be noted that even though these schools are run by local authorities the curriculum is still strictly regulated by the ministerial Course of Study and remains standard nationwide. At the lower secondary level, the dominance of local authority schools begins to recede but it is only at the upper secondary level that the role of private schools becomes really significant. It appears that as education becomes more



academic, more ‘important’, in the later years, and as examination success becomes an increasingly pressing consideration, the role of local authorities diminishes and private bodies are entrusted with a greater responsibility. Another factor influencing these educational choices is that very often private schools are affiliated to certain universities and that by ‘buying in’ early, parents are able to remove the stress and uncertainty of university entrance examinations in later years.

**FIGURE 2.2:**  
**Provision of pretertiary education in Japan**



(b) *Higher education*

In discussing pretertiary education in Japan, Okano and Tsuchiya (Okano & Tsuchiya, 1999, p. xii) identify a broadly “positive assessment of Japanese schooling” both from within Japan and overseas. However, as Goodman (2003) observes, the ‘positive assessment’ accorded to Japan’s primary and secondary tiers has rarely been extended to its tertiary tier. McVeigh is much more forthright in his appraisal of Japanese

higher education, calling it “a nationwide educational failure”(McVeigh, 2002, p. 4).

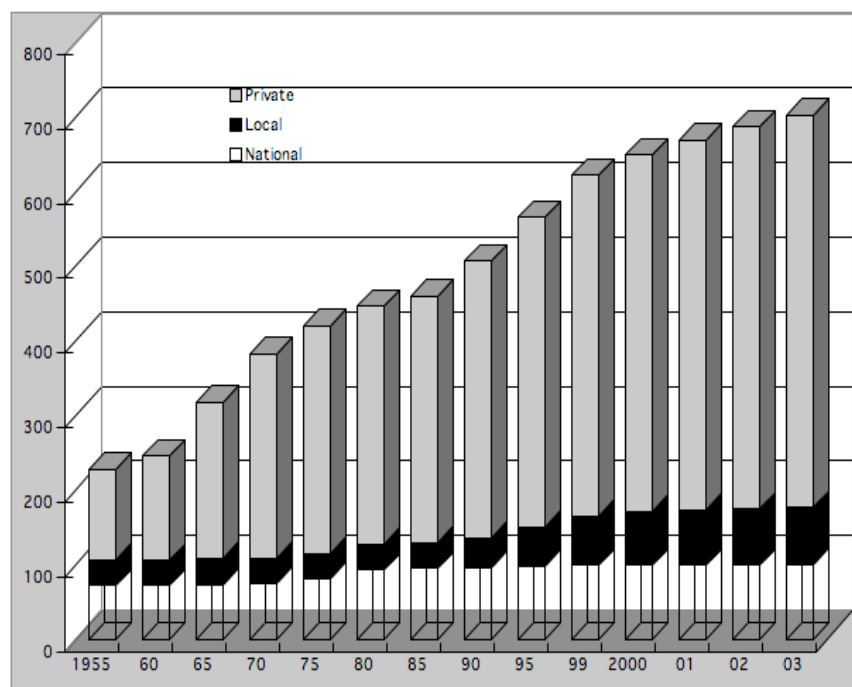
Higher education in Japan is different. It is different in the sense of what is expected of students and what students expect from their institutions. Higher education marks a break from what has gone before; Tsuda (1986, p. 314) describes university as a period of ‘liminality’. In this framework the pretertiary education system has completed its task of testing and stratifying; norms observed at the secondary level, such as hard work, perseverance, and competition are relaxed, and students adjust to the realities of their new officially assigned place in society. According to this interpretation of the role of higher education, universities are something akin to a pre-school for adulthood; students are regarded as ‘pre-adults’ freeing themselves from the duties and obligations of school life but not yet ready to assume the responsibilities of adulthood.

Goodman (2003, p. 24) rationalises the role of universities as “a kind of moratorium between the horrendous rigour of school ‘examination hell’ which precedes it and the routine life of the company employee which follows it.” Although Goodman’s analysis represents something of a simplification, – examinations are not ‘hell’ for many students but more of a monotonous formality, and the prospects on graduation are more likely to be a fraught search for employment rather than a ‘routine’ accession to company employee status in many cases – it does illustrate the point that university plays an essentially different role to pretertiary education.

One area in which university is obviously different is in the nature of its provision. As described earlier in this chapter, pretertiary education is mainly publicly provided, with a growing but limited role for private providers at the upper secondary level. Most

universities in Japan are private institutions. Higher education in post-war Japan has expanded dramatically. This expansion has been sustained mainly by private institutions and the number of national universities has risen only slightly in this period (see Figure 2.3). It could be argued that the private – commercial – sector identified a demand for higher education in Japan but, lacking central direction, failed to define a clear role for it.

**FIGURE 2.3:**  
**The provision of universities in Japan (1955- 2003)**



This demand sprang from post-war economic and demographic growth; university entrance was regarded as a key to the benefits of the new prosperity by a rapidly expanding population. The absence of a clear role for these new universities can be traced to the nature of the pretertiary education system; if the pretertiary system had successfully completed its task of stratifying the student population, there was little left for the universities to do but act as ‘holding stations’ until employment. According to

Sugimoto (2003, p. 139), the “race is more or less over after university entrance examinations” and “students are aware that employers are not interested in what students have learned in university, and rely on on-the-job training and other intra-company teaching techniques to train their new university graduates.” University marks a clear break with the past as the system of intense competition no longer applies, yet it fails to make a bridge to the future because the contents of a university education are deemed irrelevant to future employment.

Kitamura (1997, p. 142) argues that the spectacular growth of higher education in Japan occurred in something of a policy vacuum, maintaining that the “traditional policy of the government for the private sector has been something like a “laissez-faire” i.e. a “no support and no control” policy.” The number of universities grew quickly and dramatically with little public discussion or agreement as to the role they were to fulfil. As the politics of educational reform have become increasingly immobilist, attempts to clarify this role have met with little tangible success.

The ‘laissez-faire’ higher education policy was possible in an era of high economic growth and relative prosperity; the benefits of this growth and prosperity were able to mask the deficiencies of the higher education system. However, as Japan entered the 1990s, high economic growth rates had come to a standstill and, even more significantly, population growth was beginning to slow down. It was in this new socio-economic climate that Yoshida (2002, p. 43) claims “everyone associated with universities felt the ground shift under their feet.” Japan had come to the end of an era of sustained economic growth and universities were now faced with the challenge of reconsidering

their role within a changing socio-economic environment.

The declining birth rate shown earlier in Figure 2.1 is likely to have severe repercussions for Japan's higher education providers (until recently this was referred to as the '2007 Problem'). Population projections identified 2007 as the year when the number of eighteen-year-olds falls below the number of available university places; effectively, the point at which supply exceeds demand. Not only do universities have to "become increasingly entrepreneurial" (Goodman, 2003, p. 24) in their efforts to sustain enrolment, but the intensity of the competition for places is also likely to diminish. This has profound implications for an education system based on competition for limited places. If university entrance becomes effectively open, thus no longer the key to middle-class prosperity, how do universities 'sell' themselves to prospective students? If there are more places than applicants, how is it possible to justify a system based on a non-existent fierce competition for these places? If the process of entrance to universities comes under challenge, what are the implications for the field of English language education, which has traditionally owed its existence to its integral role in the entrance examination system?

### **Curricula**

Explicit curriculum standards for all schools are set out in the education ministry's *gakushu shido yoryo* (Course of Study), and these standards are strictly observed across the educational spectrum, from primary to upper-secondary stages and in both public and private schools. It is difficult to overstate the role of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) in the Japanese education system. The ministry is responsible not only for macro-level policy decisions, but it also decides curriculum,

teaching methods and materials; Sugimoto (2003, p. 128) asserts that central government “sets the content and tone” of what happens in Japanese classrooms. The Course of Study represents the most complete expression of the ministry’s authority. The most recent overall revision to these standards occurred in 1998 (special requirements for foreign languages/ English studies were introduced in 2002 and are discussed later).

One of the central platforms of the 1998 Course of Study is the notion of *yutori kyōiku* (relaxed education), which seeks to break with the uniformity of the past and provide more room for individuals to develop their own interests. Regardless of the merits of the 1998 Course of Study, the promotion of *yutori kyōiku* presents evidence of official recognition of some of the criticisms of Japan’s education system as being over-regulated and stifling creativity. The response to the direction of educational reforms provides a powerful illustration of the scale of the task facing those attempting to reform Japanese education. Various commercial interests have been quick to exploit parental unease at this ‘relaxed education’, providing a range of extra classes to compensate for the perceived lack of rigour in the formal system; parents worry that their children may be falling behind and there is no shortage of private educational establishments ready to address this demand for extra classes.

## **2.3 ENGLISH IN THE JAPANESE EDUCATION SYSTEM**

### **English in pretertiary education**

Until recently, the study of English began at the lower secondary level; there was no English in primary schools. In recent years, this has begun to change as English has been included as part of a *sogo gakushū jikan* (Integrated Study Period) in primary schools; this integrated study period was introduced in part as a response to the perceived

overbearing nature of ministerial control, leaving individual schools greater freedom in how they choose to implement the programme with the result being variable approaches to the provision of English education at this level.

English was officially only one of several foreign languages approved for study in Japanese schools but, as Kubota (2002, p. 19) points out, “English is *de facto* the only option in many secondary schools ... students learning languages other than English account for less than 1 per cent of the enrolment.” In 2002 the unique position of English was officially recognised by MEXT in its *Action Plan for “Japanese with English Abilities.”* This ‘Action Plan’ revises the 1998 Course of Study to make English ability an official requirement:

**“English language abilities required for all Japanese nationals**

*On graduating from junior high school and senior high school, graduates can communicate in English”* (MEXT, 2003)

The 2002 plan makes sweeping proposals for the overhaul of curricula, teaching methods and research aims at all levels of the education system, officially elevating English above other foreign languages. Without wishing to underplay the significance of the 2002 plans, it should be remembered that prior to 2002 English had already occupied a special place in the curriculum due to its role in the examination system, with almost all secondary schools requiring English instruction. Nevertheless, the very fact that such a comprehensive review of English language education has taken place implies a degree of dissatisfaction with the status quo and an ostensible desire for change.

The 2002 action plan is important in that it provides evidence of an official recognition that all is not well with the provision of English language education in Japan

and hints at major future reforms. However, some critics (see Cornwell, Simon-Maeda, & Churchill, 2007; Hato, 2005) question both the feasibility of the plan, given the actual hours of instruction available, and the degree to which it represents a significant break with past practices, with the prominent role afforded to standardised tests of questionable validity.

### **English as knowledge for testing**

Japan is often referred to as a *gakureki shakai* – this may be translated as ‘educational credential’ or ‘academic history’ based society – where schools and colleges are obviously stratified, and graduation from a particular school is in itself an indicator of achievement. Within such a society, acceptance to a highly regarded high school has been considered a first step to entering a prestigious university, which in turn should provide greater future career opportunities. Consequently, the examinations taken to enter these institutions have come to play a very significant role in the Japanese education system; Goodman (2003, p. 7) goes as far as to describe the Japanese education system as “an enormously elaborated, very expensive testing system with some educational spin-offs.” In Goodman’s view, it is testing first, learning second.

A brief glance back at Figure 2.2 reveals there to be significantly fewer schools at the upper secondary tier and this, combined with the high advancement rate (97.7%), would imply a degree of competition for places at this level. The corresponding advancement rate to universities and junior colleges stood at 44.6% as of 2004 (see MEXT, 2005) and these high rates of advancement have traditionally made for a highly competitive entrance procedure to more prestigious schools. This competitive entrance procedure goes a long way to shape how English is taught and learned in Japanese



schools. It may be possible to borrow Goodman’s terminology to describe English education in Japanese secondary schools as an ‘enormously elaborated, very expensive testing system’.

An illustration of the role of English in the examination system can be seen in the place English occupies in the Central University Entrance Examination. This is a nationwide examination taken every year – usually in the middle of January, when the chances of heavy snow and illness are at their highest - by most high school students aiming to enter university. This examination can play a significant role in determining which university a student may enter. Table 2.1 shows that the most commonly taken subject is Foreign Languages; the Foreign Language examinations are taken by more people than either Japanese or Mathematics.

**TABLE 2.1:**  
**2006 Central university entrance examination: number of candidates according to subject**

<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>NUMBER OF CANDIDATES 2006</b>
Japanese	482,983
History and Geography	358,985
Civics	327,451
Mathematics 1	370,172
Mathematics 2	331,038
Science 1	200,088
Science 2	237,243
Science 3	168,293
Foreign Languages	500,637
Total	506,459

National Center for University Entrance Examinations (2006)

Taken at face value, these figures would seem to indicate a high level of interest in foreign languages. However, Table 2.2 is far more revealing in showing the total dominance of English over all other languages. The number of candidates taking other

foreign languages is negligible; the category ‘foreign languages’, in fact, refers to English.

**TABLE 2.2:**  
**2006 Central university entrance examinations: breakdown of foreign languages**

<b>Foreign Language</b>	<b>NUMBER OF CANDIDATES 2006</b>
English	499,798
German	108
French	144
Chinese	397
Korean	189
Total	500,636

National Center for University Entrance Examinations (2006)

The effect of this system of examinations has been to produce a version of English known as *juken Eigo* (English for tests). This is a form of English stripped of its function as a communicative tool and bears little relation to varieties of English used outside the Japanese classroom. Law describes this form of English education as exhibiting “a strong preference for lists of language items over discursive texts, for peripheral over core forms, and for linguistic knowledge over linguistic performance” (Law, 1995, p. 215).

For most pretertiary level learners of English in Japan, English represents a form of knowledge that exists to be tested. In fact, it could be argued that English as taught in Japanese secondary schools, detached from its basic reality as a tool for communication and expression, represents a ‘pure’ form of testing knowledge. If the purpose of education is to test and stratify, then subjects such as Japanese or mathematics are tainted by their attachments to a basic reality; a subject like *Japanese examination English* is devoid of such complications and provides the means to test the ability of students to learn purely as they have been taught in the classroom.

## **The role of English within Japanese tertiary education**

If English language education at both the lower and upper secondary levels is primarily concerned with examination success and a variety of the language peculiar to Japanese schools, what is the role of English at the university level? How does the new entrant to a university, for whom English has almost entirely existed as the basis of an elaborate testing system, approach the language in this new learning environment? (The option of an outright escape from English is not available as English is a required subject for almost all first and second year university students.) How do universities present this language removed from its familiar testing context?

A basic analysis of the problem facing the curriculum designers at Japanese universities would reveal three obvious solutions:

- I. Continue to teach the language in the same way as it has been taught at the pretertiary level.
- II. Attempt to teach the language in a completely different way.
- III. Avoid the issue.

In practice, Japan's universities do all three simultaneously. Evidence of avoidance of the problem can be seen in the common practice of passing almost all students regardless of their abilities or performance. Sugimoto (2003) describes a situation where students are prepared to tolerate less than stimulating classes on the tacit assumption that nobody fails. The conflict between a continuation of pretertiary practices and the desire for something new can be witnessed in the fact that much of the English teaching that does take place within the universities takes place within literature departments, many English language teachers being literature specialists using works of literature as their

primary texts; the result of this being that there may be courses with titles such as *English Communication* which in effect consist of nothing more than the translation of works of literature (see Cornwell et al., 2007; McVeigh, 2002; van Wolferen, 1989) English at the higher education level in Japan is faced with the unenviable dilemma of choosing between whether to fill a void or to paper over the cracks.

(a) **Fantasy English**

The interest of this research is in language learning motivation and students' attitudes to the language and the prospect of learning it. Given the bleak view of English language education in Japan presented so far, the strategy of non-participation seems a perfectly rational approach. However, how do we explain the behaviour of those students who express a keen interest in learning English?

One explanation presented by McVeigh (2002) is that of 'fantasy English'. McVeigh argues that many university students of English have completely unrealistic expectations of their English classes. 'Fantasy English' exists as a reaction to the English taught at the pretertiary level. Young people at the university student age (almost all university students in Japan are between the ages of eighteen and twenty five; mature students are very rare) are prone to dreams, hopes, and expectations. Since English at the pretertiary level has been stripped of its communicative function, it becomes a hollow vessel conducive to the fantasies of young people. Many young people enter university believing that English at this level will be an inversion of what it had been before; it will be meaningful, fulfilling, practical and fun. According to McVeigh, students 'exoticize' English at the university level and this leads to highly unrealistic expectations, such as people barely able to string a few words together holding genuine ambitions to become a

translators or interpreters.

(b) **Internationalisation and English**

Surely a reaction to secondary-level English education in itself is not enough to produce the unrealistic expectations witnessed in many young Japanese learners of English. As we have seen, withdrawal or non- participation is an option, so why is it that so many students at Japanese universities appear to be ready to invest so much belief in the possibilities of English?

One possible explanation can be found in the concept of *kokusaika* (internationalisation). Internationalisation is undoubtedly one of the keywords in modern Japanese society, occurring across a whole range of public discourses. It is possible – as many people do – to take the discourse of internationalisation at face value; a process which requires greater involvement and participation with the outside world. However, there are others who seek to clarify what the term actually means. In many respects, the term is another blank canvas. Horie (2002, p. 65) presents a typically vague –though potentially revealing - interpretation, stating that “*kokusaika* implies that we change something about ourselves due to foreign influences.” Goodman (2003, p. 18) argues that this ambiguity is essential to the concept, calling it “a word which can carry multiple meanings for different groups and thereby allows them the freedom to pursue their own agendas while appearing to be in agreement.” Superficially at least, internationalisation appears to imply a degree of cosmopolitanism but Kubota (2002, p. 14) regards internationalisation as more insular than cosmopolitan:

“*Kokusaika* essentially blends Westernization with nationalism, failing to promote cosmopolitan pluralism. In other words, *kokusaika* tends to promote convergence to predetermined norms rather than divergence

towards cultural and linguistic multiplicity.”

According to Kubota, the essence of internationalisation is joining the Western economic community while at the same time preserving a specifically Japanese cultural identity. Aspinall (2003) sees internationalisation as an extension of ‘healthy nationalism’, the term coined by prime minister Nakasone (1982-87) to express a world view where successful international relations are based on a mutual strong sense of national identity and pride. McVeigh (2002) , as usual, is more outspoken, arguing that internationalisation represents nothing more than a cover for nationalism. As explicit nationalism is neither acceptable nor fashionable on the world stage, internationalism serves as a cover for such sentiments by disguising the dividing and essentialising of people into national groups behind terms such as ‘cross-cultural understanding’ and ‘world peace’.

The discourse of *kokusaika* presents a confusing picture to young Japanese people. On the one hand, internationalisation may appear modern, dynamic, and inspiring, on the other, as Horie’s (2002) seemingly vague definition of the term – ‘*that we change something about ourselves due to foreign influences*’ – implies, there appears to be a hint of coercion associated with the process; internationalisation appears to be exerting external pressure to move in an ‘un-Japanese’ direction. The picture is further confused by the nature of the provision of English education in Japan. The Japanese version of internationalisation makes a clear distinction between Japan and a vaguely defined outside world and the role of the English language within this framework is to serve as both a means of understanding this outside world and as its most visible representation. In one sense English symbolises a nebulous non-Japanese world but within Japanese classrooms English is clearly tied to specific Anglo-American cultural norms. This dual function of

English seems to simultaneously offer the young Japanese learner access to an English-speaking world while denying the possibility of active participation: the English-speaking world may appear both an inclusive, welcoming place and an exclusive, hostile environment.

The logic of *kokusaika* draws a binary distinction between Japan and the outside world. In order to be a good international person it is essential to have a strong sense of Japanese identity; in order to gain a strong Japanese identity it is essential to understand how one is separate from the outside world. Successful international communication and cooperation are achieved through the understanding and expression of separateness and difference. The challenge for the young person in Japan is to make sense of this. The challenge for the young learner of English is make sense of how ‘We’, who are separate and distinct from ‘Them’, relate to and use ‘their’ language.

(c) **English as linguistic Other**

Humans define themselves not only by their actions and beliefs; the things that we choose NOT to do also play an important role in shaping our identities. For example, a vegetarian is primarily a person who does not eat meat rather than someone who eats vegetables. Understanding who we are not (the Other) is an important part of understanding who we are (the Self). Critics of *kokusaika* maintain that the function of this Japanese version of internationalisation is to strengthen a sense of national Self by elucidating a cultural Other; the construction of a strong Japanese identity is developed through an understanding of ‘non-Japaneseness’.

It is important to note that the notion of Japanese cultural and linguistic separateness is not confined to the world of higher education, Kowner (2002, p. 357)

observes that:

Over the years, information regarding foreign communication styles and the psychological stress they involve have been disseminated through various means within the Japanese culture, such as through movies, television, the press, popular guidebooks, and academic material.

Yoshino (1992; 1999) provides further evidence of the propagation of notions of Japanese distinctness through ‘intercultural awareness’, describing how cross-cultural manuals produced by companies for employees travelling overseas, in addition to their primary function of employee training, consistently present the uniqueness and separateness of Japanese businessmen from their equivalents overseas.

In the area of popular culture, a staple diet of television entertainment programmes is a genre of ‘comedy’ that involves a television personality surprising an unsuspecting member of the public with a question in English. Invariably, the startled member of the public is unable to respond and the results are considered hilarious. The implied message of this form of entertainment is that the ordinary Japanese member of the public does not have adequate English language skills and the prospect of having to use English is considered an unpleasant ordeal. The struggle to come to terms with English – usually in the form of preparation for arcane examinations that bear little relation to language as a system of human communication yet have profound consequences for one’s future educational and career prospects – represents something of a shared national experience, the prospect of being required to use English is understood to be a source of potential great embarrassment and anxiety.

Within the field of education, the key to international communication and



*kokusaika* is English. A sense of national identity and ‘international understanding’ is developed through the learning of English, the Course of Study specifies, in Kubota’s (2002) words, that “English courses should enhance a student’s awareness as a Japanese person in the international community.” This is a different English from the ‘pure examination knowledge’ found at the pretertiary level and may help explain why so many university students appear willing to invest so much belief in the possibilities of the language despite their earlier experiences. The basic hollowness and absence of meaning in English at the pretertiary level leave it open for subsequent reinterpretation; having invested so much time and effort in studying the language at junior high and high school, Japanese learners may be readily disposed to apply some form of meaning to this investment. Coming at an age when they are already experimenting with various notions of identity, the possibilities suggested by the language of *kokusaika*, the opportunity to explore one’s own identity and how this relates to the outside world, may be highly attractive to many university students.

Japanese university students, like their counterparts all over the world, are ready to experiment with their concepts of identity. Communication with the outside world and an understanding of their place in that world may be highly attractive to young people at this stage in their development, however, the circular logic of *kokusaika* appears to proscribe an identity as a member of the outside community and successful communication with other members. The logic of *kokusaika* serves to strengthen the boundaries between ‘Us’ and ‘Them’; Japanese people can best understand who they are by understanding how the outside world is different. In Japanese universities, this logic

manifests itself in the proliferation of *Comparative Cultures* and *Intercultural Communication* courses that accompany English language classes (Guest, 2002a; Guest, 2002b; Guest, 2003). It should be noted that the English translations of these course titles often fail to reflect the element of externality contained in the original Japanese terminology. The Japanese term *ibunka* is often translated as ‘intercultural’, but the meaning has a strong sense of ‘that which is different or external’. Language learning, intercultural understanding, and the development of one’s own national self identity are inextricably connected.

The implication of this approach to cross-cultural understanding is that difficulty in communicating with foreigners is an important element of one’s Japaneseness. Communication with foreigners is an inevitable feature of modern life, yet difficulty in communicating with foreigners defines one’s Japaneseness. English is the language of international communication but it is also the language of the cultural Other. It is fascinating to contemplate how Japanese young people may react to this. There is a strong chance that many young people will be intimidated by the apparent conflict between their Japanese identity and communication with outsiders, but it is also possible to speculate that some young people may not see a web of contradictions and confusion but instead an exciting challenge to create meaning in their lives.

## **2.4 SUMMARY**

Many of the problems associated with Japan’s education system can be traced to its post-war origins. The current education system is tainted by the stain of defeat and remains a host to a range of unresolved issues from that period. Attempts at educational reform tend to become battles over fundamental issues of national identity exposing

schisms originating in the wartime experience; rather than reopen these wounds, Japan's political elite has chosen to keep the lid on educational reform. The rapid economic growth of the post-war period helped make this possible by masking many of the education system's failings.

Two of the major failures of the Japanese education system are its higher education sector and the field of language education. In Japan, language education has to all intents and purposes meant English. English at the pretertiary level has been employed primarily as knowledge to test and stratify students. The language's function as a tool of communication and expression has little place in Japan's secondary schools.

Whatever the failings of English education at the secondary level, at least there is a clear and apparent purpose. The same cannot be said for the field of higher education in Japan. Japanese higher education expanded massively in the post-war period to accommodate a growing population and rising aspirations. Society demonstrated that it wanted a university education for its young people by sending them to universities in unprecedented numbers, but the lack of action over the issue of education reform has prevented any meaningful debate as to what these new universities should do beyond take care of young people until they are available for full employment.

English learning within the Japanese higher education system marks the point where these two great failures meet. It also marks a point where young people make a considerable investment in terms of their own dreams and individual identity within an environment dominated by conflict, contradiction and insecurities over a sense of national identity.

## CHAPTER 3

### *MOTIVATION THEORY*

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the following chapter I discuss aspects of motivation theory that underpin this study. The discussion is organised into three main sections. Firstly, I examine the concept of motivation itself: theories of motivation and how the study of the field has evolved. In the second section I will look at how the study of motivation has been applied to the field of second language learning; I will present an historical outline of the development of L2 motivation theory and examine some important theoretical issues arising within this body of research. Finally, I consider specific concerns arising from L2 motivation research in the Japanese educational context and how they affect the current study.

Before attempting to define motivation, however, I would like to pause to consider *why* the study of the motivation to learn a second language is important. There is a growing consensus as to the crucial role motivation plays in the language learning process: “Motivation is often seen as the key learner variable because without it nothing happens” (Schmitt, 2002, p. 172). As an observer – and indeed as a participant – of discussions between language educators, I have often been struck by what appears to be an underlying assumption stimulating interest in the topic of motivation: “If only we could get the students to be motivated, then they would learn successfully.” The obvious implication being the highly appealing assumption that motivation is somehow within the behest of the teacher and that motivation in itself is the precursor to successful learning; though an undoubtedly attractive proposition, it is unfortunately an overly simplistic one.

The relationship between motivation and successful learning outcomes can only ever be an indirect one; motivation affects learning behaviours and it is these behavioural consequences that shape achievements. The relationship between motivation and learning success may only be an indirect one; nevertheless it is a highly important one. Early L2 motivation studies achieved a breakthrough in establishing that successful foreign language learning is not merely the product of intelligence and aptitude; efforts made to learn the language are also an important factor and these efforts are affected by a range of attitudinal variables. These early studies served to identify the importance of attitudes but there are still huge gaps in our knowledge of which attitudes encourage effort and how they do so.

The study of the motivation to learn a foreign language is obviously of importance to those immediately involved in language education but I believe that its importance extends beyond the boundaries of second language pedagogy. An understanding of foreign language learning motivation does more than explain the process of language learning; it helps explain how individuals perceive their relationships not only with people around them but also with others outside their immediate social networks, people who may even be unknown to them. An understanding of second language learning motivation, and especially the motivation to learn English, contributes to our knowledge of how people see themselves in relation to both their immediate surroundings and the world at large.

### **3.2 HOW LONG IS A PIECE OF STRING? – DEFINING MOTIVATION**

The term ‘motivation’ is one frequently encountered in many spheres of everyday life; we often hear of ‘a motivated workforce’, ‘motivated students’, or even ‘motivated

buyers and sellers'. Such terms are readily and regularly employed, yet there is very little agreement as to what they actually mean. In fact, such is the difficulty in defining the concept of motivation that Walker and Symons (1997) reveal that the American Psychological Association (APA) once considered refusing to recognise the term on the search wordlists of its main psychological database, *Psychological Abstracts*.

The New Oxford Dictionary of English defines motivation as the “the reason or reasons one has for acting or behaving in a particular way” and early theories of motivation (see Hull, 1943) portrayed these reasons as a function of a narrow set of drives, where human behaviour is regarded as being driven by responses to psychological deficits relating to hunger, thirst, sex and the avoidance of pain. Higgins (2000) describes the historically dominant assumption in our understanding of human motivation to be that people are either motivated to approach pleasure or avoid pain. From these beginnings the study of motivation has expanded and one of the most evocative phrases I have encountered being used to describe motivation comes in the title of Deci and Flaste's (see Deci & Flaste, 1996) book *Why we do what we do*. This phrase seems to capture something of the all-encompassing nature of the concept; the phrase seems at once both illuminating and evasive. Motivation covers not only human behaviour but more specifically the reasons behind that behaviour and this is an enormously complex area of study, which has led Dörnyei (2001, p. 2) to describe it as “one of the most elusive concepts in the whole domain of the social sciences.”

In order to illustrate some of the complexity of the concept of motivation, rather than dive head first into the murky waters of second language acquisition, I would like to

step back a little and consider a simple, uncontroversial act of daily human life and the challenge of interpreting such behaviour. For example, how would I begin to explain my behaviour relating to something as mundane as this morning's breakfast? One approach would be to explain my behaviour as an obvious response to a basic biological need; I was hungry therefore I ate. Another approach would be to view my actions as a product of social conditioning; it was 'breakfast time' therefore I ate because I have been brought up to eat certain foods at that time. A further interpretation would be that my actions were, in fact, the product of a complex process of mental decisions; my behaviour was not merely a programmed response to external stimuli but I was the active agent of my own actions. I made my choices based on a range of assessments of my current situation. These three interpretations are illustrative of Eccles et al.'s (Eccles, Wigfield, & Schiefele, 1998) portrayal of the development of motivational theory from a biological needs based approach via a behaviourist model to the currently dominant cognitive perspective.

If I were to continue from this cognitive perspective and analyse my behaviour systematically, what kind of mental processes could have influenced my breakfast choices? Perhaps the first point I might notice would be that the actual contents of the meal were broadly similar to what I would have eaten as a child; only a few minor modifications have occurred over the years. I might then consider which elements have changed, why they have changed and which have remained the same. I may try to explain this by considering aspects of my cultural background, my immediate environment – general dietary trends, changing retail patterns and the availability of certain foodstuffs – and the need to make accommodations with significant others in my life, as well as my

own individual idiosyncrasies. I would interpret my actions not simply as the mechanical response to an external signal, either biological or behavioural; instead I would be able to interpret even this simplest of acts as the product of a decision-making process in which I was the principal actor, weighing my current wants and needs with my past experiences in reference to my current social environment. I could go even further in this analysis and if I considered my actions in the wider context of my life, I would see that my actions did not occur in isolation; there were antecedents to my behaviour – somehow those ingredients had to be in my house this morning – and there were consequences resulting from my actions. It is also important to bear in mind the fact that I was not acting alone; my actions took place as part of a social unit – in this case, the relatively closed unit of the family.

Perhaps the easiest way to visualise this would be to consider my behaviour as a three-dimensional construct. The first and perhaps most visible dimension could describe the broad range of attitudinal factors that contributed to my decisions: personal likes and dislikes, general customs and practices etc. A second dimension would relate to the temporal aspect of my behaviour and its interconnectedness with other actions. Finally, the third dimension would concern the social factors affecting my behaviour, my engagement with others. Although far from perfect, this perspective seems preferable to any one-dimensional attempt to understand the complex processes influencing human behaviour.

Even the most uncontroversial and apparently simple behaviour can, under systematic analysis, reveal an incredibly complex range of factors affecting the



individual's decision to act in a certain way. This makes the study of motivation at once fascinating and frustrating, and this is even more so when we venture into theoretically problematic areas, such as second language learning. In fact, the concept of motivation is so complex, wide-ranging and elusive, that the question of whether or not it is possible to study motivation in any meaningful way at all is unavoidable. Obviously, if I have come this far in writing about the topic of motivation, I must believe it is, and I will begin my attempt to do so by looking at how others have interpreted the concept.

In this next section, I outline and discuss some of the most well known – and relevant to the current research – approaches to motivation theory.

### **Folk motivation theory**

I will start this overview of motivation theory outside the realm of academic inquiry with the most unscientific but perhaps most generally understood interpretation of the term, what might be termed the *carrot-and-stick* approach. According to this view of human behaviour, individuals are motivated by either the prospect of a reward or the threat of punishment. This simplistic motivational framework has a few minor variations, such as certain people responding more to rewards than punishments or vice versa, and there is also what might be referred to as the 'situational version', where rewards or punishments are distributed in relation to the particular context in which the action is occurring. This is, of course, a very one-dimensional view of human nature yet I mention it here not simply because of its penetration of the popular consciousness but also because it is indicative of a tendency to reduce the complexities of human behaviour to a set of simple choices, a recurrent theme throughout motivational theory. At this most basic level, the presentation of human agency as a simple dichotomous choice appears a

ridiculous simplification, but, as we will see, the tendency towards reductionism and dichotomy is not confined to this form of crude, unsophisticated analysis.

### **Self-determination theory**

Both the rewards and punishments of the *carrot-and-stick* approach represent external stimuli, yet there are many occasions where behaviour is not externally motivated. In mainstream psychological theory, there is a well-known distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and perhaps Deci and Ryan's (Deci & Moller, 2007; Deci & Ryan, 2002; Deci, Richard, & Ryan, 2001; Ryan & Deci, 2000a; Ryan & Deci, 2000b) self-determination theory is the most recognisable articulation of this. Self-determination theory is concerned with how individuals translate wants into organised effort; just because I 'want' something does not mean that I am prepared to put in the required effort to achieve this goal. Self-determination offers an interpretation of how this effort is organised and directed.

According to self-determination theory, "people have needs of the mind as well as needs of the body" (Deci & Flaste, 1996, p. 30). Humans seek to achieve the harmonious integration of two basic psychological needs: autonomy – the individual's need to act autonomously, to believe that the individual is in control of his or her own actions) and relatedness (the individual's need to function as part of a social world) (Deci & Ryan, 2002). People also have a basic need for competence and this draws them towards stimulating and challenging activities. Humans do not merely act in response to extrinsic stimuli, but they make and sustain efforts more successfully when they feel competent and self-determined, when they are engaged in or enjoying the task at hand.

Self determination theory is often mistakenly interpreted as presenting a

dichotomous separation between intrinsic and extrinsic motives, but it is important to note that this is far from the case. Intrinsic motivation refers to “doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable” (Ryan & Deci, 2000b, p. 55) and this has been superficially regarded as ‘good’ motivation, whereas extrinsic motivation has been presented as a “pale and impoverished” counterpart (Ryan & Deci, 2000b, p. 55). A key aspect of self-determination theory is that it demonstrates a continuum moving from the extrinsic to the intrinsic. Integral to this continuum is the notion of internalization, which is described as “an active process through which people engage their social world, gradually transforming socially sanctioned mores or requests into personally endorsed values and self-regulations” (Deci & Moller, 2007, p. 589). This process of internalisation can occur to varying degrees “ranging from taking them in but not accepting them as their own, to internalizing them and integrating them into their sense of self” (Deci & Moller, 2007, p. 588), depending on both the individual and the activity in question. Ryan and Deci (Ryan & Deci, 2000b) elaborate on these processes in greater detail but for the purposes of the current discussion I would like to summarise the relevance of self-determination theory by arguing that a) it helps explain how wants are energised into action; b) it shows humans as agents of their actions rather than simply responding to external stimuli; and c) it demonstrates that artificial distinctions and simplifications found in psychological theory are often based in a more complex reality.

### **Mastery and performance goal orientations**

Parallels to the intrinsic/extrinsic distinction can be seen in a further distinction between mastery and performance goals. This approach to motivation theory originates in the field of educational and developmental psychology, where researchers have been

interested in the link between children's goals and their behaviour. Many different approaches to goal theory have been adopted (see Ames, 1992; Covington, 2000; Dweck, 2000; Pintrich & V. De Groot, 1990; Pintrich, 2000a; Pintrich, 2000b). In this next section I intend to focus my discussion on those areas that I believe to be of greatest relevance to the subsequent discussion of second language learning motivation: mastery and performance goals.

Mastery-oriented learners are motivated by the satisfaction of successfully learning to perform specific tasks, whereas performance-oriented individuals engage in tasks to demonstrate their worth in relation to others. In classroom terms, this might be illustrated by a learner being involved and engaged in a particular task, deriving a sense of self-worth or personal growth in learning to perform that task successfully; in contrast, another learner may care less about how successfully he or she performs the task but more about how that task is performed in relation to others in the class. The key distinction between mastery orientation and intrinsic motivation is that while intrinsically motivated individuals engage in tasks for the enjoyment or satisfaction of doing them, mastery oriented learners are focused on the successful achievement of that task, enjoyment is not essential. In respect to performance orientation and extrinsic motivation, the distinction lies in the notions of reward and recognition; extrinsically motivated individuals are primarily concerned with obtaining a reward for their behaviour and this may be regardless of others around them, whereas performance-oriented individuals desire the recognition of others and may be prepared to forego any form of material reward for their actions.

## **Achievement and attribution**

In this next section I discuss two more important concepts in motivation theory and I link them primarily because of the historical associations connecting some of the principal proponents.

Achievement theory is most readily associated with the work of Atkinson and his colleagues (Atkinson & Birch, 1978; Atkinson, 1964; Atkinson, 1966; Atkinson, 1966) and has been highly influential. In essence, the theory proposes that there are two fundamental determinants of motivation: one is a desire to achieve success and the other is the inhibitory drive to avoid failure. Accordingly, when people with high achievement needs fail at a given task, their motivation to succeed increases. On the other hand, when individuals have low achievement needs and they fail at a given task, their motivation to succeed decreases. The motive to succeed is complemented by a desire to avoid failure and this fear of failure also plays an important role in how individuals approach certain tasks.

Achievement theory became a dominant model in the sixties and seventies with the first major challenge to this dominance coming from the concept of attribution and its principal advocate, Weiner, (1985; 1992) a student of Atkinson. The central tenet of attribution theory is that the attributions that individuals assign to the success or failure of a given action are entirely subjective, but it is these subjective interpretations that influence future behaviour rather than actual outcomes. Humans are constantly assessing the causes behind their successes and failures and some of the most common causes people attribute to their success or failure are factors such as ability, effort, luck, or personality. Weiner (1985) goes on to identify three underlying causal properties that can

be generalised across motivational contexts and these are locus, stability and controllability. Locus refers to the location of the cause. This location may be either internal or external to the individual; factors such as ability or effort may be considered internal, whereas luck would be external. Stability refers to the duration of a particular cause; for example, in a language learning situation a perceived aptitude for language learning would be considered a stable cause but a particular case of assistance from a classmate or teacher would not be seen as being stable. The final causal property is controllability and this refers to the degree of control the individual has over that cause; something such as effort may be regarded as being controllable while a personality trait like shyness could be seen as less controllable for that individual. So, for example, an older language learner may attribute failure to master a foreign language to his or her age and the commonly held belief that young people find it easier to learn languages. In this case, the cause of the failure – the individual's age – may be seen as internal, stable, and uncontrollable. Another language learner might attribute his or her failures to some other factor – the shortcomings of the teacher, for instance. Here, the causal properties would be regarded as external, unstable – the cause exists only for as long as that particular teacher is present – and the controllability would depend on the individual's power to change teachers. The attributions the individual makes in these cases would clearly affect future behaviour and the motivation to generate and sustain efforts.

Another important aspect of attribution theory is that it views human behaviour as having both antecedents and consequences; the motivation to take certain actions does not occur in isolation. People make behavioural choices based on their own subjective

interpretations of past events; behavioural choices are made not solely on past experience and performance, but on the individual's subjective interpretation of these events.

### **Self-efficacy**

The concept of self-efficacy was developed by Albert Bandura and relates to individuals' self-belief and assessment of their own capabilities to reach a certain level of attainment (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, 1997). The individual's efficacious beliefs influence both the degree of effort afforded to given actions and the persistence with which a chosen course of action is pursued. These self-efficacy judgements are based on the following criteria:

- **Past experiences** – to what extent and to what degree of success has the individual engaged in a certain action in the past
- **Vicarious learning** – the observation of other people's behaviour; the observation of others allows individuals to form models of how actions should be performed
- **Verbal persuasion** – the encouragement, or otherwise, of others is a significant factor in how individuals assess their own performance capability
- **Physiological and affective states** – a person encountering difficult or stressful feelings, such as anxiety, may behave in an unproductive manner

The theory contends that human behaviour is regulated through self-efficacy beliefs and that this behaviour is “rooted in the core belief that one has the power to produce the desired effects by one's own actions” (Bandura, 2002, p. 270). According to the theory, a person's sense of self-efficacy either makes them perceive tasks as either

threats (low self-efficacy), which may result in a negative approach to the task or even outright avoidance, or as challenges to be welcomed. Thus people with high self-efficacy are able to set higher goals for themselves.

### **Competence**

A final theoretical strand that I would like to introduce is that of competence. Elliot and Dweck (2007a, p. 8) present competence as a ‘conceptual North Star’ around which various theoretical notions, such as those discussed in this section may navigate. Emerging from concerns that the base of achievement theory is both too narrow and lacking coherence, they present competence as offering the potential to unify diverse research traditions and to provide a platform for future inquiry. Elliot and Dweck making a convincing case for regarding competence as the desired outcome of behaviour; it may be important to understand the various factors affecting decisions to behave in a certain way but it is also important to know to what ends individuals make these efforts. According to Elliot and Dweck, the ultimate behavioural outcome is enhanced competence, as they (2007b, p. 8) argue that, “Competence can be seen as a basic psychological need that has a pervasive impact on daily affect, cognition, and behavior across age and culture.” Accordingly, competence can be regarded as something which is at once readily definable yet comprehensive; humans desire feelings of competence when they act and seek to avoid situations in which they may be perceived as incompetent. This desire for competence is ubiquitous across the various domains of behaviour, age and cultural context. Viewed from this perspective, competence serves as a vital platform for the study of motivation; people are motivated to increase feelings of competence and an understanding of this fundamental point provides a focal point for subsequent



explorations of the specific reasons behind human action.

### **3.3 SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING MOTIVATION**

So far in this discussion, I have steered clear of the particular controversies that surround the process of learning a second language. Language is at the core of an individual's social identity therefore learning and using a second language is infinitely more complex than the mere acquisition of another skill, such as the ability to type. If I make the commitment and successfully direct my efforts in order to become an efficient typist, I may be rewarded in the form of enhanced career prospects, the recognition of others afforded by my ability to perform certain tasks, and a greater sense of self-esteem as a result of being able to perform those tasks well. Nevertheless, this will probably remain confined to a particular domain of my life; the extent to which I relate to the social world through my typing skills is likely to be limited, whereas the learning of a second language has a much greater impact on how I relate to other people and how they relate to me. Williams (1994, p. 77) provides an excellent description of the scale of the task facing the learner of a foreign language:

The learning of a foreign language involves far more than simply learning skills, or a system of rules, or a grammar; it involves an alteration in self-image, the adoption of new social and cultural behaviours and ways of being.

If the actual process of language learning is so inherently intricate, then how has the motivation to learn a second language been interpreted?

Although coming from very different perspectives, Kim (2005) and Dörnyei (2005) both schematise the development of second language motivation theory into three distinct phases. Both of these schematisations have at their core Gardner's socio-

educational model. Kim sees the field evolving first through a process of consolidation around Gardner's theories, a period of stability when these theories achieve an orthodoxy status, and then fragmentation as new theories compete and challenge to replace the dominant paradigm. Dörnyei (2005) presents second language motivation theory as essentially beginning with Gardner, and the period in which Gardner's models dominated is referred to as the social psychological period. The social psychological period was followed by a phase in which the limitations of this model were acknowledged and attempts were made to expand the theoretical base. The first attempts to do this focused on cognitive aspects of the motivation to learn a second language and this period is labelled the cognitive-situated period. The third stage of Dörnyei's model of the historical development of L2 motivation is one in which motivation is regarded as a process rather than a state or trait, thus this is referred to as the process-oriented period.

I would like to suggest that we are now entering a fourth phase in which the various theories which have sought to challenge the social psychological model are moving towards rapprochement. The numerous avenues of inquiry opened up by the limitations identified in the social psychological model seem to be coming together under the umbrella of an interpretation of L2 motivation based around self beliefs. I intend to discuss the literature relating to the self in the next chapter but in this current chapter I focus my attention on the historical development of L2 motivation theory.

### **The social psychological approach to L2 motivation**

The passage of time, familiarity with the concept, and the excitement aroused by new theories and approaches all serve to obscure the significance of Gardner's contribution to motivational theory. As Dörnyei (1994b, p. 519) puts it: "Having been

familiar with the Gardnerian approach for a long time, we may not always be conscious of how much of a “breakthrough” this was; one which rightfully influenced motivation theory for the next decades.” Gardner’s early work represents the first significant moves to understand successful second language learning as not simply a product of aptitude and to afford a central role to motivation in the second language learning process.

Perhaps the most telling testimony to the value of Gardner’s ideas lies in the fact that almost half a century after they were first published, they still have the power to stimulate controversy and excite debate.

The first major systematic investigation of L2 motivation was produced by Gardner and Lambert (1959). Their concern was to research the acquisition of English as a second language among Francophone high school students in Quebec and they found that attitudes and motivation were important elements of the acquisition process.

Gardner’s particular concern was the role of learners’ individual attitudes towards target language cultures and speakers and how this affected their learning behaviour and the process of L2 acquisition.

Gardner’s principal contribution – and it is an enormous contribution – to L2 theory was to recognise that second language acquisition was not simply a product of aptitude and ability and that learners’ attitudes towards the speakers of the L2 were also an important factor in the learning process, thus “adding a social dimension to the study of motivation to learn a L2” (Koike & Tanaka, 1995, p. 519). Perhaps unfortunately, Gardner’s work is best known for the identification of two motivational orientations: instrumental orientation and integrative orientation. Instrumental orientation primarily

refers to the learner's pragmatic or utilitarian reasons for learning a language, such as improved career opportunities or status. On the other hand, integrative orientation concerns social interaction and identification with the speakers of the target language. Though it may never have been the author's intention, – and Gardner and Tremblay (1994) convincingly rebut any such suggestion – Gardner's work has been widely interpreted as portraying a dichotomous relationship between the two orientations; people either learn languages for instrumental reasons or integrative ones.

The great strength of Gardner's work – apart from its methodological thoroughness and pioneering nature – is that it recognises language learners as social beings and language as an important element of social identity. This inherent strength combined with an absence of competing theories led to a long period where the research agenda in the field of motivation and language learning was dominated by Gardner's twin concepts of *integrativeness* and *instrumentality*.

(a) *Problems with integrativeness*

Although the socio-educational model has often been interpreted as presenting L2 motivation as a dichotomous construct, it is noticeable that very little attention has been paid to the instrumentality side of the dichotomy. Instrumentality has been greatly under-theorised, never generating the same levels of theoretical excitement and debate as integrativeness. In this section I consider some of those key issues surrounding the concept of integrativeness.

As the dominant model of L2 motivation for over thirty years, Gardner's theories attracted considerable discussion and comment. One of the earliest major challenges to Gardner's interpretation of integrativeness came from Au (1988), who questioned some

of the underlying assumptions of Gardner's approach. Gardner had based much of his theory on a high correlation between integrativeness and language proficiency but this left the issue of cause and effect open: was proficiency a consequence of motivated behaviour arising from integrativeness, or was integrativeness simply a by-product of proficiency in the L2? The issue of causality and, more importantly, a simplified reading of the relationships between variables in the learning process is a very important one for motivation studies to address. In addition to the question of cause and effect, a further area that critics of the Gardnerian model have seized upon is the terminological inconsistency that surrounds the concept of integrativeness (see Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; Dörnyei, 1994b; Oxford & Shearin, 1994). Dörnyei (2005) points to terminological vagueness found in Gardner's work – the term 'integrative' appearing in three separate guises: *integrative orientation*, *integrativeness*, and *integrative motivation* – linked to the intuitive appeal of a simple, dichotomous model as contributory factors to the misinterpretation of Gardner's work

(b) *Separate from mainstream psychology*

Another concern that has been raised about the concept of integrativeness is its separateness from mainstream psychology. The original definition of an integrative orientation was the desire "...to learn more about the language group, or to meet more and different people" (Gardner & Lambert, 1959, p. 267) and this was also characterised as "a willingness to be like valued members of the language community" (Gardner & Lambert, 1959, p. 271). Referring back to the earlier discussion in this chapter of mainstream motivational theory, we can see that this is a concept with no obvious equivalent. Integrativeness refers to a willingness to identify with a target language

community and the impact this has on the capacity of individuals to direct their efforts to learn the target language successfully. There is really no precedent in the psychological literature for a concept of motivation based on an individual's attitudes towards an external social group. This being the case, how do we reconcile the apparent conceptual gap between integrativeness and mainstream educational psychology?

One possible explanation would be that the learning of a foreign language is indeed a unique undertaking, that “acquiring a second language has very little in common with other academic exercises” (Clément, Noels, & Deneault, 2001, p. 560.) It then follows that if learning a foreign language is different from other aspects of education, then the structure of the motivation to learn may also differ from that of other learning. This is a position supported by Dörnyei, (1994b, p. 274) who argues:

“... due to the multifaceted nature and role of language (i.e., the fact that it is at the same time a *communication coding system*, an *integral part of the individual's identity*, and the most important *channel of social organisation*), the motivational background of L2 learning involves a unique and necessarily eclectic construct ...”

Perhaps the real question that needs to be addressed is not so much whether second language learning is unique or not, but rather how unique can an L2 motivational theory claim to be? On the one hand, there *are* aspects of the L2 learning process that are different from other learning experiences, but on the other hand, there are many facets of the L2 learning experience that have much in common with other educational domains.

(c) *Generalisability*

A further issue that I intend to address here is that of the generalisability of the concept of integrativeness. Although Gardner carried out studies in other contexts, such

as the Philippines and French-speaking communities in Maine and Louisiana (Gardner & Lambert, 1972), his work is very much associated with the unique Canadian socio-educational environment. Although evidence of a similar affective dimension to L2 learning has been found in many other studies (see Dörnyei, 2001; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993) and the empirical base of Gardner's theories is undeniably strong, there are numerous other studies conducted outside the confines of the Canadian context that have challenged the conventional interpretation of integrativeness. Dörnyei identified this as a potential limitation to our understanding of L2 motivation and challenged the suitability of Gardner's concept of integrativeness to EFL contexts; what was applicable in bilingual Canada was not necessarily appropriate to environments where learners lacked meaningful access to the target L2 community. A learner of English in Hungary, where much of Dörnyei's early research was conducted, faced a very different learning challenge to a learner of English in Francophone Canada (or indeed for learners of French in Anglophone Canada). If the socio-cultural environment was different, did this bring into question the validity of the central concepts of a theory built on the relationship between the learner and the socio-cultural environment? How were learners in these contexts where direct contact with the target language and its speakers is minimal supposed to obtain enough information about that L2 culture in order to form a desire to integrate? Noels et al. (Noels, Clément, & Pelletier, 2001, p. 37) neatly summarise this argument by claiming that the socio-educational model as proposed by Gardner "has relevance only in specific sociocultural contexts."

(d) *Identifying an L2 community to identify with*

An illustration of the influence of the Canadian sociocultural environment on the

development of Gardner's theories is shown in the notion of the L2 communities that form the basis of the concept. In citing Gardner's definition of integrativeness, I previously mentioned "the language group." The use of the definite article here implies a static, clearly defined entity and in Canada, where there are readily available and clearly identifiable L2 communities, this may be a valid approach but this is surely not the case for many other learning contexts. The case of English within the context of globalisation is especially problematic, as in many cases English is no longer solely associated with specific national or ethnic groups.

One particularly instructive example of this comes from a study of Indonesian learners of English carried out by Lamb (2004, p. 15) who found that for young Indonesians ideas of an English-speaking community are not so much tied to specific national groups but additionally incorporate notions such as:

Meeting with westerners, using computers, understanding pop songs, studying or travelling abroad, pursuing a desirable career—all these aspirations are associated with each other and with English as an integral part of the globalization processes that are transforming their society and will profoundly affect their own lives.

Lamb's observations allude to some of the complexities of the relationship between the learner and language affiliation produced by the processes of globalisation. If the English language is no longer firmly coupled to particular geographical or ethnic communities, how relevant is a theory that is based upon the links between a language and a clearly defined national or ethnic group? Others (Coetzee-Van Rooy, 2006; Ryan, 2006; Yashima, 2000) have also pointed out the incongruity of a model of learning based on the identification of a clearly defined language communities as an explanation for the



motivation to learn a language whose ownership (Widdowson, 1994) increasingly evades precise definition.

(e) *An empirical challenge*

Perhaps the most consistent and convincing probing of the concept of integrativeness comes from the work of Dörnyei and colleagues in a series of studies based in Hungary (Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005b; Dörnyei & Clément, 2001; Dörnyei & Csizér, 2002; Dörnyei, Csizér, & Németh, 2006). In a large-scale longitudinal study of secondary school learners of English in Hungary, integrativeness was found to dominate all other motivational variables. In fact, so dominant was integrativeness as a factor in language choice – the correlation figure for *integrativeness* and criterion measures was consistently only marginally lower than the multiple correlations for all the other motivational variables used in the study – that this suggested that the concept needed some form of reinterpretation.

These Hungarian studies indicated that the force of the scale labelled ‘*integrativeness*’ was simply too powerful to be explained by a desire to integrate with an L2 community, that in fact the items used in the scale were tapping into something altogether more vital. This is a crucial finding in that it allows a possible route to balancing continuity with past L2 motivation research and the need to expand and explore new research agendas:

We suspect that the motivation dimension captured by the term is not so much related to any actual, or metaphorical, *integration* into an L2 community as to some more basic *identification process* within the individual’s *self-concept*. As described above, such a conception would not conflict with the original Gardnerian notion and would at the same time provide a broader frame of reference. (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2002, p. 453)

Dörnyei (2005) uses the term ‘integrativeness enigma’ to describe a situation where numerous studies have found integrativeness or something equivalent to be a significant factor in the motivation to learn a second language, yet many others have found the concept problematic. This suggests a case of ‘so near yet so far’, that researchers are observing something very important yet somehow failing in their interpretations and explanations of these findings, and that the label integrativeness “does not do justice” (Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005b, p. 30) to the full complexity of what is being observed. This call to reinterpret integrativeness and ‘provide a broader frame of reference’ represents the theoretical starting pistol for this study.

### **Shifts in focus**

#### **(a) *Situational dimensions***

After the relative calm of the ‘social psychological period’, the 1990s witnessed a major revival in interest in language learning motivation. The first significant assault on the Gardnerian orthodoxy came from Crookes and Schmidt (1991) who introduced a cognitive perspective to the discussion of language learning motivation by stressing the role of the learning environment as a motivating factor. A consequence of the new approach to motivation theory was to shift the focus of research to make it more relevant to actual teaching and learning in the foreign language classroom. As most foreign language learning takes place in classrooms there was a perceived need to expand the motivation framework to include more classroom-oriented variables and factors of immediate relevance to practising teachers Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; (Dörnyei, 1994a; Dörnyei, 1994b; Oxford & Shearin, 1994). For many language learners, foreign languages remained an essentially classroom-based experience and considerations of integration

with a nominal target language community a remote abstraction and therefore it made sense to align L2 motivational thinking with more conventional educational psychology.

In tandem with the moves to making motivation research more relevant to the learning situation, there were also calls, in the words of Oxford and Shearin (1994), to ‘expand the theoretical framework’. This was an appeal to recognise the narrow theoretical limitations of then current L2 motivation theory and to embrace concepts from mainstream psychological theory. Examples of this tendency might be Noels and associates’ attempts to incorporate self-determination theory into the language learning arena (Noels et al., 2001; Noels, Pelletier, Clément, & Vallerand, 2000); Clement and colleagues’ (Clement & Labrie, 1986; Clement, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1994) conceptualisation of linguistic self-confidence; Williams and Burden’s (1997) social constructivist approach.

(b) *Temporal dimensions*

A further shift in motivational thinking can be witnessed in what Dörnyei (2005, p. 83) refers to as the ‘Process-Oriented Period’ and has its roots in the “temporal frame of reference shaping motivational thinking” (Ushioda, 1998, p. 82). Second language acquisition tends to be a lengthy process and within the time it takes to learn a language, the learner’s motivation to learn that language inevitably fluctuates; static, cross-sectional representations do not reveal the full complexity of language learning motivation.

Dörnyei (1994a) identified three levels of motivation for L2 learners: the *language level*, the *learner level*, and the *learning situation level*. He (p. 279) describes these three levels as representing “the three basic constituents of the L2 learning process.” At the language level motivation is primarily concerned with attitudes relating to various aspects

associated with the target language, such as the cultural values connected with it and its speakers, and the material benefits stemming from proficiency. This level is roughly equivalent to the Gardnerian motivational model. At the learner level, the focus is on the personality of the individual learner and the various anxieties, attributions, and experiences that she or he brings to the learning process. The final –learning situation – level comes from various factors present in the immediate learning environment, such as course content, teacher-related considerations and group norms in the classroom. This framework is important in that it recognises the multi-dimensional nature of L2 learning motivation and it was further expanded with the addition of a temporal dimension into the *Process Model of L2 Motivation* (Dörnyei & Otto, 1998). The process model schematises three distinct stages of motivation: the preactional, actional, and postactional stages. The preactional stage is also referred to as choice motivation as it concerns the choices individuals make in setting goals. The actional stage can also be referred to as executive motivation as it relates to how motivation is maintained and efforts are sustained in the pursuit of goals set at the initial stage. The final, postactional, stage is also termed motivational retrospection and concerns the individual's evaluation of the execution of a particular task and this evaluation, in turn, feeds into the preactional stage of a subsequent action.

The great attraction – and perhaps ultimate theoretical drawback – of the process model is that it acknowledges that an individual's actions do not occur in isolation; actions have both antecedents and consequences. Dörnyei (2005) himself recognises some of the inherent limitations of the model:

First, it implies that the actional process in question is well-definable and

has clear-cut boundaries. But where exactly does action start in an educational context? ... The second problem is related to the fact that the actional process does not occur in relative isolation, without any interferences from other ongoing activities the learner is engaged in a number of parallel action processes. (p. 81)

Perhaps unfortunately for researchers, language learners have other things to do besides learn languages. Learners have other social roles and responsibilities outside the classroom; language learners may also be family members, friends, lovers, or workers, and all of these other domains have the potential to affect what occurs in the field of education. To a certain extent, the process model as initially presented by Dörnyei and Otto assumes language learning to be occurring separate from other events, nevertheless the model marks an important step in L2 motivation theory as it represents the first serious attempts to systematically investigate motivation as a process occurring over time as opposed to a cross-sectional approach.

The work of Ushioda (Ushioda, 1996; Ushioda, 1998; Ushioda, 2001; Ushioda, 2003) has been crucial in developing an understanding of language learning motivation as not simply a static, individual phenomenon but a product of the learner's interaction with the social context over time. Ushioda's work is significant not only for its theoretical contribution but it has also shifted the methodological base for motivation research. Her initial studies fell outside the conventional quantitative paradigm and were, therefore, uninhibited by considerations of established theoretical constructs. Based on interviews with 20 learners of French in Ireland, her research provides fresh insights that reveal motivation to be a 'socially mediated process' rather than an individual difference. Ushioda identifies both causal and teleological dimensions to the motivation to learn a

language. The causal dimension emphasises the role of the individual's evaluation of past experiences in the formation of current motivation while the teleological dimension focuses on future-directed behaviour. She also draws attention to a tendency for motivation to shift according to proficiency, from being rooted in past experience at lower proficiency levels to being shaped by future goals as proficiency and experience develop.

(c) *Sociological dimensions*

A further consideration in this discussion of the expansion of the L2 motivation theoretical framework goes to the work of Bonny Norton, who examines language learners' behaviour as a function of the power relationships between speakers. Norton tends to eschew the term motivation in favour of the concept of 'investment', developed from Bourdieu's (Bourdieu & Coleman, 1991; Bourdieu & Nice, 1977) ideas of social, cultural, and symbolic capital, seeing motivation as being rooted in the individual, whereas investment takes into account the vital social processes that affect a sense of identity and participation in a community:

... investment in English and their opportunities to practice English must be understood with reference to the construction of social identity across historical time and social space. This, in turn, must be understood with reference to social processes of gender, ethnicity, and class. (Norton Pierce, 1993, p. 166)

Norton's work, based on interviews with female immigrants to Canada, locates the language learner in altogether different position to the conventional Gardnerian perspective; whereas Gardner views the language learner as essentially an outsider seeking access to an 'other' community, Norton situates the learner firmly as a member of the

community, struggling to construct an identity within that community by means of participation – and non-participation – using language. In many respects, Norton’s work almost represents a mirror image to that of Gardner. Both interpretations draw heavily on the immediate Canadian context and both present a view of the language learner that is somewhat determinist; Gardner - and this represents a huge simplification – portrays the learner as hostage to fixed social-psychological attitudes towards two sets of static language communities, whereas Norton’s learner is subject to powerful societal forces. It is unclear how either of these conceptualisations of language learning is immediately relevant to the EFL learner with little direct contact with the L2 community.

### **3.4 LANGUAGE LEARNING MOTIVATION IN THE JAPANESE CONTEXT**

Since the setting for this study is Japan, I would like to turn my attention to some of the specific concerns of motivation in the Japanese learning context. One of the most powerful criticisms of many models of motivation is that they are culture-specific and lack applicability to other cultural settings. Here I intend to review some of the issues that have been highlighted by previous research into L2 motivation in Japan.

The Japanese educational context is of particular interest because it throws up many challenging issues relating not only to the theory of motivation but also to the nature of second language learning as a whole. A key element to Japan’s post-war economic development, and its subsequent international integration, has been its capacity to train its workforce through a highly regulated education system. Within that education system, English has always been a central component. All of the above would suggest a dynamic, thriving environment for English language education, yet as Nakata (2006, p. 166) points out: “There is a general consensus that the educational system has resulted in

Japanese learners with weak English communication ability and low motivation to learning the language.”

On the surface, Japan appears to present ideal conditions for language education: an advanced and well-resourced education system supported by powerful political and business interests. Learners of English have obvious apparent motives to succeed in the form of educational success and enhanced career prospects, yet this learning does not seem to be taking place.

One obvious approach to this problem has been to examine the teaching methods commonly employed in Japanese schools, to view learning as a direct product of teaching. There is a substantial body of research investigating issues relating to language teaching methodology in Japan (see Brown & Yamashita, 1995; Gorsuch, 1998; Law, 1995), which makes many valid points concerning the role of teaching methods that focus almost exclusively on direct translations and the dominant role of formal examinations in the education system. However, in recent years there has been a welcome, belated shift in focus to the learning process and the role of motivation within that process.

As Nakata (2006) points out, much early Japanese L2 motivation research was trapped by the social psychological framework from within which it was operating. Many early studies (Berwick & Ross, 1989; Konishi, 1990; Matsukawa & Tachibana, 1996; Sawaki, 1997) are based not only on Gardner's methods but also on his theoretical assumptions. This is unsurprising given that it was the dominant theoretical model of the era, and it is also unsurprising that a recurring theme arising from these studies was the



limitations of the Gardnerian model, the “remaining issues and missing ingredients” (Sawaki, 1997).

### **Travel and international posture**

The square-peg-in-a-round-hole attempts to force the Gardnerian model to fit the Japanese context produced a good deal of terminological tinkering – for example, *Personal motivation* (Benson, 1991), *Intrinsic-Instrumental-Integrative* and *Extrinsic-Instrumental* motives (Kimura, Nakata, & Okumura, 2001) – as researchers endeavoured to develop an understanding of L2 motivation that was both consistent with existing theory and applicable to the local context. Gradually a consensus began to emerge (see Nakata, 2006) – undoubtedly influenced by the theoretical debates going on elsewhere – that a model of motivation based on narrow interpretations of integrativeness and instrumentality was altogether too simplistic and offered an unsatisfactory explanation of what was happening in Japanese language classrooms.

Central to the call for a model of L2 motivation more firmly grounded in the realities of the local context is the nature of the relationship between the Japanese learner of English and the L2 community, and the manner in which this blurs the distinctions between instrumentality and integrativeness. Gardner’s socio-educational model offers a static representation of language and community in which the language learner is situated outside the target language community; in this case the Japanese learner of English is an outsider seeking access to the English-speaking community. According to this model, the values of the L2 community are immediately apparent to the learner, as are the channels of access to that community, but how true is this for the Japanese educational context where the relationship between the individual, the target language and the language

community is far from linear?

A key to understanding the relationship between the language learner and the L2 community is the notion of contact: how does a learner of English in Japan envisage contact with the English-speaking world? One variable that has consistently been found in motivation studies in Japan relates to the concept of travel (Benson, 1991; McClelland, 2000). Japan's geographic location, historical isolation, and perceived cultural separateness combine to complicate the notion of travel overseas; Fotos (1994, p. 50), in language indicative of the tendency to accommodate research findings to established theory, claims that, "the desire for travel and encounter with global culture represents the *new instrumental motivation* [italics added], indicating a personal orientation towards international experience for self-actualization in global society." Travel represents more than simply a means of getting from A to B, or spending some time in country C, but it does not involve any notions of integration, as Irie (2003, p. 91) points out, "One of the most noticeable recurring patterns found in Japanese EFL university contexts is a positive orientation to foreign travel without any apparent desire to integrate into the TL culture."

The notion of travel as repeatedly found in Japanese studies contains both pragmatic, utilitarian elements (instrumentality) and a personal, affective dimension (integrativeness) and the picture is blurred even further when we consider what the English-speaking community means to Japanese learners. Yashima (2002, p.57), contends that:

English seems to represent something vaguer and larger than the American community in the minds of young Japanese learners. For many

learners, English symbolises the world around Japan, something that connects them to foreign countries and foreigners.

Yashima (Yashima, 2000; Yashima, 2002) goes on to identify *international posture* as a key motivational variable, and this parallels similar constructs found by other researchers, such as Nakata's (1995) *international outlook* and Ogane and Sakamoto's (1997) *desired interaction with foreigners*. These findings suggest an affiliation and identification with the English-speaking community that is entirely different from the one postulated by Gardner's model of motivation. Yashima developed the notion of international posture as a means of explaining how learners in Japan, lacking meaningful direct contact with the speakers of a target language, manage to relate to an L2 community. The main characteristics of international posture are described as an "interest in foreign or international affairs, willingness to go overseas to stay or work, readiness to interact with intercultural partners, and, one hopes, openness or a non-ethnocentric attitude toward different cultures" (Yashima, 2002, p. 57).

As English becomes a language increasingly used for international communication, the cultural values of the English-speaking community are no longer tied to Anglo-American norms and international posture undoubtedly represents a major contribution to our understanding of second language learning motivation. The development of the concept of international posture illustrates how the conclusions we, as researchers, can draw are inhibited by our methodologies. Professional researchers immersed in academia struggle with the complexities of identity and language learning, so how are we to expect young people – most of Yashima's research has been concerned with secondary pupils – to articulate a phenomenon that they are unlikely to have the words for? In many

respects, the concept of international posture emerges from, and is ultimately limited by, a meta-language of language education familiar to young learners in Japan. In its current form, the concept of international posture seems to somehow sell short what appears to be an incredibly powerful factor in the motivation of young Japanese people to learn English.

### ***Willingness to communicate***

A further issue for L2 motivation researchers in Japan –as elsewhere – is that of the effects or outcomes of motivation. A simple linear relationship between motivation and L2 proficiency or achievement is not tenable as this assumes that successful language learning is merely a function of motivation and ignores all other factors in the learning process, especially the fundamental issue of cause and effect: are high levels of motivation a result of L2 achievement or is high L2 achievement a consequence of high levels of motivation? This problem has stimulated interest in the concept of willingness to communicate (WTC), which was initially developed to explain L1 behaviour by McCroskey and Richmond (McCroskey & Richmond, 1991; McCroskey, 1998; Richmond, McCroskey, & Anderson, 1992) and is essentially concerned with an individual's propensity to either engage in or avoid communication. MacIntyre et al. (1998) developed a model of L2 WTC, which along with personality traits, such as L1 WTC, other variables, such as confidence, communication competence, anxiety, and intergroup attitudes, are considered to affect the individual's willingness to communicate in the L2. This L2 WTC model has been further refined (MacIntyre, 2005; MacIntyre, 2007; MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, & Conrod, 2001) to include other theoretical concepts;

the original L2 WTC model is expanded to incorporate elements of Gardner's socio-educational model, Pintrich's perspective on academic motivation, Kuhl's action control model.

A simple statement of the logic of the L2 WTC as an outcome of motivation would be that if it is indeed true that, "The major motivation to learn another language is to develop a communicative relationship with people from another cultural group" (MacIntyre, 2007, p. 566), then the willingness to communicate in that language should be closely connected to the motivation to learn. However, Wen and Clément (2003) argue that the model is based on research mainly conducted in western contexts and greater sensitivity to local cultural variables is required to improve the model. Wen and Clément found that Chinese societal beliefs and cultural norms along with classroom variables, such as group cohesiveness and teacher support, affected the L2 WTC of Chinese learners. In the Japanese context, Yashima (Yashima, 2000; Yashima, 2002; Yashima, Zenuck-Nishide, & Shimizu, 2004) in particular has been influential in developing a model of L2 WTC applicable to the experience of Japanese learners of English. Yashima investigated L2 WTC in a group of non-English-major Japanese university students and her structural equation model (SEM) pointed to L2 communication confidence and international posture as having direct paths to L2 WTC and particular importance for Japanese learners of English

### **3.5 SUMMARY**

In this chapter I have presented an overview of theories of motivation, with the intention of illustrating the enormous, at times intimidating scope of the concept. To a certain degree, the study of motivation is characterised by a tension between a tendency

towards reductionism and a need for comprehensibility; the study of motivation attempts to investigate and explain a vast range of factors affecting human behaviour yet must do so in a way that is both intelligible and coherent.

Bearing in mind the complex and comprehensive nature of the concept of motivation, it is somewhat surprising that the theoretical base of L2 motivational studies should have remained so narrow for so long. The methodological thoroughness, the theoretical simplicity, and the intuitive appeal of Gardner's social psychological approach dominated the field for much of its early history and still continue to exert a massive influence. However, since Crookes and Schmidt (1991) initiated a debate on the state of L2 motivation research, a number of key concerns have emerged. One is the pedagogical usefulness of the research; since a significant proportion of foreign language learning takes place in classrooms, there is a clear need to pay greater attention to the motivational effects of the immediate classroom situation. Following on from this lead further limitations of the social psychological approach have been identified, such as the need to acknowledge the individual in social context and the dynamic nature of motivation. A consequence of the expanding of the research agenda has been a degree of fragmentation as various theories and approaches pull in different directions. I am suggesting that we are about to enter a new phase of L2 motivational research in which some of these diverse theoretical directions are realigned and come together to form a more cohesive framework.

A further issue that I have alluded to in this section is that of the generalisability of models of motivation. Numerous geographical, cultural, social, and historical factors

suggest that findings from one context may not be directly applicable to another. In this study, I am particularly interested in how L2 motivation theory has developed in Japan. In many respects, motivation research in Japan has mirrored developments elsewhere. The social psychological model has dominated the research agenda, resulting in a substantial body of research attempting to adapt the Gardnerian model to the Japanese context. One particular variable that has been identified in the Japanese context is that of international posture. The concept of international posture has emerged principally from research in the social psychological tradition employing the familiar terminology of the Japanese English education environment, but I would like to conclude this chapter by proposing that the concept of international posture should be expanded in alignment with advances in the research agenda and in this way it may offer us greater insights not only into the motivation of English learners in Japan but also for learners in other contexts.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### ***AN IDEAL L2 SELF***

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

In the previous chapter, I presented an outline of some of the more salient points in the development of L2 motivation theory and concluded by arguing that the field appears set to enter a new phase in which a number of diverse theoretical strands may come together under a unifying umbrella theory. In this chapter I outline the theoretical framework that I envisage performing this function. The aim of the chapter is to not only show the theoretical areas from which I am coming, but also the direction(s) in which I am hoping to head. In order to do this, I will first discuss the challenges posed by some of the issues raised in Chapter 3 for future theory and research. I will then move on to consider issues of language identity and community before introducing theories of the self into the discussion. I will conclude the chapter with a consideration of possible applications of these theories to the study of language learning motivation.

#### **4.2 A CHANGING RESEARCH AGENDA**

In Chapter 3, I identified the pivotal role of Gardner's social psychological approach in the development of L2 motivation theory, and in this chapter I intend to consider how that approach may be realigned in accordance with current directions in L2 motivation research. As implied earlier, a key dilemma facing L2 motivation theory in its current form is whether to abandon its social psychological origins and seek an entirely new approach or to simply attempt to refine the existing framework. On the one hand, there are those such as Kim (2005, p. 307) who present a convincing case for making a clean break, developing alternative paradigms, and rejecting the sequence of constant



modifications to existing models, forcefully arguing:

... this process is a vicious circle and will perpetuate in L2 motivation research if we rely on the current positivistic paradigms in L2 motivation theories. Whatever potential concepts are included in the current L2 motivation paradigm would have inherent limitations from the start.

On the other hand, there is a persuasive counter-argument in favour of preserving and building on the valuable insights obtained from over thirty years of social psychological research. The social psychological approach is approaching a state of maturity both in terms of an accumulation of a significant body of research and the refinement of research instruments. It could appear misguided to turn back on an approach just as it appears about to reap further rewards. MacIntyre (MacIntyre, MacKinnon, & Clément, in press) advises caution in abandoning the social psychological foundations of L2 motivation research in favour of currently fashionable concerns, which for the most part remain untested in the field. The danger in an uprooting of the research agenda is that L2 motivation research may stray into areas where it can only hope to scratch the surface of an already established field; expanding the research agenda may result in a wider yet ultimately shallow theory of language learning motivation.

In this study, I adopt the view that there is no inherent conflict between the desire to pursue new avenues of inquiry and the need to maintain a link with established constructs; in fact, I regard this as a highly desirable goal. The potential of the social psychological paradigm has not yet been fully exploited and a social psychological perspective still has a lot to tell us about the motivation to learn a second language. However, this can only occur as one of several diverse yet complementary approaches to

the study of L2 motivation.

In the earlier discussion of L2 motivation theory in Chapter 3, I made reference to Dörnyei's (1994a) identification of three levels of language learning motivation: the language, the learner, and the learning situation. These three levels, together with the temporal aspect to the motivation process, highlight the multi-dimensional nature of motivation and suggest that no single theoretical or methodological approach can do justice to the scope of its study. What is required is a framework in which various approaches may be successfully integrated in a manner that allows their relative strengths to complement each other. In the final part of this chapter I discuss a recent theoretical development that I believe offers the possibility of doing so, Dörnyei's L2 motivational self system (Dörnyei, 2005) but before doing so I would like to consider aspects of theories of identity and how they inform the conceptualisation of this L2 self system.

#### **4.3 LANGUAGE LEARNING AND IDENTITY**

Enter the term 'identity' into any database and you are certain to be faced with an enormous number of hits. (A simple search on PsycINFO returns 22666 abstracts containing the term. 31st May, 2007.) Identity is an incredibly broad and nebulous concept, so much so that Bendle (2002, p. 2) warns of the 'ubiquity of identity'. One of the great dangers of expanding the L2 motivation research agenda is that there is a temptation to spread ideas too thinly, to dabble in various theoretical areas without ever fully mastering the concepts involved. For this reason, I intend to limit my discussion of identity to matters relating to the individual's sense of affiliation with and belonging to social groups through the use of language.

## **Identity and L2 motivation theory**

The aim of this chapter is to look at how theoretical approaches may be realigned in a way that allows them to work together in a coherent fashion and in this next section, I would like to consider the relevance of notions of identity to L2 motivation theory.

The whole social psychological approach to language learning motivation has been predicated on notions of social identity linked to the values of the community associated with a target language. As a working definition of social identity, I intend to consider “that part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group or groups together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership” (Tajfel, 1981, p. 251). Conventional interpretations of integrativeness hold that certain communities are associated with certain values and when individuals are positively disposed towards the values of a community, the more likely they are to want to participate in the activities of that community; in the case of language learning, this means that individuals with positive attitudes towards a given community are more likely to be motivated to learn the language of that community. Gardner (2001, p. 5) characterises integrativeness as “a general interest in learning the second language in order to come closer to the *other* [italics added] language community.” It may be pertinent to dwell a little on the use of the phrase ‘other language community’ for this phrase locates the learner firmly outside that target language community, an outsider seeking a means of entry through language. This may be an entirely valid reading of certain language learning contexts, where linguistic and cultural boundaries are clearly drawn, contexts such as the bilingual Canadian environment where Gardner conducted the bulk of his research. However, does this

characterisation of the language learning process really apply to learners of English in situations where contact with the language may be available but not through the 'other' language community and where the opportunities to 'integrate' with that community are few and far between?

The model of linguistic identity posited by Gardner appears somewhat static and binary. The values of individuals and communities are fixed, as are the terms of membership of those communities. Gardner uses the word 'other' in its general sense, yet it is interesting to reflect on the term in its more technical, psychological sense and regard it as the counterpart to the 'self'. Seen from this perspective, the frequently observed affective dimension to the motivation to learn a second language is interpreted as a desire to integrate with an external language community, but what happens if we switch perspectives and remove this element of 'otherness' from the second language learning process? Is it possible to construe the motivation to learn a language as a part of the learner's sense of self as an existing member of a wider language community? In order to consider these questions, it is necessary to look in more detail at ideas of identity and community.

### **National identity and language**

The field of second language education has traditionally preferred fixed, stable models of ethnolinguistic identity, with individuals belonging to clearly demarcated ethnolinguistic groups. This is unsurprising for a field that emerged in a world where the principal unit of economic and political organisation was the nation-state. Anderson (1991) provides a useful background to the essential role of language, and especially mass-circulation print media, in the development of a sense of national identity.

Anderson draws on Hegel in his account of the national newspaper replacing morning prayers as a communal activity and the resultant development of 'imagined' national communities developed through language and print. Newspapers were particularly important in developing a sense of national identity in an era when political and economic structures were being redrawn on national rather than religious lines and symbols of the nation as opposed to religious belief were used to bring people together in a sense of shared identity. Chief amongst these symbols of the nation has been language.

In a world order based on the nation-state, a sense of national identity built upon the twin foundations of language and ethnicity has been central to our understanding of that world and the relationships between its peoples. Integral to this process of building a strong sense of national identity has been the construction of a cultural Other, which reinforces a notion of difference and separateness from other nationalities. The belief that the values and the attitudes of one's own ethnolinguistic group are different, perhaps even superior, to others has been considered an essential part of the culturisation process (Gudykunst, 1988; Wortzel & Wortzel, 1985). This notion of ethnocentrism has long been considered a problematic aspect of intercultural communication and foreign language learning; an issue that can be traced back through various sources to Gardner's earliest work on language learning motivation (see Gardner & Lambert, 1959; Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Hinenoya & Gatbonton, 2000; Kalin & Berry, 1994; Wiseman, Hammer, & Nishida, 1989). Referring back to the earlier definition of integrativeness as a desire to integrate with an 'other' language community, there is an obvious tension between the

desire to construct a strong sense of national self - and by implication cultural Other - and a desire to integrate with that Other.

### **National identity, English and globalisation**

The assumption of strong links between identification with national groups and the motivation to learn a language makes sense in a world where the boundaries of national identity are clearly and simply drawn. However, the suitability of a model of language learning based on precise delineations of national and local identity is increasingly coming under challenge, with Coetzee Van-Rooy (2006) going as far as to describe it as 'untenable'. Beck (2002, p. 17) identifies a crucial weakness in theoretical models based on essentialised ideas of national identity, arguing that: "At the beginning of the 21st century the *conditio humana* cannot be understood nationally or locally but only globally."

Graddol (1997, p. 33) considers some of the potential consequences of the processes of globalisation for language and, by extension, language learning:

Globalisation is probably the most significant socio-economic process affecting the world ... globalisation seems to create new, hybrid forms of culture, language and political organisation: the results of global influences meeting local traditions values and social contexts.

If we are to accept the Graddol's notion of 'hybrid forms of culture, language and political organisation' developing from the processes of globalisation, then we need to consider how these affect our understanding of linguistic identity. Conventional, static models of language and identity do not sit comfortably with the reality of this mobile and fluid social world. Although there may indeed be various local contexts where the lines of membership are more clearly drawn than others, for many learners of English in the era of globalisation, this is surely not the case.

Much of the discussion surrounding linguistic identity has been based on an assumption of a strong link between language and locality. In this study I am particularly interested in investigating what happens when the spatial dimension of language use is altered and the sense of ‘we’ that is fundamental to a linguistic identity is no longer dependent on a specific geographical location or rigid national ties.

The distinctive role of English as “integral to the globalisation processes” (Phillipson, 2001, p. 187) represents a significant threat to established models of language and identity. According to the twentieth-century, nationalist view of the world, the concepts of language, nation and identity were inextricably linked, with the belief in a common language one of the defining traits of the modern nation-state. The processes of globalisation challenge many of these assumptions; Maurais and Morris (2003) even go as far as to describe a “new global linguistic order” arising from globalisation and Giddens (1991, p.21) argues that “the concept of globalisation is best understood as expressing fundamental aspects of time-space distancing.” Traditionally, social identity has been closely linked to locality, but globalisation appears fundamentally to undermine these ties and this has profound implications for our understanding of language and identity, Csizér and Dörnyei (2005b, p. 30) assert that English is “turning into an increasingly international language, rapidly losing its national cultural base and becoming associated with a global culture.” This process requires learners to assess the values linked to this global culture, its language and how they as individuals relate to them; Lamb supports this with an observation that:

In the minds of learners, English may not be associated with particular geographical or cultural communities but with a spreading international

culture incorporating (inter alia) business, technological innovation, consumer values, democracy, world travel, and the multifarious icons of fashion, sport and music. (Lamb, 2004, p. 3)

### *Global and local identities*

Arnett (2002) points to a significant generational aspect to the process of globalisation. He observes that all but a few young people growing up in the world today are untouched by the effects of globalisation yet this was certainly not the case for their parents or grandparents, who may have grown up in communities relatively isolated from external influences. It is worth noting that Arnett focuses his attention on the case of young people, since, as was discussed earlier, a significant element of developing a sense of self comes from a construction of the Other and distinguishing one's self from that Other. It may be that for many young people around the world there is a complex process of identity negotiation occurring, which involves an element of national/ethnic identification interacting with generational affiliations. Arnett (2002, p. 777) goes on to argue that in response to these new conditions, many young people develop a "bicultural identity ... in addition to their local identity, young people develop a global identity that gives them a sense of belonging to a worldwide culture." Kramsch (1999, p. 131) reinforces this notion of a bicultural identity as being part of the learning process for learners of English in the context of a globalizing world, "The global spread of English challenges learners of English to develop both a global and a local voice." Linguistic identity and affiliation are no longer monolithic constructs; learners - and especially young people - are able to identify with local values and cultural practices as well as those of a global culture.



The problem with this concept of 'bicultural identity' is that it once again leads us down the path of a reductionist interpretation of cultural identity, presenting dichotomous notions of cultural affinity. The temptation to construe identity in terms of a simplistic binary distinction should be avoided in favour of an approach that recognises the multiplicity and complexity of social identity. Rather than view linguistic identity as a distinct choice, surely it would be more appropriate to view these concerns as part of a continuum, in line with Syed's (2001, p. 129) contention that:

Just as the self-concept is socially constructed, so is the notion of identity  
... Any given individual will have a number of social identities that operate  
in different social domains and are contextually triggered.

Beck offers a useful frame of reference for understanding notions of national identity within the context of globalisation. He describes a world in which:

an increasing number of people nowadays trade internationally, work internationally, love internationally, marry internationally, do research internationally, and their children are growing up and are being educated internationally. These children are not only bilingual; they move through the non-place of television and the Internet like fish through water. So why do we expect that political loyalties and identities will continue to be tied exclusively to a nation? (Beck, 2002, p. 31)

Beck goes on to identify two perspectives from which people choose to see themselves and their relationships with others in such a world. A *national perspective* is one that maintains clear lines of separation between ideas of national identity and the cultural Other, whereas a *cosmopolitan perspective* allows for coexistence between them. It would be counter-productive to regard these perspectives as being dichotomous, rather it would seem more profitable to view them as forming another continuum; at one end of the

spectrum are those individuals holding a strong national perspective and at the other those with a strong cosmopolitan perspective. It also seems unlikely that individuals' positions on this continuum are fixed; they are likely to shift according to experience, cultural setting and the degree to which beliefs in the otherness of the Other are internalised.

### *Situated linguistic identity*

In the field of second language education, a more flexible approach to identity and language learning emerges from a series of studies of interethnic contact in Canada carried out by Clément and his colleagues (see Clément & Noels, 1992; Clément et al., 2001; Noels & Clément, 1996), who developed the notion of situated linguistic identity. Situated identity locates social identity not simply in the mind of an individual, but as being produced by that individual's interaction with the social context; situated identity is rooted in a sense that "individuals seek to maintain a positive self-image given contextual and social determinants" (Clément et al., 2001, p. 562) and in which "sentiments of group belonging arise through negotiations between interactants" (Noels & Clément, 1996, p. 215). Although the concept of situated linguistic identity has developed from studies of interethnic contact in the unique Canadian context, it seems to have possible applications outside this specific environment.

The possibility that identity is portable and pliable offers an avenue to explore the implications for linguistic identity of Giddens's (1991, p. 52) assertion that, "Self-identity, in other words, is not something that is just given, as a result of the individual's action-system, but something that has to be routinely created and sustained in the reflexive activities of the individual." The situated-identity approach invites us to regard

ethnolinguistic identity as a negotiable, multi-faceted construct and this seems to be an approach far more applicable to the experiences of many learners of Global English (Graddol, 2006). Identity is negotiated through interaction with others but there is also a highly reflexive nature to its construction, with the vaguely defined characteristics of the global English-speaking community allowing individual learners greater flexibility in their interpretations of the values associated with the language and its speakers.

### **Learner identity**

So far my discussion of language learning motivation and identity has focused on ethnocultural aspects of identity and referring back to Dörnyei's (1994a) three-level motivational framework, this relates only to one of those levels: the language level. I now turn my attention to how notions of identity impact on the other levels of language learning motivation.

For most young people – adolescents and young adults – the educational experience is not simply concerned with formal learning; it is also a period of intense personal growth and identity formation. Young people are continuously developing ideas of who they are as individuals – and how they relate to others – as well as who they are as learners.

Learner identities have been defined as the “schemas derived from school experiences and academic performance that incite and direct either competent or problematic behaviors in school settings” (Wigfield & Wagner, 2007, p. 229) and from this definition it is possible to infer that identity beliefs may have both positive and negative impacts on learning. However, perhaps it is best to refrain from considering identity as a finite entity and recognise that for most young people identity is constantly

in a state of flux, with beliefs being constantly reevaluated and refined. Marcia (1980) schematises four stages of identity development in young people: *identity diffusion* refers to cases where no commitment has been made nor have alternatives been explored; *identity foreclosure* is used to describe cases where commitment has been made without a full exploration of the available alternatives; *identity moratorium* describes individuals in the process of exploration; *identity achievement* refers to those individuals who have developed coherent identity beliefs after an exploration of the available alternatives. In the case of language learners additional factors affecting the formation of identity alternatives and their exploration are perceived competence in the L2 and the values assigned to competence in the target language within the learning group; for example, a learner may be keen to explore alternatives associated with proficiency in the L2 but be inhibited from doing so by perceptions of the limitations of his or her own competence in the language or by any negative attitudes towards L2 proficiency amongst peers. Learner identity is far from a static individual trait; it is a constantly evolving process and one that evolves within the social context of the learning environment and I would now like to consider how we may better understand the various identity negotiations conducted by language learners.

### *Understanding language learner identity*

As a parallel to Dörnyei's three-levels of L2 motivation, a potentially helpful frame of reference for understanding language learning identity is that presented by Zimmerman (1998), who proposes a three-tier model of identity within the context of conversational interaction: discourse identity, situated identity, and transportable identity. Zimmerman shows how our identity as a language user is shaped by the nature of the

discourse that is taking place and our roles within that discourse. Let me illustrate my understanding of these terms and then propose how they may be adapted to fit the language learning experience:

- i. **Discourse identity** refers to the organisational demands on participants of the immediate interaction. In a language classroom, a typical discourse might be something like ‘seeking clarification’ and roles within this discourse could be ‘initiator’ and ‘responder’.
- ii. **Situated identity** is concerned with the broader situation and an alignment of roles with reference to the situation the participants find themselves in.
- iii. **Transportable identity** is “assignable or claimable on the basis of physical or culturally based insignia” (Zimmerman, 1998, p. 91) and this could refer to aspects of identity that are brought from outside the classroom.

Though Zimmerman’s research is based on conversational interaction, it seems to represent a possible foundation that may be adapted to the language learning process.

Below I offer a reframing of Zimmerman’s categories for direct reference to the language learning experience:

- i. **Task identity** refers to the organisational demands of the immediate learning task. A significant consideration for language learners in this respect are perceptions of their own L2 proficiency as these affect not only their ability to perform the assigned role satisfactorily, but also the amount of effort they are prepared to invest in that role. For example, a learner with limited proficiency may be prepared to accept the role of ‘stranger asking directions’ in a learning activity but resist a role that requires the forceful expression of complex opinions. On the other hand, a learner holding a high opinion of his or her own language skills may feel affronted by being assigned roles that do not allow for the expression of these abilities. In both extremes, the

degree of learner investment in the roles of the immediate learning task is likely to affect the amount of effort expended on that task.

- ii. **Classroom identity** is concerned with not only the obvious classroom roles, such as those of ‘teacher’ and ‘student’, but also the roles adopted by or assigned to the individual learner within the dynamics of a specific learning group. These roles may include various familiar classroom personae such as the ‘class joker’ or the ‘quiet student’.
- iii. **Transportable identity**, which retains Zimmerman’s terminology, refers to aspects of the learner’s identity that are not confined to the classroom and are maintained through other domains of social interaction; these could include characteristics such as those associated with physical appearance, nationality or gender, which are brought to the classroom from outside.

Language learners experience all the identity choices faced by learners of other school subjects but in addition there is a further stratum of issues relating to the individual’s sense of ethnic or national identity. In many cases, these two sets of identity considerations are likely to be interwoven, with national identity beliefs and beliefs in the values associated with the L2 being absorbed and internalised by the learning group.

### **Community, membership and participation**

In the previous section, I alluded to the importance of group values in the formation of individual identity beliefs and one of the critical issues in any study of human behaviour is to ‘reconcile the individual with the social’ (Pittaway, 2004, p. 215). People are unique individuals yet they also have a basic psychological need for relatedness with others and to belong to various social groups. The values of these groups – from small units, such as the family, to larger units, such as the school or workplace – and the roles and rules associated with membership are a significant factor

influencing behaviour. An individual's actions and behaviour are often regarded as being typical of members of a particular social group that the individual belongs to:

... if you observe a group of teens, or some friends at a restaurant, or a large crowd at a soccer match, you will also be struck at how similar people are to one another in dress and behavior. Groups and situations seem somehow to submerge uniqueness in a sea of commonality, and the same person behaves differently as he or she moves from situation to situation and group to group. (Hogg & Reid, 2006, p. 7)

In this section, I consider how a sense of group – or community – membership impacts on the behaviour of language learners. I intend to depict the language learner as negotiating a sense of belonging to two communities: the class and the target language community.

The obvious location for many language learners' identity negotiations would be the immediate classroom and its community of learners. Mainstream educational psychology has long recognised the importance of the learning environment and the influence of peers in the motivation to learn, with a broad consensus that those “who enjoy positive relationships with peers also tend to be engaged in and even excel at academic tasks” (Wentzel, 2007, p. 279). It would seem logical to assume that for language learners an environment that encouraged peer support for language learning would be likely to encourage efforts to learn. There is undoubtedly a great deal of truth in this argument, but there is also a need for caution in applying too linear a relationship between successful language learning and peer group support since for many young people language learning contains an element of trying to extend beyond one's immediate environmental limitations. The ultimate goal of many foreign language learners is not

interaction with those around them but with others, who may in fact represent values not present in the immediate learning situation, or in extreme cases, values antithetical to those prevalent in the peer group. Peer support is undoubtedly a major factor in young people's language learning experience but for many language learners another significant factor may be the unseen presence of L2 speakers and the values they represent. It may be that the values of the peer group and those of the L2 speakers do not always exist in harmony.

### *Imagined community*

The vicarious presence of L2 speakers in the construction of the social identities of language learners is especially interesting in learning situations where there is little opportunity for direct contact with those L2 speakers and in order to explore this a little further I would now like to consider the notion of an imagined community and the possible contribution it could make to our understanding of how learners of English transcend time and space to participate in the activities of a language community beyond the limits of their classrooms.

Norton (Kanno & Norton, 2003; Norton & Kamal, 2003; Norton & Toohey, 2002; Norton, 2000; Norton, 2001) developed the notion of an imagined community for language learners in response to her observations of the struggles of immigrant learners in Canada and I would like to extend this notion of community to learners of English in contexts lacking immediate access to an obvious L2 community. Imagined communities are described as "groups of people not immediately tangible and accessible, with whom we connect through the power of the imagination" (Kanno & Norton, 2003, p. 241). Drawing on McMillan and Chavis (1986, p. 247) to describe how a sense of community



“can exist independent of territorial context,” four conditions are proposed:

1. Membership
2. The community’s influence on members and vice versa
3. Reinforcement of the individual’s identity by community membership
4. Shared affective connections

Wenger expands on how a sense of community membership may be fostered and sustained even though the members of that community experience little in the way of direct contact:

Nor does the term community imply necessarily co-presence, a well-defined, identifiable group, or socially visible boundaries. It does imply participation in an activity system about which participants share understandings concerning what they are doing and what that means in their lives and for their communities. (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 98)

Imagined communities employ imagination not as a means of escapist fantasy but as a way of reaching out beyond the immediate environment and experience to participate in this activity system. Norton’s conceptualisation of an imagined community borrows heavily from Wenger, who describes the imagination as a “process of expanding oneself by transcending our time and space and creating new images of the world and ourselves” (Wenger, 1998, p. 176). The use of the imagination is neither escapist nor is it unregulated. Appadurai (2001, p. 6) contends that imagination, “is a faculty that informs the daily lives of ordinary people in myriad ways ... it is in and through the imagination that modern citizens are disciplined.” Expanding beyond immediate environmental restrictions through the imagination as it is presented here seems to offer a possible framework for understanding the behaviour of learners of English in situations where access to the language is not immediately available; this is a framework that allows learners to transcend time and space to create new images of themselves, yet it is also a

framework that remains systematic and regulated.

### *Regulating the imagination*

The regulation of the imagination is a fascinating topic. The imagination and fantasy can have both positive and negative behavioural outcomes (Oettingen & Hagenah, 2007). In some cases, the imagination can serve as a template for future action, whereas in others fantasies can serve to provide the individual with a vicarious experience of achievement without having to undertake the necessary efforts; fantasy can provide a means of avoiding effort. An obvious factor in the behavioural outcomes of an individual's imaginings is the feasibility of the vision; for example, I am unlikely to persist with efforts to pursue any visions of myself defying natural laws, such as by flying using only my flapping arms. In the case of visions of belonging to a social group, surely some possibility of participation in the events of that community is required for those visions to have any degree of feasibility. I would suggest it is this sense of belonging and participation that is key to the regulation of learners' involvement with their imagined communities. Wenger identifies three modes of belonging to a community:

1. **Engagement:** Active involvement in mutual processes of negotiation of meaning.
2. **Imagination:** Creating images of the world and seeing connections through time and space by extrapolating from our own experience.
3. **Alignment:** coordinating our energy and activities in order to fit within broader structures and contribute to broader enterprises.

(Wenger, 1998, pp. 173-174)

For the language learner whose opportunities for immediate, active engagement

with a target language community are limited, the imagination offers one possible route to membership of that community. In fact, imagination does more than simply provide a means of access to the activities of the community; in many cases, the community itself and its activities may exist only in the imagination of the learner. In situations where a learner does not have access to any fluent L2 interlocutors, it is still possible for that learner to create such opportunities for involvement and engagement within an imaginary L2 community. It seems unlikely that learners would maintain two distinct sets of beliefs; there is likely to be some element of crossover between their sense of actual participation in the events of their immediate learning group and their membership of any imagined community. Earlier, I made reference to the influence of peers on the learner, but it is also essential that we do not overlook the importance of the activities of these imagined communities which Kanno and Norton (2003, p. 241) argue are “no less real than the ones in which learners have daily engagement.”

#### **4.4 SELF BELIEFS AND LANGUAGE LEARNING**

In the final part of this chapter, I turn to theories of the self and how they may offer a route to a better understanding of language learning motivation. As Baumeister acknowledges, “The self is one of the most actively researched topics in all of psychology” (Baumeister, 1999, p. 1) and the term ‘self’ is another, like identity, that is almost a whole academic discipline in itself and great care needs to be taken in avoiding a ‘dilettante’ appropriation of the concept to the sphere of L2 motivation theory. Hattie (2003) warns of the dangers of a fashion for researchers to easily turn to the self-concept, arguing that the self-concept:

... seems to mould itself as the answer to every societal ill ... a catch-cry

for those who wish to advance something safe and sound. It is still among the terms with the highest hits in PsycInfo ... It seems that if we use the word self- we have instant respect.

The literature on the self contains numerous approaches and diverse terminologies that at times overlap. I intend to restrict my discussion to those aspects of self theory that may help take our understanding of language learning motivation beyond its social psychological roots.

A fundamental aspect of language use is self expression therefore it logically follows that in order to engage in any form of self expression an individual requires some concept of the self that is being expressed. Dweck (2000, p. xi) defines the 'self' as the "meaning systems" that people employ to "organize their world and give meaning to their experiences." Norman and Aron (2003, p. 500) expand on this by saying that "one's self-concept is an important influence in regulating behaviour, functioning to organise an individual's interpretation of the world, determining what stimuli are selected for attention and what inferences are drawn." I am primarily interested in exploring how this self-concept can 'organize an individual's interpretation of the world' and 'regulate behaviour' in respect to language learning.

#### *A multidimensional self*

It is important to note that, as has been recognised since its earliest theorising, that the self is not a single, unified construct: "Properly speaking, a man has as many social selves as there are individuals who recognize him and carry an image of him in their mind" (James, 1999, p. 70). Marsh (1986, p. 8) articulates very similar ideas employing more current terminology: "... a person's self-perceptions that are formed through experience with and interpretations of one's environment. They are influenced especially

by evaluations by significant others, reinforcements, and attributions for one's own behaviour." One of Marsh's major contributions to self theory is that of the multidimensional self (see Marsh, Byrne, & Shavelson, 1988; Marsh & Hattie, 1996; Marsh & Shavelson, 1985; Marsh, 1993; Shavelson, Hubner, & Stanton, 1976). The multidimensional self explains how it is possible for learners to hold very different beliefs about themselves according to various domains of the human experience; examples of these dimensions to the self-concept would be the academic self, the social self or the physical self. This multidimensional self is also hierarchical, to the extent that a particular domain may consist of various sub-domains; for example, it may be possible for an individual to hold one set of self beliefs regarding mathematical abilities and other beliefs when it comes to verbal skills as part of an overall set of academic self beliefs. The obvious challenge to second language education is how the concept of a multidimensional self can accommodate foreign language abilities. To a certain extent, many of the qualities associated with foreign language proficiency are already covered by existing domains of the self. Is it possible to consider foreign language learning as merely a subset of academic self beliefs or should we separate those self beliefs associated with the use of a foreign language? How would we understand the self beliefs of an individual who did not consider herself to be particularly academically gifted but saw herself as a very sociable individual? Such an individual may find the academic side of language learning unappealing yet feel attracted to the social possibilities that it offers. Foreign language learning is different from other subjects and this requires a special consideration of how the field accords with current self theories.

## **The self and cultural context**

Before moving on to a consideration of how the self-concept may relate to language learning motivation, I will refer to one particularly relevant challenge to the application of the self-concept to language learning theory. This challenge comes in the form of the view that the self-concept is not a universal one; it is culture specific. This argument holds that the dominant theoretical models of the self emerging from industrialised, Western societies are not applicable outside those contexts. Markus and Kitayama (1991, p. 340) refer to two culturally based frameworks of self beliefs:

The independent view is most clearly exemplified in some sizable segment of American culture, as well as in many Western European cultures. The interdependent view is exemplified in Japanese culture as well as in other Asian cultures. But it is also characteristic of African, Latin-American, and many southern European cultures.

They go on to elaborate on some of the defining characteristics of the two distinct self-concepts:

In many Western cultures, there is a faith in the inherent separateness of distinct persons. The normative imperative of this culture is to become independent from others and to discover and express one's unique attributes. In contrast, many non-Western cultures insist... on the fundamental connectedness of human beings to each other. A normative imperative of these cultures is to maintain this interdependence among individuals.

Markus and Kitayama's position that there are major cultural differences in the self beliefs held by individuals is redolent of the distinction between individualist and collectivist cultures made in cross-cultural psychology. The independent self view seems to fit with ideas of individualist cultures, while the interdependent view sits well with

notions of collectivist cultures. However, in a comprehensive review of the literature in this area, Oyserman et al. (2002, p. 4) warn against an over-simplification of the distinction between individualism and collectivism, pointing to an absence of any “systematic test of the underlying assumption that European Americans value or behave more individualistically than others.” They point to two crucial weaknesses in the literature relating to individualist and collectivist cultures; firstly, they argue that some cultural psychologists are too readily willing to accept cultural differences as an explanation for their findings, and secondly, they point to a false dichotomy between collectivist and individualist self beliefs. Bond (2002, p. 74) takes up the argument with reference to the US – the most commonly presented example of an individualist culture – and Japan –the usual standard-bearer for collectivist cultures:

... one might well ask why Oyserman et al. evinced such surprise in their readers when they convincingly demonstrated ... that Japanese are often more individualistic, not less, than Americans? Using hindsight, we never should have been so surprised.

While it is surely necessary to recognise that cultural background can play a significant role in the construction of self beliefs, there is also a need to avoid making sweeping generalisations about the nature of these cultural differences. Cultural background is one of many variables – such as gender or age – that influence the development of self beliefs; these cultural factors should be acknowledged but not overemphasised.

### **Possible selves**

In my earlier attempt to describe the concept of the self, I ignored the temporal dimension to self beliefs; self beliefs are not static, they evolve over time, according to

experience and context. Nevertheless, the “traditional view has tended to be that the self-concept is a summary of self-knowledge, derived from the person’s past experiences” (Carver, Reynolds, & Scheier, 1994, p. 133). I would like to consider how self beliefs are used to organise and regulate future-directed behaviour, how the self system relates to motivation and in order to do this, I intend to discuss the concept of the possible self.

Possible selves are hypothetical images about one’s future, including the ideal selves that we would like to become, such as ‘the good parent,’ ‘the successful business person,’ and ‘the loving spouse;’ as well as the selves that we are afraid of becoming, such as ‘the alcoholic,’ ‘the college dropout,’ and ‘the lonely spinster.’ (Strahan & Wilson, 2005, p. 3)

The conceptualisation of the possible self presented above points to two distinct elements to an individual’s possible self beliefs: aspiration towards states that the individual would like to realise and apprehension regarding undesired outcomes. These future-directed images also require some reference point, an anchor that ties possible outcomes to expected ones. Three basic possible selves can be identified:

1. **An expected self:** reflects realistic anticipated outcomes of a future action;
2. **A hoped for self:** reflects an individual’s wishes and aspirations;
3. **A feared self:** reflects a generally negative set of a future outcomes that the individual seeks to avoid. (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Markus & Ruvolo, 1989)

A sound theory of motivation demands an understanding of how these possible selves create and sustain effort, how these self guides translate into actual behaviour.

### **From visions to action**

Obviously not all the visions that individuals have of themselves result in directed



behaviour, so how can we account for some visions of the self having powerful behavioural consequences whereas others have very little effect on the individual's behaviour? One interpretation of how the self-concept organises future directed behaviour is Higgins's self discrepancy theory. Higgins (1987) presents three basic domains of the self:

1. **The actual self:** representing the beliefs that you or others hold about who you really are at a given point in time.
2. **The ideal self:** representing the beliefs about who you would like to be and how you would wish others to view you.
3. **The ought self:** representing the beliefs that you attribute to others about who you should be.

Although there are some essential differences between Higgins's conceptualisation and the possible selves framework – one such difference is that Higgins appears to offer these self options as singular, goal-like states, whereas the possible selves framework stresses the diversity of possible self states – the two are broadly similar and clearly related. In both cases, the self-concept derives from a set of guides constructed from a complex fusion of our hopes, fears, aspirations, obligations, duties and expectations. Boyatzis and Akrivou (2006) focus on the motivating role of the ideal self component describing it as being “both privately conceptualised and socially influenced ... manifest as a personal vision, or an image of what kind of person one wishes to be, what the person hopes to accomplish in life and work” (p. 625). The behavioural consequences of this ‘personal vision’ occur:

... once the force of the ideal self is activated, it plays an executive or motivational function within the self. It monitors and guides all actions

and decisions in a direction which ensures deeper self-satisfaction through the articulation and direction towards either. (2006, p. 625)

They go on to identify three core components to the ideal self: one component consists of the dreams and visions the individual holds for the future; the second component is hope, which they characterise as being grounded in self-efficacy and feasibility in order to distinguish hope as a motivating force from false or unrealistic hopes; the third component relates to the individual's core identity and relatively stable personality traits. The ideal self produces a personal vision that forms the basis for experimentation and new behaviour which should ultimately lead to the achievement of the desired changes in the actual self.

#### *Ought beliefs and their internalisation*

One problematic area for Boyatzis and Akrivou is the role of the ought self in the construction of the personal visions that drive behaviour. Is the ought self an integral part of the self-concept or are these ought beliefs merely some form of frame of reference affecting the construction of an individual's self-concept? All individuals belong to various social groups of one kind or another and membership of these groups inevitably exerts some form of normative role on the behaviour of the individual group member. Boyatzis and Akrivou (2006, p. 628) describe the ought self as "someone else's version of what they think your ideal self should be." Nevertheless, if we refer back to the discussion of self determination theory in Chapter 3, it seems plausible that the internalisation of these external norms may function in a similar fashion; individuals will internalise different socialisation forces to varying degrees. A simple illustration might be that of a child who joins his local football team with an imagination full of visions of

scoring spectacular goals and the attendant individual acclaim. Over time, through coaching and experience, this child may become persuaded of the value of teamwork and more mundane duties involved in the sport. It may be the case that some children ultimately come to gain greater satisfaction from effective team play, whereas others are prepared to merely pay lipservice to the requirements of the team while still harbouring dreams of personal glory. The child who comes to value and enjoy teamwork represents a case of the normative values of the group – in this case the team – being internalised as a personal vision; the other child may understand and respect these group norms but does not internalise them to the same degree. This example highlights some of the confusion surrounding the function of these ought self beliefs; on the one hand they seem to be feeding into the ideal self but in the other case they appear to exist independently.

Greater precision is required in the theorising of ought self beliefs, both in the nature of these beliefs and in the roles that they perform. The word ‘ought’ and individuals’ attitudes to responsibility can be ambiguous. If I am a parent driving a car with some children, I *ought* to wear a seatbelt and insist that they do likewise. Why? Is it because I consider myself a responsible person and wish to act in a responsible fashion or is it because I fear the consequences of what may happen in the event of an accident? I would suggest that both motives are present and this encapsulates some of the problems relating to the ought self; as recognised by Higgins, ought beliefs contain both a sense of the ‘person I ought to be’ and something close to a feared self in the sense of what I ought to do in order to prevent a feared outcome.

Although the exact relationship between ought self beliefs and personal visions is still a little unclear, there is a consensus that the recognition of a need to conform to external norms plays a pivotal role in guiding behaviour and self discrepancy theory offers a possible explanation of how we employ these guides. Higgins (1987) argues that people seek to reduce the discrepancies between their actual selves and ideal/ought selves; individuals are constantly evaluating an assortment of aspirations and obligations against the perception - their own and the perceptions of others - of who they are at a given point in time in order 'to reach a condition where our self-concept matches our personally relevant self-guides' (p. 154). It is this constant process of evaluation and re-evaluation which helps us to organize our actions.

Another crucial factor in the behavioural outcomes of these self-guides is the specificity and detail of these visions of possible selves:

... the easier a possible self is to imagine, and the more detailed the possible self, the more available it will be. If a possible self is available, then it will influence one's actual behavior to attain or avoid that possible self. (Norman & Aron, 2003, p. 501)

The individual's ability to visualize themselves performing a given action forms the basis of an action plan and the more detailed and more specific these images, the more likely a successful outcome. Norman and Aron (2003, p. 501) elaborate: "Studies have demonstrated that for cognitive availability to influence expectancy an event must be imagined and it should be as specific as possible."

However, not all visions are translated into actions. I can illustrate this point with a simple example from my own life. I have a long-standing yearning to be able to play the

piano and have great admiration for anybody able produce even the most rudimentary melody using two hands on a keyboard. My visions of myself playing the piano can be very specific yet despite all the positive attitudes, despite the clear visions, I have never made even the slightest attempt to seriously learn how to play.

In this case, the mental imagery of my piano virtuosity has never developed beyond the realms of escapist fantasy. There are no behavioural consequences whatsoever resulting from these mental images. What is it that makes some visions develop beyond the visual imagery stage while others do not? There must be some form of decision-making process by which I come to the conclusion that it is not worth my making the effort to learn the piano. These decisions would probably include considerations such as beliefs in my capacity to learn the piano successfully, self-efficacy beliefs; the absence of any negative consequences associated with my failure to learn the piano; and the lack of any clear plan regarding how I might go about realising my dreams, the lack of sub-goals and strategies. Visions in themselves are not sufficient to produce motivated behaviour; these visions are only powerful motivators when supported by other enabling conditions.

### **The ideal self: guide or goal?**

My main principal interest in this research is with the ideal self part of the self system and in this next section I consider in more detail how the ideal self operates to regulate behaviour and what distinguishes this from other theoretical approaches to motivation. Markus and Ruvulo (1989, p. 212) describe possible selves as “specific representations of one’s self in future states and circumstances that serve to organize and energize one’s actions.” However, Erikson (2007, p. 349) warns against too narrow an interpretation of the possible self simply as an abstract representation of the future. He

goes on to argue that:

a possible self ... should include an experience of what it would be like to be in this state (i.e., an experience of the state from “the inside” and not just an abstract belief that the state is desired or undesired or more or less likely).

The future-directed nature of possible selves leads to a tendency to equate possible selves with goals and this prompts Dörnyei (Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei, in press) to question whether the two are equivalent or not. His answer is a resounding ‘no’, echoing Erikson’s emphasis on the experiential aspects of possible selves, claiming that it is “the experiential element that makes possible selves ‘larger’ than any combinations of goal-related constructs.”

The theoretical discussions surrounding the nature of self-guides can become abstract and somewhat obscure, therefore I will attempt to ground my illustration of how I see ideal self guides operating with a simple, concrete example.

If I, a healthy adult male, were sitting on a crowded commuter train and noticed a heavily pregnant woman standing burdened with bulky shopping bags while minding another small child, how would I act and what decisions would affect my behaviour? At one level, I might claim that I would give up my seat based on internalisation of a widely held belief in society that to do so is a good thing. However, I might also observe that nobody else in the train has given up their seat and this actually exerts a counter-pressure on me to follow suit and not give up my seat, as to break ranks would imply a challenge to the face of those around me who had chosen not to offer their seat to the pregnant woman. Both of these sets of considerations stem from pressure to conform to external

norms, or ought beliefs; one set of external factors coming from my understanding of the values of the society in which I live and the other coming from my observations of the actual behaviour of those around me. There may also be another dimension to the decision-making process: an internally driven dimension. Perhaps, I do not consider myself to be a particularly charitable or selfless individual but would like to become such a person. In such a case, I am faced with a stark choice: Do I act according to my perception of my current wants – I am tired after a stressful day at work and since I consider myself to be a selfish person, I should not give up my seat – or do I attempt to act like the person I want to be – a charitable person courageous enough to withstand social pressures to act selfishly? If I act according to my ideas of how the person I would like to be would act, I am, in effect, using an ideal self guide – my vision of how a kind and charitable me would act in this situation – to regulate my behaviour. I am actualising my ideal self through experience; I am experiencing being my ideal self without actually believing that I have yet become the person I want to be.

This example also seems to highlight the problematic nature of the crossover between ought and ideal self beliefs; a great deal of my ideal self beliefs here have come from the internalisation of external norms, beliefs in what I ought to do in this situation, yet surely they are none the less personal for that. These beliefs do not function as some kind of goal, with a desired end-state in mind; instead they are guides that require me to act as my ideal self would so that I may realise that ideal self. In this particular situation, it seems that in order for these self guides to operate effectively, two crucial conditions must be met: firstly, these guides must be specific and detailed enough to inform me how

my ideal self would act in this particular instance; and secondly, there must be convergence between my ought and ideal self beliefs, what Higgins (1987) calls availability.

#### **4.5 DÖRNYEI'S L2 MOTIVATIONAL SELF SYSTEM**

Although the 'self' is one of the most researched areas in mainstream psychology, there has been little discussion of the concept in the field of second language education. The only major attempt to apply self theories to language learning motivation that I am aware of is Dörnyei's (2005) *L2 Motivational Self System*. The L2 motivational self system is the product of Dörnyei's long-standing interest in confronting the problematic role of integrativeness in L2 motivation theory and represents an ambitious framework for building bridges between established concepts in L2 motivation and new theoretical directions. In this study, I wish to approach the concept of an L2 motivational self system as a means of delivering L2 motivation theory from the restrictions of its social psychological origins and in this section I will outline the main aspects of this L2 motivational self system.

Dörnyei's model fuses aspects of the possible selves theory with Higgins's framework and proposes three dimensions to this motivational system:

##### **1. Ideal L2 Self**

The Ideal L2 Self is based on the individual's aspirations and goals as a language learner.

##### **2. Ought-to L2 Self**

The Ought-to-L2 Self is a product of the individual's perceived obligations and responsibilities as a language learner.



### 3. L2 Learning Experience

This dimension is derived from the learning environment and learners' perceptions of their previous language learning successes and failures.

The theoretical pivot of this motivational system is that the ideal L2 self essentially replaces integrativeness as the base from which to understand a sense of emotional identification with a language, a language community and its values. The sense of emotional identification conceptualised in the ideal L2 self goes both much broader and deeper than that implied by integrativeness; the ideal L2 self emerges from characteristics of individual personality, aspects of the learner's social environment, and sociocultural values present in the context in which language learning is taking place. It should be pointed out that none of these are new concepts; many of these are familiar from the socio-educational model and Dörnyei's own three-level framework of language learning motivation. However, what I would argue is new is how they are put together around the unifying core of the personal visions produced by the ideal L2 self. These personal visions afford a greater role for imagery and imagination in the motivation to learn a language and this appears to be a major breakthrough, which offers the potential to take L2 motivation theory beyond narrowly conceived linear causal relationships. For many language learners, especially those in contexts that offer little opportunity for direct contact with L2 speakers, language learning requires a logical leap that takes the individual learner beyond his or her immediate environment and much of the energy sustaining that leap is provided by the imagination.

The L2 motivational self system presents two core sets of self guides, the ideal L2 self and the ought-to L2 self. Earlier, I discussed some of the theoretical ambiguity

surrounding how ideal and ought beliefs interrelate with each other in mainstream psychology and some of the questions raised seem equally applicable to the field of language learning. A further complication in the internalisation of ought beliefs for language learners may occur in cases where there is a perceived conflict between the ought values associated with L2 proficiency and other ought beliefs; for example, there are places in the world in which local cultural values or religious beliefs do not welcome the values equated with a global English-speaking culture. In such cases, language learners are faced with a complex array of calculations if they wish to align these conflicting ought beliefs.

For the ideal L2 self to function as an effective motivator there must be behavioural outcomes from the personal visions resulting from ideal L2 self beliefs. If the ideal L2 self is merely a static desired end-state, this is unlikely to have significant behavioural consequences; simply imagining one's self as being proficient in the L2 is unlikely to make it happen. The learner must construct the ideal L2 self in a way that facilitates access and reference to the self guides and for this to occur. The concept of an ideal L2 self has its origins in the theoretical field of possible selves, and a cursory glance at a thesaurus throws up the following synonyms for 'possible': feasible, achievable, conceivable, plausible, imaginable, probable. The word 'possible' encompasses a wide spectrum of meaning, covering a lot of ground between the conceivable and the probable; an imaginable L2 self is surely not equivalent to a plausible L2 self. Efforts at realisation are more likely to be focused and directed towards those visions at the plausible end of the 'possible' spectrum. For example, if I were to imagine myself

communicating in another language, I might like to think of myself as being articulate, witty, simultaneously popular and profound in that language, however, if I did not regard myself a particularly articulate person I would be unlikely to believe that I could be immediately transformed into an eloquent communicator through the acquisition of a second language. Visions of the self that are not seen as attainable are likely to remain within the realm of idle fantasy – note the ready collocation of the adjective ‘idle’ with the notion of fantasy. For an idealisation to have meaningful behavioural consequences, the individual must surely retain some belief that this idealisation is achievable; for visions to act as effective motivators there must be some base in reality, on some form of assessment of the current, actual self.

In the case of L2 learning, the notion of plausibility must be based to some extent on the individual’s perceptions of current competence in the L2 and how this relates to visions of an ideal L2 self; plausibility is partly a function of the distance between an idealisation and the perceived current reality. Although plausibility must be a significant consideration in the conversion of imagined visions into directed effort, for the ideal L2 self to be a truly exciting breakthrough in L2 motivation theory there must be something more than a simple, linear relationship between current competence, visions of the future, and motivated behaviour. If we were able to categorically state something along the lines of motivated behaviour occurs when ideal L2 self beliefs = current competence + 1 (where ‘+1’ indicates one step above the current level), then second language learning would be a very straightforward process. However, this is certainly not the case; second language learning and motivation tend to be characterised by unpredictability,

volatility, and irregularity. What makes the ideal L2 self concept truly exciting is that it suggests a possible explanation for how some learners manage to extend beyond the restrictions of their immediate environment and competence to make the sustained efforts required for successful language learning. A greater understanding of how the visions produced by the ideal L2 self are reconciled with perceptions of current competence may offer insights into why some learners appear to use the imagination as an effective motivator while others do not have any significant behavioural consequences from the images that they create of themselves as language users.

Both ideal and ought-to L2 self beliefs are essentially future directed, referring to the individual's aspirations and perceived obligations as a language learner; the L2 user the learner would like to become and the L2 user the learner thinks that he or she should become. The third component to Dörnyei's system, the L2 learning experience, accounts for how learners evaluate past experiences to project future-directed goals. The conceptualisation of both causal and teleological dimensions to the self system recognises the temporal nature of L2 motivation, simultaneously aligning this system with established theoretical concepts, in the form of process-oriented approaches, while suggesting new theoretical departures.

### **The L2 experience**

Before accepting this theory wholesale, it is necessary to consider possible limitations. Is this system merely a repackaging of old concepts? Is it simply yet another version of the socio-educational model, locating the motivation to learn a language solely in the mind of the individual? Is it just a rephrasing of the familiar refrain of integrativeness and instrumentality couched in fashionable terminology? Does this model

genuinely open up new theoretical directions or will it eventually lead us back down a well-trodden path?

Perhaps the most significant problem arising from the L2 self motivational system lies not with the theory itself but in how others may choose to interpret it. The biggest danger that I can envisage comes from the tendency to dichotomize and the potential the framework in its existing form allows for reduction and dichotomisation. The model presents the self system as having three central components: the ideal L2 self, ought-to self, and the L2 learning experience. However, only two of these contain the word 'self', therefore the temptation remains to ignore the L2 learning experience dimension of the self system, to regard this as something separate, and concentrate on a simple dichotomous construct based on the ideal and ought-to selves. If this happens then there is a significant risk that we will be left with a mere repackaging of familiar concepts in fashionable terminology, with the ideal L2 self replacing integrativeness as a label for the affective dimension to the motivation to learn a language and the ought-to self covering the more pragmatic aspects.

The term 'L2 learning experience' itself seems somewhat problematic in that it hints at a purely classroom-based construct. (When I say 'hints' I should stress that at no point is this stated but neither is it clearly stated otherwise. In no way does Dörnyei even imply that the L2 learning experience is purely a classroom-based construct, yet the possibility for such an inference is clearly there.) This is an area that I believe is open to misinterpretation and allows for its marginalisation; the ideal and ought-to constructs being theoretically exciting whereas the learning experience aspect may be relegated to a

matter of mundane, classroom practice. 'Learning' experience seems at once both too narrow and too broad a concept; on the one hand, it is too narrow in that it suggests a classroom-based experience and too broad in that almost anything a learner does with the L2 could be classified as a learning experience. For these reasons I propose this 'L2 learning experience' should be reconsidered as simply the *L2 experience*. The advantage of this adjustment is that it removes the risk of the narrow, classroom-based interpretation of this aspect of the L2 self and allows us to consider the experience of L2 learners in a more comprehensive manner, taking into account learning experiences both within and outside the confines of the classroom.

In order to avoid allowing the L2 motivational self system to be co-opted as yet another reductionist model, I suggest that a more prominent role must be afforded to this third domain; rather than being regarded as something of an appendage lurking awkwardly in the background, this participatory dimension should be considered the engine of the self system. It is this participatory dimension that reconciles the individual with the social context. Visions of the self on their own do not necessarily have behavioural consequences; it is the situating of the self within a community of practice - either actual or imagined - that allows the individual the opportunity expand on the visual imagery of the self-concept in the form of motivated behaviour.

#### **4.6 SUMMARY**

I began this chapter by considering the current state of L2 motivation theory and its need for new directions in the wake of the breakdown of the theoretical consensus surrounding the value of the social psychological approach. The principal aim of the chapter was to present a framework for understanding L2 motivation that has been

guided by the need to appreciate the role of interaction between the individual and social context occurring over time.

The social psychological approach to L2 motivation recognised the importance of social identity in the language learning process and I have looked at two particular aspects of social identity relevant to language learners: identity considerations arising from the immediate learning situation as well as a sense of national identity and how this may affect feelings of affiliation with an L2 community. One particular issue identified was that, certainly in the case of English, the shifting dynamic between local and global values within the context of globalisation challenges L2 motivation theory to adapt.

Since the early 1990s L2 learning motivation theory has been struggling to shake itself free from the shackles of its social psychological origins and this has led to a degree of fragmentation as various researchers have pursued differing theoretical directions and approaches. I strongly believe that the field is now entering a phase in which the relative merits of the disparate theoretical approaches are evaluated and consolidated within a unifying framework. In this chapter, I have argued that Dörnyei's L2 motivational self system represents such a framework, incorporating a range of theoretical considerations around the central concept of the motivational power of the personal visions individuals hold of themselves as language users.

**PART 2**

**METHODS**



## CHAPTER 5

### *RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: RATIONALE AND RESEARCH DESIGN*

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, as a prelude to a description of the methods used in the study, I review some of the major decisions taken in the process of designing and conducting this research. My basic guiding principle in planning the research has been that “theory building and instrument construction are inexorably intertwined, such that each will suffer if the two are separated” (Marsh, 2006, p. 7). A further, oft-ignored, factor guiding research aims and design is the personal experience of the individual researcher and I begin this chapter by considering how my own experience has shaped my approach to the current research.

If I recall my earliest encounters with the theory of research methodology, I can clearly remember studying some of the basic differences between quantitative and qualitative research methods. I can also recall that at some point along the way I leapt to the premature assumption that the obvious conclusion about to be drawn was that these two methodologies were complementary and that good research would naturally involve a balance between quantitative and qualitative data. It was only upon subsequent reading that I discovered the error of my ways; little was I aware of the intense debate – the ‘paradigm war’ - that was raging at the time. Nevertheless, that initial impression has been difficult to extinguish and the more I have come to reflect on the nature of research and research methods, the more I have come to wonder just how erroneous my initial assumptions were. In this section, I intend to discuss some of the main theoretical

considerations informing the methodology of this research and would like to pay particular attention to the possibilities offered by a mixed methods approach.

## 5.2 QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE APPROACHES

### **Divergent methods**

An essential difference between quantitative and qualitative research is neatly evoked by Sandelowski's (2003) 'tables or tableaux', used to contrast the presentation of quantitative and qualitative research. The implication being that quantitative research is primarily concerned with the objective analysis of numerical data – tables – whereas qualitative research rejects objectivity in favour of a more subjective interpretation – tableaux – of non-numerical data. Cassell and Symon (1994, p. 7) are more extensive in outlining some of the major characteristics that distinguish qualitative research from the quantitative tradition, pointing to:

... a focus on interpretation rather than quantification; an emphasis on subjectivity rather than objectivity; flexibility in the process of conducting research; an orientation towards process rather than outcome; a concern with context - regarding behaviour and situation as inextricably linked in forming experiences; and finally, an explicit recognition of the impact of the research process on the research situation.

At a very superficial level, this distinction may appear to be a merely technical one; quantitative researchers prefer using large-scale attitudinal questionnaires to collect their data while qualitative researchers use interviews. However, careful consideration reveals a potentially more fundamental split and some would go as far as to say that the two traditions belong to distinct theories of knowledge and are thus incompatible. Morse (1994) contends that both approaches are based on totally different philosophic

assumptions and this inevitably results in different aims and different uses of research methods. Guba (1987, p. 31) even goes as far as to claim that the two approaches are incompatible and mutually exclusive “just as surely as the belief in a round world precludes belief in a flat one.”

The quantitative tradition has evolved from the ‘hard’ sciences, where the world can be divided into discrete components and only through an objective analysis of these small, individual components may one come to an understanding of the whole. As Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p. 10) point out, qualitative research is a little more difficult to define as it can be “many things to many people.” There is an argument that holds that “qualitative research is “home” for a wide variety of scholars who appear to share very little except their general distaste for and distrust of “mainstream” (usually conceived as quantitative) research” (Sandelowski, 2003, p. 323). Without going into a detailed discussion of the historical development of qualitative research methods, it is possible to state that, in many respects, the qualitative approach has grown in reaction to the post-war dominance of quantitative methodology; a new generation of researchers sought to challenge an orthodoxy that insists that knowledge could be obtained solely through a combination of objective enquiry and the application of rigorous statistical techniques.

### **Incompatible or complementary approaches?**

It would be foolish to deny the major differences that exist between quantitative and qualitative approaches; however, it may be pertinent to ask whether divergence necessarily leads to incompatibility? Maxwell and Loomis (2003) attack the notion of incompatibility between the two research traditions by taking issue with the idea of theoretical unity within either of the two research paradigms, pointing to elements of

internal disagreement within each; not all qualitative researchers have the same theoretical assumptions and there are some disagreements of principle amongst quantitative researchers. The boundaries between quantitative and qualitative approaches are not so much clear-cut as blurred. The differences between the two approaches are of degree rather than substance. The obvious extension of this argument is to wonder if the existence of disagreement and variance within the two frameworks suggests the possibility of some degree of commonality and overlap between the two paradigms.

### **5.3 MIXED METHODS**

The notion that quantitative and qualitative methods may in some way be complementary as opposed to incompatible leads us into the field of mixed methods research. The field of mixed methods research is one that has grown in credibility – as evidenced by the publication of recent influential works (Creswell, 1994; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003) and in the field of applied linguistics, Dörnyei (2007) – as the intensity of the paradigm wars of the 70s and 80s has subsided. Sandelowski (2003, p. 323) even goes as far as to argue that mixed methods has now become “methodologically fashionable.” In this section I would like to look a little more at the concept of mixed-methods research before considering its particular relevance to this research.

#### **Mixed methods in practice**

If the mixing of research methods is to be principled, rather than a random application of unrelated techniques or a nod to ‘methodological fashion’, there needs to be some form of criteria for making critical research design decisions. Morse (1991; Morse, 2003) provides a useful basic typology of mixed methods using the abbreviations

‘QUAL’ (qualitative) and ‘QUAN’ (quantitative) along with the symbols ‘+’ and ‘→’. The abbreviations may appear in either upper case or lower case to indicate the priority given to each approach. The + symbol is used to indicate the simultaneous collection of data and the → symbol indicates sequential data collection. Thus a QUAN → qual design is one that prioritises quantitative data both sequentially and in terms of significance, or a QUAL + quan design would be one in which data is collected simultaneously but priority given to the qualitative data.

In designing mixed methods research, the researcher must be clear about the reasons for the mixing of methods. It is possible to identify three basic purposes for the mixing of research methods: triangulation, explanation, and exploration (Creswell, 2002; Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003). In the triangulation type of design, qualitative and quantitative data are collected, merged and interpreted together in order to tackle a research problem. In the explanatory type, qualitative data is collected for the purposes explaining or elaborating on results obtained through quantitative methods. The exploratory type of design works in the opposite way to the explanatory type; qualitative data is collected to explore a particular problem and quantitative data is employed to support the qualitative findings.

#### **5.4 MIXED METHODS IN THIS STUDY**

##### **Researching L2 motivation**

The field of second language learning motivation studies has its roots firmly in the field of social psychology. It should, therefore, be no surprise that the prevailing research methodology in L2 motivation studies has been greatly influenced by methods found in social psychology research. One advantage to this is that it immediately bestows a degree

of scientific respectability to the infant discipline. On the other hand, the dependence on quantitative methods has invited the criticism that “the psychometric tradition has resulted in sacrificing individual participants’ specificity and in establishing “generalizable” models by relying on sophisticated statistical measures” (Kim, 2005, p. 308). Ushioda (1994, 1998) contends that motivation cannot be fully investigated using solely quantitative methods and Dörnyei (2001, p. 242) goes on to articulate the explicit case for a mixed methods approach to motivation studies, arguing that “a combination of qualitative and quantitative designs might bring out the best of both approaches while neutralising the shortcomings and biases inherent in each paradigm.”

In designing this study one of my central concerns has been to resolve a conflict between maintaining a link with previous L2 motivation research and moving in a direction that may offer new perspectives. In addition to acknowledging the value of robust generalisations, I identified two qualities that I was keen to incorporate into my research; firstly, to recognise a parallel need to ‘particularise’ (van Lier, 2005), to understand that it is not only averages that provide important information and many valuable insights can be obtained by paying greater attention to the margins, and secondly, to adopt a more actively interpretative approach, to maintain an awareness that there are times when the quantitative data cannot simply be taken at face value, that objective analysis has its limitations and at times needs to be questioned.

### **Specific objectives of this research**

This research has dual aims. One aim is to empirically test an existing model of L2 motivation (Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005a; Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005b; Dörnyei & Clément, 2001) in the Japanese context. In order to achieve this goal, a degree of consistency with

the methods of those original studies is essential. This stage of the research is essentially concerned with replicating a previous study and validating its theoretical base. The second aim is to develop and expand that model in directions suggested by the authors of the original studies. This second aim demands methodological innovation for two reasons; one is the need to maintain sensitivity and awareness of local context and the other comes from the nature of the theoretical proposal under examination, the self, which is one characterised by unpredictability as much as linearity. In terms of practical research design I have attempted to meet these challenges in two ways. One way was to develop a quantitative research instrument that takes into account factors not considered in the original research and the other way was to include a qualitative element that provides explanation and support for the core quantitative instrument.

## CHAPTER 6

### *METHODS IN THE STUDY*

#### 6.1 MIXED RESEARCH DESIGN

The current study involved the integrated use of three separate but interrelated instruments. The design followed a qual → QUAN → qual mixed methods approach; that is to say that priority in terms of the weight assigned to the data collected was given to a quantitative research instrument, which was both preceded and followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data. The primary quantitative research instrument was a large-scale, nationwide attitudinal questionnaire. The construction of this questionnaire had been informed by data obtained from a series of exploratory interviews with learners of English in Japan and the analysis of this questionnaire was subsequently supplemented by a further series of explanatory interviews.

#### 6.2 PARTICIPANTS

##### **Questionnaire**

A total of 2,397 learners of English participated in the main questionnaire study. Of these, 1,177 (49.1%) were males and 1,082 (45.1%) females. There was missing gender information for 138 (5.8%) participants.

**TABLE 6.1:**  
**Gender of participants in the attitudinal questionnaire (MFQ)**

	<b>ALL</b>	<b>Secondary</b>	<b>Non-English Major</b>	<b>English Major</b>
<i>MALE</i>	1177	128	1001	48
<i>FEMALE</i>	1082	234	572	276

Participants were drawn from 9 educational institutions across Japan, 5 tertiary institutions and 4 secondary institutions. These schools were selected to represent a



broad spectrum of the Japanese educational system. A brief description of each participating school is given in Table 6.3.

For the purposes of analysis, participants were divided into three academic status categories: secondary students, university non-English majors, and university English majors. In this sample there were 371 (15.5%) secondary students, 1672 (69.8%) university non-English majors, and 333 (13.9%) university English majors.

In addition to the academic status categories participants were also asked for a self-reported assessment of their English proficiency.

**TABLE 6.2:**  
**English proficiency of questionnaire participants**

	<b>Beginner</b>		<b>Basic</b>		<b>Intermediate</b>		<b>Proficient</b>	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
<i>Secondary</i>	55	15.4	196	54.9	91	25.5	15	4.2
<i>University Non-English majors</i>	282	18.1	945	60.6	306	19.6	26	1.7
<i>University English majors</i>	3	0.9	133	41.7	179	56.1	4	1.3
<i>Total</i>	340	15.2	1274	57	576	25.8	45	2.0

There are obvious flaws in a self-report approach to language proficiency, with some people lacking a real awareness of their own proficiency and a tendency towards false modesty in others, but the results shown in Table 6.2 are consistent with expectations, showing the greatest number of participants falling into the basic user category except for the case of the university English majors, where the general level of proficiency was predictably a little higher. In favour of the self-report approach, it can be argued that for the purposes of this research the learners' perceptions of their own proficiency are actually more relevant than the proficiency itself.

Although every effort was made to distribute the questionnaires in a manner most

likely to achieve a balanced sample, there remain some weaknesses. Perhaps the chief weakness lies in an over-representation of private schools and the under-representation of public institutions, especially at the secondary level. The main reasons for the lack of participants from state schools were the complex bureaucratic process required to obtain official permission to administer the questionnaire and the introduction of a new data protection law in April 2005, which made certain institutions wary of cooperation in any enterprise that may be seen to expose them to any claims under the new law. In order to counter this, the private secondary schools were carefully chosen so as to reflect a broad range of interests at this level.

**TABLE 6.3:**

**Profiles of participating educational institutions**

<b>School A</b>	An art university on the outskirts of Tokyo. Students at this university would be expected to have a higher than average level of academic achievement and a strong interest in cultural matters but without any specific interest in English or other foreign languages.
<b>School B</b>	A university on the western outskirts of Tokyo renowned for its foreign language and international exchange programmes. All the participants from this university are English majors and would be expected to be considerably above the national average in terms of both interest and proficiency in English.
<b>School C</b>	A small but well-known women's university located in central Tokyo in an area known for a high concentration of foreign businesses and its international atmosphere. Students attending this university are likely to come from higher socio-economic backgrounds. The university has a well-established reputation for its international outlook. The university also has its own attached international school and participants from this university would be expected to have an above-average proficiency in English and interest in foreign affairs.
<b>School D</b>	A medium-sized lower ranking private women's university located on the outskirts of Tokyo. Students at this university mostly reside in the outer northeastern suburbs of Tokyo or the semi-rural areas beyond. Participants from this university were both English majors and non-majors, though even the English majors at this university would be expected to have an average or below-average proficiency in English and little direct contact with English speakers or overseas experience.
<b>School E</b>	Japan's largest university with colleges located all over the country but, as with the university system as a whole, mainly concentrated in the Greater Tokyo area. Participants from this university came from the schools of Law, Pharmacology, and Engineering. Students at this university would be expected to have an average level of academic achievement without any particular interest in English or foreign languages.
<b>School F</b>	A medium-sized private women's high school in the located in the suburbs of Tokyo. Affiliated to a private women's university with a reputation for its child education programmes, students at this school would be expected to come from above average socio-economic backgrounds and have an average level of academic achievement with little particular interest in English or foreign languages.

**Table 6.3 continued: Profiles of participating educational institutions**

<b>School G</b>	A public coeducational high school located in a rural area approximately 80 km east of Tokyo. Students at this school would be expected to come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds and access or exposure to foreigners and foreign cultures is likely to be limited for participants from this school.
<b>School H</b>	A private coeducational high school located on the southern island of Kyushu and affiliated to a prestigious university. Students at this school would be expected to have a higher than average level of academic achievement and interest in foreign cultures.
<b>School I</b>	A co-educational public high school in a rural area of Japan. This school is one of the more prestigious schools in this particular region and students at this school would be expected to have a high level of academic achievement but people residing in the area would be limited in their access and exposure to foreigners and foreign cultures, including media and published materials.

As might be anticipated with a sample taken from people in full-time education, the vast majority of participants were under 24 years of age, although there were a small number of participants outside this age bracket. For a complete description of the age distribution of participants see Table 6.4.

**TABLE 6.4:  
Age distribution of MFQ participants**

	Age	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<i>Valid</i>	18 or under	642	26.8	28.3	28.3
	19 to 24	1602	66.8	70.7	99.0
	25 to 40	16	.7	.7	99.7
	41 to 55	3	.1	.1	99.9
	56 or over	3	.1	.1	100.0
	Total	2266	94.5	100.0	
<i>Missing system</i>		671	5.5		
<i>Total</i>		2397			

### **Interview participants**

#### **(a) Preliminary interviews**

The first step in the design of this research was a series of ten semi-structured interviews with learners of English in Japan. The ten participants in these interviews were all English majors, eight females and two males.

(b) *Explanatory interviews*

Nine participants were chosen for the series of explanatory interviews. Whilst not wishing to make untenable claims about the generalisability of this sample, interviewees were chosen to provide insight into a range of English language-learning experiences in Japan. At one end of the spectrum were those for whom language is entirely a classroom-based entity and are very much in the process of learning. At the other end, were those who can consider themselves successful learners, those for whom English is something to be used in their personal or professional lives. Interviewees were mainly participants in the questionnaire but, with the aim of introducing a broader range of experiences into the data, interviewees C, E, F, H were individuals involved in the administration of the questionnaire. Since this round of interviews was designed to be the main qualitative component to the research, profiles of the participants are provided in Table 6.5.

**TABLE 6.5:**  
**Profiles of participants in explanatory interviews**

**Interviewee A**

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Interviewee A is a twenty-year-old female university student. English is her major. This participant is essentially a learner of English, although she does have several English-speaking friends outside the classroom with whom she is in regular contact and a clear vision of herself as a user of English. At the time of the interviews, this student was at a very interesting stage in her language development; in many ways she had outgrown learning English in the classroom but she had not yet found a significant role for English in her life outside school. At the time of the interviews she was about to depart for the US, where she was going to spend a year at a university.

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**Interviewee B**

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Interviewee B is a twenty-year-old female English major at university. English is primarily a school subject for her and she remains for the most part a learner of English. Although her English is much better than most of her fellow students, she is constantly frustrated by her inability to make significant progress and lack of opportunity to use English outside the classroom. In many respects this interviewee is typical of moderately successful Japanese language learners who find it difficult to translate success in the classroom to the outside world. At the time of the interviews, she was preparing to go overseas to study for a year at an American university.

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**Table 6.5 continued: Profiles of participants in explanatory interviews**

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**Interviewee C**

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Interviewee C is a male in his mid-twenties, who works in the administration of a private university. Upon graduating from university in Japan, he spent two years in the UK. One of the initial attractions of his current position was the promise of duties acting as a guide/ interpreter for foreign visitors to the university. At the time of the interviews he was in his third year of employment and experiencing a significant degree of frustration at the lack of opportunities to utilize his English abilities in his professional life. Due to the absence of opportunities to use English in his professional life, he makes efforts to study the language and can be described as a learner/user.

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**Interviewee D**

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Interviewee D is a female psychology graduate student in her mid-twenties. She did not attend university in Japan but instead she spent four years at a university in the US. Upon returning to Japan, she found employment in the personnel department of a major motor manufacturer. She spent only two years in this job, leaving after feeling frustration at a lack of recognition for her abilities and experiencing difficulty integrating with the social environment of the office. At the time of the interviews she was making efforts to rekindle her enthusiasm for English by attending some English classes and can be described as an English user/learner.

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**Interviewee E**

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Interviewee E is a male university lecturer around thirty years of age. He no longer actively makes efforts to explicitly learn English but he does make a point of watching English language news and sports programmes on television. This interviewee described himself as a very poor student of English at the secondary school level and only really began to make efforts to learn English when given the opportunity to take part in a university exchange programme in the United States. He has spent two extended periods in the US: one as a university exchange student and the other attending a graduate school. He does not use English in his professional life and nor does he have any real desire to do so. He feels comfortable using English around other English speakers but he does not want to 'labelled' as an English speaker in his professional life.

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**Interviewee F**

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Interviewee F is a young male working in the field of English language education in a Japanese university. He has always had a strong interest in the English language, which he attributes to the prestige of getting good test scores when he was in the early years of his secondary education. After graduating from university he went to graduate school in the US and he believes it was during the time spent there that he became an effective user of English. Upon returning to Japan, he has made efforts to make English an integral part of his professional life, though he feels some frustration that this has not been as straightforward as he had anticipated.

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**Interviewee G**

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Interviewee G was a recent university graduate at the time of her interview. Her major at university had been English but she referred to herself as a demotivated learner of English. According to the interviewee, she had been a very conscientious, hard-working student at high school but she completely changed upon entering university. At the time of the interviews, she had a somewhat ambivalent relationship with English, spending a lot of time watching films and listening to pop music in English, yet resenting the four years she spent at university.

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**Interviewee H**

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Interviewee H is a young man in his early twenties. It would be fair to categorise him as a 'high school dropout'. He did not complete his high school education and did not attend university at the usual age. He is currently enrolled on a university distance education course, majoring in English. He has very good English skills, which he attributes to interacting with foreigners in various temporary jobs rather than any formal learning. He seems to have a very antagonistic attitude towards Japanese teachers of English, and, by implication, formal English classes.

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**Table 6.5 continued: Profiles of participants in explanatory interviews**

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**Interviewee J**

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Interviewee J was a rare case of a young Japanese person who had attained an expert-like proficiency in English without any experience of living overseas. Upon entering university she came to regard these English skills as something of a mixed blessing as she fell between different social groups. Due to her uncommonly strong English ability she was often placed in classes with students who had lived overseas for long periods of time and with whom she felt she had little in common. As she is in a lot of classes with these returnees other students make the assumption that she too was brought up overseas and treat her differently.

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(c) *Follow-up interviews*

A further round of interviews was conducted subsequent to the main explanatory interviews. Since the main purpose of these interviews was to clarify what were sometimes difficult issues arising from the earlier series, the participants chosen for this stage were all proficient and articulate users of English, with a developed interest in language learning. In total there were four female English majors involved and these individuals were not part of any of the other previous samples.

**6.3 INSTRUMENTS**

**Questionnaire Construction**

(a) *Preliminary design considerations*

Since many of the ideas informing this research were suggested by Dörnyei and colleagues' longitudinal study in Hungary (Dörnyei & Clément, 2001; Dörnyei & Csizér, 2002, 2005; Dörnyei, Csizér & Németh, 2006), that study was employed as a base for the design of this research instrument. The current study had two aims in relation to Dörnyei's Hungarian research. One aim was to apply aspects of the Hungarian study to the Japanese context and test some of its main findings. A second aim was to expand on that research by examining areas suggested by Dörnyei et al. and align them to other concerns suggested by research specific to the Japanese context, principally Yashima

(2000, 2002) and Nakata (1995, 2006). The initial task was to devise a strategy that could produce a research instrument capable of accommodating these dual aims.

Guided principally by the Hungarian questionnaire, but also considering a number of other established questionnaires used in previous motivational studies (Gardner, 1985; Clément et al., 1994; Yashima, 2002), I accumulated an initial item pool consisting of 176 items across a total of 23 motivational scales. The principal challenge in producing an instrument from this item pool was to strike a balance between consistency with the original Hungarian studies and developing the questionnaire in a way to expand on the original research and to make it relevant to the Japanese context. A further practical consideration at this stage was the desire to obtain as much meaningful data as possible and the need to construct a manageable questionnaire that would elicit maximum participation.

At this preparatory stage, the item pool was based on scales used in previous studies relating to several core concerns. These initial core concerns were based around the relationship between the concept of an ideal L2 self and integrativeness, therefore, in addition to items from the Hungarian studies, there were scales drawn from Gardner's socio-educational model and there were also scales relating specifically to considerations arising from the Japanese learning context, such as international posture and ethnocentrism.

One strategic decision taken at this initial design stage was to maintain a large number of variables and to limit the number of items focusing on each variable. The reasoning behind this decision was that it was better to be as inclusive as possible at this

point and to be guided by the pilot study in making a final decision regarding the number of variables employed in the main study.

(b) *Pilot study*

In July 2005, in preparation for the main study, a pilot study was conducted involving 93 English-major university students from three universities in the Greater Tokyo area. The primary purpose of this pilot stage of the study was to develop a comprehensive questionnaire instrument that could operate in the Japanese context, with a particular interest in testing the suitability of certain items and scales in the Japanese language.

There is a temptation in the presentation of research to gloss over the fact that much of what we do is governed as much by practical realities as by theoretical purity; there are times when compromises are necessary. The main practicalities driving the construction of this questionnaire were the demands in terms of time and commitment on the part of participants. If a chief strength of the questionnaire was to be its comprehensive nature, both in terms of the number of participants and its subject matter, then demanding too much of potential participants would be likely to have an adverse effect on both the number of participants and their investment in the process. With this in mind, the questionnaire was designed to take between 15 to 30 minutes to complete and was limited to a one-sheet, four-sided, user-friendly booklet format. The restrictions of this format – the need to present the questionnaire both attractively and legibly – required the original item pool to be reduced to 100 items with additional items requesting basic biographical information.



(c) *Translation and cross-cultural issues*

The pilot study also highlighted important issues arising from the use of items across languages. Items and scales that have been successfully employed in one context do not necessarily make a smooth transition to other languages and cultural settings. In this section I would like to describe some of the major difficulties encountered and the steps taken to respond to these problems.

**TABLE 6.6:**  
**Descriptive statistics for 5-point Likert scales used in MFQ pilot**

<b>Item</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Skewness</b>	<b>Std Error</b>
001	93	1.00	5.00	3.75	.86	-.24	.25
002	93	1.00	5.00	3.76	.84	-.77	.25
003	92	1.00	5.00	3.97	1.14	-.93	.25
004	93	1.00	5.00	4.80	.59	4.04	.25
005	93	2.00	5.00	4.89	.43	-4.85	.25
006	93	2.00	5.00	3.70	.94	.05	.25
007	93	1.00	5.00	4.56	.77	-2.08	.25
008	93	1.00	5.00	4.39	.81	-1.46	.25
009	93	3.00	5.00	4.31	.71	-.53	.25
010	93	3.00	5.00	4.62	.57	-1.23	.25
011	93	3.00	5.00	4.65	.54	-1.22	.25
012	93	2.00	5.00	4.60	.69	-1.67	.25
013	93	2.00	5.00	3.86	.87	-.03	.25
014	93	1.00	5.00	4.17	.90	-.89	.25
015	67	2.00	5.00	3.66	.91	.13	.29
016	92	2.00	5.00	4.29	.87	-.92	.25
017	93	1.00	5.00	4.33	.90	-1.90	.25
018	93	1.00	5.0	4.38	.81	-1.56	.25
019	93	1.00	5.00	4.33	.85	-1.68	.25

Of the 100 items on the pilot questionnaire 19 used 5-point Likert scales while the remainder employed 6-point scales. The principal reason for using the two different scales at this stage was simply to explore which would be more appropriate in the main study. With items coming from previous studies, there was also a desire to maintain an element of continuity with the originals – to persevere with the 5-point scale – and to

preserve their established psychometric properties. On the other hand, there was a concern that an odd-numbered scale may encourage neutral responses.

Analysis of the pilot study indicated serious concerns regarding the skewness of the 5-point scales; an indication of acceptable levels of skewness can be obtained by dividing the skewness values of the scales by their standard errors, with values within the range of +/- 2 being considered acceptable (see Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). Table 6.6 reveals that several of the items had problems with the distribution of their responses, most notably items 004, 005, 007. This suggested that the 5-point scales were allowing participants to be non-committal, therefore the 5-point scales were abandoned and redesigned as 6-point scales for the main study.

At this stage, the obvious task was to investigate what was causing these problems. The issue of skewness indicated that respondents seemed reluctant to answer certain items negatively. Direct translations of some items and their response scales did not work because the possible negative responses appeared 'too negative' in the Japanese language and encouraged respondents to avoid these in favour of more non-committal options. In order to counter this, I made the decision prioritise the functionality of the instrument in the Japanese context over consistency with previous studies, leading to the rewriting of the 5-point scales as 6-point scales and the re-wording of the possible response alternatives in a manner likely to encourage a broader range of responses.

Another issue revealed in the pilot study was the translation of negatively worded items that had been developed in other languages into Japanese. The translation of negatively worded items into Japanese resulted in some low internal reliability figures for

certain scales as shown in Table 6.7.

One of the problems discovered with the scales used in the pilot study and their response options was that negatively worded items did not appear to produce a response that corresponded to a similar positively worded item. (For example, if an item such as *I respect the values and customs of other cultures* produced a '5' response, the corresponding *I don't trust people with different customs and values to myself* did not seem to elicit a '1'. In such cases the response would often be closer to '3' than '1'.)

**TABLE 6.7:**  
**The internal reliability of variables in the pilot questionnaire**

<b>Variable name</b>	<b>Number of items</b>	<b>Cronbach alpha</b>
<i>Cultural Interest</i>	4	.65
<i>Direct contact with L2 speakers</i>	4	.63
<i>Instrumentality</i>	4	.55
<i>Vitality</i>	4	.60
<i>Integrativeness</i>	3	.55
<i>L1 willingness to communicate</i>	8	.79
<i>Willingness to communicate in English</i>	8	.93
<i>Linguistic self-confidence</i>	3	.54
<i>English use anxiety</i>	4	.84
<i>Milieu</i>	3	.62
<i>English class anxiety</i>	4	.77
<i>Interest in foreign languages</i>	4	.58
<i>Parental encouragement</i>	4	.83
<i>Attitudes towards learning English</i>	4	.88
<i>Fear of assimilation</i>	4	.53
<i>Friendship orientation</i>	5	.81
<i>Instrumental orientation</i>	3	.73
<i>Travel orientation</i>	3	.67
<i>Ideal L2 self</i>	7	.80
<i>Ought-to self</i>	6	.68
<i>Criterion measures</i>	10	.83
<i>Ethnocentrism</i>	5	.43
<i>International posture</i>	4	.71

My solution to this problem was, rather than to abandon the negatively worded items, to slightly negatively weight the possible responses by wording them in such a way as to make the positive responses appear more committal.

#### **6.4 FINAL QUESTIONNAIRE**

Due to issues related to the translation of certain items developed in other languages, a number of items and their possible responses were significantly rewritten for the main study. In some cases, this meant that a degree of fidelity with the original items had to be sacrificed, but this was considered a necessary step in order to make the questionnaire both appropriate to the Japanese learning context and coherent in the Japanese language.

More significant than the re-writing of individual items, were the decisions taken regarding which scales to persist with and which to abandon. Since research findings can be shaped as much by the questions not asked as those actually asked, these decisions require some explanation. I will now attempt to explain the reasoning behind the construction of the final questionnaire and the decision-making process that determined both the choice and organisation of items.

##### *(a) Replicating the Hungarian studies*

In an ideal world, two separate questionnaires would have been administered: one faithfully replicating the original Hungarian study and a second, separate one based on my own attempts to develop this model. However, such an approach would have been likely to discourage cooperation; it would have been testing the patience and goodwill of participants to require them to complete two substantial questionnaires. The approach taken in this research was to embed the Hungarian scales as an element of my own

questionnaire and then to extract and analyse them separately.

In order to achieve this, compromises were obviously necessary. Though I endeavoured to remain as faithful as possible to the original items, there were certain cases where this was just not possible. Two conspicuous compromises relate to the number of possible responses in each scale and to the concept of the L2 speakers employed in the questionnaire. The original Hungarian studies used some 5-point scales but my pilot study revealed concerns – as discussed in the previous section – about the suitability of those scales when translated into Japanese, therefore they were redesigned as 6-point scales. The original Hungarian surveys used the UK as being representative of L2 speakers, however, analysis of the data from the pilot study suggested that the UK was not a significant factor for the Japanese participants so an interpretation of an English-speaking community removed from Anglo-American cultural norms was used to reflect the increasingly diverse ownership of English.

The questionnaire employed 7 main motivational dimensions identified in the Hungarian study:

1. Integrativeness
2. Instrumentality
3. Direct contact with L2 speakers
4. Vitality of L2 community
5. Cultural interest
6. Milieu
7. Linguistic self-confidence

For a complete list of the items used in these scales see Appendix B.

(b) *The Japanese context*

Simultaneous to the goal of observing key aspects of the Hungarian model in the Japanese context was the desire to develop that model in a direction that takes into account specific issues identified in language learning motivation in Japan. I would like to outline some of those considerations here before going on to discuss the individual variables in more detail.

One important variable repeatedly observed in L2 motivation studies in the Japanese context has been labelled *international friendship orientation* and *international posture* (Yashima, 2000, 2002) or *international orientation* (Nakata, 1995, 2006). One of my aims in this study is to examine this dimension to the language learning process systematically and to align it with the concept of an ideal L2 self. I have taken the approach that the individual's perceptions of a sense of personal engagement with the outside world is more than simply one of many variables in the motivation to learn a language; it is fundamental to the process and as such deserving of further investigation. In this questionnaire, in addition to scales originally employed in the Hungarian studies, I have developed two further variables to expand the scope of my inquiry: *international contact* and *international empathy*. The *international contact* scale relates to learners' desire for contact with speakers of the target language, while *international empathy* looks at a sense of shared understanding and connection with the speakers of the target language.

In contrast to a sense of identification with the L2 community is a feeling of distance from that community. I have chosen to analyse two aspects to that feeling of distance or separation. One is that of *ethnocentrism*, a sense of the uniqueness of one's own

culture, and the other is *fear of assimilation*, a sense of threat posed to one's own culture by the values of the L2 and its speakers. *Fear of assimilation* was a variable used in the original Hungarian studies but I have significantly re-written the items in order to take account of some of the differences between the Japanese and Hungarian cultural environments.

## **6.5 VARIABLES IN THE STUDY**

The final questionnaire comprises four basic elements: attitudinal factors, situational factors, self-related factors, and effects of motivation. The attitudinal factors element pertains to participants' attitudes towards the outside world, their role in that world and the position of English within that world. The situational factors considered are primarily related to the use and learning of English but also take into account the individual's perceptions of the expectations of other people around them. The self-related factors look at participants' perceptions of themselves as language users; these factors look at both current personality traits and possible future states as an L2 user. The final element of the questionnaire was the inclusion of scales to measure the effects of motivation.

### **ATTITUDINAL FACTORS**

*Cultural interest.* A total of six items are adapted from Dörnyei and Csizér (2002). These items assess participants' attitudes to various cultural aspects of the English-speaking world. For learners in situations where direct contact with the L2 community is rare, indirect contact through cultural products such as books and films can play an important role in shaping attitudes to the language and the L2 community.

*Attitudes towards L2 community.* Attitudes towards L2 speakers has been a central part of Gardner's motivational theory and as such has featured in most subsequent major

motivational studies. In this study, a total of eight items were adapted from Dörnyei and Csizér (2002). This scale consolidates two scales employed in that study, direct contact with L2 speakers and vitality. Analysis of the pilot study suggested that for many Japanese learners of English direct contact with L2 speakers in itself was not a significant factor in their lives, therefore their attitudes to the L2 community included both opportunities for direct contact with individuals and attitudes towards the ethnolinguistic vitality of English-speaking communities.

*Instrumentality.* A total of nine items were used in this scale. The scale was designed to capture the multi-dimensional nature of instrumentality in contexts such as Japan, where instrumentality is not simply concerned with obvious utilitarian benefits of the language, such as improved career prospects, but is also highly interwoven with the perceived educational significance of using English and the perceived value of English as an indicator of an educated person.

*International contact.* These four items were used to measure learners' sense of desired contact with people from other countries, both social and professional, through the use of English. It should be noted that this scale does not refer to actual contact, but rather to a view of the possibility of contact with people from other countries as being personally fulfilling.

*Interest in foreign languages.* Five items were used in this scale to measure learners' general interest in foreign languages as a whole. An interest in foreign languages was an essential element of Gardner's socio-educational model (1985) as it may be indicative of a wider sense of openness and affinity with outside groups .



*International empathy.* This three-item scale was developed around Yashima's (2002) international friendship orientation variable and assesses learners' perceptions of a sense of shared understanding, connection and friendship with speakers of English.

*Fear of assimilation.* Three items adapted from Dörnyei and Csizér (2002) to measure learners' perceptions of the threat that the learning and use of foreign languages pose to the Japanese language and culture.

*Ethnocentrism.* These five items were adapted from Neuliep and McCroskey (1997) and assess participants' beliefs in the separateness and uniqueness of their Japanese cultural identity. This is a particularly important scale within the current study as one of my aims is to examine conflicts between a sense of national identity and a sense of identification with the outside world and a desire for participation in the events of that outside world.

*Travel.* These four items were used to assess the importance of the prospect of overseas travel as a reason for learning English. In EFL contexts such as Japan, where there is little immediate necessity or opportunity to use English, the prospect of overseas travel remains the most obvious immediate use of English for many learners. In such contexts, travel may come to represent something more than a mere recreational pursuit, encompassing personal development and engagement with other people.

#### SITUATIONAL FACTORS

*English Anxiety.* This scale consolidates two scales adapted from Dörnyei and Csizér (2002), *English use anxiety* and *English class anxiety*. The reason for the consolidation was that the pilot study indicated that many learners of English in Japan did not distinguish

between 'use' and 'class'. For many learners the main, indeed the only, use of English was in the class.

*Attitudes to learning English.* Attitudes to the learning situation have been central to Gardner's (1985) socioeducational model and the learning situation is an integral element of Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System (2005). This six-item scale was used to measure the individual's attitudes to the actual process of learning of the language and a sense of enjoying the learning experience.

*Milieu.* The five items on this scale examine the perceived support and expectations occurring in the learner's environment. In this case, the term 'environment' is considered as that outside the immediate realm of education and to include significant others. For young people, the values projected by one's peers come to reflect an unofficial code which acts as a counterbalance to the values promoted by authority figures.

*Parental encouragement.* Four items developed from Gardner (1985) were used to measure the specific support and encouragement to learn coming from parents. Implicit in this support framework is an element of expectation and this variable also takes into account learners' sense of expectation from others to learn the language. Parental encouragement also represents a formal or approved set of expectations in contrast to milieu which represents an 'unofficial' version of expectations of young learners.

#### SELF- RELATED FACTORS

*Ideal L2 self.* The ideal L2 self forms the core of this research. The research aims to simultaneously reinterpret established motivational constructs and expand the future agenda through an interpretation of L2 motivation based on the concept of the ideal L2

self. This new scale consists of six items developed for this research which focus on the clarity and intensity of learners' visions of themselves as users of the language.

*L2 self-confidence.* This scale of five items asks about the learners' beliefs in their abilities to master and use the L2. Items in the scale were based on those used in Clément, 1980; Clément, Gardner, & Smythe, 1977, Dörnyei and Csizér 2002.

*L1 willingness to communicate.* Eight items were used to measure the willingness to communicate in Japanese of participants. Willingness to communicate in L1 is essentially a personality trait related to factors such as self-esteem, introversion and extraversion. The concept is concerned with the individual's propensity to engage in communication when free to do so.

## EFFECTS OF MOTIVATION

### *Intended learning effort*

In this study I have chosen not to regard proficiency or achievement measures as outcomes of motivation since such an approach seems to ignore a host of other aspects to the learning process; it seems to assume that successful learning is simply a direct product of motivation. Dörnyei's original Hungarian studies used language choice as one measurement of the effects of motivation, but in the Japanese context no real choice exists and almost all young people in full-time education from the ages of 12-20 are already studying English in some form. For this questionnaire I developed a scale, comprising nine items and labelled *intended learning effort*, as a measurement of both learners' perceptions of their current efforts to learn and their possible intended future efforts. This scale looks at not only efforts to learn in the classroom but also efforts made to create opportunities to use and practise the language outside the classroom.

### *Willingness to communicate in English*

One concern revealed in the literature review related to the nature of English education in Japan and the fact that what was presented as 'English' in some Japanese classrooms was not always consistent with a view of language as a system of human communication. In attempt to redress the effects of some of the limitations of a classroom-based view of learning efforts, I have chosen to follow on from previous studies (MacIntyre, Baker, Clément & Conrod, 2003 and Yashima, 2002) and regard the major goal of language learning as being “to develop a communicative relationship with people from another cultural group” (MacIntyre, 2007, p. 566) and consider willingness to communicate in English as an important outcome of motivation. A total of eight items adapted from McCroskey and Richmond (1987) were used to assess the likelihood of the learner initiating communication in English. These were the same eight items as used in the *L1 willingness to communicate* scale.

### **Interviews**

#### **(a) Preliminary interviews**

Prior to, and an integral part of, the construction of the main questionnaire a series of semi-structured interviews with learners was conducted. The average length of the interviews was between 30 and 40 minutes and a total of 10 interviews were conducted in the spring of 2005.

The function of these interviews was entirely exploratory. The interviews were intended to provide guidance and support for the construction of the main research instruments. These interviews were based on a prepared interview guide (see Appendix D) but in conducting these interviews I attempted to remain as open as possible to

direction from the interviewees. The contents of these interviews are discussed in more detail in the procedure section of this chapter.

At this initial stage of the research process, my immediate goal was to confirm and prioritize the direction and focus of the main research instrument. Put bluntly, I was mainly seeking confirmation that the research directions suggested by the theoretical literature were relevant to the learners of English around me. Data obtained from these interviews provided a base to inform the construction of the questionnaire and the conduct of the subsequent series of explanatory interviews.

(b) *Explanatory interviews*

The explanatory interviews were intended to serve as a supportive, supplementary element to the questionnaire stage of the research design. Given the comprehensive nature of the questionnaire and the size of the sample, there would inevitably be areas that require both interpretation and explanation. A series of semi-structured interviews based on issues raised in the questionnaire was scheduled to follow the administration of the questionnaire. A more complete description of this interview process is given in the next section.

A further role of these interviews was to compensate for some of the inherent weaknesses in self-reported questionnaire instruments. A particular concern in the interpretation of such instruments is the possibility of respondents choosing responses on the basis of how they wish to portray themselves, or attempting to select the 'correct' response. Of course, great care was taken in the construction and wording of the questionnaire to reduce the likelihood of this occurring, nevertheless the interviews provided an additional opportunity to explore any areas of concern and a further

safeguard against the imperfections of self-reported research instruments.

(c) *Follow-up interviews*

A final, short series of follow-up interviews was conducted. The purpose of these interviews was to clarify or elaborate upon issues arising from the earlier interviews. As a result, these interviews were more narrow in focus and interviewer-led than the previous rounds of interviews.

## **6.6 PROCEDURE**

### **Questionnaire**

The Japanese language questionnaires were distributed in two phases; the first – and main – phase occurred in December 2005 and the second phase was administered in May 2006. The principal reason for this two-phase approach was the difference in the internal structures of the academic years at the secondary and tertiary levels. It was easier to receive cooperation from tertiary institutions towards the end of the calendar year; secondary schools were entering their ‘examination season’ at this time and found it easier to offer cooperation towards the start of the Japanese academic year, beginning in April. A further benefit of the two-phase approach was that it offered the opportunity to redress any imbalances in the original sample population. Initial analysis of the first-phase data showed there to be a low number of English majors from the university sample, therefore a further group of university English majors was included in the sample at the second phase.

The questionnaire was designed to be administered anonymously. Questionnaires were administered by teachers fully conversant with the methods and aims of the research. Only teachers familiar to the students participating in the study were employed

in the distribution of the questionnaire on the grounds that the involvement of an unfamiliar figure may affect responses. Certain basic ethical principles of data collection were adhered to in the administration of the questionnaire:

- The content of the questionnaire was confirmed with participating teachers as not being harmful or excessively intrusive in any way that may violate rules concerning classroom research.
- Clear instructions were given to teachers regarding the administration of the questionnaire and the assurance of anonymity on the part of participating individuals and schools.
- The required official permission was obtained so as not to compromise in any way schools or individuals cooperating with the research.

The questionnaires were administered during class time and took approximately 15 - 25 minutes to complete.

### **Interviews**

Three sets of interviews were conducted: an initial round of exploratory interviews and two subsequent explanatory series. Though the ultimate objectives of the interviews differed, the actual conduct was very similar. Perhaps the main difference in the conduct of the two sets of interviews was my own role as interviewer. In the first set of interviews, I played a less active role in the direction of the interviews; there was an interview guide but my principal role as interviewer was to allow the participants to express their own ideas and concerns, even if this meant diverting from the script. The purpose of the second set of interviews was to explain and illuminate issues arising from the main body of data, therefore a more active role was required in maintaining a focus on the relevant topic areas.

The initial exploratory interviews were conducted in December, 2004, about two

months before the construction of the pilot questionnaire. The first round of explanatory interviews were conducted at the end of summer 2006, around three months after the final questionnaires had been collected, and the final interviews took place in 2007, after an initial analysis of the earlier data. All interviews conducted in an environment familiar to the participant – either at a place of education or employment. All interviews were conducted face-to-face and recorded. The purposes of the interviews were explained to the participants and in the case of the explanatory interviews a signed consent form was obtained from the interviewee prior to the commencement of the interview (see Appendix E). The average length of each interview was around 35 minutes, although in one case the interview was disturbed midway and had to be resumed at a later date.

The interviews followed a semi-structured format. The guide for the earlier interviews is given in Appendix D; in the case of the explanatory interviews this was based on elements of the main questionnaire. Although based on the questionnaire, I made every effort to avoid conducting the interviews in the form of an ‘oral questionnaire’ and to emphasise the ‘narrative of the self’ aspect of the interview format; interviewees were given every opportunity to tell their own stories. Around ten days prior to the interview, participants were provided with a Japanese-language summary of some of the main points of the questionnaire and some of the questions likely to occur in the interview. This approach both reassured interviewees – they were unlikely to be embarrassed by any difficult, unexpected questions – and gave them time and opportunity to reflect on some of the key issues. On the other hand, allowing interviewees to think carefully about their responses introduced the risk of interviewees



over-elaborating their responses and this was something that needed to be factored into the subsequent interpretation of the qualitative data.

These interviews were all conducted in English. The original intention had been to conduct the interviews in Japanese, as the interviewees would be able to express themselves more clearly and articulately in their first language, however, the interviewees all expressed a strong preference to conduct the interviews in English. To a certain extent this represented a great compromise, especially with the two participants in the early stages of their language learning development. Although some of the interviewees would certainly have been able to express themselves more skilfully in Japanese, the opportunity and challenge of conducting the interviews in English appeared to encourage a greater level of involvement and investment in the process on the part of the interviewees and thus conducting the interviews in English was deemed to be a worthwhile strategy.

The actual interviews began with a preamble that included confirming the main purposes of the research and the basic interview procedure. Interviewees were assured of the confidentiality of the discussions and were then asked to sign the consent forms. The next few minutes were spent discussing biographical details, with the aim of putting the interviewee at ease and in a relaxed frame of mind. After establishing a satisfactory rapport, the interviews then proceeded to the semi-structured interview schedule. The interviews were concluded by my thanking the interviewees for their time and cooperation.

## **6.7 DATA ANALYSIS**

### **Questionnaire**

Data were computer-coded using SPSS for Mac (versions 11 and 13) and all

negatively worded items were recoded for analysis. A total of thirteen questionnaires were completely discarded on the basis that the respondents had appeared not to take the task seriously; indications of this were all responses being of the same value or the responses being used to simply to construct a pretty pattern on the page. The principal statistical procedures used for analysis of the data were correlation analysis, analysis of variance (ANOVA), and t-test analysis.

### **Interviews**

#### **(a) *Preliminary interviews***

Since the function of these initial interviews was essentially exploratory, the interviews were only partially transcribed. Two rounds of 'tape analysis' were conducted, which involved an immediate analysis of the data upon completion of the interview while much of the paralinguistic information contained in the interview was still fresh in the memory and a second round when some time had elapsed and there was some distance between the interviewer and the data.

#### **(b) *Explanatory interviews***

The role of these interviews, though secondary and supportive to the main questionnaire instrument, was of vital importance to the research design. All the interviews were recorded and fully transcribed and a copy of the transcription was given to the interviewees. The interviewees were then offered the opportunity to consider the transcription and to rectify any points that they did not feel accurately reflected their contribution. No challenges to the veracity of these transcriptions were forthcoming.

Interviews were coded following a template style. After a preliminary reading of the transcripts a template of codes was prepared and analysed using the HyperResearch

computer-aided qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) package. The rationale behind the template approach, as opposed to a more emergent strategy, was simply that the role of the interview data in this study was essentially secondary and supportive; the interviews were intended to focus only on certain theoretical areas therefore analysis of the data was restricted to these areas in the most time-efficient manner.

**PART 3**

**RESULTS**

## **CHAPTER 7**

### ***RESULTS OVERVIEW***

#### **7.1 INTRODUCTION**

In the following chapters, I present the results of the study. The presentation of the results will be divided into two distinct sections; the first part – this chapter – is a general overview of the principal findings and the second part consists of three shorter chapters, each dealing with a particular issue emerging from initial analysis. The overview chapter will focus entirely on the presentation of data obtained from the main quantitative questionnaire instrument. The subsequent chapters will offer a more detailed analysis of key questions using both quantitative analysis and interpretation based on qualitative interview data.

The primary objectives of this study were to attempt the first empirical test of Dörnyei's L2 Self Motivation System and to apply its theoretical constructs to the Japanese educational context. These initial aims were formulated into the following broad research questions:

- Is the ideal L2 self a valid concept upon which to build a theory of L2 learning motivation?
- Does the ideal L2 self represent an effective means of understanding and explaining efforts to learn a language?
- Are there any aspects to the construction of the ideal L2 selves of Japanese learners of English that are unique? And if so what are they?

In this first data analysis chapter, I will begin by confirming the reliability of the

core research instrument (MFQ), first examining the internal reliability of the scales initially developed in Hungary when applied in the Japanese context before proceeding to an examination of my complete instrument. I will then attempt to investigate some of the more salient interrelationships between the motivational variables measured in the questionnaire and look at how these interrelationships vary both within and across some of the principal sub-groups of the sample population.

## 7.2 INTERNAL RELIABILITY OF MULTI-ITEM SCALES

### Hungarian variables

The initial aim of this research was to test the findings of the large-scale longitudinal research programme carried out by Dörnyei and his colleagues in Hungary – and by extension the significant theoretical advances associated with that line of research – when applied to the Japanese language learning context.

**TABLE 7.1:**  
**Internal reliability for variables used in the original Hungarian study**

	Number of items	Alpha	Original Hungarian value*
<i>Cultural interest</i>	4	.73	.73/.66 <sup>†</sup>
<i>Direct contact with L2 speakers</i>	4	.80	.74/ .74 <sup>†</sup>
<i>Instrumentality</i>	4	.78	.77
<i>Vitality</i>	4	.75	.60/.63 <sup>†</sup>
<i>Integrativeness</i>	3	.58	.69
<i>Milieu</i>	3	.60	.63
<i>Linguistic self confidence</i>	3	.53	.47

\* refers to the 2004 figure for learning English reported in Dörnyei, Csizér & Nemeth 2005

<sup>†</sup> Separate figures for the UK and US.

Table 7.1 presents the internal reliability for those scales that were imported directly from the Hungarian studies. As can be seen, there is a high level of consistency with the data reported in the original Hungarian studies. The internal reliability of the

scales is either roughly similar or compares favourably to the alpha values found in those studies. From this it is possible to conclude that the scales devised in Hungary have operated successfully in the Japanese context. There is, however, one problematic exception to this pattern. The alpha value for the integrativeness scale is considerably lower in the Japanese case than the Hungarian. It is necessary to consider what may have caused this to occur.

An obvious suspect in cases of a low internal reliability figure is the number of items contained in the scale. Since the internal reliability coefficient calculation is based not only on the average correlation among the items in a scale but also on the number of items in that scale, a scale with a large number of items is more likely to achieve a more impressive internal consistency figure than one containing only a few. An analysis of the Japanese results in isolation might lead to the conclusion that the reliability of the integrativeness scale had been compromised by the number of items, as the 3-item scales all have lower alpha values than the 4-item scales, however, since the Hungarian scales contained the same number of items and those reliability figures were acceptable, this still leaves the question as to why only the integrativeness scale showed a marked difference. The fact that only this particular scale was affected in this way points to something other than simply a low number of items as being the cause.

A second possibility would be that the items had simply not been well translated into Japanese. The translation process in the construction of the questionnaire was rigorous, involving checks by several independent sources, and back translation and thorough piloting. An indicator that the problem with this scale was not caused by the

translation process was that the issue was confined to this scale; in such a comprehensive questionnaire, if there were any major problems with the translation process, we would expect them to manifest in several places, not just in a single scale. Further evidence of problems with the translation process would be a single item within the scale standing out, but within this scale, there was no item present whose deletion would have improved the reliability. While caution and vigilance over the translation of items across languages is vital, in this case, careful analysis of the data suggests that the translation of the items was sufficiently reliable so as not to have been the principal cause of the lower reliability coefficient.

A final consideration must be the nature of the concept of integrativeness itself. In the introduction to this thesis, I discussed how a desire to analyse and understand what learners of English in Japan really meant when they told me that they ‘like English’ had formed a starting point for this research. This question cuts to the heart of the research and it is one of the three questions that form the integrativeness scale - (9 - *Do you like English?*). Since one of the overall objectives of the research is to interpret the notion of ‘liking English’ and this notion is an intrinsic element of integrativeness, it makes logical sense to take a critical approach to the concept of integrativeness itself. If the findings of the Hungarian studies – that integrativeness subsumes all the other motivational dimensions – are correct, then this scale is in fact tapping into several aspects of the motivational system and it should be unsurprising that we encounter reliability issues with such scale that covers an immense theoretical scope. The notion of ‘liking English’ will be discussed later in Chapters 8 and 11, but for the moment I will simply note its



problematic, and perhaps important, nature.

### Final composite measures

In addition to testing the validity of the Hungarian research studies, a further aim of this study was to develop a model of motivation that both expands on existing general, integrativeness-based models yet is informed by specific concerns of the Japanese educational context. For this reason the questionnaire (MFQ) included a relatively large number of original items that have been developed specifically for this context. Table 7.2 shows the internal reliability for the final 18 composite scales used in the MFQ.

**TABLE 7.2:**  
**Internal reliability for the MFQ variables with separate information for the academic status groups**

	No. of items	Cronbach Alpha			
		Whole sample	Secondary students	Non-English majors	English majors
<i>Ideal L2 self</i>	6	.85	.87	.82	.85
<i>Attitudes towards L2 community</i>	8	.83	.84	.83	.83
<i>Instrumentality</i>	9	.87	.87	.85	.83
<i>International contact</i>	4	.87	.89	.85	.86
<i>Interest in foreign languages</i>	5	.70	.72	.66	.63
<i>Ethnocentrism</i>	5	.63	.54	.60	.65
<i>English anxiety</i>	6	.81	.78	.81	.83
<i>Attitudes to learning English</i>	6	.88	.87	.86	.85
<i>Cultural interest</i>	6	.77	.81	.73	.80
<i>Milieu</i>	6	.66	.70	.63	.64
<i>Parental encouragement</i>	4	.79	.79	.80	.76
<i>Fear of assimilation</i>	4	.67	.69	.67	.67
<i>Self-confidence</i>	5	.57	.53	.55	.66
<i>L1 Willingness to communicate</i>	8	.87	.86	.86	.83
<i>Travel orientation</i>	4	.79	.83	.76	.80
<i>International empathy</i>	3	.74	.78	.72	.70
<i>Intended learning effort</i>	8	.86	.84	.84	.81
<i>Willingness to communicate in English</i>	8	.94	.94	.94	.91

The table shows that the reliability of the various scales is generally very good for both the whole sample and within the individual academic status sub-groups. It is especially good for the two key new scales designed and developed for this research, *ideal L2 self* and *intended learning effort*.

In almost all of the scales, reliability remains stable across all the academic status groups. There are, however, certain exceptions. In both the *ethnocentrism* and *self confidence* scales, the value for the English majors sub-group is noticeably higher than that reported for the whole sample. While the figures for the English majors group can be considered more than acceptable, the figure for the whole sample border on the very limits of acceptability. This seems to be calling out for further attention and analysis: Why do the different academic status sub-groups appear to be interpreting certain items on the questionnaire in different ways? In both cases, the lowest figure is found in the secondary school student group and this suggests that some of the differences in interpretation of the items may be connected to the natural development processes of young people, showing a gradual alignment with age. In the case of the ethnocentrism scale, the reliability figure for the secondary students is much lower than for the university students and this may be simply a result of ethnocentrism being a difficult concept for some young people with limited experience or contact with people from other cultures. For the self confidence scale, adolescence is a notoriously difficult complex stage of development and perhaps we should anticipate a suitably confused set of responses from this age group. (Further support for this explanation can be found in the original Hungarian results, which also reported a lower reliability figure for the young sample.) The

difference between the reliability figure for English majors and the non-majors is a fascinating one; what could explain these two groups apparently interpreting these items differently? The most likely explanation is that the English majors, having made a conscious decision to pursue their English studies, will have spent more time in the past considering issues of their own ability to master a foreign language, therefore having a more developed awareness of such matters.

### 7.3 REPLICATING THE HUNGARIAN STUDY

As stated earlier, one of the principal aims of this study was to test the findings of the Hungarian studies in the Japanese context to validate the theoretical conclusions that were drawn based on those results. In order to be able to compare the Hungarian with the Japanese ones, some of the main motivational scales used in the Hungarian study were embedded in the MFQ. Table 7.3 shows the correlations between the main motivational dimensions measured by these scales and intended learning effort.

**TABLE 7.3:**  
**Correlations of the motivational variables imported from the Hungarian studies with intended learning effort, also showing the original Hungarian results**

	Intended learning effort	
	Japanese results	Hungarian results <sup>†</sup>
<i>Integrativeness</i>	.65	.67
<i>Instrumentality</i>	.42	.49
<i>Direct contact with L2 speakers</i>	.53	.28
<i>Vitality</i>	.30	.21
<i>Cultural interest</i>	.52	.22
<i>Milieu</i>	.13	.31
<i>Linguistic self-confidence</i>	.31	.28
Multiple correlations	.71	.70

Correlations significant at the  $p < 0.001$  level

<sup>†</sup> refers to the results reported for English/US in 1999 in Dörnyei and Csizér (2002)

#### **A comparison of the Japanese and Hungarian data**

Analysis of Table 7.3 reveals both similarities and differences between the two sets

of data. A consideration of some of these similarities and differences may serve as a useful pointer to help identify areas that require further investigation.

(a) *Commonality*

Firstly, there are striking similarities between some of the Hungarian and Japanese results (with the multiple correlations being almost identical). This is especially true for the two established variables from L2 motivation theory, integrativeness and instrumentality, suggesting that the Hungarian findings are not peculiar to the local Hungarian context but are, in fact, indicative of common patterns to be observed in learning environments where contact with the L2 target community is not immediately available. This is especially important in light of criticisms of models of motivation being culture specific and not generalisable; there are fundamental aspects to the motivation to learn a language that are common across cultural contexts.

The most remarkable aspect of a comparison of the Japanese and Hungarian results is the stability of the integrativeness correlations. As with the Hungarian study, integrativeness in the Japanese dataset is almost equal to the multiple correlation figures for all the variables. In the Hungarian study, this led to the conclusion that only integrativeness had a direct path to intended effort, that other factors were being mediated by integrativeness (which was then tested and verified by structural equation modelling by (Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005b), and therefore, in order to develop a more meaningful understanding of language learning motivation, the concept of integrativeness needed to be reconsidered. Since the results in the current study are remarkably similar to those found in Hungary, I intend use that call to reinterpret integrativeness to underpin my own efforts to develop an understanding of language learning motivation.

(b) *Difference*

There is marked difference in the correlation values for four of the scales: *milieu*, *direct contact with L2 speakers*, *cultural interest* and *vitality*. It is possible to categorise these variables as two sets of social relationships: one set involving the learner's social relationships with people immediately around them and the other set concerning to the learner's relationships – often imagined – with the speakers of the L2.

*The immediate social environment*

The correlation between milieu and intended learning effort is much less pronounced in the Japanese data than in the Hungarian, which indicates that there are important differences in the role the learner's immediate social relationships play in the language learning process. Although there were some differences in the samples, relating to age and the academic status of participants, which may partially negate the effectiveness of a direct comparison of the whole samples, these results, nevertheless, suggest that there are aspects of the Japanese social environment that require further investigation: How does the Japanese social environment differ and how does this affect the motivation to learn English? I will look at this in more detail in later Chapters 10 and 11, but at this point it is sufficient to say that the correlation between milieu and intended learning effort shows that further exploration of the social environment may reveal important information about the motivation of Japanese learners of English.

**The L2 community**

The correlation values in Table 7.3 for direct contact with L2 speakers, cultural interest and vitality show the Japanese figures to be much higher than the Hungarian. If cultural interest can be considered a form of indirect contact with the speakers of the L2

and vitality measures the perceived ethnolinguistic vitality of the culture associated with the target language, then these sets of figures are pointing to differences in attitudes towards contact with the L2 community.

This is an area that requires consideration and explanation. The first point to bear in mind is that the piloting of the questionnaire showed that some of the items in these scales required reworking and much of this was attributed to differing notions and experience of contact with the outside world. This is not unsurprising if we consider the relative historico-cultural backgrounds of the two countries. Hungary is a small landlocked nation at the heart of Europe, neither fully belonging to Western nor Eastern Europe, in many respects overshadowed by the powerful, neighbouring German and Slavic linguistic and cultural traditions; Japan is a relatively large, economically powerful country, geographically and historically separated from its neighbours. In the original Hungarian studies, the concept of an L2 community was firmly tied to specific national communities: in the case of English, the US and the UK. Piloting of the questionnaire revealed that the UK association in particular did not work in the Japanese context, therefore some items were rewritten to reduce the prominence of nationality in the notion of an English-speaking community. The UK aspect was completely removed in favour of items that which recognised the international nature of the English-speaking world. There is a strong possibility that this redefinition of the L2 community affected some of the results.

In order to investigate this a little further, I separated those items in the MFQ that referred to a specific, national (US) aspect of the L2 community from those that signified

an English-speaking community with no specific, national ties. Table 7.4 shows the respective correlations of these two differing notions of the L2 community.

**TABLE 7.4:**  
**Correlations of attitudes towards the L2 community with intended learning effort**

	<b>Intended learning effort</b>
<i>Attitudes towards English speakers (US)</i>	.31
<i>Attitudes towards L2 speakers (no specific country)</i>	.51

Correlations significant at the  $p < 0.001$  level

The correlation for the US-based English-speaking community is almost the same as that of the Hungarian study shown in Table 7.3, but when the element of nationality is removed from the notion of the English-speaking community, the correlation with learning effort is much higher. This finding lends support to the idea that there are more powerful factors motivating learners of English than the desire to integrate with some external, nationality-based L2 community. The question of how learners of English perceive the L2 community and how these perceptions affect efforts to learn will be investigated further in Chapter 9.

### **Validating the theoretical proposals of the Hungarian studies**

The first step in this study was to confirm that the Hungarian research could operate successfully in the Japanese context. Having verified the viability of the principal research instrument, the next step was to establish a theoretical base by empirically testing the validity of the major theoretical advances suggested by the studies carried out in Hungary:

- i. Can the ideal L2 self be equated with integrativeness?
- ii. If the ideal L2 and integrativeness can be equated, which does a better job of explaining learning effort?

*Integrativeness and the ideal L2 self*

Following on from the lead suggested by the Hungarian studies I have chosen to explore the sense of emotional identification with the values of a language and its speakers not from the point of view of a desire to integrate with an external community, but from learners' aspirations and visions of themselves as users of the language.

Table 7.5 shows a remarkably high correlation between *integrativeness* and *ideal L2 self*, which suggests that the two concepts may in fact be tapping into the same pool of emotional identification that learners feel towards the values of the language and its speakers.

**TABLE 7.5:**  
**Correlation: Integrativeness and the ideal L2 self**

	Ideal L2 self
Integrativeness	.59

p < 0.001

This correlation shown in Table 7.5 lends support to the claim that it may be possible to reinterpret what has been known as integrativeness from the perspective of the ideal L2 self and to use this as a foundation for further investigation of learners' sense of emotional identification with the L2 community and the role this plays in language learning motivation. The strength of this correlation, even though the individual items on the relative scales were ostensibly very different, gives credibility to the view that what was interpreted as integrativeness in early Canadian research was simply one local manifestation of a wider sense of affiliation with the values associated with a language and the language community; in other contexts the same sense of affinity exists but may take other forms. This helps account for the 'integrativeness enigma' (Dörnyei, 2005),



whereby numerous studies have found integrativeness or something equivalent to be a significant factor in the motivation to learn a second language, yet many others have found the concept problematic. The strength of the correlation presented in Table 7.5 aligned with the behavioural impacts of notions of an English-speaking community implied by Table 7.4 suggest that the ideal L2 self represents a more appropriate base for understanding the motivation of language learners, especially those in EFL contexts, than integrativeness.

### **Ideal L2 self and effort**

If the ideal L2 self variable can be equated with integrativeness, this poses a very obvious follow-up question: Which of the two variables represents a more effective means of explaining motivated behaviour?

**TABLE 7.6:**  
**Correlations of integrativeness and the ideal L2 self with intended learning effort**

	<b>Total sample</b>	<b>University students (non-English majors)</b>	<b>University students (English majors)</b>	<b>Secondary school pupils</b>
<i>Ideal L2 Self</i>	.77	.74	.71	.75
<i>Integrativeness</i>	.65	.61	.54	.71

p < .001 level

Table 7.6 presents the correlations of integrativeness and the ideal L2 self with intended learning effort for both the whole sample and the various academic status groups (these academic status groups are explained in the next section). The figures presented in Table 7.6 offer a simple means of comparing which variable represents the more authentic predictor of efforts to learn English. Although the strength of all the integrativeness correlations is consistently high, the *ideal L2 self* value surpasses these for all the sub-groups as well as the whole sample. Analysis of the values for the various

academic status sub-groups reveals that this difference is most noticeable for the university English majors, the group that we would expect to be the most highly motivated. In contrast, the difference between the values for the two variables for the secondary pupils remains relatively slight. The reasons for the discrepancies between the academic status sub-groups will be considered in more depth in Chapter 8, but at this stage I simply wish to point out that the correlation figures shown in Table 7.6 demonstrate that although integrativeness is indeed a highly effective predictor of learning effort, the *ideal L2 self* scale represents a more accurate measurement.

#### **7.4 THE JAPANESE CONTEXT**

The secondary aim of this research was to elaborate upon the validation of the Hungarian studies through an investigation of the specific Japanese English-learning context. In the remainder of this chapter, I present results based on an initial analysis of relationships between sub-groups of the sample and the most salient inter-relationships between the main variables used in the study.

##### **Analysis of the main sub-groups within the sample**

###### **(a) Academic status**

For the purposes of analysis, the sample was divided into three separate categories of learners: secondary school students, university non-English majors, and university English majors. It is possible to crudely characterise these three groups as follows: 1) University majors are those who have made an active decision to study English, therefore we may expect them to display higher levels of motivation to learn. 2) The non-English majors are generally studying English as a compulsory element of their university studies, with no great investment in the success of that learning. 3) Falling somewhere in between

the extremes are the secondary students for whom English would primarily exist as a school subject, though an important subject for those seeking to proceed to higher education.

**TABLE 7.7:**  
**Variation of motivational factors across academic status**

	Secondary students		Non-English majors		University English majors		F	Effect size <sup>†</sup>	Sequence <sup>a</sup>
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD			
<i>Ideal L2 Self</i>	3.43	1.13	3.31	1.05	4.46	1.02	165.27**	.12	2,1/3
<i>Attitudes towards L2 community</i>	4.10	.85	3.97	.84	4.45	.79	45.71**	.03	2/1/3
<i>Instrumentality</i>	4.45	.89	4.39	.86	4.66	.77	14.35**	.01	2,1/3
<i>English anxiety</i>	4.12	.97	4.09	1.02	4.13	1.02	.26	.00	2,1,3
<i>Self-confidence</i>	3.03	.65	3.05	.71	3.03	.71	.28	.00	1,3,2
<i>Attitudes to learning English</i>	3.57	1.08	3.26	1.06	4.45	.94	181.43***	.13	2/1/3
<i>International contact</i>	4.39	1.10	4.18	1.05	5.13	.84	118.69**	.09	2/1/3
<i>Interest in foreign languages</i>	4.18	.99	4.07	.95	4.96	.79	126.49**	.09	2,1/3
<i>Cultural interest</i>	4.07	.95	4.00	.87	4.71	.82	90.09**	.07	2,1/3
<i>International empathy</i>	3.95	1.10	3.76	1.07	4.58	.97	83.49**	.07	2/1/3
<i>Milieu</i>	4.18	.81	3.86	.79	4.32	.78	60.78**	.05	2/1/3
<i>Fear of assimilation</i>	2.63	.85	2.75	.93	2.63	.92	5.03*	.00	1,3/2
<i>Ethnocentrism</i>	2.99	.73	3.03	.70	2.54	.78	54.10**	.04	3/1,2
<i>Parental encouragement</i>	3.51	1.17	3.37	1.17	3.78	1.19	17.94**	.01	2,1/3
<i>Travel orientation</i>	4.54	1.11	4.32	1.06	5.22	.83	103.51**	.08	2/1/3
<i>L1 Willingness to communicate</i>	4.06	.97	4.04	.99	4.24	.85	5.47*	.00	2,1/3
<i>Willingness to communicate in English</i>	1.87	1.07	1.89	1.07	2.91	1.15	126.88**	.10	1,2/3
<i>Intended learning effort</i>	3.38	.92	3.15	.92	4.09	.82	149.94**	.11	2/1/3

\* p < 0.01 level; \*\* p < 0.001 level

†= eta squared

<sup>a</sup> Post hoc SNK comparison. Numbers refer to the academic status groups: 1=secondary students, 2 = non-English major university students, 3 = English major university students and are presented with the lowest value coming first. A comma between numbers indicates non-significant differences between two values and a slash indicates significance.

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests were conducted to explore how the motivational factors diverge according to academic status. The results are presented in Table 7.7.

Perhaps the most fundamental characteristic of Table 7.7 is that the university English majors have consistently higher scores than the other two groups. This was anticipated and supports the assumption that this group of learners is likely to be more highly motivated than the other groups. In the cases where there is significant difference between secondary students and non-English majors, the secondary students tend to be superior.

Although statistical significance was observed within most of the motivational factors, the effect size, calculated using eta-squared, indicates the strongest effects to occur for *ideal L2 self*, *attitudes to learning English* and *intended learning effort*. (For the purposes of interpretation of Table 7.7, I will observe convention and regard .01 as a small effect, .06 as a medium effect, and .14 as a large effect.) The medium-to-large effects observed for *ideal L2 self* and *attitudes to learning English* demonstrate that there is a substantial difference between the academic status groups for these variables, suggesting that they may represent a suitable starting point for further exploration of the motivation to learn. Other points of note shown in Table 7.7 include the finding that (a) both *ethnocentrism* and *fear of assimilation* are significantly higher for the non-English majors – assumed to be the least motivated group – and (b) the lack of variation across groups for *English anxiety*. The fact that both *ethnocentrism* and *fear of assimilation* are significantly higher for the non-English majors indicates that these factors tend to be present in less committed students

therefore may, in fact, higher levels may be indicative of a low motivation to learn English. In Chapter 9, I will attempt to explore how these variables co-exist alongside positive attitudes towards the L2 community and the behavioural consequences of this interaction.

The absence of any significant variation across academic status groups for English anxiety is intriguing, for it suggests a strong association between anxiety and English for all groups of young Japanese people; it is almost as if anxiety represents an accepted part of English language learning and use. It seems somewhat counter-intuitive that levels of anxiety should not vary across academic status as it might be expected that the motivated group – the English majors – would be less anxious about the use of English than the other groups. This finding indicates that there are certain characteristics relating to the use and learning of English in Japan that contribute to an atypical relationship between anxiety and language use. This lack of variation across academic status grouping sits incongruously with the results for the attitudes to learning English variable, which show clear differences between the groups. I will attempt to investigate this further in Chapter 8.

(b) *Gender differences*

In addition to academic status, the other main sub-division of the sample was based on gender, examining as to whether there were any significant differences in the responses provided by male and female participants.

Table 7.8 presents the variables of the study broken down according to gender. As anticipated females score significantly higher than males across most of the variables employed in the study.

**TABLE 7.8:**  
**Descriptive statistics for motivational factors with t-test statistics comparing the results for male and female respondents**

		Male		Female		t	df	effect size <sup>†</sup>
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
<i>Ideal L2 Self</i>	Whole	3.26	1.01	3.76	1.18	-10.60***	2140.92	.46
	Secondary	3.24	.97	3.52	1.20	-2.44*	311.57	.26
	Non-major	3.23	1.00	3.47	1.09	-4.39***	1107.57	.23
	Major	4.04	1.10	4.53	.97	-3.22**	322	.47
<i>Attitudes towards L2 community</i>	Whole	3.88	.83	4.26	.82	-10.83***	2257	.49
	Secondary	3.96	.84	4.18	.87	-2.33*	360	.26
	Non-major	3.86	.83	4.18	.80	-7.60***	1571	.39
	Major	4.23	.86	4.49	.78	-2.11*	322	.31
<i>Instrumentality</i>	Whole	4.30	.90	4.59	.82	-7.87***	2257	.33
	Secondary	4.36	.90	4.49	.89	-1.32	360	.15
	Non-major	4.28	.86	4.58	.83	-6.70***	1571	.35
	Major	4.60	.95	4.68	.74	-.63	322	.09
<i>English anxiety</i>	Whole	4.02	1.02	4.19	1.00	-4.17***	2255	.17
	Secondary	4.04	.97	4.15	.97	-1.03	360	.11
	Non-major	4.01	1.02	4.24	1.00	-4.27***	1569	.22
	Major	4.06	1.10	4.13	1.01	-.44	61.30	.07
<i>Self-confidence</i>	Whole	3.08	.82	3.02	.83	2.09	2255	.08
	Secondary	3.09	.78	2.99	.79	1.13	360	.13
	Non-major	3.08	.82	3.01	.82	1.60	1569	.09
	Major	3.09	.93	3.01	.87	.51	322	.08
<i>Attitudes to learning English</i>	Whole	3.19	1.04	3.79	1.13	-13.11***	2198.62	.55
	Secondary	3.35	1.01	3.67	1.11	-2.68**	360	.30
	Non-major	3.13	1.03	3.49	1.07	-6.64***	1571	.34
	Major	4.09	1.00	4.52	.91	-2.97**	322	.44
<i>International contact</i>	Whole	4.05	1.04	4.68	1.02	-14.49***	2257	.61
	Secondary	4.21	1.07	4.49	1.11	-2.26*	360	.26
	Non-major	4.00	1.02	4.53	1.01	-9.99***	1560	.52
	Major	4.84	1.02	5.18	.79	-2.66**	320	.38
<i>Interest in foreign languages</i>	Whole	3.97	.95	4.50	.94	-13.47***	2252	.56
	Secondary	4.06	.99	4.23	.99	-1.58	360	.17
	Non-major	3.93	.93	4.53	.91	-8.99***	1566	.47
	Major	4.62	.97	5.03	.72	-2.80**	56.44	.47
<i>Cultural interest</i>	Whole	3.89	.88	4.37	.88	-13.13***	2257	.55
	Secondary	3.90	.95	4.16	.95	-2.57*	360	.27
	Non-major	3.86	.86	4.28	.84	-9.39	1571	.34
	Major	4.45	.99	4.75	.79	-2.03	322	.33

**Table 7.8 continued**  
**Descriptive statistics for motivational factors with t-test statistics comparing the results for male and female respondents**

		Male		Female		t	df	effect size†
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
<i>International empathy</i>	Whole	3.63	1.05	4.22	1.07	-13.20***	2252	.56
	Secondary	3.80	1.10	4.04	1.09	-1.99	360	.22
	Non-major	3.58	1.03	4.09	1.07	-9.35***	1566	.49
	Major	4.24	1.08	4.64	.93	-2.66**	322	.40
<i>Milieu</i>	Whole	3.80	.78	4.18	.80	-11.57***	2255	.48
	Secondary	4.05	.66	4.24	.88	-2.36*	324.69	.24
	Non-major	3.75	.79	4.07	.76	-7.97***	1569	.41
	Major	4.17	.79	4.37	.77	-1.59	322	.26
<i>Fear of assimilation</i>	Whole	2.79	.87	2.61	.81	4.87***	2252.51	.21
	Secondary	2.71	.78	2.59	.84	1.34	360	.15
	Non-major	2.80	.88	2.64	.80	3.65***	1569	.19
	Major	2.76	.92	2.58	.77	1.35	322	.21
<i>Ethnocentrism</i>	Whole	3.14	.80	2.72	.77	12.53***	2255	.53
	Secondary	3.09	.70	2.94	.76	1.82	360	.21
	Non-major	3.17	.80	2.75	.75	10.63***	1569	.54
	Major	2.71	.87	2.50	.76	1.68	322	.26
<i>Parental encouragement</i>	Whole	3.27	1.11	3.65	1.22	-7.73***	2187.40	.33
	Secondary	3.25	1.11	3.63	1.18	-2.99*	360	.33
	Non-major	3.26	1.11	3.58	1.25	-5.08***	1072.63	.27
	Major	3.57	1.26	3.82	1.18	-1.34	322	.20
<i>Travel orientation</i>	Whole	4.21	1.05	4.81	1.07	-13.81***	2257	.57
	Secondary	4.36	1.09	4.63	1.12	-2.21*	267.78	.24
	Non-major	4.15	1.03	4.66	1.02	-9.64***	1571	.50
	Major	5.02	1.08	5.26	.77	-1.46	322	.27
<i>L1 willingness to communicate</i>	Whole	4.02	1.03	4.13	.89	-2.69**	2207	.11
	Secondary	4.11	1.03	4.04	.94	-.23*	353	.07
	Non-major	4.01	1.04	4.12	.89	-2.15	1315.60	.11
	Major	4.11	.88	4.23	.84	-1.11	63.08	.14
<i>Willingness to communicate in English</i>	Whole	1.84	1.07	2.24	1.18	-8.28***	2201	.36
	Secondary	1.84	1.08	1.87	1.06	-.23	351	.02
	Non-major	1.80	1.04	2.06	1.11	-4.55***	1529	.24
	Major	2.79	1.17	2.94	1.14	-.84	317	.13
<i>Intended learning effort</i>	Whole	3.11	.92	3.56	.95	-11.32***	2247	.48
	Secondary	3.20	.85	3.47	.95	-2.62**	360	.30
	Non-major	3.06	.92	3.31	.91	-5.17***	1569	.27
	Major	3.80	.94	4.14	.78	-2.72**	320	.39

\*p<0.05; \*\*p < 0.01 : \*\*\* <0.001; † = Cohen's d

In 15 of the 18 scales, females score significantly higher than males in the whole sample. The only areas where males score significantly higher than females are ethnocentrism and fear of assimilation, two areas that would not normally be expected to contribute positively to language learning motivation. This is a potentially significant finding that may throw more light on the development of the social identities of young Japanese people, how gender identity interacts with a sense of national identity and how all of this affects the motivation to learn English. I intend to pursue a more detailed analysis of these issues in Chapter 9.

Although the general picture is one of higher scores for females than for males, there are several fascinating sub-plots within the overall narrative. One of these is that at the secondary level females score significantly higher than their male counterparts in only 2 of the 18 scales. One interpretation of this absence of significant gender differences among secondary pupils might be that the development of gender-based attitudes to learning English only begins in earnest at the tertiary stage. The initial analysis does not, however, provide information regarding the causal relationships within this process: Do gender-based attitudes towards language learning change as a consequence of age-related developments or are attitudes towards learning languages an integral part of the process? This is obviously an important issue requiring greater in-depth analysis, which I will attempt in the following chapter.

### **Outcomes of motivation**

The main criterion measure – the measure of motivated behaviour – employed in the study was *intended learning effort*. In addition, a further scale – *willingness to communicate in English* – was used as a complement. The reasoning behind this approach was that the



literature review indicated that there were aspects to the provision of English education in Japan that were not related to language as a system of human communication; the obvious implication of this was that efforts to learn in such classes could not always be safely assumed to be equivalent to efforts to learn English for the purpose of communication. In this section I look at some of the most salient features of the relationships between the motivational variables used in the questionnaire and these two measures.

(a) *Intended learning effort*

Table 7.9 shows the correlations between *intended learning effort* and the various motivational factors across the whole sample and for each of the academic status categories. The table also breaks down the results for each category of learner according to gender.

The first point of note in Table 7.9 is the very high correlation between the *ideal L2 self* scale and *intended learning effort*. This was mentioned earlier but it is such an important finding that I will simply reiterate that the strength and stability of this correlation indicates a vital relationship between learners' sense of a language-using self and the efforts made to learn the language. The strong correlation between *ideal L2 self* and *intended learning effort* lends further support to the view that the concept of an L2 self represents a valid and sound foundation for the interpretation of second language learning motivation.

TABLE 7.9:

**Correlations with intended learning effort according to academic status with additional gender analysis**

		Intended Learning Effort			
		All	Secondary students	Non-English majors	English majors
<i>Ideal L2 self</i>	Whole	.77**	.75**	.74**	.71**
	Male	.74**	.71**	.73**	.78**
	Female	.78**	.76**	.75**	.68**
<i>Attitudes towards L2 community</i>	Whole	.47**	.51**	.43**	.37**
	Male	.43**	.48**	.40**	.62**
	Female	.45**	.52**	.43**	.30**
<i>Instrumentality</i>	Whole	.49**	.56**	.47**	.44**
	Male	.45**	.47**	.43**	.58**
	Female	.49**	.53**	.50**	.42**
<i>English anxiety</i>	Whole	.05*	-.03	.07*	-.01
	Male	.08*	-.10	.10*	.05
	Female	-.04	-.02	-.02	-.03
<i>Self-confidence</i>	Whole	.20*	.08	.19**	.07
	Male	.17**	.11	.18**	.04
	Female	.17**	.06	.17**	.06
<i>Attitudes to learning English</i>	Whole	.86**	.86**	.84**	.79**
	Male	.85**	.86**	.84**	.91**
	Female	.85**	.86**	.84**	.75**
<i>International contact</i>	Whole	.60**	.64**	.54**	.58**
	Male	.53**	.63**	.50**	.64**
	Female	.62**	.63**	.57**	.59**
<i>Interest in foreign languages</i>	Whole	.65**	.68**	.60**	.59**
	Male	.56**	.61**	.54**	.64**
	Female	.71**	.72**	.70**	.59**
<i>Cultural interest</i>	Whole	.58**	.60**	.53**	.56**
	Male	.54**	.62**	.51**	.67**
	Female	.78**	.58**	.52**	.52**
<i>International empathy</i>	Whole	.65**	.64**	.62**	.60**
	Male	.61**	.64**	.59**	.62**
	Female	.66**	.65**	.65**	.59**
<i>Milieu</i>	Whole	.20**	.34**	.08*	.25**
	Male	-.00	.26*	.05	.02
	Female	.33**	.35**	.27**	-.31**
<i>Fear of assimilation</i>	Whole	.09**	-.08	.18**	-.06
	Male	.23**	-.07	.28**	.01
	Female	-.03	-.06	.03**	-.07

**Table 7.9 continued:**

**Correlations with intended learning effort according to academic status with additional gender analysis**

		<b>Intended Learning Effort</b>			
		<b>All</b>	<b>Secondary students</b>	<b>Non-English majors</b>	<b>English majors</b>
<i>Ethnocentrism</i>	Whole	.03	-.12	.11**	-.08
	Male	.15**	-.03	.18**	.10
	Female	.03	-.13	.04	-.04
<i>Parental encouragement</i>	Whole	.42**	.43**	.41**	.32**
	Male	.41**	.34**	.42**	.46*
	Female	.38**	.44**	.38**	.29**
<i>Travel orientation</i>	Whole	.59**	.62**	.53**	.53**
	Male	.51**	.58**	.48**	.59**
	Female	.62**	.64**	.58**	.51**
<i>L1 Willingness to communicate</i>	Whole	.17**	.17*	.16**	.15*
	Male	.16**	.15	.16**	.23
	Female	.17**	.20*	.14*	.13
<i>Willingness to communicate in English</i>	Whole	.38**	.31**	.29**	.40**
	Male	.28**	.29*	.24**	.42*
	Female	.41**	.33**	.325**	.37**
MULTIPLE CORRELATIONS	Whole	.89**	.90**	.88**	.86**
	Male	.89**	.90**	.88**	.96**
	Female	.89**	.90**	.88**	.83**

\* p < 0.01 level; \*\* p < 0.001

A further point revealed in Table 7.9 is the unexpectedly high correlation for *attitudes to learning English* across all the sub-groups. There are two possible ways to interpret this result; on the one hand, the correlation coefficient is abnormally high, which could indicate a fault with the measurement instrument meaning that the two scales are measuring the same thing, or it could be telling us something important about the role of the learning situation in the motivation of learners of English in Japan. This is obviously an area that requires further investigation and explanation. Attitudes to learning and the learning situation have long been an established part of the socio-educational model of language learning motivation theory and the Learning Experience

forms an integral element of Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System, however, these exceptionally high correlation results seem to suggest that these particular items tap into something which is broader and more fundamental than merely the enjoyment of the learning process. This is obviously an issue calling out for further investigation and interpretation, which I will attempt in Chapter 8.

(b) *Willingness to communicate in English*

Table 7.10 shows how the variables in the MFQ correlate with the *willingness to communicate in English* scale.

**TABLE 7.10:**  
**Correlations with willingness to communicate in English according to academic status with additional gender analysis**

		<b>Willingness to communicate in English</b>			
		<b>All</b>	<b>Secondary students</b>	<b>Non-English majors</b>	<b>English majors</b>
<i>Ideal L2 Self</i>	Whole	.33**	.25**	.24**	.23**
	Male	.24**	.24*	.21**	.37
	Female	.35*	.24**	.29**	.18*
<i>Attitudes towards L2 community</i>	Whole	.17**	.21**	.13**	.05
	Male	.10*	.20	.06	.26
	Female	.18**	.21*	.19**	-.01
<i>Instrumentality</i>	Whole	.09**	.02	.08*	-.00
	Male	.06*	-.01	.06	.06
	Female	-.06	.03	.09	-.02
<i>English anxiety</i>	Whole	-.14**	-.20	-.11*	-.30**
	Male	-.12**	-.29*	-.09*	-.32
	Female	-.22**	-.17	-.21**	-.31**
<i>Self-confidence</i>	Whole	.18**	.22	.17**	.26**
	Male	.17**	.36**	.14**	.33
	Female	.21**	.15	.25**	.25**
<i>Attitudes to learning English</i>	Whole	.34**	.27**	.25**	.30**
	Male	.23**	.23	.20**	.27
	Female	.39**	.29**	.32**	.29**
<i>International contact</i>	Whole	.28**	.27**	.20**	.20**
	Male	.21**	.29*	.17**	.20
	Female	.29*	.25**	.20**	.22**

**Table 7.10 continued:**

**Correlations with willingness to communicate in English according to academic status with additional gender analysis**

		Willingness to communicate in English			
		All	Secondary students	Non-English majors	English majors
<i>Interest in foreign languages</i>	Whole	.28**	.19**	.21**	.22**
	Male	.19**	.13	.16**	.27
	Female	.33**	.21*	.27**	.21*
<i>Cultural interest</i>	Whole	.26**	.28**	.18**	.19*
	Male	.20**	.30*	.16**	.22
	Female	.25**	.27**	.16**	.17*
<i>International empathy</i>	Whole	.21**	.15*	.14**	.14*
	Male	.12**	.11	.10*	.13
	Female	.23**	.16	.17**	.14
<i>Milieu</i>	Whole	.11**	-.03	.09**	.07
	Male	.06	-.02	.06	-.15
	Female	-.11**	-.04	.11*	.12
<i>Fear of assimilation</i>	Whole	-.00	-.03	-.00	-.05
	Male	.01	-.11	.03	-.09
	Female	-.00	.23**	-.07	-.03
<i>Ethnocentrism</i>	Whole	-.22**	-.17*	-.18**	-.11
	Male	-.17**	-.20	-.15**	-.04
	Female	-.23**	-.15	-.22**	-.14
<i>Parental encouragement</i>	Whole	.14**	.06	.13**	.10
	Male	.13**	.04	.13**	.30
	Female	.10*	.05	.11*	.03
<i>Travel orientation</i>	Whole	.23**	.17*	.16**	.18*
	Male	.17**	.20	.13**	.20
	Female	.23**	.13	.17**	.17*
<i>L1 willingness to communicate</i>	Whole	.19**	.19**	.17**	.17*
	Male	.13**	.12**	.14**	-.05
	Female	.23**	.23**	.20**	.21**
<i>Intended learning effort</i>	Whole	.36**	.29**	.27**	.38**
	Male	.26**	.27*	.22**	.44*
	Female	.39**	.30**	.31**	.36**

\* p < 0.01 level,; \*\* p < 0.001

The overall pattern is broadly the same for the *willingness to communicate in English* measurement as for *intended learning effort*, although the strengths of the relative correlations with *willingness to communicate in English* are noticeably weaker. Table 7.11

shows the variables ranked in order of the strength of their correlations with the criterion measures.

**TABLE 7.11:**  
**Motivational variables ordered according to strength of whole sample correlations with the two criterion measures**

<b>Intended learning effort</b>	<b>Willingness to communicate in English</b>
Attitudes to learning English	Attitudes to learning English
Ideal L2 Self	Ideal L2 Self
Interest in foreign languages	International contact
International empathy	Interest in foreign languages
International contact	Cultural interest
Cultural interest	Travel orientation
Travel orientation	International empathy
Instrumentality	Self-confidence
Attitudes towards L2 community	L1 willingness to communicate
Parental encouragement	Attitudes towards L2 community
Milieu	Parental encouragement
Self-confidence	Milieu
L1 willingness to communicate	Instrumentality
Fear of assimilation	Fear of assimilation
English anxiety	English anxiety
Ethnocentrism	Ethnocentrism

The two variables with the strongest correlations are the same for both criterion measures, as are the variables with the weakest correlations. This suggests that these variables are consistent in the role that they play in both classroom-based learning behaviour and in actual language use. There were three variables that differed markedly in their correlations with the relative measures: *instrumentality*, *L1 willingness to communicate* and *self confidence*. In the case of instrumentality the difference is probably mostly due to the nature of much English learning in Japan, where it is often presented as simply a school subject without any eventual communicative purpose, therefore the greater emphasis

placed on instrumentality in classroom-based learning. The higher correlation between first language willingness to communicate, self confidence and L2 willingness to communicate reminds us of the important role of individual differences in the language learning process; although L2 willingness to communicate is more than a mere duplication of L1 willingness to communicate, there are, nevertheless, internal traits unique to the individual learner that are major factors in determining the amount of effort expended to either learn or use a foreign language.

## 7.5 SUMMARY

In this chapter I have begun the analysis of the quantitative data by firstly establishing the reliability of the various scales. I have done so in two separate stages. The first stage was with reference to Dörnyei and his colleagues' Hungarian studies and secondly as an independent instrument tailored to the Japanese learning context.

Some of the main scales employed in the Hungarian research were embedded in the MFQ with both the reliability and correlation figures providing important follow-up information to those earlier studies. Several remarkable similarities were revealed by a simple comparison of the Japanese and Hungarian data, pointing to a number of commonalities; the Hungarian findings are not peculiar to the local context but reveal aspects of language learning motivation common to learning environments where exposure and contact with the L2 community is not readily available.

One of the theoretical starting points for this research was the possibility of exploring the limitations of the concept of integrativeness as a means of understanding language learning motivation. This approach is supported by the analysis of the data. Firstly, analysis of the reliability coefficients shows the *integrativeness* scale to be the only

one that performs differently in the Japanese research. This seems to point to something unsatisfactory about the concept itself; ideas contained within the concept of integrativeness are vital elements of language learning motivation but concept itself does not represent the best way to develop understanding.

The concept of integrativeness has been fundamental to our understanding of second language learning motivation and it is essentially concerned with the learner's emotional identification with the L2 community and the motivational effects of that identification. The Hungarian studies of Dörnyei and his colleagues suggested reinterpreting this sense of emotional identification from the perspective of an ideal L2 self and I have attempted to verify these findings in the Japanese context. Analysis of the data shows strong correlations between *ideal L2 self* and both *integrativeness and intended learning effort* – a measure of motivated behaviour. These high correlations support the claim that the concept of an ideal L2 self is an integral element of the motivational systems of language learners.

Differences between the Hungarian and the Japanese results were used to provide direction for further in-depth analysis of the data. I will outline three areas that will serve to form the basis of the subsequent results chapters.

#### 1            *The language learning experience*

The most immediately problematic finding was that of the prominent role of *attitudes to learning English*. The data showed that *attitudes to learning English* correlated strongly with both *ideal L2 self* and *intended learning effort*. The finding that the immediate learning situation plays an important role in the motivation of learners is neither



surprising nor of great intrinsic interest, however, the results seem to suggest a role that is almost too strong. The *attitudes to learning English* scale appears to be tapping into much more than enjoyment of the learning process and this requires further, more sophisticated analysis. Other findings, such as those showing little variation in anxiety levels across academic status categories and the differences between the levels of gender variation for secondary and university students, indicate that a more detailed investigation of the language learning experience of Japanese learners of English, and its impacts on the motivation to learn, is needed and I will attempt this in the next chapter.

## 2 *Relationships with an English-speaking community*

The initial comparison of the Japanese and Hungarian datasets showed there were key differences in attitudes towards the L2 community. One important finding was the correlation with effort was stronger when the concept of the L2 community was not tied to any particular nationality, remaining a more nebulous entity free from national ties. This finding inevitably lends support to the claim that it is necessary to reconsider the relationship between attitudes to the L2 community and efforts to learn a language; in other words, the findings are not consistent with conventional interpretations of Gardnerian integrativeness, which posits attitudes towards a clearly defined L2 community as a major factor in the element to learn a language.

The need for a thorough investigation of this aspect to the motivation to learn a second language was corroborated by an examination of the correlations between the motivational variables and the two criterion measures. The correlation tables showed a cluster of variables relating to contact, identification and communication with the outside

world that figured prominently for both measures. In contrast there were two variables, *ethnocentrism* and *fear of assimilation*, that appeared to be working in opposition. The tension between a desire to participate in the events of an English-speaking community and an impulse to preserve aspects of national identity is a crucial issue in many contexts in an era of globalisation and the seemingly unstoppable spread of English. An understanding of the particular Japanese dynamic to this tension is of vital importance and should reveal more about the motivation of Japanese learners of English. I will look at these issues in Chapter 9.

### 3 *The immediate social environment*

The initial reading of the data showed a clear difference between how the *milieu* variable performed in the Hungarian and Japanese contexts, suggesting a need for an examination of the role of immediate social relationships in the regulation of motivated learning behaviour. This was reinforced by an examination of the various sub-groups within the sample. Analysis of gender differences revealed that although females typically recorded higher scores across almost all scales than males, the academic status division was a much more important indicator of levels of motivation.

Adolescence and early-adulthood is a period of rapid development and experimentation with social identity in all societies. The data indicate that attitudes towards English and the efforts to learn the language may represent a significant part of the development process for many Japanese young people. In Chapter 10 I will explore how interaction with others and the development of an individual social identity impact on the efforts made to learn English.

## CHAPTER 8

### *ATTITUDES TO LEARNING ENGLISH*

#### 8.1 INTRODUCTION

The initial analysis of the MFQ data presented in Chapter 7 revealed two variables that were consistently strong in their correlations with efforts to learn and use English. One of these – *ideal L2 self* – was anticipated, but the other – *attitudes to learning English* – was not. It was the unexpected *attitudes to learning English* variable that correlated with effort more strongly than any of the other variables in the questionnaire and this demands detailed consideration for it challenges some of the theoretical assumptions upon which the study was based.

One reason for this finding being so unforeseen was the picture painted in the literature review of the Japanese English learning environment presented in Chapter 2. The literature depicted an English education system characterised by low levels of motivation towards classes almost solely directed towards the goal of examination success. It was something of a surprise to find a variable measuring feelings of enjoyment in the learning process figuring so prominently. In this chapter, I intend to consider some of the possibilities as to why this unexpected finding may have occurred. I will base my analysis on the following lines of investigation:

1. What do the data tell us about the relationships between *attitudes to learning English*, *ideal L2 self* and effort? Why do they correlate so highly?
2. What do the extremely high correlation values indicate and what is it that people who score highly actually like about learning English?

## 8.2 ATTITUDES TO LEARNING ENGLISH, IDEAL L2 SELF AND EFFORT

To begin my analysis, I would like to reiterate the strength of the correlations of the two motivational variables, both with each other and with the main criterion measure.

Table 8.1 shows the correlations between these two variables along with intended learning effort across academic status groups.

**TABLE 8.1:**  
**Intercorrelations for ideal L2 self, attitudes towards learning English, and intended learning effort**

		<b>Attitudes to learning English</b>	<b>Ideal L2 self</b>	<b>Intended learning effort</b>
<i>Attitudes to learning English</i>	Whole	1		
	Secondary	1		
	Non-major	1		
	Major	1		
<i>Ideal L2 self</i>	Whole	.75	1	
	Secondary	.72	1	
	Non-major	.72	1	
	Major	.72	1	
<i>Intended learning effort</i>	Whole	.86	.77	1
	Secondary	.86	.75	1
	Non-major	.84	.74	1
	Major	.79	.71	1

all correlations significant at  $p < .001$  level

The table shows a consistent pattern of remarkably high correlations across the academic status categories. Such high ( $>.70$ ) correlations are often an indication of overlap between variables, but if we examine the various constituent items from the two motivational variable scales, we can see that they appear to be measuring very different matters. Here are two example items to serve as an illustration:

### **Ideal L2 Self**

When I think about my future, it is important that I use English.

### **Attitudes to learning English**

I'm always looking forward to my English classes.

If we accept that the two scales are measuring different constructs, and these

example items certainly suggest that to be the case, then how do we explain the extraordinarily high correlations between them?

The *ideal L2 self* scale is measuring the strength of learners' visions of themselves as users of English while the *attitudes to learning English scale* is specifically concerned with an enjoyment of the process of learning, with a particular focus on the classroom. A simple explanation for the high correlation figures might be that for many Japanese learners, English is such a classroom-based activity that the visions that they have of themselves as users of the language are closely tied to the classroom context, that they have very little in the way of other frames of reference of themselves as language users. However, such an interpretation appears to present a very narrow and limited view of the Japanese English learning experience; I would like to consider the possibility of other explanations and intend to begin my investigation with a more detailed examination of the relationships between the two variables and effort.

The *attitudes to learning English* variable not only correlated remarkably highly with the other main motivational variable – *ideal L2 self* – but its correlation values with the criterion measure *intended learning effort* were also notably strong across all academic status groups. As was previously discussed in detail in Chapter 7, the ideal L2 self consistently correlates strongly with effort, yet the correlation values shown in Table 8.1 for *attitudes to learning English* are markedly stronger in each instance. This suggests that it is these attitudes to the learning process that have the more direct relationship with effort. I would like to explore that relationship a little further through a partial correlation analysis.

Partial correlation analysis was used to explore the relationships between *ideal L2 self*, *attitudes to learning English* and *intended learning effort*. I first correlated *ideal L2 self* with effort controlling for *attitudes to learning English* and then the reverse procedure was conducted, correlating *attitudes to learning English* with effort while controlling for *ideal L2 self*. These analyses were performed for each of the academic status groups.

**TABLE 8.2:**  
**Correlations: Ideal L2 self and attitudes to learning English with intended learning effort**

		Intended learning effort	
		zero order correlation	partial correlation
<i>Ideal L2 Self</i> (controlling for <i>attitudes to learning English</i> )	Whole	.77	.37
	Secondary	.75	.37
	Non-major	.74	.37
	Major	.71	.35
<i>Attitudes to learning English</i> (controlling for <i>Ideal L2 self</i> )	Whole	.86	.66
	Secondary	.86	.70
	Non-major	.84	.66
	Major	.79	.57

all correlations significant at p<.001 level

Table 8.2 shows a strong partial correlation between *attitudes to learning English* and *intended learning effort* for all the groups, and an inspection of the zero order correlation indicates that controlling for *ideal L2 self* had a relatively small effect on the relationship between these two variables. (A partial correlation analysis provides information about the relationship between two variables while controlling for a third variable, showing the unique variance between two variables while eliminating the variance from a third variable.) However, a comparison of the partial correlation for *ideal L2 self* and *intended learning effort*, controlling for *attitudes to learning English*, and the zero order correlation points to attitudes to learning English having a strong effect. This demonstrates that although both variables have strong relationships with learning effort, it is the

relationship with attitudes to learning rather than the ideal L2 self that is the more prominent.

The finding that the correlation between attitudes to learning and effort was stronger than those for the ideal L2 self goes against expectations and demands further analysis. In order to investigate further, let us consider how the variables interact with each other. The relationships between the two motivational variables and the criterion measure are visually represented in Figure 8.1.

**FIGURE 8.1:**  
**Relationships between ideal L2 self, attitudes to learning English and intended learning effort**

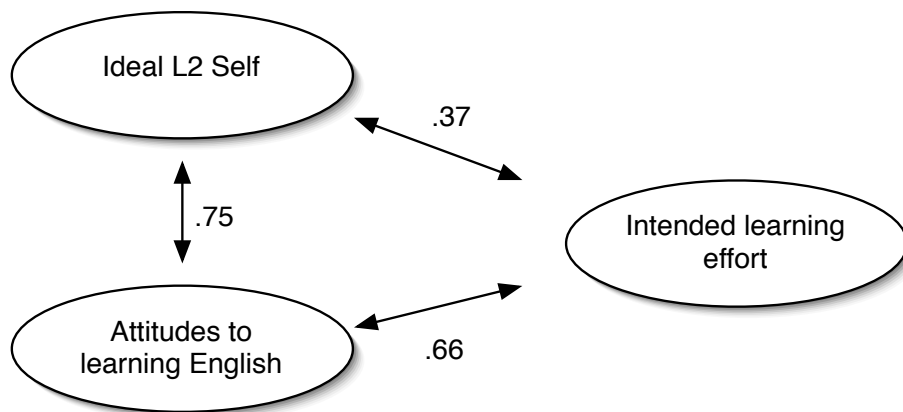


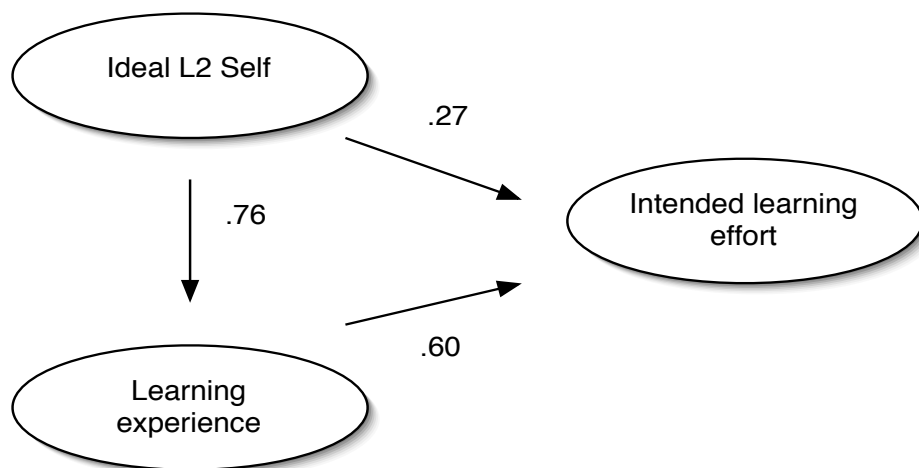
Figure 8.1 suggests that learning effort is the outcome of an interaction between the ideal L2 self and attitudes to learning, however, the statistical techniques employed in the study do not allow me to legitimately make claims that specify the direction of cause and effect. At this point, I can simply state that the data demonstrate the relationships between the ideal L2 self, attitudes to learning and effort to be important ones requiring additional investigation, especially in the matter of cause and effect.

### **Other studies**

In order to further explore cause-effect direction, I would like to refer to other

recent studies employing similar constructs. I will consider the findings of four separate studies; firstly, a study carried out in Japan by Taguchi (Taguchi, Magid & Papi, in press), then two more in Asian contexts, one by Magid (Taguchi et al., in press) in China and the other by Papi (Taguchi et al., in press) in Iran, and finally I will look at a study conducted by Csizér and Kormos (Csizér & Kormos, in press) in Hungary. Though the individual items and scales employed in these studies are not identical, they are certainly similar enough to bear direct comparison.

**FIGURE 8.2:**  
**Relationships between ideal L2 self, learning experience and intended learning effort in Japan as reported by Taguchi**



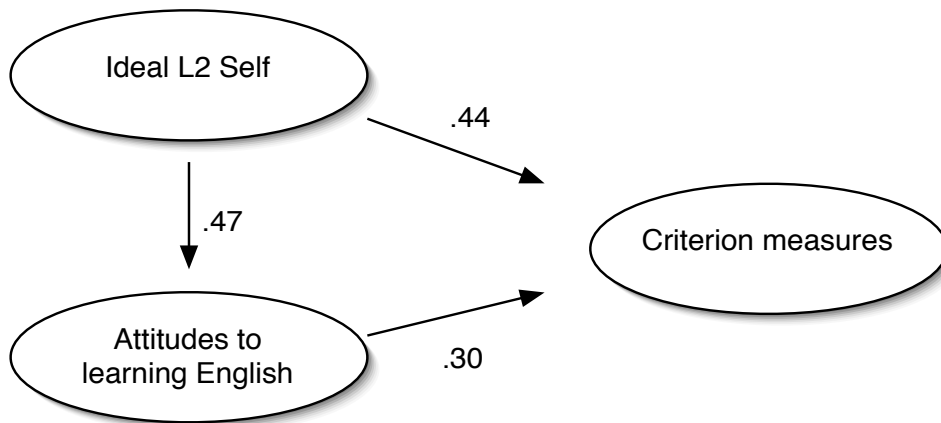
The similarities between the results of the current study and the Taguchi’s findings shown in Figure 8.2 are immediately apparent. Taguchi’s model, which was developed through structural equation modeling, shows very similar strengths of relationship between the three constructs. The degree of the similarities coupled with the combined size of the samples, which in total comprised more than 3,500 participants, are testimony to the robustness of the data and its generalisability within the Japanese context. For Japanese learners of English the relationship between the ideal L2 self and learning effort



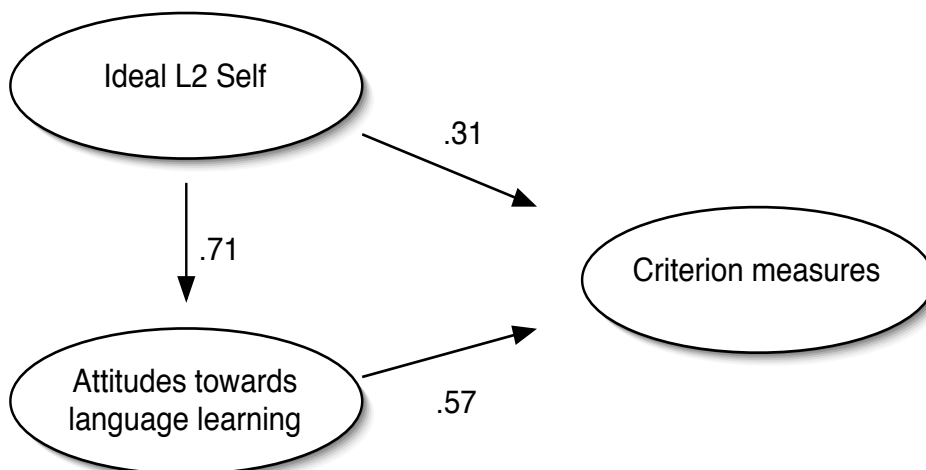
appears to be strongly mediated by attitudes towards learning and the learning experience.

The findings of my own study and that of the Taguchi study represent a strong empirically based illustration of the Japanese context, but I would like to consider to what extent these properties are shared by other English learning contexts.

**FIGURE 8.3:**  
**Relationships between ideal L2 self, attitudes towards language learning and motivated learning behaviour in China**



**FIGURE 8.4:**  
**Relationships between ideal L2 self, attitudes towards language learning and motivated learning behaviour in Iran**

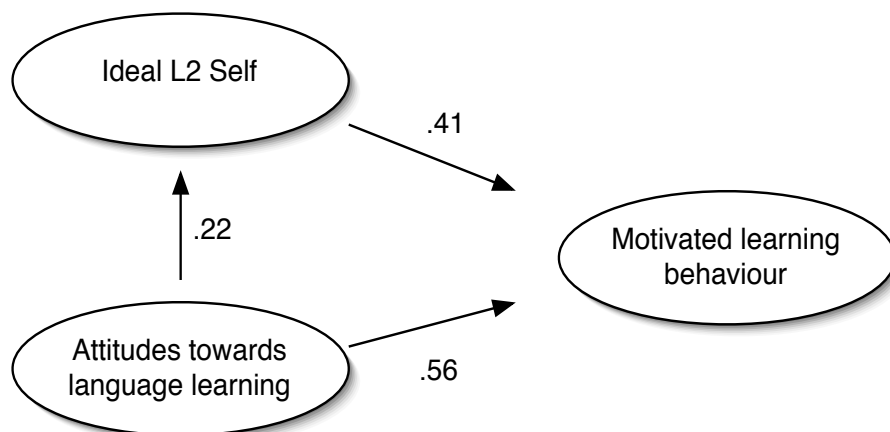


A simple comparison of the directional paths shown in Figures 8.3 and 8.4 supports the earlier interpretation of the Japanese data. Using the three other studies it is possible to confirm the inference drawn from my own data, that effort is the outcome of the interaction between the ideal L2 self and attitudes to learning. It is also possible to go further and to argue that the data indicate a basic structure common to foreign language learning environments. The essential elements of this structure are shared but the details of specific manifestations are dependent on variables peculiar to the local context. Taguchi et al. (in press) make a convincing case for explaining the differences observed in the three contexts presented here by pointing to salient features of the English education systems of the three countries. In China, where the strength of the relationships between the motivational variable and the criterion measure differs from the other two countries, acquiring English skills is regarded as a more critical undertaking, with significant immediate consequences, therefore learners are less concerned with the niceties of the immediate learning situation. On the other hand, in both Japan and Iran, there is little risk associated with failure to learn English thus the role of the learning environment comes to the fore as a motivating factor. The immediate classroom environment seems to play a greater role where the exigent consequences of learning are less obviously apparent.

The three studies discussed above all referred to Asian educational contexts, which can be regarded as sharing certain characteristics, based on a highly formal, teacher-fronted approach to language education. Data drawn from Hungary, where more communicative methodology is prominent, provides an informative comparison.

Figure 8.5 illustrates the results of a study conducted in Hungary by Csizér and Kormos and points to a slightly different dynamic between the three components than that observed in the Asian contexts.

**FIGURE 8.5:**  
**Relationships between ideal L2 Self, attitudes towards language learning and motivated learning behaviour in Hungary**



In the Japanese and Iranian examples, where English success is less critical but teaching methods remain highly formal, the direction of the relationship between the two variables is clearly shown to be from *ideal L2 self* to *attitudes towards learning*; in China, where English success is more immediately important but the dominant methodology is still broadly similar, the relationship moves in the same direction but is less strong; in Hungary, where language education tends to employ different methods, the relationship between the ideal L2 self and attitudes to learning travels in the opposite direction.

The comparison of the four educational contexts presented above points to a basic common structure in which two key motivational variables, the ideal L2 self and attitudes to the learning experience, affect learning behaviour. The essential elements are common to all four countries but the strengths of the relationships between those elements and their cause-effect directions emerge from local factors. In the next section, I intend to

consider aspects of the Japanese context that might be relevant to the particular Japanese manifestation of this motivational system.

### **8.3 ATTITUDES TO LEARNING ENGLISH AND THE JAPANESE CONTEXT**

#### **Anxiety**

I began this chapter by remarking upon the unexpectedly high correlations found between attitudes to learning and effort; I also suggested that these remarkably high correlation values implied that the scale was tapping into something more significant than simply the enjoyment of the classroom experience. One way of gaining further insights into what exactly this attitudes scale is measuring and how participants are interpreting it is to compare it to other measures of the language learning environment employed in the study and foremost amongst these is anxiety. I am particularly interested in the relationship between anxiety and effort because, while the data indicate that enjoyment of the learning experience is the most salient factor in determining efforts to learn, anxiety appears to also feature prominently in that learning experience. I am curious to explore how learners attempt to reconcile enjoyment with anxiety.

The descriptive statistics shown in Table 8.3 confirm the high levels of anxiety experienced by all groups. An inspection of the *English anxiety* figures shows almost no variance across academic status categories for either males or females. High levels of anxiety are reported for all groups. This lack of variance seems incompatible with the significant variance for *attitudes to learning English* between all three groups. The English majors – and especially the females – report much greater levels of enjoyment of the learning process than the other groups. This seems somewhat contradictory in that levels of anxiety might be expected to correlate negatively with enjoyment of the learning

experience; anxiety could be anticipated to fall as enjoyment rises but this does not appear to be the case.

**TABLE 8.3:**  
**English anxiety, attitudes to learning English and variance across academic status**

		Secondary students		Non-English majors		University English majors		F	Effect size <sup>†</sup>	Sequence <sup>a</sup>
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD			
<i>English anxiety</i>	All	4.12	.97	4.09	1.02	4.13	1.02	.26	.00	2,1,3
	Male	4.04	.97	4.01	1.02	4.06	1.11	.12	.00	2,1,3
	Female	4.15	.97	4.24	1.00	4.13	1.01	1.24	.00	3,1,2
<i>Attitudes to learning English</i>	All	3.57	1.08	3.26	1.06	4.45	.94	181.43**	.13	2/1/3
	Male	3.35	1.01	3.13	1.03	4.09	1.00	22.02**	.03	2/1/3
	Female	3.67	1.11	3.49	1.07	4.52	.91	92.74**	.15	2/1/3

\*\* p < 0.001 †= eta squared

<sup>a</sup> Post hoc SNK comparison. Numbers refer to the academic status groups: 1=secondary students, 2 = non-English major university students, 3 = English major university students and are presented with the lowest value coming first. A comma between numbers indicates non-significant differences between two values and a slash indicates significance.

In order to examine the relationship between anxiety and attitudes to learning in more detail, a correlation analysis was performed. The results are shown in Table 8.4.

**TABLE 8.4:**  
**Correlations between English anxiety and attitudes to learning English**

		Attitudes to learning English		
		All	Male	Female
<i>English anxiety</i>	Whole	.03	.06*	-.06*
	Secondary	-.06	-.14	-.05
	Non-major	.05	.07*	-.07
	Major	.01	.14	-.02

\* p<.05

Table 8.4 reveals almost no significant negative correlation between anxiety and attitudes to learning. The only significant negative correlation found – that shown for the overall female population – was in fact a very small one. The high levels of anxiety

reported for all groups coupled with the lack of meaningful negative correlations between anxiety and positive attitudes to learning shown in Table 8.4 paint a very confusing picture. The findings are more than confusing; they appear highly incongruous.

One explanation for the apparent contradiction of a lack of negative correlation between anxiety and enjoyment may lie in the nature of anxiety itself. If anxiety is defined as a 'feeling of worry or unease', it is usually a feeling that is derived from emotional responses rather than logical rationalisations. The data indicate that the emotional dimension to the motivation to learn a language is indeed an important one; unfortunately, the quantitative data is not suited to explaining non-linear, emotional processes and I will return to this issue in Chapter 11, where I interpret the study's qualitative data. However, while it is certainly true that models of language learning need to make greater allowances for the irrational and the illogical, the puzzling findings presented here require a more convincing explanation than merely attributing them to the realm of the emotional. Anxiety and a positive, enjoyable learning experience seem so incompatible that the results suggest that one of the scales is not measuring what it was designed to measure.

One possible source of confusion could be in the nature of the *English anxiety* scale. Piloting of the questionnaire showed that learners in Japan did not appear to distinguish between the use of English and English in the classroom, therefore two scales, *English use anxiety* and *English class anxiety*, were merged to create a single *English anxiety* measurement. It may be that the items not specifically related to the classroom were causing the apparent contradiction. In order to test this, the two items which specifically

referred to the classroom situation were extracted and a separate *English class anxiety* scale was created. The Cronbach alpha value for the new scale was .69, which is acceptable.

The correlations between the new scale and attitudes to learning are shown in

Table 8.5.

**TABLE 8.5:**  
**Correlations between English class anxiety and attitudes to learning English**

		Attitudes to learning English		
		All	Male	Female
<i>English class anxiety</i>	Whole	-.07**	-.05	-.13***
	Secondary	-.18	.27**	-.16*
	Non-major	-.06*	.02	.18***
	Major	-.01	.02	.02

\*p < 0.05 ; \*\*p<0.01;\*\*\*p <0.001\_

Table 8.6 shows more significant negative correlation than was found in Table 8.4 but in most cases the levels are still much lower than would be anticipated. The slightly higher correlation values observed in Table 8.6 provide evidence that this scale is accurately targeting attitudes relating to the classroom experience and therefore successfully measuring what it is intended to measure. If the *English class anxiety* scale is measuring what it was designed to measure, then the relatively low correlation values observed suggest that it is the *attitudes to learning English* scale that is being interpreted in a way not intended in the original research design.

A combination of personal experience and a review of the literature on English education in Japan suggests that the *attitudes to learning English* scale is measuring something more than a simple enjoyment or involvement of English classes. This suspicion is confirmed by analysis of the anxiety variables, which show an improbable lack of negative correlation between anxiety and positive attitudes to the learning

experience. The attitudes to learning scale as represented in the current data covers more than an experiential factor but suggests something more akin to a cognitively determined disposition. The obvious next step suggested by this conclusion is to explore what it is the participants are reading in to this scale and what exactly it is they are disposed to. Unfortunately, such an exploration is not possible through a solely quantitative analysis; this is an area that requires the additional sensitivity of qualitative data for a more complete interpretation of what it is happening. I return to this matter in Chapter 11.

#### **8.4 SUMMARY**

One of the most striking features of the initial analysis of the data was the unexpectedly key role of attitudes to learning English in the Japanese context. Of course, it was anticipated that these attitudes would have had a major role in the regulation of learning effort but the strength of that role was unanticipated. In this chapter I have attempted to explore and explain some of the reasons behind this.

In the first part of the chapter I looked at the relationships between the two main motivational variables found in the study, *attitudes to learning English* and *ideal L2 self*, and the principal criterion measure, *intended learning effort*. The findings of this study, when compared to those of other similar studies, indicate that these two dominant variables are common and may be key aspects to learning in environments lacking immediate direct contact with L2 speakers. A comparison with findings from other similar studies was used to further explore my own data. The results of this comparison suggests that although the basic structure of the two variables dominating efforts to learn may be common to both contexts, the specifics of how the variables relate to each other and to effort is likely to be determined by conditions prevalent in the local learning



environment. There is a shared basic structure to the motivation to learn in EFL contexts but there are also aspects particular to the local context that have a significant impact on how this structure develops.

The conclusion that the local educational context has a significant bearing on the relationships between the main motivational variables and effort demands a more thorough investigation of peculiarities of the Japanese learning environment. One of the most noticeable findings from the questionnaire data was that high levels of anxiety seem to be a defining characteristic of English use for many young Japanese people. It was anticipated that anxiety would be a key variable in predicting attitudes to learning but this was not supported by the data. The data found high levels of anxiety to be common to all groups of learners of English in Japan.

The findings relating to anxiety and learning provide a timely reminder of the emotional dimension to the learning of a language; the decisions that young people take in the course of their learning are not always informed by purely rational decisions and this needs to be acknowledged by L2 motivation theory. However, both the strengths of the correlations between attitudes to learning and effort, and the levels of anxiety were high enough to lead to the belief that this was an important area that required serious examination. It would not suffice to relegate this issue to the level of an unpredictable emotional state. This an area of inquiry unsuited to quantitative investigation therefore I intend to take up this challenge in Chapter 11 where I introduce a qualitative interpretation to my discussion.

## CHAPTER 9

### *COSMOPOLITAN OUTLOOK AND ETHNOCENTRISM*

#### 9.1 INTRODUCTION

A recurring theme in Japanese L2 motivation studies has been the prominence of variables relating to travel abroad and contact with the outside world. This concept has been given several different labels, the most well known being Yashima's international posture. At the core of Yashima's conceptualisation of international posture is an "openness or non-ethnocentric attitude toward different cultures" (Yashima, 2002 p.57). The initial analysis of the data presented in Chapter 7 was consistent with these previous Japanese studies in finding a cluster of variables relating to contact and identification with people from other cultures correlating highly with efforts to learn (shown in Table 7.11). In this chapter, I aim to realign this aspect of the motivation to learn a language with the concept of an ideal L2 self.

I will begin by looking at notions of attitudes towards the L2 community, a long-standing pillar of the socio-educational model of L2 motivation, and at how the data suggest a need to reevaluate the relationships between learners' attitudes to the speakers of a language, the values associated with the language and its speakers, and efforts made to learn that language. Following on from the initial findings reported in Chapter 7, I aim to show that for learners in EFL contexts such as Japan, the relationship between the language learner and the L2 community is far more complex than that posited by conventional interpretations of integrativeness. I will then move on to a consideration of how these concepts concerning contact and identification with an L2 community, and

those emphasising separateness and distance from that community, affect the construction of an ideal L2 self and how all of this affects learning behaviour.

## 9.2 THE L2 COMMUNITY

In Chapter 7, I briefly discussed how the questionnaire data indicate that learners in Japan are motivated by vague notions of an L2 community free of ties to particular cultural or geographic locations. In this section, I would like to examine this issue in more detail with a view to providing a platform for a broader consideration of how Japanese learners of English perceive and relate to the outside world. I will take my cue from Yashima's (2002, p. 57) assertion that, "English seems to represent something vaguer and larger than the American community in the minds of young Japanese learners. For many learners, English symbolizes the world around Japan." How learners of English in Japan view their own relationships, as young Japanese people, with this symbol of the outside world and the effects of these relationships on learning behaviour is the question that provides the foundations of the current chapter.

The first issue I intend to address is that of the vagueness and specificity of notions of an English-speaking community. Table 9.1 shows the correlations between *attitudes to the L2 community* and *intended learning effort* for the various academic status groups. The table presents a comparison of two interpretations of an English-speaking community: one closely linked to the US and the other representing a view of English as a language of international communication, detached from Anglo-American cultural norms. The table also provides partial correlation values. These partial correlations analyses were conducted by first correlating attitudes towards a US-based English-speaking community with effort while controlling for the vague, non-specific version of an English-speaking

community. Following this, the reverse procedure was carried out by correlating the non-specific version of the English-speaking community while controlling for the US-based scale.

**TABLE 9.1:**  
**Correlations for attitudes towards L2 community and intended learning effort**

	<b>Intended learning effort</b>							
	<i>zero order correlations</i>				<i>partial correlations</i>			
	All	Secondary students	Non-English majors	English majors	All	Secondary students	Non-English majors	English majors
<i>Attitudes towards L2 community (US)</i>	.31**	.35**	.29**	.22**	-.05	-.03	-.01	-.10
<i>Attitudes towards L2 community (no specific nationality)</i>	.51**	.55**	.47**	.42**	.43**	.45**	.38**	.38**

\*\* p<0.001

partial correlation values shown are 1) attitudes towards L2 community (US) - intended learning effort controlling for attitudes towards L2 community (no specific nationality) ; 2) attitudes towards L2 community (no specific nationality) controlling for attitudes towards L2 community (US)

The zero order correlations for the US-based English-speaking community are reasonably strong for all the groups, suggesting that identification with a particular nationality can be an effective motivating factor, however, when the element of nationality is removed from the notion of an English-speaking community, the correlations with learning effort are much higher. The picture becomes even more interesting when the partial correlation values are taken into account. When attitudes to a US-based English-speaking community are controlled for, the correlations between effort and attitudes to an English-speaking community without any particular national base fall slightly, but when the reverse procedure is conducted the significant correlations between attitudes and effort disappear. I interpret this as demonstrating that the correlations with

the nationality-based L2 community are actually being bolstered by the attitudes towards the vague, nationality-free L2 community; the English-speaking community that encourages young Japanese people to learn is one that represents the world outside Japan rather than any specific national group. This finding undermines the assumption implied in conventional interpretations of integrativeness, that static notions of a clearly available target language community serve as an effective motivator for language learners. The data is consistent with Yashima's position that Japanese learners of English are motivated to learn by the role of English as a symbol of vaguely defined outside world.

### 9.3 COSMOPOLITAN ATTITUDES

If Japanese learners of English are not motivated to learn by their attitudes towards specific national communities, what is it that they see in their vaguely defined version of the English-speaking world that encourages efforts to learn? In Chapter 7, I identified a number of variables relating to contact and communication with people from other cultures that correlated highly with both measures of motivated behaviour used in the MFQ, *intended learning effort* and *willingness to communicate in English*. I would like to investigate these variables further to see how they inter-relate with each other and with efforts to learn and use the language. Before proceeding with my analysis, I will simply restate these variables and their chief characteristics:

- *Cultural interest* – concerning an interest in the cultural products associated with the target language.
- *International contact* – referring to a desire to make contact with people from other countries through the target language.
- *Travel* – relating not so much to travel itself but more the prospect of overseas travel as

a means of connecting with the outside world, thus a reason for learning the language.

- *International empathy* – pertaining to a sense of connection and friendship with the speakers of the target language.
- *Attitudes towards L2 community* – covering feelings about the speakers of the language, with particular attention being paid to the international nature of the English language.

My initial aim in this analysis is to discover whether these variables perform in a broadly similar manner to each other or do they each possess unique characteristics that require separate consideration.

**TABLE 9.2:**

**Intercorrelation matrix for the cosmopolitan attitudinal variables**

		Cultural interest	Attitudes towards L2 community	Intl. contact	Travel	Intl. empathy	Interest in foreign languages
<i>Cultural interest</i>	Whole	1					
	Secondary	1					
	Non-major	1					
	Major	1					
<i>Attitudes towards L2 community</i>	Whole	.66	1				
	Secondary	.66	1				
	Non-major	.64	1				
	Major	.64	1				
<i>Intl. contact</i>	Whole	.63	.57	1			
	Secondary	.63	.63	1			
	Non-major	.60	.53	1			
	Major	.55	.48	1			
<i>Travel</i>	Whole	.65	.59	.78	1		
	Secondary	.64	.65	.81	1		
	Non-major	.63	.55	.75	1		
	Major	.59	.52	.77	1		
<i>Intl. empathy</i>	Whole	.60	.57	.76	.70	1	
	Secondary	.60	.62	.80	.71	1	
	Non-major	.56	.54	.72	.67	1	
	Major	.50	.48	.72	.64	1	
<i>Interest in foreign languages</i>	Whole	.46	.47	.69	.65	.65	1
	Secondary	.52	.51	.72	.72	.65	1
	Non-major	.55	.43	.66	.64	.63	1
	Major	.48	.39	.57	.60	.56	1

all correlations significant at the  $p < 0.001$  level

Table 9.2 shows the inter-correlations between the variables relating to cosmopolitan attitudes. The most noticeable characteristic of Table 9.2 is the degree of consistency in the high (>.50) correlation values across the different academic status groups. One slight exception is that the correlations between *attitudes towards the L2 community* and *interest in foreign languages* tend to be lower than .50 but I would simply attribute this to the fact that in the Japanese educational context – and in the overall context of the questionnaire instrument – the term ‘foreign languages’ may contain a suggestion of ‘foreign languages other than English’ therefore producing lower correlations with items relating to a specifically English-speaking L2 community. The only other real suggestion of variation is the tendency for the English majors to score slightly lower in most categories. I interpret this as indicating that the English majors have a more sophisticated language learning experience than the other groups, meaning that their perceptions of English and the outside world are less uni-dimensional. (I will return to this theme a little later in the chapter, when I discuss the relationships between the cosmopolitan variables and the ideal L2 self.) A further interpretation might simply be, since the intercorrelation values are higher for the secondary students in all but one category, that a more mature understanding of the outside world develops with age and greater experience and knowledge of that world.

### **Cosmopolitan attitudes and learning behaviour**

The next issue to consider is the effect of these attitudes towards the outside world on learning behaviour. Table 9.3 shows the correlations between the various cosmopolitan attitudinal variables and the principal criterion measure, *intended learning effort*.

**TABLE 9.3:**  
**Correlations for cosmopolitan attitudinal variables and intended learning effort**

	Intended learning effort			
	All	Secondary students	Non-English majors	English majors
<i>Cultural interest</i>	.58	.60	.53	.56
<i>Attitudes towards L2 community</i>	.47	.51	.43	.37
<i>International contact</i>	.60	.64	.54	.58
<i>Travel</i>	.59	.62	.53	.53
<i>International empathy</i>	.65	.64	.62	.60
<i>Interest in foreign languages</i>	.65	.68	.60	.59

all correlations significant at the  $p < 0.001$  level

Once again the overall picture is one of generally stable, high correlations for all the variables. In support of the earlier interpretation of Table 9.2 comes the observation that the correlations between the attitudinal variables and intended effort tend to be higher for the secondary students than for both sets of university learners. Learners of English at secondary schools seem to put a greater emphasis on the ‘foreignness’ of English than the university learners, especially the English majors.

#### **9.4 COSMOPOLITAN OUTLOOK**

The broad pattern in both Tables 9.2 and 9.3 is one of high stability and consistency. Since the six attitudinal variables all correlated so consistently across the various academic status groups with each other and in relation to the criterion measure, it was decided that it would be both possible and desirable to merge the individual variables into a single, collective variable. This new variable was labelled *cosmopolitan outlook*.

I employ the word ‘cosmopolitan’ in an attempt to move away from the ‘international’ of *international posture* because I feel this is somewhat compromised by its prominent role in the discourse of internationalisation – discussed in Chapter 2 – that has



been so important in contemporary Japanese society and in the metalanguage of English language education in Japan; simply because young people are able to discuss these complex issues in terms of becoming an ‘international person’ or valuing ‘international friendship’ does not mean that their analyses and articulations are necessarily accurate. The core components of this cosmopolitan outlook variable are familiar from previous studies in Japan and elsewhere. The aim here is not to claim to have discovered something new, but to attempt to work towards a better understanding of how these ideas of contact and interaction with the outside world can be aligned with a view of L2 motivation that situates an ideal L2 self at its core.

The new variable was calculated through a simple computation of the means of its six constituent components. Table 9.4 shows the internal reliability figures for the variable, which are all very good.

**TABLE 9.4:**  
**Internal reliability of cosmopolitan outlook variable**

		<b>Cronbach alpha</b>			
		All	Secondary students	Non-English majors	English majors
<i>Cosmopolitan outlook</i>	Whole	.91	.92	.90	.89
	Male	.89	.90	.89	.92
	Female	.91	.93	.91	.87

Personal knowledge and experience of Japanese social values and customs suggested that this cosmopolitan outlook may operate differently for males and females. In order to examine possible gender differences a t-test analysis was conducted. The results of this analysis alongside the basic descriptive statistics for the new variable are presented in Table 9.5.

**TABLE 9.5:**  
**Descriptive statistics for cosmopolitan outlook with gender t-test analysis**

		Male		Female		t	df	effect size <sup>†</sup>
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
	Whole	3.91	.79	4.46	.81	-16.36***	2228.93	.69
<i>Cosmopolitan outlook</i>	Secondary	4.02	.83	4.27	.89	-2.62**	360	.29
	Non-major	3.86	.77	4.33	.77	-11.59***	1571	.61
	Major	4.54	.86	4.88	.63	-2.68*	56	.46

\*p < 0.05 ; \*\*p<0.01;\*\*\*p <0.001; †Cohen's d

The t-test analysis confirms the common perception that Japanese females tend to have a more cosmopolitan outlook than Japanese males, with females scoring significantly higher in each of the academic status categories. This finding is consistent with a common perception in Japanese society that women are more cosmopolitan than men, that women are more likely to travel for pleasure and take an interest in the various artefacts of international culture, cuisine and fashion. In Japanese popular culture and marketing, males tend to be portrayed as experiencing pleasure when returning to traditional Japanese values, often in the form of a trip back to an ancestral home or the consumption of some traditional food or drink. The data tends to support this popular belief and my interest here is with how this affects efforts to learn English, with the behavioural outcomes of this cosmopolitan outlook. However, before examining the specifics of the relationships between effort, the idea L2 self and cosmopolitan outlook, I must consider some of the factors acting in opposition to the development of a cosmopolitan outlook and how they may affect the efforts to learn English.

### **Anti-cosmopolitan attitudes**

The initial analysis of the data presented in Chapter 7 revealed that two of the variables that correlated least with learning effort were *ethnocentrism* and *fear of assimilation*.

The *ethnocentrism* variable is concerned with a belief in the separateness of Japanese culture and *fear of assimilation* relates to perceived external threats to that culture, with a particular focus on the role of language. Both these concepts seem at variance with cosmopolitan attitudes that place the young Japanese learner of English as a candidate for legitimate membership of an inclusive English-speaking community.

It would seem logical to assume that if levels of cosmopolitan outlook were much higher for females than males would score more highly for the anti-cosmopolitan variables. A t-test analysis was carried out to test this assumption.

**TABLE 9.6:**  
**Gender differences for anti-cosmopolitan variables**

		Male		Female		t	df	effect size <sup>†</sup>
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
<i>Fear of assimilation</i>	Whole	2.79	.87	2.61	.81	4.87**	2252.51	.21
	Secondary	2.71	.78	2.59	.84	1.34	360	.15
	Non-major	2.80	.88	2.64	.80	3.65**	1569	.19
	Major	2.76	.92	2.58	.77	1.35	322	.21
<i>Ethnocentrism</i>	Whole	3.14	.80	2.72	.77	12.53**	2255	.53
	Secondary	3.09	.70	2.94	.76	1.82	360	.21
	Non-major	3.17	.80	2.75	.75	10.63**	1569	.54
	Major	2.71	.87	2.50	.76	1.68	322	.26

\*p < 0.05 : \*\*p < 0.01; \*\*\*p < 0.001 † Cohen's d

Although there was a significant difference between males and females, Table 9.6 shows that all of this difference is concentrated within the university non-English majors group. The non-English major academic status category represents the broader general population with no particular interest in learning English and within this category males and females appear to develop very different attitudes. However, for the other two groups, those with an expressed interest in learning English, there is no significant gender difference.

Since the values presented in Table 9.6 revealed similar patterns of variance for both variables, creating a single combined variable was considered. In order to test the feasibility of this approach a correlation analysis was carried out between the two variables. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 9.7.

**TABLE 9.7:**  
**Correlations between the two anti-cosmopolitan attitudinal variables**

		Fear of assimilation			
		All	Secondary students	Non-English majors	English majors
<i>Ethnocentrism</i>	Whole	.32**	.23**	.29**	.22**
	Male	.30**	.28**	.33**	.14
	Female	.20**	.18*	.29**	.22**

\*  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.001$

Although the figures shown demonstrate a broad pattern of correlation between the two variables, the relative lack of strength of these correlations – certainly compared to the intercorrelation values for the component parts of the cosmopolitan outlook variable – in addition to the lack of uniformity in the distribution of the correlations seem to caution against computing a single measure from the two variables. Instead it was decided to keep the two variables separate.

My interest at this point is primarily in exploring how the anti-cosmopolitan attitudes operate for the various sub-groups of the sample before embarking on a more detailed examination of the relationships between *cosmopolitan outlook*, *ideal L2 self* and effort. Are there any particular groups within the sample that are singularly affected by anti-cosmopolitan attitudes?

Table 9.8 shows that the correlation values for *ethnocentrism* are slightly more stable than those for *fear of assimilation*. The overall tendencies are that female correlation values

are stronger than those for males and that the values reported for the non-English majors are the lowest of the academic status groups. This is not a uniform pattern and there are one or two notable exceptions, chief amongst these is the finding that male secondary pupils report a higher correlation for fear of assimilation and that female university non-English majors report a higher value than the English majors.

**TABLE 9.8:**  
**Correlations between the two anti-cosmopolitan attitudinal variables and cosmopolitan outlook**

		<b>Cosmopolitan outlook</b>			
		<b>All</b>	<b>Secondary students</b>	<b>Non-English majors</b>	<b>English majors</b>
<i>Fear of assimilation</i>	Whole	-.15***	-.30***	-.09***	-.21***
	Male	-.06*	-.33***	-.02	-.16
	Female	-.20***	-.28***	-.16***	-.21**
<i>Ethnocentrism</i>	Whole	-.37***	-.44***	-.31***	-.31***
	Male	-.27**	-.36***	-.21***	-.21
	Female	-.43***	-.46***	-.39***	-.34***

\*p < 0.05; \*\* p < 0.01 level; \*\*\* p < 0.001

Perhaps the most interesting finding from Table 9.8 is that the male university non-English majors report no negative correlation between *cosmopolitan outlook* and *fear of assimilation*; this means they see no conflict between a desire to protect Japanese cultural and linguistic values and engagement and interaction with people from other countries. It would be interesting to speculate on what kind of engagement with people from other countries these non-English majors had in mind, but since this group of learners is the one of least interest to the current study, I will refrain from getting embroiled in that discussion.

In order to confirm that these anti-cosmopolitan attitudes were affecting efforts to learn a correlation analysis was conducted and the results are shown in Table 9.9.

**TABLE 9.9:**  
**Correlations between the two anti-cosmopolitan attitudinal variables and intended learning effort**

		Intended learning effort			
		All	Secondary students	Non-English majors	English majors
<i>Fear of assimilation</i>	Whole	.09**	-.09	.18**	-.06
	Male	.23**	-.05	.28**	.01
	Female	-.03	-.08	.03	-.07
<i>Ethnocentrism</i>	Whole	-.21**	-.35**	-.11**	-.16*
	Male	.08*	-.31**	-.03	-.16
	Female	-.28**	-.36**	-.22**	-.17*

\*p < 0.05; \* p < 0.01 level; \*\*\* p < 0.001

The overall pattern shown in Table 9.9 is broadly similar to that observed in Table 9.8. Of course, there are some differences, once again especially in the figures shown for the university non-English majors, but it is still possible to conclude from a comparison of these two table that the effects of anti-cosmopolitan attitudes on cosmopolitan attitudes are reflected in their effects on efforts to learn. These findings are in many ways predictable and were anticipated. Anti-cosmopolitan attitudes seem to be a significant factor in the learning experience of all groups of learners in Japan but this seems to be especially the case for male university non-English majors. This is the group we would expect to have the least interest in making efforts to learn English and in many respects of the least interest to this study. For the other groups, anti-cosmopolitan attitudes remain constantly in the background but do so in a predictable fashion.

#### **9.5 COSMOPOLITAN OUTLOOK, THE IDEAL L2 SELF AND EFFORT**

My essential interest in this chapter is in how these attitudes towards engagement with the outside world impact on ideal L2 self beliefs and learning behaviour. Table 9.5 presents the correlations between *cosmopolitan outlook*, *ideal L2 self* and *intended learning effort*.

**TABLE 9.10:**  
**Intercorrelation matrix for the cosmopolitan outlook, ideal L2 self, and intended learning effort**

		Intended learning effort			Ideal L2 self			Cosmopolitan outlook		
		All	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All	Male	Female
<i>Intended learning effort</i>	Whole	1	1	1						
	Secondary	1	1	1						
	Non-major	1	1	1						
	Major	1	1	1						
<i>Ideal L2 self</i>	Whole	.77**	.74**	.78**	1	1	1			
	Secondary	.75**	.71**	.76**	1	1	1			
	Non-major	.74**	.73**	.75**	1	1	1			
	Major	.71**	.78**	.68**	1	1	1			
<i>Cosmo outlook</i>	Whole	.66**	.66**	.73**	.74**	.68**	.76**	1	1	1
	Secondary	.74**	.73**	.73**	.73**	.71**	.73**	1	1	1
	Non-major	.67**	.64**	.70**	.69**	.67**	.73**	1	1	1
	Major	.69**	.75**	.67**	.73**	.67**	.74**	1	1	1

all correlations significant at the  $p < 0.001$  level

Table 9.10 shows that *cosmopolitan outlook* correlates very highly with both *intended learning effort* and *ideal L2 self* in all the academic status categories. There is an overall tendency for the female values to be slightly higher than those for the males, but this is not uniform and the male university English majors report a notably higher value than their female counterparts.

The data reveal that a cosmopolitan outlook in itself appears to be a very reliable predictor of efforts to learn English, however, the ideal L2 self still does a better job of explaining these efforts for all the academic status categories, although this is notably less pronounced for the secondary pupils. This is reminiscent of the pattern observed between *integrativeness* and *ideal L2 self* in Chapter 7; the correlation between *cosmopolitan outlook* and effort is relatively high but the values shown for *ideal L2 self* are even higher.

The consistently high correlations observed in Table 9.10 demonstrate that the

ideal L2 self and cosmopolitanism are very closely related concepts. I will now consider how they interact with each other. In order to explore these relationships a partial correlation analysis was carried out: first correlating *ideal L2 self* with effort controlling for *cosmopolitan outlook* and then the reverse procedure was conducted, correlating *cosmopolitan outlook* with effort while controlling for *ideal L2 self*. The results of these procedures are presented in Table 9.11.

**TABLE 9.11:**  
**Partial correlations with intended learning effort: Ideal L2 self (controlling for cosmopolitan outlook) and cosmopolitan outlook (controlling for ideal L2 self)**

		Intended learning effort	
		zero order correlation	partial correlation
<i>Ideal L2 Self</i>	Whole	.77**	.51**
	Secondary	.75**	.47**
	Non-major	.74**	.52**
	Major	.71**	.50**
<i>Cosmopolitan outlook</i>	Whole	.74**	.34**
	Secondary	.73**	.42**
	Non-major	.69**	.32**
	Major	.73**	.35**

\*\* p<0.001

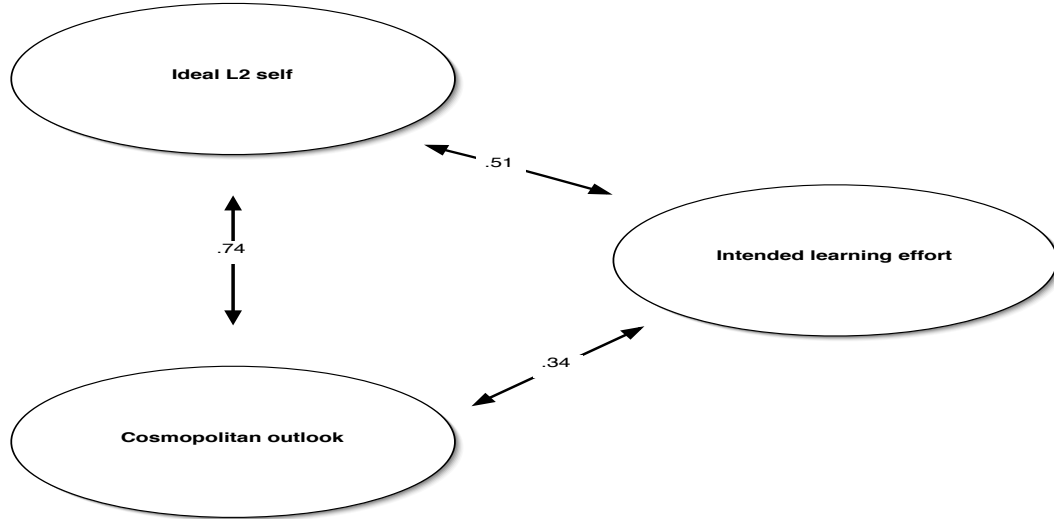
Table 9.11 reveals that although the zero order correlations with *intended learning effort* are very similar for both variables, the relationship between the ideal L2 self and effort appears to be the more direct one. This is visually represented in Figure 9.1.

Figure 9.1 shows a reasonably strong direct correlation between cosmopolitan attitudes and effort but the correlation between effort and the ideal L2 self is considerably stronger. However, even though the relationship between *ideal L2 self* and effort is stronger, the correlation between cosmopolitan attitudes and effort is still a strong one. This finding challenges some of the basic claims of the L2 self theory, which predict that the ideal L2 self component should absorb the cosmopolitan attitudes; it is a



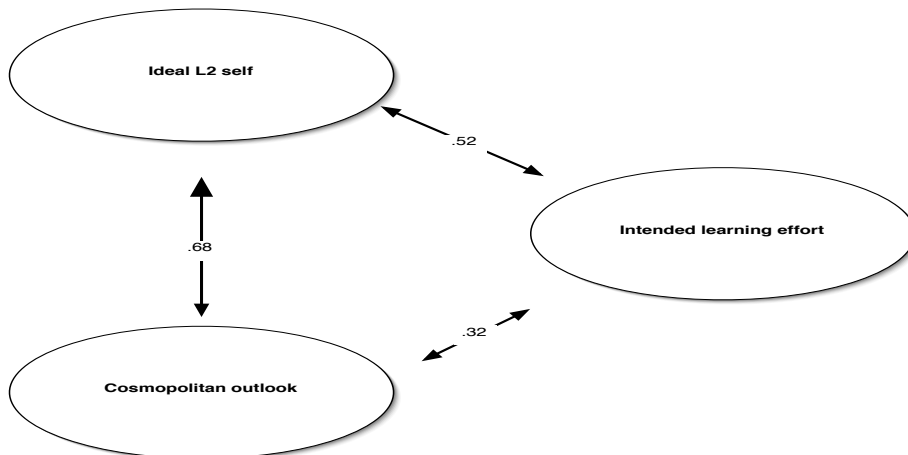
finding that demands serious investigation and explanation.

**FIGURE 9.1:**  
**Cosmopolitan outlook, the ideal L2 self and effort**

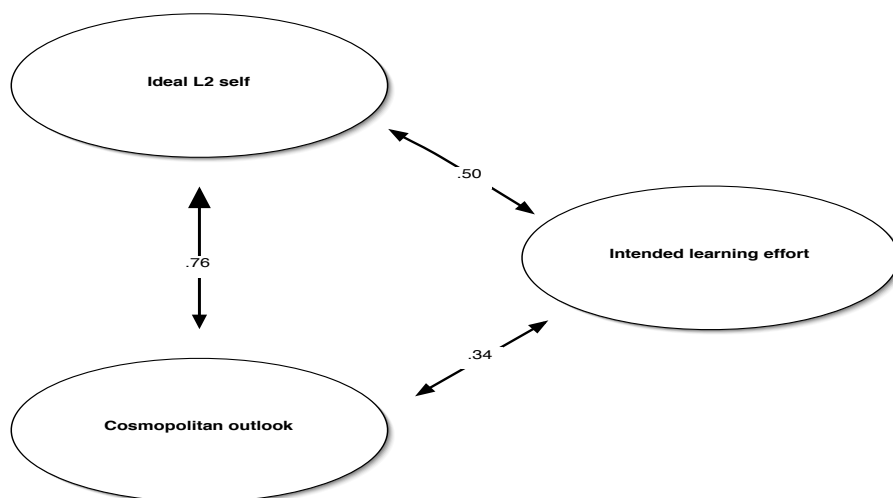


Before moving on to a more detailed discussion of the finding presented in Figure 9.1, I intend to confirm that these relationships are common to both sexes. The earlier discussion of cosmopolitan attitudes highlighted significant differences between male and female attitudes therefore the partial correlation analyses were carried out separately for both males and females.

**FIGURE 9.2:**  
**Cosmopolitan outlook, the ideal L2 self and effort - males**



**FIGURE 9.3:**  
**Cosmopolitan outlook, the ideal L2 self and effort -females**



Figures 9.2 and 9.3 show that the relationships between *ideal L2 self*, *cosmopolitan outlook* and *intended learning effort* are very similar for both males and females therefore it is possible to discuss the matter as a characteristic of English language learning common to all learners in Japan.

The essential problem posed by the relationships identified in Figures 9.2, 9.3, and 9.4 concerns the role of the *cosmopolitan outlook* variable. Why does it correlate so strongly with effort and why is it not absorbed by the ideal L2 self? A superficial consideration of these findings might lead to the conclusion that the data undermine claims made in support of the ideal L2 self as a principal motivating factor, however, I will argue here that the data in fact provide essential support for those claims.

The key to unlocking the perplexing relationships presented above can be found in the nature of the criterion measure, *intended learning effort*. This scale measures the efforts that learners believe they will make in order to learn a language; the scale does not measure actual effort – this would be a very difficult undertaking for any quantitative research questionnaire instrument. I propose that the correlation between cosmopolitan

attitudes and intended effort represents an element of unregulated fantasy; some cosmopolitan attitudes do not have behavioural consequences. The efforts implied by a reading of the above figures are not in fact efforts, they will remain as unfulfilled intentions. In contrast to this, the ideal L2 self component represents those attitudes and intentions that are converted into learning behaviour.

Within the Japanese English learning context, the theoretical proposal outlined above makes a great deal of sense. In the discussion of the Japanese English education system presented in Chapter 2, I mentioned the concept of ‘fantasy English’, whereby many learners of English, especially at the university level, have highly unrealistic expectations for their future English learning. Some learners of English appear to hold dreams and ambitions that are distinctly implausible, that bear no relation to either current levels of proficiency or previous language learning experience. I would argue that for such learners these positive attitudes form intentions to learn that do not develop into effective learning behaviour because they are not informed by an element of plausibility that is essential to the ideal L2 self. (I discuss the issue of plausibility in more detail in Chapter 10.) That part of the *cosmopolitan outlook* variable that by-passes the ideal L2 self towards *intended learning effort* helps explain one of the fundamental issues driving this research: the apparent paradox of learners who hold positive attitudes towards the values associated with the language and its speakers, who display a strong interest in learning, but who ultimately do not appear to make sustained efforts to learn. It is only when these cosmopolitan attitudes are channelled through the ideal L2 self that directed learning effort occurs.

Of course, the proposal outlined above is speculation, yet I believe that it represents speculation that offers the possibility to explain one of the enigmas of the Japanese English learning environment. This proposal requires testing through further research and poses a range of interesting questions relating to how and why some learners fail to include an element of plausibility in the visions they hold of themselves and what is it about English learning that appears to tolerate, or perhaps encourage, a puzzling degree of unregulated fantasy.

## **9.6 SUMMARY**

In this chapter I have looked at the effect of cosmopolitan attitudes on the efforts to learn a language. The finding that a cosmopolitan outlook was an important aspect of Japanese learners' motivation to learn English is consistent with several previous studies. My real interest here was to examine how cosmopolitan attitudes can be accommodated with an approach to L2 motivation based on an ideal L2 self.

I began by reconsidering the concept of the L2 community. Traditional notions of language and language learning have assumed a strong link between languages and national communities. The role of English in the era of globalisation breaks many of these assumptions and analysis of the data revealed that an interpretation of the notion of an English-speaking community that was not based on specific national communities offered a more appropriate means of understanding the motivation of Japanese learners of English. I would argue that this alters the dynamic of the relationship between the language learner and the L2 community from one where the learner makes accommodations with the fixed characteristics of a clearly defined national community to one in which the individual imposes aspects of the self on a vaguely constructed, pliable

L2 community.

The next step was to explore how the cosmopolitan outlook of learners interacts with one of the primary motivational factors, *ideal L2 self*, and the main criterion measure, *intended learning effort*. The data reveal a very close relationship between cosmopolitan attitudes and both the ideal L2 self and effort. The initial impression created by this finding is that it confounds a basic assumption of L2 self theory, that the relationship between cosmopolitan attitudes and effort should be absorbed by the individuals' ideal L2 self beliefs. However, I have interpreted this as a key finding which helps to explain one of the most perplexing aspects to English learning in Japan: the apparent contradiction between learners who appear intent on making great efforts to learn the language but who fail to execute those intentions. I speculate that the *cosmopolitan outlook* variable remains as unregulated fantasy unless it is processed through the ideal L2 self of the learner; it is the ideal L2 self beliefs of the learner that produce sustained actual effort. In conclusion, I would like to hypothesize that the two central findings of this chapter are in fact connected. Learners find the prospect of a vaguely defined English-speaking community highly attractive and this is a major factor in the development of cosmopolitan attitudes. These cosmopolitan attitudes, informed by a vaguely conceived L2 community, encourage intentions to learn, but these intentions are not necessarily executed; it may be a function of the vagueness of the learners' visions of the English-speaking world that leads to this situation.

## CHAPTER 10

### *SUBSTANTIATION AND AVAILABILITY OF THE IDEAL L2 SELF*

#### 10.1 INTRODUCTION

An essential prerequisite for the ideal L2 to act as an effective motivator is that language learners have a capacity to use the personal visions they have of themselves as users of the target language to form the basis of an action plan for learning, to harness the power of the imagination into directed behaviour. Of course, not all personal visions have behavioural consequences, many visions individuals have of themselves never develop beyond the realm of unstructured fantasy, and in this chapter I intend to investigate the conditions which may nurture the substantiation of ideal L2 self visions: How are idealisations of the self regulated and converted into learning efforts?

In this chapter, I begin my investigation into the substantiation of ideal L2 self visions through an examination of relationships with perceptions of current competence: Are the efforts produced by ideal L2 self visions a direct function of current competence in the L2? Are learners only able to substantiate ideal L2 visions when those visions are tangibly linked to current proficiency?

In the second part of the chapter, I consider other possible factors that may affect the regulation of efforts made towards realising these idealisations; principally the normative role of external social values. All individuals belong to social groups and membership of these groups inevitably modifies our behaviour. The idealisations we have of ourselves as individuals must in some way be aligned to the terms of our membership of various social groups; social context functions not only to regulate or restrict efforts to

realise idealisations, but it also plays a significant role in their construction. I would like to explore the availability of ideal L2 self visions, the notion that ideal self beliefs are more likely to produce directed behaviour when they exist harmoniously with the ought dimension of the self system.

## **10.2 POSSIBILITY AND PLAUSIBILITY**

In the introduction to this chapter, I referred to the argument that for visions of the ideal L2 self to have meaningful behavioural consequences these visions must be considered achievable; the possible must also be plausible. In the questionnaire, I employ two variables that focus on perceptions of current English competence and the capacity to successfully learn the language: self confidence and perceived proficiency. The *self confidence* variable has a particular focus on the individual's assessment of his or her levels of confidence as both a user and learner of a foreign language and the *perceived proficiency* scale measures the individual's evaluation of current L2 competence. It is important to note that this is not a measure of actual proficiency; it is perfectly conceivable for a highly proficient L2 user to have a negative assessment of their own abilities, and vice versa, but the point is that it is the individual's judgements rather than the actual level of proficiency that are likely to have the greater impact on motivated behaviour. In this section, I would like to consider the relationships between *ideal L2 self*, effort and these two variables. I am particularly interested in finding out if either of the variables affects the relationship between the ideal L2 self and effort in a way that suggests it may be a major factor in the realisation of the ideal L2 self; in effect, I am asking what role, if any, do these variables play in the substantiation of ideal L2 visions. Table 10.1 presents the correlations for *perceived proficiency* and *self-confidence* with both effort and the ideal L2 self for each of the

academic status groups.

**TABLE 10.1:**  
**Correlations for perceived proficiency and self-confidence with ideal L2 self and intended learning effort**

		Intended learning effort	Ideal L2 self
<i>Perceived proficiency</i>	Whole	.37***	.28***
	Secondary	.36***	.22***
	Non-major	.29***	.20***
	Major	.27***	.16**
<i>Self-confidence</i>	Whole	.16***	.04
	Secondary	.27***	.13*
	Non-major	.16***	.03
	Major	.16**	.04

\* p < 0.05; \*\* p<0.01; p<0.001

I will begin my analysis of Table 10.1 by looking at the figures shown for the *self-confidence* variable. There is significant correlation between self-confidence and effort for all the academic status groups, though the values observed here are not as high as anticipated. This seems to indicate that although self-confidence may be a significant factor in the regulation of efforts to learn, it remains a relatively minor consideration for most learners. There is no significant correlation between *self-confidence* and the ideal L2 self for the university students and only a small correlation for the secondary students. The absence of correlation suggests that self-confidence is not a factor in the construction of ideal L2 self visions.

It is noticeable that in all sets of correlations that the values for the secondary pupils – this is also true for the perceived proficiency values – are higher than for those of the university students. This seems consistent with the view, discussed in Chapter 3, that motivated behaviour for those learners with limited language learning experience



tends to be based on evaluations of immediate experience rather than on abstract future-directed references; the secondary pupils, the group that we would anticipate having the most limited language learning experience, show a markedly stronger relationship between effort, perceived competence and self-confidence.

The values reported in Table 10.1 for the perceived proficiency variable are much higher than those for *self-confidence*. Table 10.1 points to a relatively strong relationship between *perceived proficiency* and effort; either efforts result from perceptions of proficiency or efforts made to learn affect perceptions of proficiency. The correlation values for proficiency and *ideal L2 self* are lower than those observed for effort, and an initial consideration of the data might suggest that perceptions of current competence play some form of mediating role between ideal L2 self visions and effort. This is a crucial concern that requires further investigation. If ideal L2 self visions only have meaningful consequences when closely allied to perceptions of current competence, then the concept seems somewhat limited in what it has to offer, however, if ideal L2 self visions allow learners to make efforts to extend beyond the confines of their current competence then the ideal L2 self may provide insight into some of the unpredictability of L2 motivation, helping to account for some of the variation in patterns of motivation observed between individual learners.

In order to further explore the relationships between the ideal L2 self, perceived competence and effort, a partial correlation was conducted; the correlations between *ideal L2 self* and effort were controlled for the effect of the *perceived proficiency* variable.

**TABLE 10.2:**  
**Partial correlations for ideal L2 self and intended learning effort controlling for perceived proficiency and self-confidence**

		<b>Intended learning effort</b> (zero order correlation)	<b>Intended learning effort</b> (partial order correlation controlling for perceived proficiency)	<b>Intended learning effort</b> (partial order correlation controlling for self-confidence)
<i>Ideal</i>	Whole	.77	.75	.77
<i>L2 self</i>	Secondary	.75	.74	.75
	Non-major	.74	.74	.74
	Major	.71	.71	.71

all correlations significant at the  $p < 0.001$  level

Table 10.2 shows that controlling for *perceived proficiency* has a negligible effect on the correlations between *ideal L2 self* and effort. This suggests that the strong relationship shown between the ideal L2 self and effort is hardly affected by current perceptions of L2 competence. It seems that assessments of proficiency are a factor both in the construction of ideal L2 beliefs and in the regulation of efforts to learn, however, the learner's subjective perceptions of current L2 proficiency have almost no effect on the relationship between ideal L2 self visions and efforts made to realise those visions. Efforts made to realise ideal L2 self visions are more than merely a function of current L2 proficiency and this is a very important finding that may contribute to an understanding of how some learners are able to escape the constraints of current competence and make remarkable efforts to learn and progress in their learning while others are not. It also a finding that demands consideration of what other factors may affect the substantiation of L2 visions.

### **10.3 INTERNALISING OUGHT BELIEFS**

If perceptions of current competence are not the only factor in the substantiation of ideal L2 self visions, then what other factors may be considered? So far I have only considered internally referenced factors – confidence and perceived L2 proficiency – and

in the second part of this chapter, I intend to look at some externally referenced factors; I wish to consider the individual in social context. Humans have a desire and need for relatedness, to fit in with others, and this both affects our behaviour and shapes our ideas of the kind of person we would like to become, our ideal self beliefs. I will base my discussion around the three variables in the MFQ that relate most directly to these external influences on the individual learner:

1. *Parental encouragement* - the label here is self-explanatory but this variable also contains a suggestion of an official, or approved, set of behavioural guidelines for young people; these are the expectations of authority figures.
2. *Milieu* - which concerns the individual's immediate social environment but does not specifically relate to the immediate educational context, it is more concerned with significant others around the individual and represents unofficial, or informal, behavioural guidelines: the expectations of one's peers.
3. *Instrumentality* - which, although not directly connected to specific individuals around the learner, is included because it represents a set of values towards the target language recognised by society as a whole.

Before considering how these variables relate to effort and the ideal L2 self, I look at how they relate to each other. The intercorrelation figures between these variables are provided in Table 10.3

Analysis of Table 10.3 shows that the highest correlations are those between instrumentality and parental encouragement. Those values that involve the milieu variable are, with one exception, much lower. This was anticipated as the parental encouragement

and milieu variables were conceptualised differently; parental encouragement was designed to represent a set of values officially sanctioned by authority figures, while the milieu variables represents a more unofficial set, thus there should be occasions when these values act in opposition to those of the authority figures

**TABLE 10.3:**  
**Intercorrelation matrix of the social values variables**

		Milieu	Parental encouragement	Instrumentality
<i>Milieu</i>	Whole	1		
	Secondary	1		
	Non-major	1		
	Major	1		
<i>Parental encouragement</i>	Whole	.21	1	
	Secondary	.19	1	
	Non-major	.18	1	
	Major	.20	1	
<i>Instrumentality</i>	Whole	.27	.41	1
	Secondary	.40	.41	1
	Non-major	.21	.41	1
	Major	.27	.38	1

all correlations significant at the  $p < 0.001$  level

The relatively high and stable correlations between *instrumentality* and *parental encouragement* suggest a consensus regarding the pragmatic values attached to English in Japan; the messages transmitted to learners of English from authority figures such as parents appear to be consistent with the general values attached to English within the educational environment.

### **Instrumentality**

I would like to consider the effects of this consensus regarding the pragmatic values attached to English and efforts made to learn the language in some detail, but

before doing so I must reconsider one aspect of that consensus, the *instrumentality* variable.

Instrumentality has long been an established component of L2 learning motivation theory, yet it has always been under-theorised, failing to generate the same levels of controversy and debate as integrativeness. On reflection, it appears that this under-theorisation of instrumentality has contributed to a degree of theoretical inconsistency in the construction of my own measurement of the concept. The scale used to measure instrumentality in the MFQ was essentially based on three key thematic strands: career prospects, educational advancement and the role of English as an indicator of an all-round cultivated/knowledgeable person within the context of globalisation. If we look at the following example items, we can see that they both relate to the same subject area:

*A knowledge of English would make me a better educated person.*

*For me to become an educated person I should learn English.*

Within the context of a social psychological approach this seems a legitimate line of investigation, but from a self based perspective, it seems somewhat problematic.

Although both items ostensibly ask about the value of English as part of an individual's overall knowledge system, unfortunately they do not specify the location of the source of these values: Are the values associated with English proficiency internally constructed by the individual learner or are they externally imposed? Is the perceived instrumental value of English an externally imposed requirement or is it an internally driven hope based on visions of the kind of person the learner would like to become? Is the distinction between external obligations and self directed visions a precise one, or are these external obligations in some way internalised as to contribute to visions of the self?

Some of the problems in attempting to analyse the *instrumentality* variable in its current form are highlighted by the results shown in Table 10.4.

**TABLE 10.4:**  
**Correlations for social context variables and intended learning effort with additional gender information**

	All	Secondary students	Instrumentality	
			Non-English majors	English majors
<i>Ideal L2 self</i>	.58	.63	.58	.55
<i>Intended learning effort</i>	.49	.56	.47	.44

all correlations significant at the  $p < 0.001$  level

Table 10.4 suggests several possible interpretations of the role of instrumentality in the motivation to learn English. A simple examination of the correlations between *instrumentality* and effort in isolation would conform to a view of instrumentality as a uni-dimensional, utilitarian externally driven entity. This is a view consistent with early theorising of instrumentality. We might anticipate such a pragmatic, utilitarian construct not to correlate strongly with the ideal L2 self, with its associations with idealisations, emotional identification, and the imagination. However, if we turn to the correlation values shown in Table 10.4 between *instrumentality* and *ideal L2 self* show this not to be the case. The two sets of correlation values challenge the interpretation of instrumentality as a merely pragmatic, externally directed concept, suggesting a much broader, multifaceted interpretation of instrumentality embracing an extensive array of possibilities relating to personal development, dreams, the imagination and self realisation. The two sets of correlation values shown Table 10.4 seem to be suggesting an interface between externally directed, pragmatic considerations and highly personal dreams and visions.

One possible explanation might be that learners understand the instrumental value of English and internalise it in the form of personal visions of the kind of person that they would like to become. In learning environments that value English abilities as a measure of educational status or as a route to material rewards, individuals who imagine themselves as being materially successful, cultivated or well-educated are likely to include any perceived need for English skills into these visions of themselves. Rather than representing a means of obtaining material rewards or educational achievement, English abilities constitute an integral part of being that successful or educated person.

Unfortunately the instrumentality scale as conceptualised in the original questionnaire construction does not really allow for analysis from this self perspective. A degree of reframing of the concept of instrumentality from that envisaged in the earliest questionnaire construction is required.

### **Ought-to beliefs**

The strength and stability of the correlations between the *instrumentality* and *parental encouragement* variables shown in Table 10.3 suggest a degree of commonality between the two concepts and the possibility that both scales may be tapping into the same vein of externally referenced values associated with English abilities. In order to pursue this line of inquiry further, I decided to combine the two scales into a single scale measuring ought-to beliefs regarding the learning of English. The constituent items from the two scales were re-examined and those items with an aspirational focus were discarded and the remaining items were computed as a compound variable and the internal reliability coefficients for the new scale are shown in Table 10.5.

**TABLE 10.5:**  
**Internal reliability for the ought-to beliefs scale, with separate information for the academic status groups**

	Cronbach Alpha			
	Whole sample	Secondary students	Non-English majors	English majors
<i>Ought-to beliefs</i>	.80	.78	.78	.75

The high internal reliability coefficients for the new variable appear to validate the combining of the two variables and the next step was to look at how the measurement correlated with other variables. My principal interest here is to consider how these ought-to beliefs relate to the ideal L2 and efforts to learn. Do these ought-to beliefs serve as an buffer mediating between ideal L2 self visions and effort, or do they somehow feed into the construction of the ideal L2 self? In order to consider the relationship between *ideal L2 self* and *ought-to beliefs*, a simple correlation analysis was performed.

**TABLE 10.6:**  
**Correlations between ought-to beliefs and ideal L2 self**

		Ideal L2 self (zero order correlation)
<i>Ought-to beliefs</i>	Whole	.64***
	Secondary	.66***
	Non-major	.63***
	Major	.57***

\*\*\* p<0.001

Table 10.6 presents a set of strong correlations between *ought-to beliefs* and *ideal L2 self*. This high correlation is revealing in itself for it shows that learners do not perceive a conflict between their hopes and aspirations as language learners and their obligations; there seems to be a substantial degree of accord between the individuals' aspirations as language users and the perceived expectations of those around them. Working from the hypothesis that availability of the ideal L2 visions is dependent on a lack of conflict with



ought-to beliefs, one might assume that a high correlation between *ideal L2 self* and *ought-to beliefs* would lead to conditions conducive to making efforts to realise the ideal L2 self. However, a simple correlation analysis does not provide information about causality, nor does the table tell us anything about how the two variables interact with effort. In order to consider the relationships with effort, a partial correlation analysis was performed. Table 10.7 shows the correlations between *ought-to beliefs* and *intended learning effort*, and it also shows the partial correlation figures when *ideal L2 self* is controlled for.

**TABLE 10.7:**  
**Correlations for ought-to beliefs with effort with partial correlations for ideal L2 self**

		Intended learning effort (zero order correlation)	Intended learning effort (partial order correlation controlling for ideal L2 self)
<i>Ought-to beliefs</i>	Whole	.57***	.16***
	Secondary	.61***	.22***
	Non-major	.55***	.15***
	Major	.49***	.13*

\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ ; \*  $p > 0.05$

Analysis of Table 10.7 reveals a pattern of generally high correlations for all the academic status groups. The data appear to indicate a pattern in which the strength of correlations decreases according to the nature of the L2 learning experience, reinforcing the similar earlier finding in which current perceived competence was shown to be a greater factor in both the construction of the ideal L2 visions and efforts to learn of secondary pupils. (A Fisher Z-transform test showed the correlations found for the secondary students and the university English majors to be significantly different at the  $p < .01$  level.) If we assume that the secondary pupils have the narrowest learning experience based around the role of English in certain examinations that are likely to have significant consequences, then we can see that they also have the strongest correlation between

ought-to beliefs and effort, whereas the university English majors, whom we may assume have made an active decision to learn and a more rounded learning experience, show a lower figure. Relating this to the earlier discussion of the role of perceived competence, it seems that for the secondary pupils the immediate experience and the expectations of others play a greater role in the regulation of efforts to learn. However, this is a relatively minor issue in comparison to the main finding from Table 10.7.

A comparison of the zero-order and partial correlation figures in Table 10.7 indicates that the correlations between *ought-to beliefs* and learning efforts are being affected by ideal L2 self beliefs; when *ideal L2 self* is controlled for, the correlation values become considerably lower. This demonstrates that ought-to beliefs only really affect motivated behaviour when internalised through the ideal L2 self; ought-to beliefs in isolation do not have a strong relationship with learning efforts.

The obvious alternative framing of the data presented in Table 10.7 is to consider how the relationship between the ideal L2 self and effort is affected when ought-to beliefs are controlled for. Table 10.8 presents the partial correlation figures for *ideal L2 self* and intended learning effort controlling for *ought-to beliefs*.

**TABLE 10.8:**  
**Correlations for ideal L2 self and effort with partial correlations controlling for ought-to beliefs**

		Intended learning effort (zero order correlation)	Intended learning effort (partial order correlation controlling for ought-to beliefs)
<i>Ideal L2 self</i>	Whole	.77	.64
	Secondary	.75	.59
	Non-major	.74	.61
	Major	.71	.60

all correlations significant at the  $p < 0.001$  level

The figures shown in Table 10.8 indicate that ought-to beliefs do affect the relationship

between *ideal L2 self* and learning effort but only to a relatively small degree. The comparatively weak partial correlation effect shown in Table 10.8 tells us that a strong correlation between *ideal L2 self* and effort exists independently of *ought-to beliefs*. These results were somewhat different to those anticipated at the outset of the analysis; I had expected *ought-to beliefs* to play a much greater role in the regulation of efforts to realise the ideal L2 self. The results suggest an altogether more dynamic relationship between *ideal L2 self*, *ought-to beliefs* and effort. *Ought-to beliefs* appear to function in two guises; their primary role is to feed into ideal L2 self beliefs and relate to effort indirectly as they become internalised as personal visions, and the secondary role is a regulatory one in which ideal L2 self beliefs are realigned with *ought-to beliefs* and effort. Rather than existing as an independent dimension of the L2 self system, the main function of *ought-to beliefs* seems to be as a contributory factor to ideal L2 self beliefs.

#### **10.4 SUMMARY**

My aims in this chapter were to consider the conditions that enable ideal L2 self visions to be converted into motivated behaviour. I was principally concerned with two theoretical areas: I began my analysis by considering the role of perceived competence in the substantiation of ideal L2 visions and then examined the regulatory function of external norms. The data showed that perceived competence was a factor in both the construction of ideal L2 self beliefs and in the efforts to learn, however, it did not appear to mediate between the two. Efforts made to realise ideal L2 self visions are more than a function of the relationship between these idealisations and perceptions of current competence.

A key variable in my consideration of external normative forces was

instrumentality, however, the data suggested that the initial conceptualisation of instrumentality was problematic within the context of a self based motivational framework. The scale, as originally conceptualised, contained both an internally driven, aspirational dimension and an externally driven, obligational element. It was decided to reconsider instrumentality as part of a set of ought-to beliefs.

Analysis of the ought-to beliefs showed a strong correlation with both effort and ideal L2 self. Further partial correlation analysis revealed ought-to beliefs to operate in a way different to that originally anticipated. Instead of serving to mediate between ideal L2 self beliefs and effort, the principal function of ought-to beliefs seems to be a contributory element to the construction of ideal L2 self beliefs; ought-to beliefs relate to efforts when internalised through the ideal L2 self.

## CHAPTER 11

### *A QUALITATIVE INTERPRETATION*

#### 11.1 INTRODUCTION

As discussed in Chapter 6, the quantitative component of my research project was accompanied by a subsequent secondary qualitative phase. The purpose of this phase was to expand upon some of the issues discussed in the previous chapters through an interpretation of the qualitative data. Qualitative data is somewhat messier than quantitative data, often spilling across neat quantitative categories. For organisational reasons, principally the need to maintain thematic coherence in the analysis of the quantitative data, I have opted to separate this discussion from the other chapters. It is worth noting that I refer to this chapter as an interpretation rather than an analysis for this helps explain how the chapter integrates with the previous quantitative analyses. The aim of this chapter is not so much to add qualitative flesh to quantitative bones; it is more a case of providing shade to the lines drawn by quantitative data. It is the nature of shade to consist of both light and dark; though the primary intention behind the collection of qualitative data was to illuminate the quantitative findings, there are times the qualitative findings may inadvertently obfuscate conclusions drawn through quantitative analysis.

This chapter is structured according to the broad themes identified in the previous chapters but, as I stated in the previous paragraph, the qualitative data do not always fall into regular, well-ordered categories. Obtaining qualitative data requires sensitivity in allowing participants to express their own ideas and in my interpretation I take a flexible,

pragmatic approach. One of the major challenges in organising this chapter has been that of striking a balance between addressing the questions I originally posed in designing the research instrument and tackling the actual responses received to those questions. Whenever in doubt, I have chosen to follow the lead provided by the data rather than rigidly adhere to the path set out in my initial research design.

In the first part of this chapter I address one of the fundamental questions underpinning this study – what do people mean when they say that they ‘like English’? – and this touches upon some of the issues arising in Chapter 8 concerning individuals’ attitudes to the learning and use of English. In Chapters 7 and 8, I discussed how the *attitudes to learning English* variable emerged as the strongest predictor of motivated behaviour from the MFQ. This scale was designed to measure how individuals’ sense of enjoyment of the immediate learning process impacted upon efforts to learn but the strength of this relationship with effort demands further investigation. The quantitative data showed that a sense of enjoyment of the learning experience to be a vital component of the motivational systems of Japanese learners but it did not tell us what or how they were enjoying about their learning.

A further issue broached in Chapter 8 was the role of anxiety in the English-using experience of young Japanese people. The data reported simultaneously high levels of anxiety and enjoyment of the learning experience yet this seems a highly incongruous finding as the two concepts – enjoyment and anxiety – appear incompatible. High levels of anxiety were reported for all groups of learners but the quantitative data did not elaborate on the various causes and manifestations of that anxiety. This I intend to do in

the current chapter.

A further area that I deal with in this chapter concerns group and social norms. This topic was touched upon in Chapter 10 yet several unresolved issues remain that I believe may be more effectively addressed through a consideration of the qualitative data. It is both a strength and weakness of interviews, thus any qualitative data obtained through such means, that some issues are easier to talk about than others; people tend to be more expansive with respect to issues that they have strong feelings about. People are less likely to open up to a researcher about issues that may be considered personal or sensitive, or about issues that they do not understand or have any particular interest in. In this research one of the topics that interviewees readily talked extensively about was the role of peer pressure in English learning. In this chapter I use the interview data as a base from which to further my investigation of some of the impacts of group norms on efforts to learn.

The final topic addressed in the chapter is that of young Japanese people's sense of identification and engagement with the outside world. In Chapter 9, I discussed the importance of cosmopolitan attitudes in the construction of learners' ideal L2 self beliefs. In this chapter, I explore in more depth perceived conflicts between cosmopolitan attitudes and a sense of Japanese national identity.

## **11.2 THE 'CHARMS' OF ENGLISH**

My own interest in language learning motivation has grown out of regular encounters with learners who express a strong liking of English and its associated values together with a clearly expressed desire to learn the language but do not appear to make the necessary efforts to achieve this. I have long been interested in exploring what it is

that young people mean when they state that they 'like English'. When I put this question to the interviewees most of the responses were vague and perhaps a little evasive, but the following provides a good representation of the general tone:

One is that they like the sound of English and the second one is that they have some kind of admiring feeling for the English-speaking culture, including movies, music, models, everything, fashion. Their thing is that they know or feel this kind of charm of speaking English. **(Interviewee J)**

This learner identifies two basic attractions of the English language. One is a fairly clear identification with the cultural values associated with the language; this is neither new nor surprising and has long been an standard assumption of language education. The second point is altogether more elusive. The interviewee refers to the 'charm of speaking English', suggesting some form of emotional gratification deriving from the use of English. When I asked another interviewee to elaborate on these 'charms', she explained:

For example, you can show your emotions in more detail than in Japanese. You're allowed to express them more. When you can speak English better, when you become an advanced speaker you can sometimes see different airs between certain words. Like in Japanese there is a word like *bakanai* and the English word is 'transient' ... It's translated like that but the air is completely different. You can feel a slight difference in these words and I feel like there's Japanese-version words and there's like English-version words as well. Those are the charms I think. I can feel this ... how do you say it? Like nice sounds, like, "That sounds good!" ... that's a very superficial feeling. **(Interviewee D)**

Although this learner refers to a 'superficial feeling', it appears that she is actually alluding to much deeper issues. At one level she mentions a simple attraction to the sounds of the language but then she seems to saying that these 'nice sounds' represent alternative forms of expression; she is able to say and hear things in English that she does not encounter in Japanese. A consequence of acquiring these alternative forms of



expression is that she is actually improving her own powers of self expression. For this individual, English learning seems to be about personal development; English represents something complementary to her first language, enhancing her understanding of and ability to express complex ideas and emotions. English represents access to that which is not available through Japanese alone.

Adolescence and early-adulthood are times when individuals constantly experiment with notions of identity, wondering who they are and what kind of person they would like to become. Young people often attempt to test the limits of possibility. Interpreting the comments of the interviewee above suggests that English offers young people much more than the benefits of access to the artefacts of popular culture, such as films, the internet and pop music, it also provides a means of personal growth through the development of a more sophisticated understanding of complex human ideas and emotions and increased powers to express them. Above all, English appears to represent a pliable form of possibility, which can be highly attractive to young people; perhaps lacking available models, these young people are able to attribute to English and the successful English speaker all kinds of characteristics of the person they would like to become. It is the vagueness and lack of definition of what it means to be an English speaker that attracts so many young people.

I will surmise by arguing that much of what is meant by 'liking English' derives from the lack of definition for the role of English in Japanese society, and, more specifically, its education system. English is presented as clearly an *important thing* but the specifics of that importance are left open to interpretation. English can be a means of

establishing one's credentials as a respectable, educated member of society through numerous competitive examinations; English can be seen as an opportunity for interaction and communication with the outside world; English can be a representation of a cultural Other; English can be a symbol of popular culture and fashion; English can represent an outlet for personal expression. All of these may be attractive to young people. A pertinent analogy might be that of a very abstract work in a major art exhibition. The work is obviously the centrepiece of the exhibition, signalling its importance; however, the work is so abstract that visitors to the exhibition note its importance and then attach their own interpretations of the nature of the work and its significance to them as individuals. The enjoyment, or 'liking', of the experience is highly dependent on the particular interpretation an individual attaches to it.

### **11.3 SOCIAL STATUS AND ENGLISH**

Young people are not only exploring notions of who they are but they are also concerned with how they relate to other people, how they fit in. Their place within their immediate social networks and society at large are major concerns. I was keen to find out how English abilities were perceived within the social environment of young people in Japan.

I think many people want to speak English because it sounds cool so they want to speak so they like it, including me. English is a very difficult language because grammar is completely different, pronunciation is totally different. It's very difficult to study English but speaking English is cool. Many people think that the person who speaks English is cool.

**(Interviewee J)**

According to this interviewee, English represents a valuable form of social capital. The 'cool' English speaker has acquired the necessary capital to gain popularity and

increased social influence. Popularity and social status can be very important considerations for young people and for this particular learner, enhanced social status and attendant popularity appear to be encouraging her to make efforts to learn a 'very difficult language'.

The interviewee speaking above appears to have a relatively straightforward view of the social benefits associated with English ability; greater English skills lead to increased popularity. However, other learners, especially some very proficient users of English, do not regard advanced English skills as necessarily being a social advantage. Listen to this interviewee:

... Like when they knew that I can speak English well, people who are like school bully types - they are powerful - they wanted to talk to me. ... But if you showed too much of your English ability, they don't want you anymore. ... So it's the balance you have to figure. (**Interviewee A**)

The words of this learner of English illustrate some of the complexities of the relationship between young Japanese people and the English language, suggesting something of a love-hate relationship between those around her and herself, a proficient Japanese speaker of English. On the one hand, this young woman seems to be suggesting that her English ability makes her a popular figure gaining the admiration of powerful 'opinion formers' within the class social hierarchy, yet this popularity exists on a knife edge, constantly threatening to cross the line into rejection and ostracism.

Of course, there is always an element of risk when a student has a standout ability in any subject but there appears to be more than the simple dynamics of the classroom at play in the Japanese English learning context. There are fundamental issues of social identity, which challenge not only the learner's sense of belonging to the immediate

learning group but also to the wider society at large. This sense of uncertainty surrounding the social value of English skills is something that some young people appear to have difficulty in coming to terms with. In the following short extract, one young woman attempts to evaluate the sense of differentness that others attribute to her as a proficient English speaker.

Y: ... Do they think differently about me? Yes, they do. They think I'm different.

I: Is that a good 'different'?

Y: Yes, it's good.

I: Can you explain?

Y: I'm speaking English ... and I'm a good speaker, so it's good ... no, wait a minute, I think they think it's bad, I'm bad ... ahh!

(Y- interviewee; I - interviewer) (**Interviewee B**)

In the above example, the interviewee's immediate response to the question is that her English ability is seen in a positive light by others, but then after a moment's reflection, she appears to come to a completely different conclusion. This short dialogue is highly revealing in what it tells us about the process of learning English for many young Japanese people; at a surface level there is an obvious prestige associated with possessing English skills, but below that attractive surface the picture is much more complex.

The management of English skills in social situations appears to be something of a balancing act for many young people. The data concerning the social status of English seem to reinforce the findings of the previous section relating to the 'liking of English'; in this case it is the value of English as social capital that is characterised by ambivalence. It is not simply a case of some learners regarding English as being 'cool' and others not; it

seems that some individuals experience conflicting reactions towards the social value of English, at times regarding it as being prestigious or cool but at others viewing it as marginalising force, alienating them from the main social body.

#### **11.4 ANXIETY**

In Chapter 8, I referred to the high levels of anxiety associated with the use of English reported for all groups in the questionnaire sample. The questionnaire was able to identify high levels of anxiety but was not able to elaborate on the nature of the anxieties being experienced. In this section I intend to examine two general areas of anxiety: firstly, those directly associated with the learning of English, especially the social pressures exerted by peer groups; secondly, anxieties arising from the necessity to conform to wider social expectations.

##### **Mixed messages in the classroom**

Earlier in this chapter, I made reference to the social status attached to English abilities and described a somewhat contradictory or confusing situation. This seems to mirror the findings of the quantitative data relating to an English learning experience simultaneously characterised by enjoyment and anxiety. In Chapter 8, I discussed the importance of the *attitudes to learning English* variable and suggested that although participants in the questionnaire appeared to be saying that enjoyment was an important aspect of their learning experience, their interpretations of the meaning of enjoyment of learning seemed to extend beyond a simple sense of pleasure derived from participation in the events of the classroom. The following interviewee describes her own classroom experience and attempts to interpret the perceptions of her fellow students:

But in the class, they think the class is boring and they don't like the teacher and they don't feel like it's necessary to say things. It's very quiet. You don't

find someone raising their hands and saying “I think. I think ...” People will think, “What kind of girl is she?” I think it’s kind of connected with this Japanese society, we try to read this air all the time, ... won’t you be the same? (**Interviewee A**)

The learning environment described by this interviewee does not appear to be one bursting with enjoyment and active participation from learners. Perhaps, what is most revealing about her statement is that she appears to accept boredom and antipathy to the teacher as typical traits of an English class. She also seems to attribute much of the general apathy to an overwhelming social pressure to fit in, to ‘be the same.’ I intend to explore this pressure to fit in through a consideration of the data concerning peer relationships.

(a) *Peer pressure*

The research instruments – both quantitative and qualitative – were entirely focused on English learning so it is impossible to ascertain whether the learning environment described above is common to all Japanese classrooms or is it one unique to English classes. However, it does appear that active participation in an English class carries additional social ‘stigma’, partly due to the perception of the English speaker as being separate from the main body of Japanese society; within the context of the language classroom the competent, enthusiastic English speaker risks alienation from the majority. To a certain extent this sense of separateness and difference is reinforced by the English speakers themselves, who seem to anticipate the reactions of others and develop preventive strategies. Note the use of the verb ‘find out’ in the following:

The other reason is that if we speak English and if other people find out we can speak English, they think of us as someone above them ... like a special kind of person so they treat us differently. ... Maybe they feel ...they just think, “I cannot understand you ... I’m Japanese.” (**Interviewee D**)

The use of the verb ‘find out’ here seems to allude to an almost illicit behaviour; English ability is not something to be displayed too readily or too openly. Orthodox logic – the logic of the earlier interviewee who regarded speaking English as ‘cool’ – would predict that these young people, who have successfully made efforts – probably huge efforts – to learn and master the language, to be eager to display their abilities, employ their talents and receive recognition for their efforts. Instead we can observe a certain wariness and caution on the part of the proficient English speaker, a fear of standing out, of being labelled as different, and even having their credentials as a member of the in-group of mainstream Japanese society challenged.

One of the recurring themes throughout the interview data was a tendency for proficient speakers of English to conceal their English abilities from those around them, especially when meeting new people. This female university student clearly illustrates the point:

I pretend I can't speak English. I mean I don't pretend I can't speak English but I don't tell them I can speak it. Whenever I meet people from different universities, I just pretend that I'm just one of them. (**Interviewee J**)

This young woman is essentially describing her encounters with other people of the same age – the Japanese education system largely excludes other age groups from the main student body – and the fact that English skills are not necessarily considered an asset in this socialisation process. Not only are they not an asset, there is also the likelihood that they may be something of a handicap at times.

The phrase ‘one of them’ is particularly revealing as it suggests that ‘they’ – the majority of other young people – do not speak English and that not speaking English is a

defining characteristic of ‘them’. There is a clear separation between the English speaker and the non-English speaker in this young person’s mind; the English speaker is someone who risks being placed outside the mainstream and English-speaking ability immediately tags an individual as being different in some way.

The sense of frustration some English speakers feel at being immediately labelled socially different – thus a possible out-group member – is elaborated on by another of the interviewees:

Then some people make more spaces between me and that person, you know, because they think I’m special and [a] totally different person from that person ... that I am leading a totally different life from that person, so they can’t understand me. They think. (**Interviewee D**)

The words of this interviewee neatly encapsulate the potential for English abilities to create a social distance between herself and her peers. The obvious extension of this logic is that in order to reduce the social distance from others, there may be a pressure on the accomplished English speaker to reduce the visibility of that distance-creating English ability.

(b) *Peer pressure and gender*

It is perhaps pertinent to remark at this point that the strongest comments regarding the effects of peer pressure on efforts made to learn and use English all came from female interviewees. The male interviewees did not express any strong opinions on this matter. It could be that the males did not discuss this issue because to do so may appear weak and less masculine – the impression of being easily swayed by the opinions of others may contradict certain notions of masculinity – or it may be that this is simply not so much of an issue for them. The nature of the interview process and the data



obtained does not allow me to make legitimate claims on the matter, but a brief return to the quantitative findings may be helpful at this point. The main variable used in the MFQ to measure the support of peers was labelled *milieu* and Table 10.1 shows the correlations between this variable and effort.

**TABLE 11.1:**  
**Correlations between milieu and intended learning effort**

		Intended learning effort			
		All	Secondary students	Non-English majors	English majors
<i>Milieu</i>	Whole	.20**	.34**	.08*	.25**
	Male	.00	.26*	-.05	-.02
	Female	.33**	.35**	.27**	.31**

\* p < 0.01 ; \*\* p < 0.001

Table 10.1 identifies a clear pattern of differences between the male university students and all the other groups. At the secondary level, the difference between males and females is relatively small but for both types of university students the figure for females remains broadly stable whereas all peer influence on the efforts of males at university seems to disappear. It should also be pointed out that there is virtually no difference between the figures for male English majors and non-majors. One explanation may be that the perceived milieu plays a much greater role in regulating the efforts of secondary students and female university students; for older males the efforts to learn a language are much less a function of this milieu.

The conclusion that can be drawn from this quantitative data and the reluctance of the male interviewees to talk about the matter is that males – certainly at the university age – are less influenced by the values prevalent in their immediate social networks than female university students. Peer pressure is a much more significant factor in the

regulation of efforts to learn English for females than males.

### **English use and anxiety outside the classroom**

So far I have limited my discussion to the use of English within the classroom. I have shown that English abilities can be something of a mixed blessing. On the one hand, English proficiency can bestow popularity and ‘coolness’ but on the other, if these language skills are not employed adroitly, there is a considerable risk of social isolation or alienation. I would now like to consider how these tendencies are reflected in social situations outside the classroom. I discuss events external to the classroom because they play an important role in shaping social norms that are reproduced within the classroom setting.

All the interviewees mentioned feeling uncomfortable when using English in the presence of other Japanese people. There seem to be two main strands of discomfort, which I believe tell us a lot about the nature of English language learning and use within Japan. These anxieties seem to form a continuum which varies in relation to English proficiency. It seems that the levels of anxiety remain relatively constant across all groups – as discussed in Chapter 8 – but the nature of that anxiety shifts.

#### **(a) Lower proficiency users**

For lower proficiency users of English in Japan a considerable amount of anxiety appears to stem from the role of English as a school subject to be thoroughly and constantly tested or evaluated according to formal rules of correctness:

In front of Japanese people, I don’t feel comfortable because I tend to be too careful about my grammar mistakes and stuff. (**Interviewee F**)

The implication seems to be that for Japanese people the dynamics of the classroom extend far beyond formal educational contexts; for many Japanese people English is

forever associated with how it is presented in school. Active communication in English seems to carry connotations of volunteering answers in the classroom, with all the attendant risk of a public loss of face.

The data suggested that it was not just a concern about the correctness of the language that inhibited their attempts to use English. There was also a consideration of the social appropriateness of using English. In fact, it seems that many young Japanese people link formal correctness with appropriateness; the right to use English depends on attaining a certain level of proficiency and it is in some way inappropriate for those who have not yet achieved this level of proficiency to attempt to use English outside the confines of the classroom. The following interviewee spoke of her apprehensions when using English:

T: They're thinking, "She's speaking English. Do you really understand?"

I: They're thinking do the English speakers really understand you?

T: No. Can I really understand English ... the Japanese people are thinking, I think. "Do you understand very well? Really?" Like that.

(I=interviewer; T=interviewee) (**Interviewee D**)

It is noticeable how often the word 'really' appears in this short extract suggesting that the interviewee has concerns that there is something false about her position as an authentic communicator in English. The interviewee seems to have doubts regarding the legitimacy of her use of English in a public place and I would suggest that this comes from uncertainties arising from both a lack of confidence in her own abilities and the perception of an unforgiving judgement of those around her. This interviewee seems to be simultaneously doubting her own credentials to use English effectively outside the classroom and attributing a harsh assessment of her abilities to the non-participating

observers. It is almost as if one has to earn the right to use English in a public place; English is regarded as essentially a classroom-based entity and those who attempt to use it outside the classroom are breaking with convention. In order to obtain the permission of others to use English outside its designated environment, an individual needs to display exceptional or, at the very least, above average competence. This young woman's uncertainty as to whether she has attained the required ability, thus the permission to break with the restrictions on English use outside the classroom, contributes to her feelings of anxiety.

The sense of being observed and judged in public is reinforced by another interviewee who referred to experiencing very similar feelings:

I: What were you worried about?

S: I'm not good enough.

I: You mean your English?

S: My English level and pronunciation and things.

I: Do you mean the other Japanese people are thinking your pronunciation is no good?

S: And my grammar and 'r' and 'l'.

I: Why would they care about that?

S: (pause) I suppose so. But I still get afraid. The other Japanese speak English less than me I know, but I'm afraid.

(I=interviewer; S=interviewee) (**Interviewee B**)

This woman appears to be transferring some of her classroom anxieties – grammatical and pronunciation errors – to an external communication situation. It is not entirely clear from this extract, but the other people that this speaker refers to are probably adults older than herself. One possible interpretation of the concerns that she voices is that she is attributing to these observers qualities and concerns she observes in

her teachers. At this stage in her life, her principal contact with adult society and with the English language is likely to be channelled through teachers in the classroom. The nature of this classroom contact, with its emphasis on grammatical accuracy and the attention paid to an inability to distinguish between the phonemes /l/ and /r/, seems to be contributing to feelings of anxiety in L2 communication outside the classroom. In her mind, the adult strangers in public places appear to be performing the role of hypercritical authority figures and this surely derives from her experience of classroom-based language learning.

In summary, the data suggest that for lower proficiency users anxiety stems from an uncertainty surrounding the transfer of English skills from the classroom to the outside world. One concern seems to relate to the appropriateness and eligibility of lower proficiency users attempting to use English outside the classroom. The other main source of anxiety seems to result from a transfer of the concerns and anxieties of the classroom into the public domain, a perception of public situations, and the people present, as having properties similar to those of the classroom, the learner's principal source of contact with the language. The nature of this classroom discourse, with its focus on a prescriptivist view of language being constructed through the accurate production of discrete linguistic units, is being applied to discourses outside the classroom.

(b) *Higher proficiency users*

For proficient speakers of English there was an entirely different concern relating to the social appropriateness of using English in front of other Japanese people; these individuals were worried about overstepping the mark and appearing too conspicuous. This is how one interviewee interpreted the thoughts of those around her when she

spoke English well.

“Oh, [you] can speak English!” It’s kind of stupid. Some people who cannot speak English think she’s proud of herself or something like that. ... It’s boasting or showing off. It looks cool but sometimes it looks like those things. **(Interviewee J)**

It appears that for many young Japanese people the use of English retains the properties of classroom interaction: make a mistake and risk ridicule, or perform the task too well and face censure for showing off. For the higher proficiency users the greater risk was that of ‘boasting or showing off’ and this seems consistent with the earlier observation that high proficiency learners experience difficulties integrating their English abilities within the dominant social body.

In order to illustrate the strength of this perception and some of its consequences, I will leave the final word to one of the interviewees:

... I have some foreign friends in Japan. My friends. When they are speaking in public, with many people ... in a train or in a restaurant ... when there are many Japanese around. I ... don’t speak, don’t speak. I’m afraid of other people. **(Interviewee D)**

The words “I’m afraid of other people” strike me as a moving indictment of a socio-educational environment in which young people ‘fear’ the consequences of demonstrating their English abilities. In the next section, I intend to explore a possible contributory factor to this unsupportive learning environment.

### **11.5 COSMOPOLITAN OUTLOOK AND ETHNOCENTRIC ATTITUDES**

One of the earlier comments illustrating the peer pressure experienced by some learners of English mentioned a perceived inherent lack of mutual understanding between for a Japanese person and an English speaker:

“I cannot understand you ... I’m Japanese.” **(Interviewee C)**

This comment brings into focus the social expectations regarding the young Japanese person's relationship with the outside world. In Chapter 9 I discussed ideas of cosmopolitan outlook and ethnocentric ideas and how they affect the construction of the ideal L2 self beliefs of learners. In this next section I intend to expand on this discussion by looking at possible conflicts between ideal L2 self visions of young Japanese people as active, engaged participants in communication with people from other countries and beliefs about national identity.

### **The English speaker as cultural propagandist**

One concern for Japanese learners of English arises not from the dynamics of the immediate social environment but from the roles that appear to be assigned to proficient English speakers by the Japanese education system. (The discussion of the Japanese education system in Chapter 2 mentioned the explanation of Japanese culture as being one of the goals of English education.) Young Japanese learners of English seem to believe that as fluent English speakers they acquire a responsibility to expound and propagate the virtues of Japanese culture through the English language and this causes them to doubt their expertise on Japanese cultural matters. Some young people appear to experience unease as to their own Japaneseness when faced with situations where they feel unable to 'explain' Japanese culture to foreigners in English:

I can speak English but I'm not really knowledgeable about Japanese culture so it's difficult to translate, you know the topics of Japanese culture into English so you know in those situations I feel that I can speak English but I cannot explain my own culture so I myself feel that I am less Japanese or something. (**Interviewee C**)

This interviewee's use of the phrase 'less Japanese' is crucial in that it reveals an implied tension or conflict between English ability and 'Japaneseness'. There seems to be

a belief that identity and membership of language communities are fixed entities, that belonging to one community precludes membership of another community and that attempts to join another language community are in some way a manifestation of disloyalty to one's 'own' community. A similar concern is echoed by another interviewee:

I don't think that other people of my age know more about Japanese things than I do but, because I meet many foreign people, more often than not, they ask me about Japanese culture and Japan. In those situations I want to answer them. If I don't answer their questions I think they might think less of me, less of me as a Japanese. (**Interviewee E**)

In this case the speaker appears to have some confidence in the credentials of his own Japaneseness but seems to be a little apprehensive as to how others may be evaluating him. It is important to note that these others are not only Japanese people; this speaker seems to be concerned that the foreign people he is encountering may doubt the authenticity or the veracity of his Japaneseness if he is found to be lacking in knowledge of subject areas relating to Japan and Japanese culture.

The data indicated a dissatisfaction or sense of inadequacy on the part of some young people in respect to their own knowledge of aspects of Japanese culture; they seemed to be less concerned with their English ability than their knowledge of Japanese cultural matters:

As far as the English ability is concerned, if we talk to other people in our daily life I think I have to know more about Japan and Japanese culture because I can't explain about Buddhism or some other technical Japanese culture. (**Interviewee H**)

The implication behind these sentiments seems to be that there is some obligation or duty for young Japanese English speakers to know more about Japan, its customs and traditions – “technical Japanese culture” in the words of the interviewee. One of the



principal functions of English is to expound on an essentialised version of Japanese culture and Japanese learners of English appear to feel that a consequence of English proficiency is a responsibility to act as a representative of Japanese cultural values.

### **Threats to Japanese cultural heritage**

Although the data showed young people questioning their knowledge of Japan and its cultural heritage, the same young people simultaneously appear to feel that this cultural heritage is somehow under threat:

But to know about Japanese things is good for me because Americans and Europeans [have] their own identity but Japanese [don't have] so much. [By speaking] with foreigners Japanese lose this ... you need to express your own things, own opinions. ... we have to, have to have identity.

**(Interviewee B)**

This young woman seems to be echoing earlier concerns of an inherent friction between Japanese identity and contact with the outside world. She clearly views Japanese people as being disadvantaged in communication with foreigners and the reason for this seems to be that these foreign interlocutors have a stronger sense of their own national identity, therefore the way for Japanese people to level the playing field in such discourse is to develop a stronger awareness of their own national identity. These sentiments seem to sit comfortably with the concepts of 'healthy nationalism' and internationalisation discussed in Chapter 2, where a strong sense of national identity is the principal unit of international contact and communication.

It is worth speculating on how these young people perceive their own role in the perceived demise of Japanese cultural values; on the one hand, the threat to traditional values and practices is portrayed as an undoubtedly regrettable development, yet young people appear to present themselves as the chief culprits in this development:

I'm not quite sure about our culture because a lot of young people are attracted to Western, I'd say American, culture. There are less people learning traditional Japanese culture, like how to wear a kimono and that kind of thing. So it means we are losing people who can pass our traditions and culture to the next generation. **(Interviewee D)**

It is certainly not uncommon in affluent societies for young people to be cast as betrayers of traditional values, and Japanese society is clearly not alone in this respect. However, it is worth considering how the particular Japanese manifestation of this debate affects the thinking of young people. Young people have an obvious and vested interest in the future and the new. These same young people are being charged with the responsibility to maintain and protect traditional cultural values and practices. The challenge for Japanese learners of English seems to be to accommodate these two perceived roles in light of an interpretation of Japanese identity and cultural values that excludes the new and the foreign, which are often closely associated with English.

## **11.6 SUMMARY**

In this chapter I have drawn on the qualitative data that I gathered to accompany the quantitative survey data. I have focused my attention on those areas in which the qualitative data was most productive and in order to do so I have had to show flexibility in my approach and divert from some pre-planned design considerations. I have not covered all the areas dealt with in the quantitative research instrument as there are many cases where the qualitative data provides little fresh insight. The areas in which I have chosen to concentrate my discussion are those in which I feel the quantitative analysis requires further support or to be examined from a different perspective.

The first part of the chapter looked at the attractions of learning English for Japanese learners. The data showed that the values associated with English and popular

culture were an important consideration for some young people in Japan. I did not discuss this issue in detail in this chapter as it is a familiar one from previous L2 motivation literature but this is not to underestimate the importance of this dimension to the motivation to learn English. Most of my discussion was concentrated on elements of personal development linked to the learning of English. English – perhaps connected to its role as a symbol of the outside world – seems to offer young Japanese people a framework of possibility. This possibility is not solely related to ideas of contact and engagement with the outside world; it is also connected to a desire for greater understanding and powers of expression complementary to those acquired through L1. I would suggest that a major reason behind this is the lack of definition of the role of English beyond the secondary school. At Japanese secondary schools, the role of English is clear and narrowly defined, however, this leaves something of a void at the post-secondary level where the examinations studied for at the secondary level do not exist. Young people are prepared to accept that what they are learning at secondary schools is not ‘real’ language but is something necessary for their future education or career paths; the trade that some young people infer from this state of affairs is that there must be some reward beyond examination success associated with the study of English at a later stage. This reward remains unspecified and therefore open to interpretation; the nature of the provision of English in the Japanese education system allows learners great flexibility in their interpretations of the rewards associated with English success.

A separate consideration was the social status young Japanese people attach to English abilities. The data showed a complex and often contradictory situation in which

English speakers are regarded as ‘cool’ yet this coolness comes at a price with an attendant risk of social exclusion facing the person who displays ‘too much’ English ability. For proficient users of English, there is a complex balancing act as the interviews revealed a sense of separation from mainstream Japanese society on the part of some proficient English speakers, who found it difficult to gain acceptance as ‘normal’ people and sometimes made efforts to conceal their English abilities from others. Obviously, English proficiency brings recognition, prestige and status but these seem to come with various strings attached and the interview data indicated a balancing act being performed by young people learning English. For young people immediate social relationships are obviously a major factor in determining behaviour, therefore the sometimes bewildering social consequences of English proficiency are a key consideration for learners in Japan to negotiate. It was also observed that peer pressure appears to be a much more significant factor for females than for males.

A further point concerned the anxiety individuals experience when using English outside the classroom. A major worry for learners of English in Japan seems to be the observations and evaluations of others. These others are not significant others in the language learning process, such as teachers or classmates, but unknown strangers who happen to be present when they are using English outside the classroom. These worries seem to arise from two sources. One is a lack of certainty surrounding the appropriateness of the use of English outside the confines of the classroom; lower proficiency users doubt the legitimacy of their use of English and by extension their right to use it outside its allotted place in the classroom. Higher proficiency users expressed

concerns that overt displays of their English abilities might lead to a questioning of their credentials as a 'normal' Japanese person. The second principal source of anxiety seems to be a tendency to apply the discourse of the classroom to real-life communication. A defining characteristic of English in the Japanese classroom is an attention to formal correctness and many learners reported anxiety over the use of English in front of other Japanese people; their worry was not so much that their formal errors would impede communication but rather that people observing their communication would pass a harsh judgement on those errors.

A final concern discussed here was a sense of confusion or uncertainty over the prescribed role of the English speaker as a member of Japanese society. In Chapter 2, I discussed a confusing and often contradictory position for English in contemporary Japanese society; English education is tremendously important yet one of the core values promoted throughout that society is the apparently circular argument that Japanese people experience difficulty learning English because they are unique and separate from the rest of the world and the fact that they experience such difficulty in learning English is testimony to their uniqueness. This was reflected in that data with many interviewees alluding to a conflict between an identity as a fluent English speaker and one as a Japanese person. Young people also seemed to understand and, in some cases, accept the role of the successful English speaker as a representative of national self beliefs, but they often appeared to doubt their own capacity to perform these duties satisfactorily.

The overall impression left by the qualitative data was that young Japanese people were lacking any models of a successful Japanese speaker of English. In one respect, this

makes English more attractive in that the whole notion of what a successful English speaker represents is left open to the individual learner's interpretation. English is obviously a very important thing yet it is also vaguely defined and this can be highly attractive to young people as they are allowed to construct their own visions of what it means to be a successful learner of English. I believe that this is a key factor in explaining the almost ubiquitous 'liking' of English amongst motivated learners. However, this lack of definition also contributes significantly to high levels of anxiety surrounding the learning and use of English. Without obvious role models young Japanese people are unsure of who they are and how they are supposed to act as users of English.

## CHAPTER 12

### *SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS*

One of my stated aims in this thesis was to consider a comprehensive framework for understanding language learning motivation. This goal of comprehensiveness has required me to investigate an extensive range of theoretical concerns and in this chapter I hope to bring together some of the main findings of the research in a manner that adds clarity and comprehensibility to comprehensiveness. This concluding chapter is divided into two sections. The first part discusses and summarises some of the main findings and then the second part considers some of the pedagogic applications of the thesis along with implications for future research.

#### **12.1 SUMMARY**

In this section I summarise the principal findings of the research and conclude by providing a model of how I believe the ideal L2 self operates. The summary is organised in accordance with the earlier presentation of my results. The first part concerns a general overview of the principal findings of the research, while the latter part relates to issues emerging from the subsequent detailed analysis chapters.

#### **The ideal L2 self**

The roots of this thesis lie in a dissatisfaction with current models of language learning motivation and a perceived need to consider other possible theoretical frameworks for understanding the motivation to learn a language. I have chosen to empirically test and explore proposals that an L2 motivational self system represents a more accurate and complete base from which to understand learner motivation and fundamental to those claims is the concept of the ideal L2 self; the underlying hypothesis

being that motivation derived from the critical sense of emotional identification with the values associated with the language and its speakers is better understood as being a part of the individual's self system rather than as a desire to integrate with an external language community.

The initial research questions of this thesis were whether the ideal L2 self was equivalent to the concept of integrativeness and if so which of the two did the better job of explaining efforts to learn. The quantitative analysis reported in Chapter 7 demonstrated convincingly that the ideal L2 self correlated very highly with integrativeness, adding substance to claims that what had been observed in previous L2 motivation research represented a specific, local – Canadian – manifestation of a much wider, more powerful phenomenon. Since the concept of integrativeness does not really make much sense in many language learning contexts, where opportunities to 'integrate' are either rare or non-existent, the high correlation found between ideal L2 self and integrativeness implies that the ideal L2 self may make a more robust base, one generalisable across cultural contexts, from which to understand this dimension to the motivation to learn a language. Support for this approach was found in the relative correlations with effort, as ideal L2 self correlated markedly higher with the main criterion measure.

The high correlation between ideal L2 self and integrativeness raises a fundamental question; if the two concepts are equivalent, why bother with a major reinterpretation of L2 motivation theory? Is this nothing more than a nod to terminological fashion? Does it really matter which labels are employed? I would argue that it does matter to the extent



that accurate descriptions and labels for the constructs that we use are important. I would also argue that the value of accuracy in the description of the nature of L2 motivation is likely to increase according to the degree of investment in the language learning process. For both educators and learners a precise understanding of the motivation to learn should facilitate a more efficient channelling of efforts to learn; or, viewed from another perspective, inaccurate descriptions of the motivation to learn may lead to the misdirection of efforts and ultimately demotivation.

### **English and a global L2 community**

Further evidence of the necessity of a reframing of L2 motivation was provided by the data showing the relationships between attitudes towards the L2 community and effort. Traditional models of language learning and theories of motivation have assumed a strong link between a language community and specific geographic or national groupings, however, a global English-speaking community is no longer tied to any specific geographical location and for many learners the cultural values associated with this community have little connection to established Anglo-American norms. This has profound consequences for how we regard the relationship between the language learner and the target language community and challenges the theoretical basis of models of language learning motivation that depend on an explicit link between the target language and a clearly defined group of people. The role of English as both an integral element of continuing globalisation and a means of access to its perceived rewards surely sets it apart from other languages and one way in which English is different from other languages is in the nature of its language community.

Analysis of the survey data demonstrated that – in common with an established tradition of L2 motivation research – attitudes towards the L2 community were an important factor in the motivation of language learners but that data also revealed that when the ties between that L2 community and a specific national group – in this case, the US – were removed, the correlation with intended effort rose markedly. A vaguely defined English-speaking community correlated with the main criterion measure more strongly than an English-speaking community specifically associated with the US. It seems that the very vagueness and lack of definition of this global English-speaking community allows learners the possibility of membership and participation on their own terms – as opposed to having to meet terms set by the external L2 community. Some learners appear to find this liberating and empowering, while others may find it disorientating. It seems that this vagueness and openness can have two sets of behavioural consequences; one is that a sense of belonging to this English-speaking community encourages efforts as learning represents a form of alignment and participation in the events of a community of which the learner is already a member of, but for other learners this vagueness may ultimately act as an obstacle to effort, with intentions to learn not being executed.

### **‘Liking English’**

In Chapter 8, I analysed the data relating to the effects of an enjoyment of the learning process on the motivation to learn. Initial analysis suggested that enjoyment of the learning process was an overwhelmingly dominant factor in the motivation of learners but this finding seemed highly incompatible with other data pointing to high levels of anxiety in that same learning process. Simultaneously high levels of enjoyment

and anxiety are contradictory and this required me to take a more actively interpretative approach to this data.

I began this research by wondering how to account for the ubiquity of 'liking English' as an explanation of intentions to learn English and I found that for some learners this constituted nothing more than a meaningless, socialised default response. This helps explain the inflated correlation value for attitudes to learning and effort. Taken at face value, the quantitative findings relating to the attitudes to English variable seemed incongruous.

Within the Japanese educational context, English learning can appear in many guises. For some people English represents nothing more than a form of mental knowledge learned in classrooms, and assessment of one's English abilities provides recognition of one's status and performance in relation to others; for others English represents a means of reaching out beyond the limitations of the immediate environment, offering opportunities for contact with new people and enhanced powers self-expression. The contradictions and ambiguity of purpose in the provision of English education in Japan allows learners great flexibility in how they interpret the role of English in their lives; for some learners 'liking English' is simply the default, socially conditioned response, however, for others it represents something altogether more powerful - it becomes a genuine commitment issue.

The L2 learning experience was the component of the motivational self system that was shown to be most context dependent. A comparison of my own findings with another recent study from Japan showed a remarkable degree of consistency but when

these findings were compared with data obtained from other countries there were noticeable differences. These comparisons indicated that the role of the learning experience in the motivation systems of learners was greatly affected by two key factors: the perceived urgency, or necessity, of successful language learning and the nature of the provision, or the dominant methodologies, of language education. This sensitivity to local cultural conditions is a vital component of the L2 self framework and one that I would argue sets it apart from many other models of language learning motivation; this participatory dimension locates the individual learner firmly within a social context.

### **Cosmopolitan outlook**

A recurring theme in English language learning motivation studies, and especially those coming from Japan, is the role of English as a means of access to people and events beyond one's immediate local environment. In Chapter 9 I decided to interpret this dimension to the motivation to learn English as representing the individual learner's cosmopolitan outlook. I developed the concept of a cosmopolitan outlook to expand on other variables that have been found to be significant in previous L2 motivation studies and with specific reference to the Japanese context those variables that look at attitudes to contact with and interest in the outside world; these variables include an interest in the cultural products associated with the language, an interest in travel and interaction with people from other countries, as well as a rejection of an ethnocentric or nationality based view of the world.

Cosmopolitan outlook was found to be a primary component in the construction of learner ideal L2 self beliefs but the data also suggested that cosmopolitan outlook in itself did not lead to motivated behaviour. There are times when a cosmopolitan outlook

contributes to intentions to learn but these intentions are not necessarily executed; cosmopolitan outlook only produces motivated behaviour when internalised through ideal L2 self beliefs. I regard this as a vital finding that helps explain problematic areas in previous L2 motivation research. Positive attitudes towards the outside world and a keen interest in its events result in a favourable disposition to learn English but do not necessarily produce motivated learning behaviour. It is only when these positive attitudes are harnessed as part of the ideal L2 self, generating specific and detailed personal visions, that meaningful effort occurs.

### **Substantiation of the ideal L2 self**

Having established the validity of the ideal L2 self as a base for understanding L2 motivation and looked at some of the principal contributory components to ideal L2 self beliefs, the next task was to consider how these beliefs are converted into directed behaviour. In Chapter 10, I focused my investigation on two key aspects; the role of perceptions of current L2 competence and the regulatory function of external social values.

The relationships between perceptions of current L2 competence, ideal L2 self beliefs and effort is a particularly important one. Although plausibility must surely be a crucial factor in the behavioural outcomes of personal visions, if the relationship between the ideal L2 self and effort is merely a function of perceived competence, then the potential of the concept seems limited. The data demonstrated that while perceived proficiency correlated significantly with both the ideal L2 self and effort, it did not mediate between the two. This suggests that an understanding of the workings of the ideal L2 self may help explain how some learners are able to escape the restrictions of

limited proficiency in their efforts to learn while others fail to do so.

One of my fundamental aims in this research was to look at the motivation to learn a language as being socially constructed; the visions produced by ideal L2 self beliefs may be highly personal but they are shaped by the individual's relationships with others. The individual learner has a need for not only autonomy but also relatedness and the need to belong to social groups produces both obligations and expectations. Within the L2 self framework, the need to consider the expectations of and obligations to others belong to the ought-to dimension. The data showed that ought-to beliefs played a complex role in the stimulation and regulation of efforts to learn. One role of ought-to beliefs was to feed into the ideal L2 self; the expectations of others were internalised within the ideal L2 self beliefs and only then converted into actual efforts to learn. A secondary role of these ought-to beliefs was to act as a counterbalance to the ideal L2 self in the regulation of efforts; idealisations were weighed against perceived responsibilities and obligations before motivated behaviour occurs.

### **The qualitative perspective**

Although originally designed as a supplementary and secondary component to the research, some of the most powerful findings emerged from the qualitative data. This qualitative data was particularly useful in bringing to life the concerns individual learners had about balancing their needs to relate to both their immediate peers and the wider English-speaking world. The data showed the learning environment of Japanese learners of English to be riddled with conflict and contradictions with learners constantly having to balance these contradictory forces. On the one hand, there was an obvious social status attached to English abilities but in opposition to this there was a definite risk of

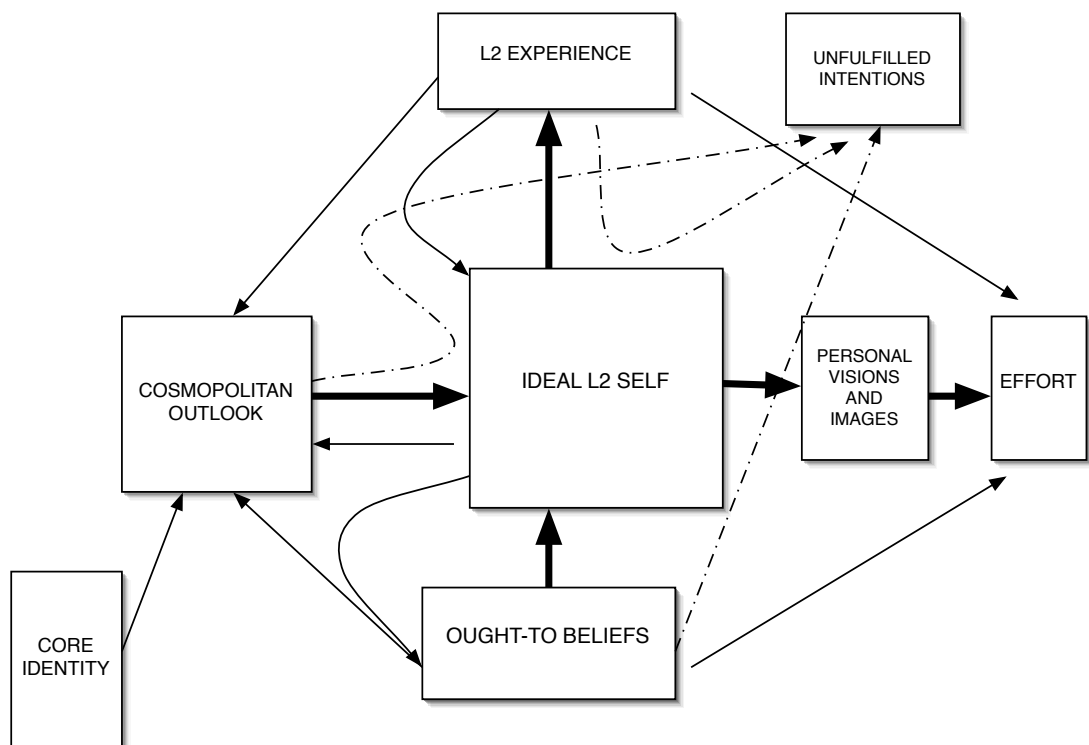
the fluent English speaker being stigmatised, often based on a perceived conflict between a sense of Japanese national identity and fluency in English. The overall picture presented in this thesis is one of individual learners being motivated to realise visions of themselves as active participants in a vaguely defined English-speaking community, yet struggling to align these visions with an educational environment that questions their right to belong to these communities and social networks that are ambivalent as to the value of English skills. Learners of English in Japan are faced with accommodating two sets of often conflicting obligations, one as diligent learners of English and participants in the events of an English-speaking community and the other as loyal members of a non-English-speaking Japanese society.

### **A conceptualisation of the ideal L2 self**

In this final part of my summary of the thesis I would like to offer a model of how I conceptualise the ideal L2 self. Figure 12.1 offers a visual representation of my conceptualisation of the ideal L2 self. This visual representation is based on Boyatzis and Akrivou's (2006) model and is intended to clarify important relationships rather than provide an exhaustive list of contributory factors.

I intend to conclude by discussing some of the principal characteristics of the model. The bold arrows represent the primary relationships involved in producing the personal visions and images that result in motivated behaviour. The plain lines signify the secondary relationships that emphasise the dynamic process of language learning motivation; for example, a cosmopolitan outlook feeds into ideal L2 self beliefs but these ideal L2 self beliefs also serve in the construction of a cosmopolitan outlook.

**FIGURE 12.1:**  
**Main components of the ideal L2 self**



The broken lines show those motives that are not executed. Of particular interest here are the relationships with cosmopolitan outlook and L2 experience; the illustration shows the lines apparently moving towards the ideal L2 self and then being diverted away in the direction of unfulfilled intentions. These broken lines help identify the non-linear nature of language learning and how some attitudes are assumed to have certain behavioural consequences.

A final word on the model presented in Figure 12.1 would be to emphasise that this a continuing process. The efforts to learn, shown here for the sake of visual simplicity to be the ultimate product of ideal L2 self beliefs, would in fact have their own consequences, shaping future constructions of the ideal L2 self.



## 12.2 PEDAGOGIC APPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

In this final section I will consider some practical applications of this research, first looking at how it may be used to improve the provision of language education and then at some of the implications for future research.

### **Pedagogic applications**

- Some of the most important pedagogic applications suggested by this research are found at a macro-planning level. English education in Japan is heavily reliant on notions of linguistic identity that situate the Japanese learner unequivocally outside the English-speaking world, that stress the otherness of English speakers. This is clearly at odds with a view of language learning based on the self. Education policy planners have concentrated on models of language that serve to reinforce the young Japanese learner's outsider status with regard to the English-speaking community. The continued elevation of an Anglo-American model of English and its speakers, tying the language to external, geographically defined locations, serves to situate the learner as peripheral to the English-speaking community, thus thwarting aspirations of young Japanese learners seeking legitimate membership of that community. Such models appear to deny, rather than support, individuals' L2 self-concepts.
- In the Japanese English educational context, a prime example of the elevation of Anglo-American norms is found in the JET programme, which imports young teaching assistants from core English-speaking countries to serve as models of both the cultural and linguistic norms associated with English. A typical manifestation of the JET programme might be a team-teaching class in which a young native-speaker teaching assistant exists as model of correctness, of 'real' English, leaving the role of the

Japanese teacher of English somewhat unclear in this situation; this Japanese teacher of English must surely represent a relatively successful learner of English, yet the degree of success attained by this Japanese learner of English must be in some way substandard – hence the presence of the native speaker – and not considered ‘real’ English. Viewed from a self perspective, this surely creates a dilemma in the mind of the young Japanese learner: Does the learner choose to identify with the non-Japanese speaker of English or the non-English-speaking Japanese teacher? Both in Japanese society as a whole and within its English classrooms, there is an obvious shortage of models of successful Japanese English speakers. A greater awareness of the importance of near-peer role models is called for; models that recognise the motivational benefits of positive images of Japanese speakers of English, of presenting language learning as a self-enhancing endeavour as opposed to a self-denying one.

- In terms of materials development and syllabus design, there needs to be greater attention given to a presentation of English that locates the young Japanese person as an active participant in the events of an inclusive English-speaking world. Materials that simply focus on activities that present English as a means of explaining Japan to an uncomprehending ‘outside’ world or the Japanese person as the uncomprehending ‘outsider’ when confronted with that English-speaking world serve only to strengthen learners’ sense of alienation. The same surely applies to courses that exist merely to identify and magnify essentialised cultural differences between Japan and the outside world.
- A classroom management consideration suggested by this research is the need for a

greater consideration of the motivational effects of the learning environment. The data showed that the efforts of many learners were being inhibited by powerful social forces not to display proficiency in English. The challenge for teachers is to recognise the power of these social forces and channel them in ways that encourages effort rather than discourages it. This means paying more attention to individual social relationships within the class, relationships not always directly concerned with immediate learning tasks, and a constant awareness of the position of proficient English speakers within the group dynamic of that class.

### **Future research**

- I would like to look at two methodological issues suggested by this research. Firstly, this research was centred around an attitudinal survey and this approach has obvious limitations. Perhaps the most crucial limitation involved the main criterion measure; a key finding of the research was that not all positive attitudes have behavioural consequences and this underlines the need for a greater role for observation of actual behaviour rather than a reliance on reported intentions. A second methodological consideration arising from this research is that of the role of the interviewer, and more specifically the language of the interview, in the collection of qualitative data. My interviews were all conducted in English and this was at the clear request of the participating interviewees. The language of the interviews clearly affects the nature of the data obtained. I believe that my interviews are certainly legitimate and represent a genuine expression of the concerns of the interviewees, but I was left wondering how the interviewees might have responded to the same questions when faced with a Japanese,

Japanese-speaking interviewer. The basic premise of this thesis is the existence of L2 self beliefs that function independently of the L1 and this implies that qualitative data obtained in the L2 may not always be consistent with those obtained in the L1; for a more complete understanding data need to be acquired in both the L1 and L2.

- Many of the ideas discussed in this paper are predicated on an interpretation of events occurring in the imaginations of language learners yet very little is known about the visions language learners hold of themselves as language users and how they imagine themselves relating to other members of their imagined L2 communities. Further research into the workings of the imagination and its relationship to actual behaviour is required: What are the behavioural consequences, if any, of the mental visions learners hold in their imaginations?
- Greater precision is called for in the theorising of substantiation of ideal L2 self beliefs. What are the conditions that enable visions of the self to be converted into directed behaviour and why do some visions remain as unregulated fantasy? How do language learners employ ideal L2 self guides and how does this differ from other established, and perhaps more readily understood, motivational concepts such as goals. Without a clear, convincing explanation of the relationship between the ideal L2 self and behaviour there appears to be little chance of widespread acceptance.
- The concept of a L2 self strongly implies that these beliefs are in some way different from the individual's core self beliefs based in the L1, however, these L2 self beliefs cannot exist totally independently. The self-concept is not a single monolithic entity; humans hold a range of self-concepts. How are L2 self aligned with other domains of

the self? For example, is there a strong relationship between an L1 academic self and an L2 self? Is the social self in the L2 essentially a projection of an L1 social self? The concept of an L2 self is still in its early stages and, at this point, perhaps raises more questions than answers. The challenge of addressing these questions promises an exciting future for language learning motivation research.

### **12.3 FINAL THOUGHTS**

I intend to conclude this thesis by means of a subjective evaluation of the research. Actually, I imagine that it would probably be impossible for me to be objective about something that has so dominated my life for the past few years. Perhaps my overriding sentiment as I write these final sentences is that this does not feel like the end. The current research has opened up a range of issues both large and small that I expect will keep me occupied for the foreseeable future. Foremost among these are lingering doubts as to how much the ideal L2 self as presented in this thesis is specific to English – is the ideal L2 self actually an ideal English self? – and a desire to understand how the L2 dimension fits into the individual's overall self system.

If I think back to how I regarded language learning motivation at the outset of this project, I barely recognise myself. At that time, the motivation to learn a language appeared as an intimidating, bewildering array of disparate theoretical strands lacking a gravitational centre, often seeming to pull in opposing directions. The task of devising a convincing and coherent structure that could accommodate these competing yet relevant theoretical concerns was a daunting one. While there is certainly much that remains unknown about the motivation of language learners, I believe that this thesis has provided me with not only a more thorough and systematic understanding of language

learning motivation but also a robust, dynamic framework from which to pursue further investigations. I can only hope that others may find it to be of similar use.

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## Appendices

### APPENDIX A

#### ITEMS AND COMPOSITE VARIABLES USED IN THE MFQ

##### CULTURAL INTEREST

- 2 Do you like the pop music of English-speaking countries?
- 5 Do you think that it is important to learn English in order to learn more about the culture and art of its speakers?
- 6 Do you like Hollywood films?
- 14 Do you like English magazines? (Write 'X' if you don't know any.)
- 19 Do you like English TV programmes?
- 32 I often wish I could read newspapers and magazines in another language.

##### ATTITUDES TOWARDS L2 COMMUNITY

- 3 Do you like the people of the United States?
- 4 Do you think that English-speaking countries (besides the US) have an important role in the world?
- 8 Do you think that English-speaking countries (besides the US) are advanced and developed nations?
- 11 Do you think that the United States has an important role in the world?
- 12 Do you like the people who live in English-speaking countries (besides the USA)?
- 15 Do you like meeting people from English-speaking countries?
- 16 Do you think that the United States is an advanced and developed nation?
- 17 Would you like to become similar to the people of English-speaking countries?

##### INSTRUMENTALITY

- 1 Do you think English is important in the world these days?
- 10 Do you think English would help you if you travelled abroad in the future?
- 13 Do you think knowing English would help you to become a more knowledgeable person?
- 18 Do you think English would help your future career?
- 29 For me to become an educated person I should learn English.
- 33 English ability would help me get a better paying job.
- 44 Studying English will help me get into better schools.
- 56 A knowledge of English would make me a better educated person.
- 90 Learning English is necessary because it is an international language.
- 98 Studying English will help me get a good job.

##### INTERNATIONAL CONTACT

- 41 I think that English will help me meet more people
- 62 I would like to be able to use English to get involved with people from other countries.
- 78 I would like to be able to use English to communicate with people from other countries.
- 80 If I could speak English well, I could get to know more people from other countries.

**INTEREST IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

- 55 If I planned to stay in another country, I would study the local language.
- 66 I think I would study a foreign language even if it weren't compulsory.
- 85 I would like to learn a lot of foreign languages.
- 92 If I were visiting a foreign country I would like to be able to speak its language.
- 97 If I made the effort, I could learn a foreign language.

**INTERNATIONAL EMPATHY**

- 46 Studying English will help me to get to know English-speaking people.
- 50 Studying English will help me to understand people from all over the world, not just English-speaking countries.
- 87 Studying English is important to me because I would like to become close to other English speakers.

**FEAR OF ASSIMILATION**

- 42 As a result of internationalisation, there is a danger Japanese people may forget the importance of Japanese culture.
- 57 Using English in front of people makes me feel like I will be thought of as less Japanese.
- 74 As internationalisation advances there is a danger of losing the Japanese language and culture.
- 82 As a part of international society Japanese people must preserve the Japanese language and culture.

**ETHNOCENTRISM**

- 30 I don't trust people with different customs and values to myself.
- 47 I respect the values and customs of other cultures.
- 67 I find it difficult to work together with people who have different customs and values.
- 88 I find it difficult to comprehend the values and customs of other cultures.
- 99 I am not very interested in the values and customs of other cultures.

**TRAVEL ORIENTATION**

- 7 Would you like to travel to English-speaking countries?
- 51 Studying English will be useful when I travel overseas.
- 54 Learning English is important to me because I would like to visit English-speaking countries.
- 89 Learning English is important to me because I would like to travel internationally.

**ENGLISH ANXIETY**

- 38 I am worried that other speakers of English would find my English strange.
- 43 If I met an English speaker, I would feel nervous.
- 52 I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my English class.
- 69 I'm not very good at volunteering answers in our English class.
- 71 I would feel uneasy speaking English with a native speaker.
- 84 I would get tense if a foreigner asked me for directions in English.

**ATTITUDES TO LEARNING ENGLISH**

- 9 Do you like English?
- 37 Learning English is really great.
- 60 I really enjoy learning English.
- 73 I'm always looking forward to my English classes.
- 86 I find learning English really interesting.
- 95 Learning English is one of the most important aspects in my life.

**MILIEU**

- 35 Most people around me tend to think that learning a foreign language is a waste of time.
- 40 Hardly anybody really cares whether I learn English or not.
- 63 Few people around me think that it is such a good thing to learn foreign languages.
- 75 For people where I live learning English doesn't really matter that much.
- 77 My parents do not consider foreign languages important school subjects.
- 96 I don't think that foreign languages are important school subjects.

**PARENTAL ENCOURAGEMENT**

- 34 I am often told by my parents that English is important for my future.
- 58 My parents encourage me to study English.
- 72 My parents think that I should really try to learn English.
- 81 My parents encourage me to practise my English as much as possible.

**IDEAL L2 SELF**

- 39 The things I want to do in the future require me to speak English.
- 45 Whenever I think of my future career, I imagine myself being able to use English.
- 59 I often imagine myself as someone who is able to speak English.
- 83 If my dreams come true, I will use English effectively in the future.
- 93 I can imagine speaking English with international friends.
- 100 When I think about my future, it is important that I use English.

**L2 SELF-CONFIDENCE**

- 28 I am sure I will be able to learn a foreign language.
- 36 I worry that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English
- 48 Learning a foreign language is a difficult task for me.
- 70 I think I am the type who would feel anxious and ill at ease if I had to speak to someone in a foreign language.
- 91 I always feel that my classmates speak English better than I do.

**WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE (L1/in English)**

How likely would you be to initiate communication in Japanese/English in the following situations?

- 20/28 Making a presentation in front of a large group.
- 21/29 Talking with an acquaintance while standing in line.
- 22/30 Talking with a salesperson in a store.
- 23/31 Talking in a small group of strangers.
- 24/32 Talking with a friend while standing in line.

25/33 Talking with a stranger while standing in line.

26/34 Talking in a small group of acquaintances.

27/35 Talking in a small group of friends.

**INTENDED LEARNING EFFORT**

31 I am working hard at learning English.

49 It is extremely important for me to learn English.

53 If an English course was offered in the future, I would like to take it.

61 When I hear an English song on the radio, I listen carefully and try to understand all the words.

65 I can honestly say that I am really doing my best to learn English.

68 If I could have access to English-speaking TV stations, I would try to watch them often.

76 I am the kind of person who makes great efforts to learn English.

79 If English were not taught in school, I would try to go to English classes somewhere else.

## **APPENDIX B      Scales used in Hungarian studies**

### **INTEGRATIVENESS**

- 9      Do you like English?
- 5      Do you think that is important to learn English in order to learn more about the culture and art of its speakers?
- 17     Would you like to become similar to the people of English-speaking countries?

### **INSTRUMENTALITY**

- 18     Do you think English would help your future career?
- 10     Do you think English would help you if you travelled abroad in the future?
- 1      Do you think English is important in the world these days?
- 13     Do you think knowing English would help you to become a more knowledgeable person?

### **DIRECT CONTACT WITH L2 SPEAKERS**

- 3      Do you like the people of the United States?
- 7      Would you like to travel to English-speaking countries?
- 12     Do you like the people who live in English-speaking countries (besides the USA)?
- 15     Do you like meeting people from English-speaking countries?

### **VITALITY OF L2 COMMUNITY**

- 4      Do you think that English-speaking countries (besides the US) have an important role in the world?
- 8      Do you think that English-speaking countries (besides the US) are advanced and developed nations?
- 11     Do you think that United States has an important role in the world?
- 16     Do you think that the United States is an advanced and developed nation?

### **CULTURAL INTEREST**

- 2      Do you like the pop music of English-speaking countries?
- 6      Do you like Hollywood films?
- 14     Do you like English magazines? (*Write 'X' if you don't know any.*)
- 19     Do you like English TV programmes?

### **MILIEU**

- 63     Few people around me think that it is such a good thing to learn foreign languages.
- 96     I don't think that foreign languages are important school subjects.
- 77     My parents do not consider foreign languages important school subjects.

### **LINGUISTIC SELF-CONFIDENCE**

- 28     I am sure I will be able to learn a foreign language.
- 48     Learning a foreign language is a difficult task for me.
- 70     I think I am the type who would feel anxious and ill at ease if I had to speak to someone in a foreign language.

## Motivational Factors Questionnaire

このアンケートはイギリスのノッティンガム大学応用言語学センターにより作成されたもので、イギリス・カナダ・韓国・日本の4カ国で実施している国際調査です。この研究の目的は、英語学習者かどのように物事を発想するかを調査することにあります。正確なデータを得るために、よく考えてきてるだけ空白のないように記入してください。

### 1 One

下記の質問について、自分に当てはまると思う番号を○で囲んでください。

1 = 全然 2 = あまり 3 = どちらでもない 4 = まあまあ 5 = とても 6 = 非常にとても

例) カレーがとても好きで、ハンバーグはあまり好きではなく、ピーマンが嫌いな人

カレーが好きですか？	1	2	3	4	⑤	6
どれくらいハンバーグが好きですか？	1	②	3	4	5	6
どれくらいピーマンが好きですか？	①	2	3	4	5	6

1. 英語は現代社会において重要だと思いますか？	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. 英語圏の音楽（ポピュラーミュージック）が好きですか？	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. アメリカの人々が好きですか？	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. 英語圏の国（アメリカ以外）は世界で重要な存在だと思いますか？	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. 英語を習うことは英語圏の人々の文化や芸術を知るために大切だと思いますか？	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. ハリウッド映画が好きですか？	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. 英語圏の国を旅行したいですか？	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. 英語圏の国（アメリカ以外）は先進国だと思いますか？	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. 英語が好きですか？	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. 将来海外旅行をするときに英語が役立つと思いますか？	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. アメリカは世界で重要な存在だと思いますか？	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. 英語圏（アメリカ以外）の人々が好きですか？	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. 英語ができればもっと知識豊かな人になれると思いますか？	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. 英語の雑誌が好きですか？（知らない場合は‘X’を記入してください。）	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. 英語を話す国の人たちと出会うことが好きですか？	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. アメリカは先進国だと思いますか？	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. 英語圏の人のようになりたいですか？	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. 英語は将来就職に役立つと思いますか？	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. 英語のテレビ番組が好きですか？	1	2	3	4	5	6

## 2 Two

これから示す場面で、あなたはどの行動しますか？自分から進んで会話を始めますか？？日本語と英語の両方について、どの程度の頻度で自分から話かけるか、自分に当てはまると思う番号を○で囲んでください。

1	2	3	4	5	6
しない	ほとんどしない	ごくたまに	ときどき	たいてい	いつも

例)

	Japanese						English					
知らない人とエレベータにいるとき	1	2	3	4	⑤	6	1	②	3	4	5	6

	Japanese						English					
20. 大勢の人の前でスピーチをするとき。	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
21. 列に並んでいて顔見知りにと会ったあつたとき。	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
22. お店で店員さんと会話するとき。	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
23. 何人かの知らない人と一緒にいるとき。	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
24. 列に並んでいて友達にあつた会つたとき。	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
25. 列に並んでいて見知らぬ人と会話するとき。	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
26. 何人か顔見知りの人と会話するとき。	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
27. 少人数何人かの友達と会話するとき。	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6

## 3 Three

下記の事柄にあなたがどの程度共感どれくらい同感できるか考えて1～6のいずれかを○で囲ってください、自分に当てはまると思う番号を○で囲んでください。

1	2	3	4	5	6
全くそう思わない	そう思わない	どちらかというと思わない	どちらかというと思う	そう思う	非常にそう思う

例)

先生が難しい宿題たくさん出すとうれしい。	1	②	3	4	5	6
私は必ず期限内にレポートを提出する。	1	2	3	4	⑤	6

28. 自分は外国語の習得には自信がある。	1	2	3	4	5	6
29. 教養を身につけるために英語を習得するべきだ。	1	2	3	4	5	6
30. 習慣や価値観の異なる人はあまり信用できない。	1	2	3	4	5	6
31. 英語はすすんで勉強している。	1	2	3	4	5	6
32. 他の言葉で書かれた新聞や雑誌など読めればいいなあと思うことがよくある。	1	2	3	4	5	6
33. 英語力があればもっと給料が高い仕事につける就けるだろう。	1	2	3	4	5	6
34. 両親に将来のために英語を一生懸命勉強するようによく言われる。	1	2	3	4	5	6
35. 自分の周りには外国語を勉強するのが時間の無駄だと思っている人が多い。	1	2	3	4	5	6
36. 私はが英語を話すときクラスメートが笑わないかと心配になる。	1	2	3	4	5	6
37. 英語を学ぶことは本当にすばらしいことだと思う。	1	2	3	4	5	6
38. 英語を話せる人が自分の英語を聞くと変に思うのではないかと心配である。	1	2	3	4	5	6

39. 将来のやりたいことのためには英語を話すことは必要だである。	1	2	3	4	5	6
40. 私が英語を学んでも学ばなくてもあまり気にする人はいない。	1	2	3	4	5	6
41. 英語を学ぶことによってべば新しい出逢いがあるだろう増えると思う。	1	2	3	4	5	6
42. 国際化により日本文化が失われる危険性がある。	1	2	3	4	5	6
43. 英語を話すときにはドキドキする。	1	2	3	4	5	6
44. 英語を勉強することによって将来いい学校に入れるだろう。	1	2	3	4	5	6
45. 将来英語を使って仕事をしている自分をよく想像する。	1	2	3	4	5	6
46. 英語を勉強すれば、英語圏の人々と親しくなれる。	1	2	3	4	5	6
47. 自分は異文化の価値観や習慣を尊重する。	1	2	3	4	5	6
48. 外国語を習得することは自分にとってむずかしい。	1	2	3	4	5	6
49. 自分にとって英語を学ぶことは非常に大切なことである。	1	2	3	4	5	6
50. 英語を学ぶと英語圏の人々に限らず世界の人々を理解できるようになると思う。	1	2	3	4	5	6
51. 英語を勉強しておけば海外旅行をするときに役立つ。	1	2	3	4	5	6
52. 英語の授業で発言するしていると緊張する。	1	2	3	4	5	6
53. もし英語の講座があれば 将来的に受講したい。	1	2	3	4	5	6
54. 自分は英語圏の国に行きたいと思っているので、英語を学ぶことは大切だと思う。	1	2	3	4	5	6
55. もし今外国に滞在することになっていれば、ならその国の言葉を勉強すると思うだろう。	1	2	3	4	5	6
56. 英語ができればもっと教養のある人になれる。	1	2	3	4	5	6
57. 人前で英語を使うと日本人らしくないと思われる気がする。	1	2	3	4	5	6
58. 両親は英語の勉強に協力的だ。	1	2	3	4	5	6
59. 英語を話せる人になるだろうと思うようになっている自分をよく想像する。	1	2	3	4	5	6
60. 英語を学ぶことは本当に楽しい。	1	2	3	4	5	6
61. ラジオで英語の曲を聴くときには注意深く聞いて歌詞を理解しようとしているする。	1	2	3	4	5	6
62. 英語でを使って外国人とかかわりたい。	1	2	3	4	5	6
63. 自分の周りには外国語ができることはいいことだと思っている人が少ない。	1	2	3	4	5	6
64. 自分が英語を学ぶ努力をしなかったら周囲の人はがっかりすると思う。	1	2	3	4	5	6
65. 正直に言って自分は英語をマスターするために本当によく頑張っているとおもう思う。	1	2	3	4	5	6
66. 外国語が必修科目でなくても勉強すると思う。	1	2	3	4	5	6
67. 習慣や価値観の異なる人と協力して物事をするのは困難だと思う。	1	2	3	4	5	6
68. 英語のテレビ番組が見られるなら、いつも見るだろう。	1	2	3	4	5	6
69. 英語の授業で積極的に発言するのははづかしい苦手だ。	1	2	3	4	5	6
70. 自分私はだれか誰かと外国語で話すときにすぐ不安になる緊張するタイプだ。	1	2	3	4	5	6
71. 英語が母語の人と英語で話すときには不安を感じる。	1	2	3	4	5	6
72. 両親は私が英語を学ぶべきだと考えている。	1	2	3	4	5	6
73. いつも英語の授業をたのしみ楽しみにしている。	1	2	3	4	5	6
74. 国際化が進むと日本語が失われる危険性がある。	1	2	3	4	5	6
75. 今の私の環境では英語がそんなにできなくてもかまわない。	1	2	3	4	5	6
76. 英語の習得のためによく努力する方だ。	1	2	3	4	5	6
77. 両親は外国語を学校の科目として 重要だと考えていない。	1	2	3	4	5	6
78. 外国の人とコミュニケーションをはかるために英語を使いたい。	1	2	3	4	5	6
79. 学校で英語の授業がなかったらどこか他に出向いて英語を勉強する。	1	2	3	4	5	6
80. 英語がうまくしゃべれれば、より多くの外国の人と知り合えるだろ。	1	2	3	4	5	6
81. 両親は私ができるだけ英語を使えるように協力してくれている。	1	2	3	4	5	6



82. 国際社会において、日本人は日本語や日本文化を守るべきだ。	1	2	3	4	5	6
83. 自分の夢が叶ったら英語を効果的に使う自由に使えるようになると思う。	1	2	3	4	5	6
84. 外国人に英語で道を聞かれると緊張する。	1	2	3	4	5	6
85. 多くの外国語を学びたいと思っている外国人に道を聞かれたら緊張する。	1	2	3	4	5	6
86. 英語を勉強するのはとても面白い。	1	2	3	4	5	6
87. 英語を話す人と親しくなりたいから、英語はが自分にとってとても大切なものだと思う。	1	2	3	4	5	6
88. 自分は異文化の価値観や習慣をあまり理解できない。	1	2	3	4	5	6
89. 海外旅行をしたいから英語は自分にとってとても大切だと思う。	1	2	3	4	5	6
90. 英語は国際共通語なので勉強する必要がある。	1	2	3	4	5	6
91. クラスメートは自分より英語がうまく話せるような気がする。	1	2	3	4	5	6
92. 外国にいったら行ったらその国の言葉を話るといい、したいと思う。	1	2	3	4	5	6
93. 外国人の友達と英語で話しているのをよく思いうかべる。	1	2	3	4	5	6
94. 英語を勉強することによって英語圏の人々やその生活を理解できるようになる。	1	2	3	4	5	6
95. 自分の人生において英語の学習は最も重要な位置を占めている。	1	2	3	4	5	6
96. 私は外国語を学校の科目としては重要だと思っていない。	1	2	3	4	5	6
97. 努力すれば、必ず外国語ができるようになる。	1	2	3	4	5	6
98. 英語を学ぶといい仕事につけるだろう勉強すればいい仕事に就けると思う。	1	2	3	4	5	6
99. 異文化の価値観や習慣にはあまり興味がない。	1	2	3	4	5	6
100. 将来のことを考えると英語を使うことは大切だと思う。	1	2	3	4	5	6

### あなたについて

この情報はすべて研究のために集計しているもので第三者第三者に公開されることは一切ありません。該当するものを○で囲ってください。自分に当てはまると思う番号を○で囲んでください。

性別	男	女	年齢	18歳以下	19~24歳	25~40歳	41~55歳	56以上
学歴	高校卒または又在学中			短大卒	大学卒	大学院以上		
海外滞在歴 (海外にもっとも長く滞在したのは？最も長く滞在した期間)	1度もない			現在職				
	数日程度							
	数週間程度			学生	パート・アルバイト	社員	退職者	
	数ヶ月程度(1年未満)			現在の英語学習				
	1年以上							
			していない		必修科目だけ	選択科目も		
			語学学校		自宅			
英語能力	全くできない	初心者初級	ある程度できる		よくできる			

ご協力ありがとうございました

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## Appendix D Preliminary interview guide

### Interview Guide

#### **A SELF EVALUATION**

Do you consider yourself a 'good language learner'?

How would you describe your English abilities?

Do you think that you are 'good at languages'?

#### **B LANGUAGE LEARNING EXPERIENCE**

How long have you been learning English?

Would you say that you enjoy learning English?

- Can you give reasons? (Why/ Why not?)

Do you think that you are a successful language learner?

- Can you give reasons? (Why/ Why not?)

What has been your most successful/ satisfactory experience while learning English?

What has been your most unsuccessful/ frustrating experience while learning English?

#### **C ATTITUDES TO ENGLISH**

What does English mean to you?

What kind of images does English bring to mind for you? (either positive or negative)

What does it mean to you to be a successful user (speaker) of English?

Many people reply 'I like English' when asked their reasons for learning. What does that phrase mean to you?

#### **D ATTITUDES TO SPEAKERS OF ENGLISH**

Is there a person/ or people who has/ have served as a role model for your language learning?

When you see a group of people who appear to be native speakers of English talking together, how do you feel?

When you see a Japanese person talking to people who appear to be native speakers of English, how do you feel?

When you see a Japanese person talking to people in English to people who do not appear to be native speakers, how do you feel?

When you imagine a competent speaker of English, what does he or she look like?

How do you think people around you (friends, family, colleagues) would regard you if you were an expert user of English?

#### **E GOALS AND ORIENTATIONS**

Do you think that it is important for all Japanese people to learn English?

Can you give reasons? (Why/ Why not?)

Do you think that it is important for YOU to learn/master English?

Can you give reasons? (Why/ Why not?)

Do you have clear learning goals?

- Can you explain?

How would a command of English enrich your life?

**E OBLIGATIONS AND NEED TO LEARN ENGLISH**

Is it necessary for Japanese people to learn English?

- Can you give reasons? (Why/ Why not?)

Is it necessary for YOU to learn English?

- Can you give reasons? (Why/ Why not?)

If you think that it is necessary to learn English, when did you first think so?

- Can you give reasons?

Have you ever felt any pressure to learn English?

What do other people think about your learning English?

What concerns you most about your English ability?

- Can you explain?

**F IDEAL L2 SELF**

Can you imagine a clear situation when you are a successful speaker of English:

- who would you be speaking to?
- where would you be speaking?
- what would you be using English for?

**Appendix E**

**Interview Consent Form**

CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

RESEARCH TOPIC:

MOTIVATION AND THE IDEAL L2 SELF OF JAPANESE LEARNERS OF ENGLISH

I consent to my participation in an interview for the above research. I give my permission to the researcher to use recordings and any notes taken during the interview for research purposes.

**NAME/SIGNATURE:**

**DATE:**

I, the researcher, have explained the purpose of this study and have requested the cooperation of the above participant in research interviews. I have explained that any information and all recordings obtained in the interview will be used only for legitimate research purposes.

**NAME/SIGNATURE:**

**DATE:**