

研究ノート

L2 Learning Motivations of Japanese College Students: A Survey I

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1 Introduction

This is the first part of an investigation of Japanese college students' attitudes and motivations in learning English. It also examines their reasons for learning English at the college level. Since researchers reopened the debate in the 1990s to expand Gardner's well-established social psychological theory of language learning, much research has been conducted to study other affective and contextual variables that might influence motivational constructs of L2 learners (e.g., Crookes and Schmidt, 1991; Dörnyei, 1994; Oxford and Shearin, 1994; Tremblay and Gardner, 1995).

In her attempt to obtain further understanding of Japanese EFL learners' motivations, Yashima (2000) focused on Japanese college students who were not English majors and examined their motivations and reasons for learning English. It was found that among nine orientations identified, instrumental and intercultural friendship orientations were perceived to be most important by those students. Intercultural friendship orientation, which reflects learners' interest in different cultures, seemed to be highly valued as a reason for learning English, whereas interest in American and/or British cultures was not among the most important reasons. It was also reported that a strong correlation was observed between strength of motivation and English proficiency levels among the learners, as was also shown in past research.

The purpose of the present study is to investigate motivations and orientations of a

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wider range of Japanese college students. It involves two different types of college and three different speciality areas. The study aims to find answers for the following questions:

- 1) What are the attitudes towards English language learning by Japanese college students who are not English majors? Are there any differences in attitudes among different majors?
- 2) How motivated are they to learn English? Are there any differences in motivation levels among different majors?
- 3) How are these attitudes and motivations related to their English proficiency levels?
- 4) What are the main reasons for them to learn English? Which reasons do they consider to be important?
- 5) Are there any differences in reasons for learning English among students of different English proficiency levels?

2 Method

2.1 Participants and Procedures

A total of 251 Japanese students from three different departments of the same college participated in this survey. All of them were freshmen and none of them English majors. About half of them (136 students) were four-year college students and the rest (115 students) were two-year college students. Among the four-year college students, 47 of them majored in Liberal Arts, and 89 Health Science. All of the two-year college students were Child Education majors⁽¹⁾. Approximately 80% of the participants reported that they had never visited English-speaking countries or areas at the time of the survey. Twelve percent of them had stayed in at least one English speaking country or area and the total days of their visits were fewer than 7 days, 6% of them from 7 to 14 days, 0.8% of them from 14 to 21 days, and the remaining 1.2% of them more than 21 days. About 84.5% of the students were female, and the remaining 15.5% of them were male students.

The questionnaire was administered on the first day of the required English class in April, 2013. The participants indicated how strongly they agreed or disagreed with each item of the questionnaire by rating on a five-point Likert scale. All the items in the questionnaire were given in their native language, Japanese.

2.2 Questionnaire

The questionnaire items of the current study are divided into three parts: (1) Attitudes towards learning English (5 items), (2) Motivation for learning English (8 items) and (3) Reasons for learning English (25 items). The items for 'Attitudes towards learning English' were based on the Attitude / Motivation Test Battery (Gardner, 1985). Among the original 10 items, due to the limited time available for the survey, 5 items (3 positive and 2 negative items) were chosen. The items for the

‘Motivation’ and ‘Orientation’ parts were developed on the basis of Yashima (2002). Since the college English classes had not started at the time of the survey, the ‘Motivation’ items mainly asked their readiness or willingness to make efforts to learn the language at college, instead of their actual learning behaviours. Eight items concerning motivational intensity and desire to learn English were chosen for the present survey. Regarding the ‘Orientation’ part, the original 37 items in Yashima’s survey were reduced to 25, with some items adjusted so they fit the learning environments and experiences of the students in this study.

2.3 Data Analyses

The items in the ‘Attitudes’ part of the questionnaire reflect the students’ attitudes towards English language and learning the language. The scores for the negative items were reversed for the analysis. All the item scores were added to produce an average score, which is named ‘Attitude Index’ (Cronbach’s $\alpha=.85$). The items in the ‘Motivation’ part indicate how strongly they wish to learn English as well as how much effort they are willing to exert to learn the language. The average score of these items is called ‘Motivation Index’ (Cronbach’s $\alpha=.93$).

Attitude Indexes and Motivation Indexes were compared among the three majors by using ANOVA and Tukey’s tests⁽²⁾. *T*-tests were used to compare two groups of different majors and higher and lower English proficiency levels.

The mean score of each item in the ‘Orientation’ part was calculated in order to see how important each item is perceived by the students as a reason for learning English. The rank order and the levels of importance were compared among three different majors as well as two different levels of English proficiency.

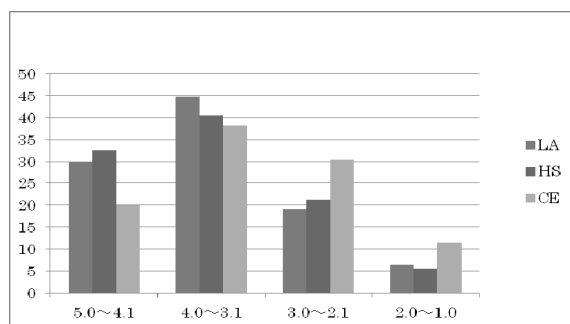
All the analyses above were conducted by using SPSS 16.0 for Windows.

3 Results and Discussion

3.1 Attitude Index

In order to identify any differences among three majors, the averages of each person were conducted on Attitude items (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: *Mean Distribution Attitude*



Note. LA=Liberal Arts; HS=Health Science; CE=Child Education

As shown in Figure 1, the average points of more than half Liberal Arts students and Health Science students distributed on points 5.0 to 3.1; however, the average points of more than half Child Education students distributed on point 4.0 to 2.1.

To investigate how the three groups are significantly different, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted. The results indicated a significant difference within the groups ($F(2, 248)=5.60, p=.004, \eta^2=.04$). Means and standard deviations of three majors are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: *Descriptive Statistics of the Three Majors*

<i>Group</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Liberal Arts	47	3.64	0.86
Health Science	89	3.63	0.92
Child Education	115	3.24	0.95

Given this result, a Tukey's multiple comparison test was performed to examine where the differences might exist. As seen in Table 2, significant differences were found between Child Education and Liberal Arts ($d=.43$), and Child Education and Health Science ($d=.42$). However, there was no significant difference between Liberal Arts and Health Science.

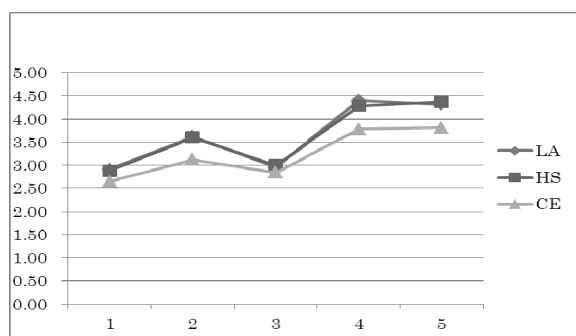
Table 2: *Results of Comparisons between Each Pair of Groups (Tukey)*

<i>Compared</i>		<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
Liberal Arts	Health Science	0.995	0.01
	Child Education	0.034*	0.43
Health Science	Liberal Arts	0.995	0.01
	Child Education	0.009*	0.42
Child Education	Liberal Arts	0.034*	0.43
	Health Science	0.009*	0.42

* $p<.05$

By looking at the mean of each item, three majors showed a similar attitudinal tendency (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: *Mean Distribution of Attitude by Item*



As seen in Figure 2, all majors showed the lowest points on item (1) “I like English”; however, the item (5) “We don’t need English as part of school programmes” was the highest (items (4) and (5) were reversed because of negative questions).

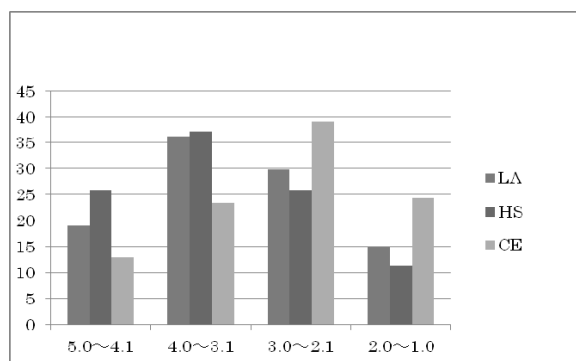
As a result of a Tukey’s multiple comparison test, the four-year college students and the two-year college students were statistically significantly different. Therefore, a *t* test was run to determine whether any significant differences exist in each item. The *t* test results showed significant differences on items (2) “I am interested in English” ($t(249)=3.19, p<.001, d=.40$), (4) “Learning English is a waste of time” ($t(249)=4.57, p<.001, d=.58$), and (5) “We don’t need English as part of school programmes” ($t(249)=4.05, p<.001, d=.52$).

A number of differences and similarities were found in a comparison of the three majors on the Attitude Index. According to the result of the Tukey’s test, Child Education students might have a different attitude towards learning English. It can be said that Child Education students have a rather negative attitude toward English compared to the other majors. On the other hand, all three majors have a similar tendency in their attitude towards each item. It seems that all three majors do not like English so much and they do not think learning English is fun. However they think neither that learning English is a waste of time nor that English is dispensable for school education.

3.2 Motivation Index

In order to identify any differences among the three majors, the averages of each person were conducted on Motivation items (see Figure 3). As shown in Figure 3, the average points of more than half Liberal Arts students and Health Science students were distributed on points 5.0 to 2.1; however, the average points of more than half Child Education students were distributed on points 4.0 to 1.0.

Figure 3: Mean Distribution Motivation



To investigate how the three groups are significantly different, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted. The results indicated a significant difference

within the groups ($F(2, 248)=8.16, p<.001, \eta^2=.06$). Means and standard deviations of three majors are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: *Descriptive Statistics of the Three Majors*

<i>Group</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Liberal Arts	47	3.19	0.94
Health Science	89	3.33	0.90
Child Education	115	2.80	1.02

Given this result, a Tukey's multiple comparison test was performed to examine where the differences might exist. As seen in Table 4, significant differences were found between Health Science and Child Education ($d=.55$). Although there was no significant difference between Liberal Arts and Child Education, a small effect size was found between them. Between Liberal Arts and Health Science, however, no significant difference was observed and the effect size was almost negligible.

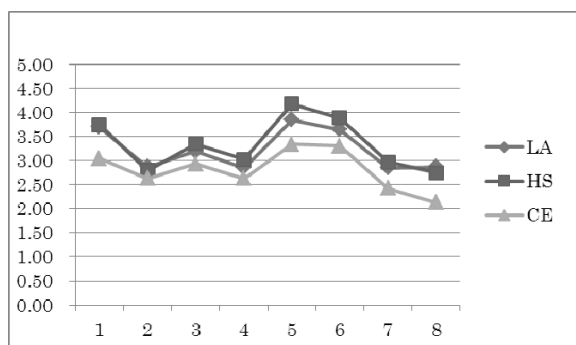
Table 4: *Results of Comparisons between Each Pair of Groups (Tukey)*

<i>Compared</i>		<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
Liberal Arts	Health Science	0.690	0.15
	Child Education	0.053	0.39
Health Science	Liberal Arts	0.690	0.15
	Child Education	0.000*	0.55
Child Education	Liberal Arts	0.053	0.39
	Health Science	0.000*	0.55

* $p<.05$

By looking at the mean of each item, all three majors gave a similar tendency to each item (see Figure 4). As seen in Figure 4, all majors showed the item (8) "If English were not taught at school, I would study it on my own" was the lowest; however, the item (5) "I want to try hard to learn English" was the highest.

Figure 4: *Mean Distribution of Motivation by Item*



To examine if there were any significant differences between the four-year college

students and the two-year college students, a *t*-test was conducted on each item. The results showed significant differences on items (1) “I strongly wish to learn English” ($t(249) = 4.67, p < .001, d = .60$), (3) “If I find interesting English learning materials, I want to use them immediately” ($t(249) = 2.45, p = .015, d = .31$), (4) “I want to enrol in many English courses” ($t(249) = 2.21, p = .028, d = .27$), (5) “I want to try hard to learn English” ($t(249) = 5.31, p < .001, d = .69$), (6) “I want to try hard to do English homework and assignments” ($t(249) = 3.29, p = .001, d = .41$), (7) “After I graduate from college, I want to continue to study English” ($t(249) = 3.22, p = .001, d = .41$), and (8) “If English were not taught at school, I would study it on my own” ($t(249) = 3.69, p < .001, d = .46$).

According to the results of the Tukey’s test and the *t*-test, it can be said that Child Education students were less motivated to learn English than the other two majors. On the other hand, all three majors had similar motivational tendencies in each item, even if there were some significant differences. It seems that they are motivated to try hard at learning English and do their assignment but less motivated to learn English independently.

3.3 Attitudes, Motivations and English Proficiency Levels

Eighty nine Health Science students were divided into two groups based on the scores of the placement test that they took approximately two weeks prior to the survey. The group with higher scores is called the Upper Group (43 students) and that with lower scores, the Lower Group (46 students). *T*-tests were conducted in order to investigate if there were any significant relationships between the learners’ English language levels and their attitudes and motivations in learning the language. The results showed that the two groups were significantly different in both attitudes and motivations (Attitude Index, $t(87) = 3.96, p < .001, d = .84$; Motivation Index, $t(87) = 4.47, p < .001, d = .95$). The results indicated that students with higher English abilities had significantly more positive attitudes towards English language learning, and that they were also more motivated to learn the language than those with lower English abilities. This confirms the results of Yashima’s survey, which reported that the learners’ motivation levels were significantly correlated with their TOEFL scores.

However, a closer examination revealed that there was one aspect of their attitudes towards learning English where no significant differences were observed between the groups. Those are items (4) “Learning English is a waste of time” and (5) “We don’t need English as part of school programmes”. The majority of the students (84% of them) responded negatively on those items (one or two on a five-point scale). In other words, the Health Science students seem to have accepted the value and necessity of learning English regardless their English language levels.

This may suggest contradicting and possibly frustrating situations that the students with lower English abilities find themselves in; they feel that it is important to learn English, but at the same time, they find themselves less motivated to do so. It may

also imply that merely emphasizing importance and necessity of learning English does not affect low achievers' motivation to learn the language. Steps should be taken to investigate the causes of their demotivation and implement measures that help them overcome it.

3.4 Orientation

As for students' orientations, the mean scores of each 25 items were calculated and compared. The results in Tables 5, 6 and 7 indicated which reasons were considered to be important by each major and how different they were according to each major.

According to the highest order, the four out of five highest items perceived as most important reasons, items (4), (25), (14) and (13), were shared by all majors. Items (4) and (25) are related to vague necessity, and item (14) "English is necessary to be a modern, educated person", is related to academic importance, and item (13) "English is useful in getting a job and at work", is related to the instrumental orientation. It is understandable for students to feel vague necessity because they live and learn in an EFL environment, although it is in the modern globalized world. The situation they are in probably gives them an impression of unclear present need and concurrently a psychological distance from using English.

However, when the results were closely examined by comparisons of each major, the same highest items indicated different meanings among the three majors. According to the results from the Child Education major they are assumed to learn English for the same vague reasons such as items (4) and (25) like the other two majors. However, their mean scores were lower, their scores were more widely spread, and coverage of their mean confidence interval was different, compared with the other two majors (see Table 8).

Table 5: *Ten Most Important Reasons for Child Education* (n=115)

<i>Item number</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Importance(SD)</i>
1 (4)	There is no specific reason, but I think English is useful.	3.44(1.24)
2 (10)	It is cool to be a competent English user.	3.39(1.37)
3 (25)	There is no specific reason, but I want to be able to speak English.	3.38(1.27)
4 (13)	English is useful in getting a job and at work.	3.37(1.31)
5 (14)	English is necessary to be a modern, educated person.	3.26(1.28)
6 (7)	I want to travel to English speaking countries and areas.	3.25(1.32)
7 (8)	I want to travel to various countries and areas in the world.	3.18(1.33)
8 (11)	I want to make friends with English-speaking peoples.	3.10(1.32)
9 (1)	I have been learning English since junior high school.	3.08(1.22)
10 (6)	I like English songs.	3.05(1.32)

As mentioned above, Child Education students have more negative attitudes and are less motivated to learn English. The aim of their career plan after two-year college education promises a professional goal, which does not usually require English skills. Therefore it would not be surprising if they do not have a strong sense of ownership in learning English. It follows that they speak about their English learning orientations in vague generalities. It could be said that their ‘vague necessity’ mindset can be seen in the fact that the item (13) “English is useful in getting a job and at work.” is included in their highest five reasons.

Table 6: *Ten Most Important Reasons for Health Science* (n=89)

<i>Item number</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Importance(SD)</i>
1 (25)	There is no specific reason, but I want to be able to speak English.	4.10(0.89)
2 (4)	There is no specific reason, but I think English is useful.	4.04(0.94)
3 (13)	English is useful in getting a job and at work.	4.02(0.93)
4 (14)	English is necessary to be a modern, educated person.	4.00(0.93)
5 (7)	I want to travel to English speaking countries and areas.	3.92(1.18)
6 (10)	It is cool to be a competent English user.	3.81(1.10)
7 (8)	I want to travel to various countries and areas in the world.	3.76(1.22)
8 (16)	English allows me to acquire new ideas and broadens my horizon.	3.58(1.23)
9 (6)	I like English songs.	3.46(1.23)
10 (11)	I want to make friends with English-speaking peoples.	3.46(1.39)

Table 7: *Ten Most Important Reasons for Liberal Arts* (n=47)

<i>Item number</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Importance (SD)</i>
1 (13)	English is useful in getting a job and at work.	4.02(1.11)
2 (4)	There is no specific reason, but I think English is useful.	3.94(0.87)
3 (14)	English is necessary to be a modern, educated person.	3.83(1.05)
4 (25)	There is no specific reason, but I want to be able to speak English.	3.83(1.17)
5 (10)	It is cool to be a competent English user.	3.53(1.33)
6 (16)	English allows me to acquire new ideas and broadens my horizon.	3.49(1.23)
7 (20)	I want to understand cultures and peoples of English-speaking countries.	3.45(1.16)
8 (6)	I like English songs.	3.45(1.28)
9 (7)	I want to travel to English speaking countries and areas.	3.43(1.41)
10 (8)	I want to travel to various countries and areas in the world.	3.43(1.38)

‘Vague necessity’, such as items (4) and (25) appeared in the top two reasons for Health Science. This may seem similar to Child Education, but Health Science majors attach a higher level of importance to their reasons generally. As two items, (7) and (8), relate to foreign travel, it may be possible to say that they contemplate using English abroad in a real situation.

Table 8: *Descriptive Statistics of the Items (4) and (25) of the Three Majors*

	(4)				(25)			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>95% CI</i>		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>95% CI</i>	
			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
CE	3.44	1.24	3.21	3.67	3.38	1.27	3.15	3.62
HS	4.04	0.94	3.85	4.24	4.10	0.89	3.91	4.29
LA	3.94	0.87	3.68	4.19	3.83	1.17	3.49	4.17

Note. CI=confidence interval.

On the other hand, Liberal Arts students have a different feature from the other two; it suggests no clear future career after a four-year college education. It is understandable that item (13) is given the highest importance by students of this major. They have an anxiety about getting jobs from the beginning of their university education. The results indicate another feature of this major. The courses they learn in the Liberal Arts major are deeply associated with ideas of cultures to expand their views and horizons. In addition to the items (14) and (16) which are related to academic importance, the item regarding intercultural friendship, (20) “I want to understand cultures and peoples of English-speaking countries” was included in the highest 10 items. It is reasonable to suppose that Liberal Arts students are interested in foreign cultures and people.

The items of lowest importance for all the majors were quite similar. From the lowest, the results of the Child Education were items (22), (17), (3), (15) and (18), Health Science were items (22), (17), (3), (15) and (9), Liberal Arts were items (22), (17), (15), (3) and (18). Items (3) and (22) are related to examinations, and items (15), (17) and (18) are associated with working in the international community. Since careers after college education are clearly decided by the two majors, they may not have an idea to take English proficiency tests and entrance examinations for graduate courses, or to work in international organizations. Moreover, it can also be assumed that most of them do not have confidence in achieving a certain outcome in learning English.

3.5 Orientations and English Proficiency Levels

In order to examine the relationships between the students’ orientations and their English abilities, the ten most important reasons for learning English were compared between the Upper Group and the Lower Group of Health Science majors. The results are shown in Table 9.

The four items (4), (7), (13), and (25), appeared among the five most important orientations in both groups. Both Upper and Lower Groups reported a vague sense of necessity as one of the most important reasons for learning English. Both groups also recognized the instrumental values that English had in their pursuit of a future career, as well as leisure activities. None of those item scores showed significant differences

between the groups.

Table 9: *Ten Most Important Reasons for Learning English for Health Science*

Upper Group (n=43)			Lower Group (n=46)		
Item number	Key word	M(SD)	Item number	Key word	M(SD)
1	(14) Education	4.35(0.65)	1	(25) Vague 2	4.07(1.00)
2	(4) Vague 1	4.28(0.77)	2	(13) Job	3.85(0.99)
3	(13) Job	4.21(0.83)	3	(4) Vague 1	3.83(1.04)
4	(25) Vague 2	4.14(0.77)	4	(7) Travel E	3.76(1.10)
5	(7) Travel E	4.09(1.25)	5	(8) Travel W	3.70(1.13)
6	(16) Viewpoint	4.05(0.95)	6	(14) Education	3.67(1.03)
7	(10) Cool	4.00(1.18)	7	(10) Cool	3.63(1.00)
8	(24) Like E	3.93(1.16)	8	(6) Songs	3.24(1.21)
9	(11) Friends E	3.88(1.28)	9	(16) Viewpoint	3.15(1.32)
10	(12) Friends W	3.86(1.19)	10	(12) Friends W	3.09(1.30)

The Upper Group, however, placed significantly more importance on the academic aspect of learning English. The item (14) “English is necessary to be a modern, educated person” was perceived to be far more important by Upper Group students than Lower group students ($t(87)=3.71, p<.001, d=.78$). The two groups were also significantly different in what Yashima (2000) called ‘Intercultural friendship’ orientations. The items (11) “I want to make friends with English-speaking peoples”, (12) “I want to make friends with peoples of various countries” and (16) “English allows me to acquire new ideas and broadens my horizon” were listed among the most important reasons for Upper Group students. The mean scores for these items were significantly different between the groups (item (11), $t(87)=2.89, p=.005, d=.61$; item (12), $t(87)=2.93, p=.004, d=.62$; item (16), $t(87)=3.69, p<.001, d=.78$).

Finally, it is worth noting that the Upper Group showed more positive attitudes towards native English speakers and their countries. There was a significantly large difference between the groups in the score for the item (24) “I like English-speaking peoples and their countries” ($t(87)=3.77, p<.001, d=.80$). Upper Group students also had item (11) “I want to make friends with English speaking peoples” among the most important reasons. This may suggest that the students with higher English abilities are inclined to have a so-called integrative orientation.

4 Summary

The present study set out to investigate motivations and orientations of a wider range of Japanese college students. Similar attitude and motivational patterns were found across different majors. They seem to believe in the importance of learning English at school and show a willingness to strive for it. However, they feel less enjoyment and eagerness in the act of learning the language. A significant difference

was observed in the overall strength of attitudes and motivation mainly between the four-year college students and the two-year college students. The four-year college students have more positive attitudes towards learning English and they are more motivated to learn it than the two-year college students. The students' English language abilities also showed a strong positive relationship with their motivation levels.

Two types of orientations were perceived to be most important by all the majors: they were a vague sense of necessity and job (instrumental). Other important orientations shared by all the groups included travel and education. None of the majors reported the item (24) "I like English-speaking peoples and their countries" as one of their most important reasons for learning English. Examinations and work in international settings turned out to be the least important orientations by the three majors.

Comparison of the 10 most important orientations by all three majors indicated that the Liberal Arts students might possess some features of intercultural friendship orientation. Comparison of the mean scores of each orientation item revealed that the two-year college students attached the lowest levels of importance to their reasons for learning English.

The students with higher English abilities tend to show some features of intercultural friendship and integrative orientations. The high English achievers also perceived the academic aspect of learning English to be highly important. However, due to the limited range of data available, it is not clear whether those results can be generalized to students of other speciality areas or not.

Notes:

(1) Liberal Arts: four-year undergraduate courses in language and culture, psychology, and home economics. Health Science: a four-year undergraduate course for training to be a hospital nurse. Child Education: a two-year junior college training course for qualification as a nursery school or pre-school teacher.

(2) Results should be interpreted with care because of the unbalanced sample sizes.

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Appendix:

Attitudes towards learning English

1. I like English.
2. I am interested in English.
3. Learning English is fun.
4. Learning English is a waste of time.
5. We don't need English as part of school programmes.

Motivation to learn English

1. I strongly wish to learn English.
2. I find studying English more interesting than other subjects.
3. If I find interesting English learning materials, I want to use them immediately.
4. I want to enrol in many English courses.
5. I want to try hard to learn English.
6. I want to try hard to do English homework and assignments.
7. After I graduate from college, I want to continue to study English.
8. If English were not taught at school, I would study it on my own.

Orientations for learning English

- (1) I have been learning English since junior high school.
- (2) English is a familiar language I often see around me.

- (3) I want to get high scores on qualification tests such as TOEIC.
- (4) There is no specific reason, but I think English is useful.
- (5) I want to understand English films and dramas.
- (6) I like English songs.
- (7) I want to travel to English speaking countries and areas.
- (8) I want to travel to various countries and areas in the world.
- (9) I want to get information using ICT such as the Internet.
- (10) It is cool to be a competent English user.
- (11) I want to make friends with English-speaking peoples.
- (12) I want to make friends with peoples of various countries.
- (13) English is useful in getting a job and at work.
- (14) English is necessary to be a modern, educated person.
- (15) I want to work in a foreign country in the future.
- (16) English allows me to acquire new ideas and broadens my horizon.
- (17) I want to work in international organizations such as the U.N.
- (18) I want to participate in international volunteer activities.
- (19) I want to participate in exchange activities of foreign countries.
- (20) I want to understand cultures and peoples of English-speaking countries.
- (21) I want to understand various cultures and peoples in the world.
- (22) I need to learn English to enter into a graduate school.
- (23) I need English for my future career.
- (24) I like English-speaking peoples and their countries.
- (25) There is no specific reason, but I want to be able to speak English.