Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

# An Exploratory Study of Motivation and Self-Regulated Learning in Second Language Acquisition: Kanji Learning as a Task Focused Approach

A thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master in
Second Language Teaching at
Massey University,
Manawatu, New Zealand

Akie Hirata

2010

© 2010
Akie Hirata
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

# ABSTRACT

This study aimed to identify motivational factors affecting self-regulated learning (SRL) in the context of second language acquisition. Rather than investigating learners' overall disposition toward their learning, it focused on a particular task, the learning of kanji in Japanese, in order to provide a clearer picture of the complex relationship between motivation and SRL. Using quantitative methods, the underlying structure of motivation and SRL was explored and the relationships among the extracted factors were examined.

On the basis of a self-administered questionnaire specifically developed for this study, the data were obtained from 381 tertiary students studying Japanese at one of the seven cooperating institutions in New Zealand. Principal components analyses identified three motivational orientations (intrinsic, instrumental mastery, and performance orientation), four sources of motivation (self-efficacy, self-concept, extrinsic value, and intrinsic value), and four types of self-regulation (behavioural, environmental, cognitive, and metacognitive regulation) involved in kanji learning.

The results of correlational analyses revealed a number of significant relationships suggesting the interdependence of the identified constructs. However, instrumental mastery, performance orientation, and extrinsic value did not predict students' use of SRL. Further investigation of individual and situational factors indicated that learning opportunities outside the classroom possibly confounded the significant relationships between these non-predictors and SRL.

On the other hand, intrinsic orientation, self-concept, self-efficacy, and intrinsic value were identified as significant predictors of SRL in general. These significant predictors displayed a unique contribution to different types of SRL. The results show that intrinsic interest in kanji learning is necessary for cognitive and metacognitive regulation. A sense of positive self-concept, on the other hand, influences environmental regulation while self-efficacy beliefs facilitate behavioural regulation.

Overall, self-concept was found to be the best predictor of the use of SRL. However, self-efficacy is another important factor since students who used behavioural regulation tend to use a wider variety of strategies to self-regulate their own learning. In this study, the interactions of identified motivational constructs and their possible effects on SRL are discussed. The study concludes with a discussion of practical and theoretical implications of the findings along with suggestions for future research.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writing of this thesis was an inspiring but complex journey which would not have been completed successfully without support, guidance, and encouragement from a number of different people and groups.

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisors, Dr. Gillian Skyrme and Prof. Cynthia White, for their professional guidance. I was very fortunate to work on my research under their supervision which allowed me to take initiative and explore my interest freely while receiving excellent academic advice and support. I would also like to take the opportunity to thank Dr. Penny Shino and other staff members at the School of Language Studies for their on-going encouragement and assistance.

My research would have been impossible without the kind support from cooperating institutions. In particular, my sincere thanks go to all the heads of schools and teachers of Japanese who granted me permission to conduct my research at their institutions and offered further assistance in accessing their students. Of course, my deepest thanks go to their students who participated in this study and provided valuable information I needed to carry out my research. I would also like to acknowledge the support from Massey University and the Sasakawa Foundation. Their scholarships helped me enormously in conducting my research to the maximum potential.

I would like to express my appreciation to Student Learning Development Services where I had regular one-on-one consultations to improve the quality of my writing. I feel incredibly thankful to Fleur Connor-Douglas and Dr. Julia Rayner for their expert counsel and timely feedback. Further thanks should also go to Heather Dickson at Massey Library for her continuous friendly assistance. Without the involvement of these people, my writing of this research would not have been possible.

My special thanks go to Yoshitaka Maeda and Shiki Nakazawa for their unconditional love and friendship. They not only came to see if I was alive when I was absorbed so much in my project but also took care of me throughout my journey. Their regular food offerings were all ready-to-eat, tasty and healthy. Anyone who has a busy life and lives by themselves would immediately recognise how lucky I was.

Also, big thanks to my lovely friends, Yuka Lee, Noy Douangngeun and Diane Rozmus, who took me out or called me and made me laugh whenever I needed to have a break. I would like to extend my thanks to Damian Duggan-Jones, Waleed Elgharably, and Miho Elers for being such caring warm-hearted friends. My research journey would not have been enjoyable without my friends' great humour and optimism.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**ABSTRACT** ..... **i**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS** ..... **ii**

**LIST OF TABLES** ..... **v**

**CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION** ..... **1**

1.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM ..... 1

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY ..... 3

**CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW** ..... **8**

2.1 INTRODUCTION ..... 8

2.2 MOTIVATIONAL ORIENTATIONS ..... 8

*2.2.1 Motivational orientation in language learning* ..... *9*

*2.2.2 Self-determination approach to motivational orientation* ..... *11*

*2.2.3 Achievement orientated motivation* ..... *14*

2.3 SOURCES OF MOTIVATIONAL BELIEFS ..... 17

*2.3.1 Self-efficacy* ..... *17*

*2.3.2 Self-concept* ..... *21*

*2.3.3 Achievement task value* ..... *25*

2.4 TASK SPECIFIC MOTIVATION ..... 28

2.5 SELF-REGULATED LEARNING (SRL) ..... 30

*2.5.1 Cyclic processes of SRL* ..... *30*

*2.5.2 SRL components* ..... *33*

2.6 SUMMARY ..... 37

**CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY** ..... **39**

3.1 INTRODUCTION ..... 39

3.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS ..... 39

3.3 SELECTION OF DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES ..... 39

3.4 PROCEDURES ..... 41

3.5 PARTICIPANTS AND SETTINGS ..... 42

3.6 INSTRUMENTS ..... 44

*3.6.1 Motivation and kanji learning questionnaire* ..... *45*

*3.6.2 Student information questionnaire* ..... *54*
*3.6.3 General background questionnaire* ..... *55*
3.7 Data Analyses ..... 55
3.8 Summary ..... 56
**CHAPTER 4: RESULTS ..... 57**
4.1 Introduction ..... 57
4.2 Research Question One ..... 57
4.3 Research Question Two ..... 62
4.4 Research Question Three ..... 65
4.5 Research Question Four ..... 67
4.6 Summary ..... 69
**CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION ..... 71**
5.1 Introduction ..... 71
5.2 Motivational Orientation in Kanji Learning ..... 71
5.3 Key Sources of Motivation in Kanji Learning ..... 73
5.4 Self-Regulation in Kanji Learning ..... 76
5.5 Interactions of Motivation and SRL ..... 79
5.6 Summary ..... 85
**CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION ..... 87**
6.1 Theoretical and Practical Implications ..... 87
6.2 Limitations and Recommendations ..... 92
**REFERENCES ..... 96**
**APPENDICES ..... 103**
Appendix A: Letter of Approval from MUHEC ..... 103
Appendix B: Information Sheet for Participants ..... 104
Appendix C: Motivation and Kanji Learning Questionnaire ..... 105
Appendix D: Scree Plot for Motivational Items ..... 108
Appendix E: Scree Plot for SRL Items ..... 109

# LIST OF TABLES

**Table 2.1** Major Self-Regulatory Processes in the Components and Phases of SRL.....34
**Table 3.1** Characteristics of the Participants.....43
**Table 3.2** Motivational Orientations, the Number of Items, and Sample Statements.....46
**Table 3.3** Factor Loading for the 13 Items in the Motivational Orientation Scale based on a Principal Components Analysis with Varimax Rotation.....47
**Table 3.4** Sources of Motivational Beliefs, the Number of Items, and Sample statements.....49
**Table 3.5** Factor Loading for the 15 Items from the Motivational Beliefs Scale based on a Principal Components Analysis with Varimax Rotation.....50
**Table 3.6** SRL Components, the Number of Items, and Sample statements.....52
**Table 3.7** Factor Loading for the 18 Items from the Kanji Learning Strategies Scale based on a Principal Components Analysis with Varimax Rotation.....53
**Table 4.1** Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlation Coefficients for Motivation Variables....58
**Table 4.2** Results of the MANOVA for Motivation Variables on the Availability of Opportunities to use Kanji.....61
**Table 4.3** Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlation Coefficients for SRL Variables.....62
**Table 4.4** Correlation Coefficients between Motivation and SRL Variables.....65
**Table 4.5** Standard Beta Coefficients predicting SRL from Motivation Variables.....68