Factors Correlated with Student Motivation

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Abstract

This article is based on surveys conducted in three academic years between 2011 and 2013 among three hundred Chinese elective students taking courses at two levels. The general characteristic of courses in this research is two-credit elective course of a foreign language. In an elective course, it cannot be expected that every course taker starts with high motivation, nor can it be expected that students put much time on it. In a two-credit course, there isn't enough time to allow both the course teacher and students to work on and assess the improvement of students' motivation. However, based on the comparison between students who took only one two-credit course at a beginning level and students who took two two-credit courses at both the beginning and the following, intermediate levels, this research finds that among factors correlated with students' motivation, the length of studying the language is the most important one as the statistics of the survey results show. Nevertheless, as non-language majors, the majority of students in this research have hardly spent time on practicing language skills on their own, with around 68% of students doing this less than an hour, and around 28% of them between one and three hours per week, outside the classroom. The two suggestions from this research are: 1) It is important to introduce the methods of language learning, and make students understand that the time spent outside the classroom is critical for improving various skills of that language; 2) College curriculum, especially in the age of globalization, should make it compulsory that every student takes a foreign language course at the length of, at least, 4−5 credits so that it can cultivate students' motivation on learning the language through the course. In doing so, it can improve students' motivation when they can make and feel the accomplishment in learning the language as being able to use the whole language though it might be only at an elementary level.

**Keywords**: Motivation, Correlation, Length of Learning

In the earlier research under the title of "*From Motive to Motivation: Motivating Chinese Elective Students*" (2015), the author finds the difference between motives of taking a Chinese course and aims of learning Chinese. A student can have a motive to take the course but puts no effort or takes no self-learning action. With an aim, the student will take actions towards his/her learning goal. Based on the same student body of elective Chinese, this research is conducted within a larger sample of 302 students in an extended time of three years comparing with the former research of 54 students in one semester. The former research has pointed out that motivators, intrinsic or extrinsic, integrative or instrumental, and their elements are all connected and interacting, and play an important role in transforming students' course taking motives to

learning goals and motivation. Quantitatively, the former research is based on the survey from a small sample of students learning Chinese at the same level in one semester, and analyzes only half of the indicators of the survey. Qualitatively, the former research excludes factors correlated with student motivation other than what students want to learn the most and their opinions on weekly tests. In addition to a larger sample of students in an extended time, this research focuses on factors correlated with student motivation including methods of learning a foreign language, the time invested in learning the language outside the classroom, and the content of self-learning. More importantly, it is to analyze the data from educational sociology and learning methodology in addition to student motivation, and to interpret the social phenomenon of insufficient self-learning outside the classroom and the role of self-learning in foreign language acquisition.

Literature Review

The time of self-learning outside the classroom is not only related to, but also more than the issue of student motivation. Based on a sample of 44,905 college students, Tokyo University did the National Survey of Student Engagement (CRUMP, 2007). One item in this survey is the comparison of self-learning hours outside the classroom between American and Japanese freshmen. There are only 0.3 percent of American students who spent zero hours on self-learning outside the classroom weekly versus 9.7 percent of Japanese students; 58.4 percent of American students who spent 11 hours and above each week versus 14.8 percent of Japanese students.

Weekly Self-learning Hours Outside the Classroom

	Zero Hours	1-5 Hours	6-10 Hours	11 Hours and Above
American Students	0.30%	15.30%	26%	58.40%
Japanese Students	9.70%	57.10%	18.40%	14.80%
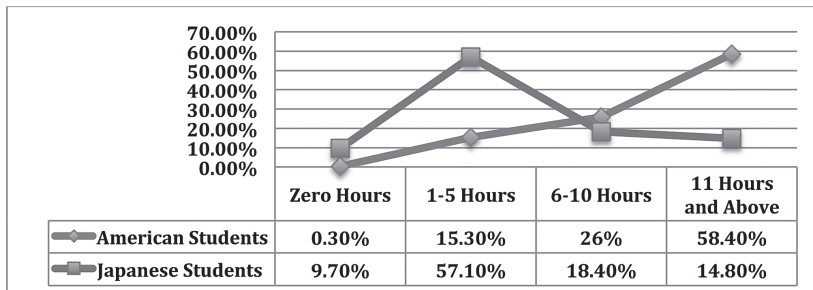
(CRUMP, 2007)

Robb and Kano (2013) report on a large-scale implementation of extensive reading outside of class time in 2009 at a Japanese university. The report is based on a comparative study on reading scores between the 2009 cohort of students who read outside of class and the 2008 cohort who did no do outside reading.

Reading scores for the two years compared by class level
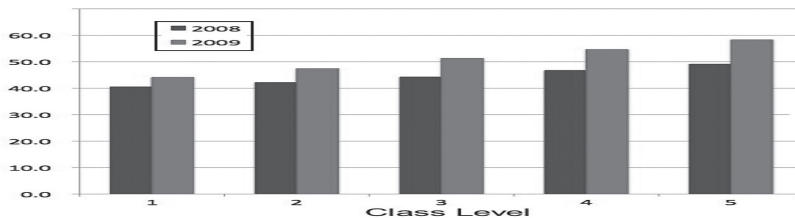
The five levels in the figure above "range from the very bottom of the scale to perhaps 430−450 (of TOEFL) on the average for Level 5," and the English language ability of the entire student body is at the "basic or lower-intermediate" level. The figure above reveals that the Level 1 students in 2009 performed approximately as well as the 2008 students in Level 3, while the Level 3 students performed better than those in Level 5 of the previous year. The research shows that the implementation of extensive reading outside the classroom resulted in highly significant gains (Robb & Kano, 2013).

The materials of outside the classroom in Robb and Kano's research are mainly the *Graded Readers*. Students are required to read at least five graded readers outside of class for each two-credit course (2013). However, in Inozu, Sahinkaradas, and Yumru's research (2010), materials students often use for learning English outside-of-class include the dictionary (84%), Internet (76%), music (68%), grammar books (64%), vocabulary exercises (61%), reading books (58%), etc. The results of their research on the nature of language experiences beyond the classroom and its learning outcomes reveal the significant contribution of out-of-classroom learning experiences to the development of vocabulary (83%), reading (80%), listening (70%), grammar (69%), speaking (67%) and writing (63%) respectively. Due to the broad range of outside-of-class learning materials, especially those through electronic equipment, for instance, email or online chat, listening to music and news on the radio, and watching television programs, video, or movies, the learning outcomes go beyond reading comprehension and cover every aspect of language proficiency.

Based on the comparison between teacher-directed learning and self-guided learning, Davis (2013) focuses on the effectiveness of self-guided learning "to ensure that students have access to a well-structured learning environment with externally-determined process goals." He further persuades instructors to provide students with guided instructions and scaffolding learning environment, and to use them as "a source of motivation for language students to study outside the classroom." In this way, "instructors will be able to prepare their students as much as possible for the learning experiences they are likely to encounter." However, in some cases, students do not preview and review the basic content in textbooks, neither do they prepare for tests with guided instructions. The author's previous study (Zhu, 2015) shows that around 78% of Chinese elective students spent less than one hour on out-of-class learning of the subject in 2011. Since "Less than One Hour" is the lowest one among the four categories of "Less than One Hour," "Between One and Three Hours," "Between Three and Five Hours," and "More than Five Hours," it includes students who spent zero hours on self-learning outside the classroom, although the course teacher, the author of this research, provided weekly assignments either in textbooks or specific materials on university online platform and PC@LL system in the library. This phenomenon is possibly not limited to the lack of student motivation. In order to find factors related but not limited, to student motivation, this research is based on surveys with more dynamics in terms of a larger student population taking different level courses in three academic years, to find correlations that were ignored or did not show in the previous research. Why did students hardly study the language outside the classroom although they hoped to learn a foreign language and to be able to use it in the future job? Why did students have a positive view on weekly tests yet spent no time on preparing for the tests? Why are there a large deviation between what students want to learn and what they focus on in their self-learning?

Analysis of the Survey Results

As mentioned above, the sample of this research includes 302 students who took elective Chinese courses at Nagoya University of Commerce and Business in three years between 2011 and 2013. Among them, 158 took an elective Chinese course at the beginning level, or Level 1, for two credits in 2013, and 144 at the second level, or Level 2, for two credits in addition to the two-credit Chinese course at the introductory level, of which 54 took the course in 2011, 73 in 2012, and 17 in 2013. The 158 beginning level Chinese

elective students studied Chinese with two different textbooks. Among them, 101 were using a textbook focusing on grammar whereas 57 were using a textbook focusing on conversation.

The questionnaire includes 8 rating questions and two open questions in aspects of attitudes towards learning Chinese and comments on the courses. There were only 54 students who participated in the previous research. They were continuing students who took the elective Chinese course at the 2nd level. In this university, the student number of the 2nd level elective Chinese course is much less than that of the 1st level course. In order to expand the sample of the survey, and compare the attitudes among students at the different levels, the author did a survey among the students who took the elective Chinese at the beginning level with a large population. Thus, this research adds more correlations with student motivation than the previous research.

The 8 rating questions are as follows:

1. What is your motive of taking this course?
2. What is your aim in learning Chinese?
3. Which skill do you want to learn the most in Chinese?
4. What is the easiest part of Chinese to learn?
5. How many hours do you spend on Chinese learning outside the classroom each week?
6. Which part of Chinese do you study the most outside the classroom?
7. What do you think about the course content?
8. What do you feel about the weekly tests?

The 2 open questions are as follows:

9. Which Chinese language skill have you improved the most, and why?
10. Which Chinese language skill have you improved the least, and why?

(Zhu, 2015).

There are deviations and variations among the answers to the ten survey questions due to the dynamics in the survey sample in terms of the course level, course textbooks, and answers to related questions. There are three characteristics revealed in the survey results that need further analyzing.

1. Comparison between Students of Chinese Level 1 and Level 2

The numbers of Chinese elective students at the level 1 and the level 2 are 158 and 144 respectively. Their answers to the questions 4 and 7 are identical. For instance, both groups consider writing is the easiest Chinese skill to learn, and reading the second easiest. Their receptions on the difficulty of course contents are similar: 76.5% of students at the level 1 and 79% of students at the level 2 consider the course content just right. However, there are visible variations in answers to other questions between the two groups.

1.1 Motives for Taking the Course and Aims in Learning Chinese

Question 1 on "Motives for Taking the Course" and Question 2 on "Aims in Learning Chinese" in the survey are related. There are four items each for questions 1 and 2. While the answers to four items from both groups of students are relatively similar, the answers to the other four items between the two groups show clear deviations.

1. Motives for Taking the Course	Level 1 Students	Level 2 Students
Like Chinese	22%	31%
For Getting the Credits	17%	7%
2. Aims in Learning Chinese	Level 1 Students	Level 2 Students
Understand Chinese Culture	35%	26%
Use Chinese at Work in the Future	32%	43%

The chart above shows that there are more Level 2 students than Level 1 students taking the course out of liking Chinese, and less of them just for getting the credits. Comparing to the Level 1 students, more Level 2 students took the course aiming at using Chinese at work in the future than aiming at understanding Chinese culture. The data from this chart indicates that the more students learn Chinese, the more they like Chinese, and the fewer of them take the course just for credits. The fact that more Level 2 students learn Chinese in order to use Chinese at their future jobs is possibly due to students being more pragmatic and connecting their Chinese learning with the future career.

1.2 Skills Students Want to Learn the Most and Focus of Self-Learning

Question 3 on "Chinese Skills Students Want to Learn the Most" and Question 6 on "Focus of Self-Learning" in the survey are related. There are five identical items for each of these two questions: grammar, listening, conversation, reading, and writing. While answers to conversation of Question 3 from both groups of students are exceptionally high (67% of Level 1 students and 62% of Level 2 students) writing is the focus of self-learning for both groups at the same rate of 30%. There is only one visible change in the choice to items of Question 3 and Question 6 between the two groups of students. While the percentages of Level 2 students who choose other language skills in answering Question 3 and Question 6 decreased compared to Level 1 students, listening is the only item increased as the skill students want to learn the most and the focus of their self-learning.

3. Chinese Skills Students Want to Learn the Most	Level 1 Students	Level 2 Students
Grammar	7%	5%
Listening	5%	14%
Conversation	67%	62%
Reading	12%	12%
Writing	8%	6%
6. Focus of Self-Learning	Level 1 Students	Level 2 Students
Grammar	17%	16%
Listening	14%	19%
Conversation	15%	13%
Reading	23%	21%
Writing	30%	30%

The reasons for the increase of students who want to learn the listening skill at Level 2 can be as follows. First, both Level 1 and Level 2 Chinese courses teach and train students skills of grammar, writing, reading, and conversation (simple dialogues) except listening skill due to the characteristics of the textbooks. Second, after learning the basic grammar, vocabulary, and sentence types, students want to learn something practical or something enabling them for self-learning. The reasons for the large discrepancy between what students want to learn the most (Conversation, 62 ～ 67%) and their focus of self-learning (Conversation, 13 ～ 15%) can be as follows. First, the textbooks are not conversation based. Second, Japanese students rarely practice conversation in foreign languages among themselves. Third, the weekly tests are mainly on vocabulary, grammar, and writing. Fourth, many students consider the content of weekly tests as writing although it usually covers three areas: vocabulary, grammar, and sentence writing.

1.3 Hours on Self-Learning Outside the Classroom

There is a slight change in answers to this question between Level 1 and Level 2 students showed in the following chart.

5. Hours on Self-Learning Chinese	Level 1 Students	Level 2 Students
More than 5 Hours	1.9%	0.7%
Between 3 and 5 Hours	1.9%	5.6%
Between 1 and 3 Hours	27.2%	27.8%
Less than 1 hour	69%	66%

Level 2 students spent a little more time on self-learning than Level 1 students, yet two thirds of them hardly studied outside the classroom. This should not be the pattern of language learning. However, it is

not unusual concerning the general situation among Japanese college students in terms of their out-of-class learning discussed in literature review.

1.4 Opinions on Weekly Tests

Among 33 items of 8 rating question, the item with a high variation is the option of "Necessary" with regards to weekly tests between Level 1 students and Level 2 students (14% increase).

8. Opinions on Weekly Tests	Level 1 Students	Level 2 Students
Necessary	59%	73%
Optional	40%	27%
No Need	1%	0%

The author has emphasized the purposes of weekly tests as an important motivator for reviewing and understanding the content learned, the content of self-learning, and the way of studying a foreign language continuously. The survey results indicate that Level 2 students agree more with the author or the course teacher than Level 1 students, possibly due to their foreign language learning experience.

As a conclusion of this comparison, the top three largest deviations between the two groups are displayed in the following chart.

1. Motives for Taking the Course	Level 1 Students	Level 2 Students	Variation
For Getting the Credits	17%	7%	− 10%
2. Aims in Learning Chinese	Level 1 Students	Level 2 Students	Variation
Use Chinese at Work in the Future	32%	43%	+11%
8. Opinions on Weekly Tests	Level 1 Students	Level 2 Students	Variation
Necessary	59%	73%	+14%

The comparisons above are between two student groups at Level 1 and Level 2. The further comparisons are between two student groups at the same level with different textbooks.

2. Comparison between Level 1 Students Using Different Textbooks

In 2013, we offered two Chinese elective courses at the Level 1. In order to distinguish the two courses, we chose textbooks with different focuses, one on grammar and writing and the other on conversation. The number of students with the textbook focusing on conversation is 57 (Level 1C) and the number of students with the textbook focusing on grammar and writing is 101 (Level 1G). The following comparisons are based on 11 items among 33 items that have a discrepancy of 4% and above between the two groups.

2.1 Motives for Taking the Course and Aims in Learning Chinese

1. Motives for Taking the Course	Level 1C Students	Level 1G Students
Study a Foreign Language	52%	59%
Like Chinese	28%	19%
2. Aims in Learning Chinese	Level 1C Students	Level 1G Students
Understand Chinese Culture	37%	33%
Use Chinese at Work in the Future	29%	33%

The chart above shows a tendency that having learned Chinese texts through daily conversation students have more attached to Chinese language and culture whereas the attitudes of students who have studied more of Chinese grammar and writing are relatively practical.

2.2 Easiest Skill to Learn and Focus of Self-Learning

4. Easiest Chinese Skill to Learn	Level 1C Students	Level 1G Students
Listening	24%	11%
Writing	24%	36%
6. Focus of Self-Learning	Level 1C Students	Level 1G Students
Listening	20%	11%
Writing	23%	35%

The data in the chart above present significant differences between the two groups of students using different textbooks. While Level 1C students give more attention to listening, Level 1G students focus more on writing. This is due to the fact that the textbook of Level 1C comes with a CD and has some listening exercises whereas the textbook of Level 1G has neither CDs nor listening exercises although the course teacher made the record for the textbook and uploaded in the PC@LL system and university online platform.

2.3 Weekly Hours Studying Chinese Outside the Classroom

In general, there are fewer Level 1G students who spent less than one hour weekly on Chinese learning outside the classroom. There are 74% of Level 1C students who spent less than one hour on self-learning Chinese while 66% of Level 1G students who belong to the same category. There is a factor that the weekly tests were only on vocabulary for Level 1C, but included both vocabulary and sentence writing for Level 1G. This means that Level 1G students had to spend more time on the preparation including grammar and writing for the weekly tests.

2.4 Difficulty of the Course

Among 33 items of 8 rating question, the item with the highest variation at nearly 20% between the answers of Level 1C and Level 1G students is the comment of "Too Much or Too Difficult" on the course content. There are about 30% of Level 1G students who consider the course content too hard whereas only 10.5% of Level 1C students share the same opinion. The textbook for Level 1C focuses on simple conversation, and each lesson consists of a text of eight dialogue sentences with 3 or 4 grammar points and 20 or so new words. Students can memorize the grammar points of each lesson without a comprehensive understanding of the grammatical system of the Chinese language. The textbook for Level 1G is much more substantial in both quality and quantity in terms of grammar and vocabulary, and covers most basic words, grammar rules and sentence types of Elementary Chinese. In order to meet the course requirements, students have to master the usage of words in sentences and be able to make different types of sentences on their own. The goal is not to just memorize and copy but to understand and produce language elements and discourses.

As a conclusion of this comparison, the top three largest deviations between the two groups are displayed in the following chart.

4. Easiest Chinese Skill to Learn	Level 1C Students	Level 1G Students	Variation
Writing	24 %	36%	+12 %

6. Focus of Self-Learning	Level 1C Students	Level 1G Students	Variation
Writing	23 %	35%	+12 %

7. Difficulty of the Course	Level 1C Students	Level 1G Students	Variation
Too Much or Too Difficult	10.5%	30%	+19.5%

The interpretation here is based on the comparative data listed above. Some of the deviations between two groups of respondents using different textbooks may be not out of necessity but contingency. More identical research with similar results can help to reach a more reliable conclusion.

Positive and Negative Correlations

There are various relations among 33 items of 8 rating questions. However, only significant relations, for instance, correlations and inverse correlations, have academic value or practical implication. The following are significant correlations and inverse correlations displayed in the data on answers of 302 respondents.

1. Correlations between Aims in Learning Chinese and Skills Want to Learn the Most

2. Aims in Learning Chinese		3. Chinese Skill Want to Learn the Most	
Chinese as the 1st Foreign Language	9%	Grammar	6%
Understand Chinese Culture	30%	Listening	9%
Travel in China	23%	Conversation	65%
Use Chinese at Work in the Future	37%	Reading	12%
		Writing	7%

There are around two thirds of respondents who want to learn the Chinese conversation the most. This is correlated with their aims in learning Chinese including using Chinese at work, understanding Chinese culture, and traveling in China. Among the respondents of this research, conversation is considered the most critical Chinese skill to their aims in every possible situation.

2. Correlations between Students' Perception on the Easiest Skill to Learn and Their Focus on Self-Learning

4. The Easiest Chinese Skill to Learn		6. Focus of Self-Learning Out-of-Class	
Grammar	13%	Grammar	17%
Listening	16%	Listening	16%
Conversation	14%	Conversation	14%
Reading	23%	Reading	22%
Writing	34%	Writing	30%

The answers to the same items of questions 4 and 6 are exceptionally identical except the items of "Grammar" and "Writing." If we include the fact that writing and grammar are closely related and the possible deviation in respondents' selection between the two, the match is astonishing.

3. Correlations between Students' Perception on the Difficulty of Course Content and Weekly Hours of their Self-Learning Chinese

7. Difficulty of the Course		5. Hours on Self-Learning Chinese Weekly	
Too Much or Too Difficult	21.9%	More than 5 Hours	1.3%
Just Right	77.8%	Between 3 and 5 Hours	3.6%
Too Little or Too Easy	0.3%	Between 1 and 3 Hours	27.5%
		Less than 1 Hour	67.6%

The correlations exist between students' perception of "Just Right" on the course difficulty and the per-

centage of "Less than 1 Hour" weekly on self-learning Chinese, and between students' perception of "Too Much or Too Difficult" on the course and the percentage of "1 Hour and Above" weekly on self-learning Chinese. What does students' perception of "Just Right" really mean? Does this mean that there is no need for self-learning or they only need "Less than 1 Hour" weekly to preview and review the course content and to be able to conduct conversations in Chinese? There are inverse correlations in addition to correlations between students' answers to the two questions above and between their answers to other questions.

4. Inverse Correlation among Students' Perception on the Difficulty of Course Content, Students' Opinion on Weekly Tests, and Weekly Hours of Self-Learning Chinese

7. Difficulty of the Course		8. Opinion on Weekly Tests		5. Weekly Hours on Self-Learning Chinese	
Too Much/Too Difficult	21.9%	Necessary	65.6%	More than 5 Hours	1.3%
Just Right	77.8%	Optional	33.8%	Between 3 and 5 Hours	3.6%
Too Little or Too Easy	0.3%	No Need	0.7%	Between 1 and 3 Hours	27.5%
				Less than 1 Hour	67.6%

The positive correlation between the answer of "Just Right" to Question 7 and the answer of "Less than 1 Hour" to Question 5 can also be interpreted as an inverse correlation. For a language course of 100 minute-class per week, it would take at least 1 to 3 hours to review the learning content of the week including preparing for the test and preview for the new lesson. To include the practice for pronunciation, conversation, and listening, students have to extend their language learning outside the classroom whenever they have spare time. Another inverse correlation concerning the two items mentioned above is between students' answer of "Necessary" and their average scores on weekly tests, midterms and finals. It is possible that there is a discrepancy between students' "Just Right" and the course requirement, and a difference between students' rational answer of "Necessary" to, and their effort on, weekly tests.

5. Inverse Correlation between Students' Motives for Taking the Course, Students' Opinion on Weekly Tests, and Weekly Hours of Their Self-Learning Chinese

1. Motives for Taking the Course		8. Opinion on Weekly Tests		5. Weekly Hours on Self-Learning Chinese	
Study a Foreign Language	58%	Necessary	65.6%	More than 5 Hours	1.3%
Chinese is Easy to Learn	4%	Optional	33.8%	Between 3 and 5 Hours	3.6%
Like Chinese	26%	No Need	0.7%	Between 1 and 3 Hours	27.5%
For Getting Credits	12%			Less than 1 Hour	67.6%

As indicated in the chart above, 58% of respondents took the course because they want to study a foreign language and 28% of them like Chinese, which correlates with their opinion of "Necessary" on weekly tests. However, two thirds of them spent less than 1 hour weekly on self-learning although only 12% of students took the course for credits and 4% of them thought that Chinese is easy to learn.

6. Inverse Correlation between Chinese Skill Students Want to Learn the Most and Focus of Self-Learning

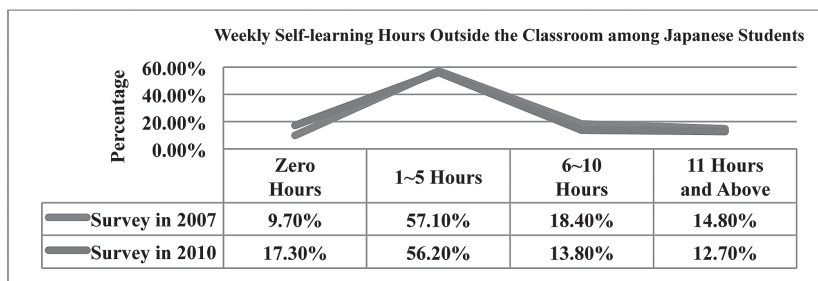| 3. Chinese Skill Want to Learn the Most		6. Focus of Self-Learning Out-of-Class	
Grammar	6%	Grammar	17%
Listening	9%	Listening	16%
Conversation	65%	Conversation	14%
Reading	12%	Reading	22%
Writing	7%	Writing	30%

The inverse correlation in the chart is very visible. While 65% of respondents want to learn the conversation skill the most, only 14% of them chose it as the focus of self-learning. One possible reason can be that students do not know how to improve their oral skill through multimedia equipment and practice among themselves. Another inverse correlation is that 30% of students focus on writing outside the classroom whereas only 7% of them consider writing the skill they want to learn the most, which itself may have a correlation with the content of weekly tests.

The inverse correlations mentioned above are not all motivation related issues. There are factors behind the occurrence of these inverse correlations that are beyond learning motivation. Nevertheless, they are related to teachers, textbooks, learning methods, and learning environment.

Factors Beyond Motivation and Behind Inverse Correlations

Factors Beyond Motivation

Factors beyond motivation are rooted in social psychology of Japanese college students and educational sociology in Japanese universities. Gardner (1985) identifies a motivated learner as being (a) eager to learn the language, (b) willing to expend effort on the learning activity, and (c) willing to sustain the learning activity. According to these standards, there are very few motivated learners in this research judging by the effort they put outside the classroom. However, the time of self-learning outside the classroom is an issue of more than learning motivation. As the earlier research presents, Japanese freshmen spent much less hours each week outside the classroom compared to the American counterparts (CRUMP, 2007). The situation has not improved based on the data of a survey among 12,726 students at 48 departments of humanity and social sciences in 33 private universities in 2010. The statistics shows that students who study zero

Weekly Self-learning Hours Outside the Classroom among Japanese Students

	Zero Hours	1~5 Hours	6~10 Hours	11 Hours and Above
Survey in 2007	9.70%	57.10%	18.40%	14.80%
Survey in 2010	17.30%	56.20%	13.80%	12.70%

(Data from CRUMP, 2007, & Fujimura, 2013)

hours outside the classroom amount 17.3 percent, and 11 hours and above 12.7 percent (Fujimura, 2013).

The two samples in the above chart consist of different categories. The participants of the survey in 2007 are freshmen of various majors from both private and public universities in Japan, and those who took the survey in 2010 are students majored in humanity and social sciences at different years from 33 private universities (freshmen 30.8%; sophomore 25.1%, junior 26.5%, and senior 17.6%) (Fujimura, 2013).

The survey in this research shows that more than two thirds of respondents spent less than an hour on out-of-class learning for Chinese courses. However, it is not unusual comparing with the previous research, which found that 9.7% and 17.3% of respondents spent zero hours outside the classroom on all courses they took (CRUMP, 2007, & Fujimura, 2013). We cannot simply attribute this to students being lack of motivation. The samples of surveys by CRUMP and cited in Fujimura's research are relatively large and include many universities in Japan, which means that many Japanese college students do not spend much time on self-learning. Why does this situation exist among so many Japanese college students compared with their American counterparts? Is it because those Japanese college students do not have a habit or a need to study outside the classroom? There are many possible reasons behind this phenomenon, and some of them are based on the author's observation during her twelve-year teaching at a Japanese university.

Japanese college students do not have enough time for out-of-class learning due to various situations within the educational sociology of Japan. First, unlike their American counterparts most of whom live in the on-campus dormitories at least during their first college year, the majority of Japanese college students, for instance, all respondents of this research, live off-campus. The situation for those who live in the nearby apartments is not as bad as those who commute from home to the university. It is common for them to spend two hours on commuting between home and the university everyday, and for some of them even more than 4 hours. Second, American college students do their part-time jobs mostly during the summer although some of them have an on-campus job during the semester. Japanese college students work part-time many hours each week. Up to 44.6% of respondents in Fujimura's research work more than 11 hours weekly (2013). Most of their part-time jobs are off-campus, and only a very limited number of on-campus student jobs are available at the university, such as those at a convenience store, a fast-food restaurant, or in the library. Japanese college students have to spend much time on the way to their off-campus jobs in addition to long hours of the job itself. Third, some students spend much time in sports team practices and club activities. For instance, students in softball or soccer teams have to practice every day starting from 6: 30 in the morning; and some students often go to their clubs after the 4th period and stay until very late. From a social psychological point of view, students want to establish and maintain connections among themselves through these activities, which is an important part of their college life. "Reasons for doing something may indicate motivation and maybe not" (Gardner, 2005). Reasons for not spending time on language learning maybe because of students' psychological needs for activities other than study, or their limited time besides taking courses and out-of-class work from other courses.

Factors Behind Inverse Correlations

As discussed above, there are three main inverse correlations discovered from the survey. First, two thirds of respondents consider weekly tests necessary, and almost no students think that the course content is easy, yet two thirds of them spend less than one hour every week on self-learning outside the classroom. Second, majority of students either like Chinese or want to study a foreign language, but hardly spend enough time on mastering the language. Third, there is a big discrepancy between what students want to learn the most and what they learn on their own. In addition to the social phenomenon of spending minimum hours on out-of-class learning discussed above, there are other factors behind these inverse correlations.

1. Methods of Learning a Foreign Language

The goal of language course is not just to understand, but more importantly, to be able to use it. This means having skills of listening, reading, writing, and speaking that language. However, due to the characteristics of language learning which is more of a productive process than a receptive one, and the limited classroom hours, a teacher cannot teach students to become fluent in that language. Only students themselves can reach this goal through sufficient self-learning outside the classroom. Kaufmann (2007) considers "spending the time" the most important factor for foreign language learning, and believes that one hour of listening or reading is more effective than many hours of class time. However, "the transition from in-class learning to out-of-class practice is often not a very successful one" (Davis, 2013).

The majority of students in this research are commerce and business majors. They are used to learning methods of listening to professors' lectures on various topics, understanding important concepts and theories, and being able to write essays and reports on important issues and cases. They do not know that the ways of learning a foreign language are very different from those for business subjects. Foreign language learning needs overtime, and students have to keep practicing. Practicing outside the classroom on students' own including preview, review, and preparing for weekly tests is an important part of language learning. The requirements for other courses in social sciences usually include only a report and a final exam. Many students do not understand that intensive preparation before exams alone is not effective in foreign language learning. Many of them are not enthusiastic about pronunciation and oral practice with the teacher although they want to be able to speak the language. They do not realize that in order to be able to speak the language, they need to master many words and be able to use correct sentences while speaking. In China, language majors speak the language among themselves at least when they are on campus. But students in this research hardly practice the language among themselves. They may lack confidence speaking the language among themselves, but they are willing to practice with native speakers. Some of them go to professors' offices to practice with professors.

2. Importance of Self-Learning

As a person who can speak nine languages fluently, Kaufmann's suggestions to learn a foreign language are as follows: spend the time, listen and read every day; focus on words and phrases; take responsibility for your own learning; and relax and enjoy yourself (2007). In addition to not having a self-learning habit, Japanese students in this research do not understand the importance of self-learning for language acquisition, not to mention that they do not know how to learn by themselves or to initiate a self-learning. However, teachers can start with assigning students some specific and guided learning materials before students can take initiatives on learning activities outside the classroom.

Inozu, Sahinkarakas, and Yumru (2010) point out that out-of-class language learning is of great importance to the theory and practice of self-directing and life-long language learning. When students see the visible improvement of learning outcomes from outside-of-class in both quantity and quality, they are more motivated to put time in learning

3. Materials for Self-Guided Learning

The inverse correlations between the Chinese skill students want to learn the most and the focus of their self-learning may occur because students do not have materials or do not know how to use certain materials for self-learning. This situation is common for beginners of a foreign language. "Implementing minimally-guided learning assignments when students have very little prior knowledge rarely results in any substantial positive effects" (Davis, 2013). The research (Inozu, Sahinkarakas, & Yumru, 2010) reveals that students find the materials most useful in improving receptive language skills rather than productive ones. In addition, it is difficult for beginners to find appropriate materials for learning the language productively on their

own. Davis (2013) suggests to use "structured learning curriculum as a means of providing scaffolding outside of the classroom." It is teachers' responsibility to provide beginners guidance on selecting the materials for self-guided learning. A further research on outside-of-class learning materials that can improve not only students' receptive language skills but also their productive language skills is critical.

4. Removing Barriers for Speaking the Language

According to the observation of the author, many Japanese students are passive or receptive learners. They are used to learning depending on either teachers or textbooks. Many of them have a quiet and introvert personality. They usually hesitate to participate in class, and do not feel comfortable at speaking or presenting loudly in front of everybody except when it is necessary. They are afraid of making mistakes before other people for not losing the face. Many students study for tests, exams, and certificates, and therefore, their studies much depend on textbooks and certificate instructions. They rarely search for suitable learning materials on their own and study for long-term goals. The survey results indicate that two thirds of students want to learn conversation the most, but they do not focus on improving this skill on their own. Students in this research generally are better in writing due to the similarity between Japanese Kanjis and Chinese characters, and the fact that the highest percentage of them focuses on writing outside the classroom. There are two ways that teacher can help students to remove barriers for speaking the language: giving students the opportunity to speak among themselves or in front of the class; and introducing simple sentences that students can easily practice on their own.

Conclusion

The survey data in this research show both positive and negative correlations among 33 items in 8 rating questions. The positive correlations exist between aims in learning Chinese and skills participants want to learn the most, between students' perception on the easiest skill to learn and their focus on self-learning, and between students' perception on the difficulty of course content and the hours of their self-learning weekly. The negative correlations exist among students' perception on the difficulty of course content, students' opinion on weekly tests, and the hours of their self-learning Chinese weekly, among students' motives for taking the course, students' opinion on weekly tests, and the hours of their self-learning Chinese weekly, and between the Chinese skill students want to learn the most and the focus of their self-learning.

Factors beyond motivation are rooted in social psychology of Japanese college students and educational sociology in Japanese universities. Whether students study the language beyond the classroom and how much time they spend on it are both the indications of, and the important factors correlated to student motivation, yet they are beyond student motivation. Factors behind the inverse correlations are methods of learning a foreign language, understanding the importance of self-learning, suitable materials for self-guided learning, and removing barriers for speaking the language in public.

The comparison between the two elementary Chinese courses using different textbooks shows that textbooks affect students' learning greatly in specific skills learned in class and their focus of self-learning. Students' first textbook for learning the language plays an important role in guiding students' learning focus and habit, and enhancing students' learning interests and motivation. An ideal textbook for a two-credit elementary Chinese should present students with the language as a whole, with exercises targeting different language skills that guide students to an overall comprehension in and out of class.

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