

A COMPARATIVE-CORRELATIONAL STUDY OF YEARS 4 TO 6 AND YEARS 7 TO 9 NON-THAI STUDENTS' MOTIVATION AND ORIENTATION OF MOTIVATION TOWARD LEARNING THAI AT AN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL IN BANGKOK, THAILAND

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to determine if there was a significant difference between Years 4 to 6 and Years 7 to 9 non-Thai students' level of motivation toward learning Thai, and to determine if there was a significant association between Years 4 to 6 and Years 7 to 9 non-Thai students' orientation of motivation toward learning Thai at an international school in Bangkok, Thailand. An adapted version of Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) was used to collect data from 29 non-Thai students in Years 4 to 6 and 44 non-Thai students in Years 7 to 9 during the second semester of academic Years 2017 – 2018. Descriptive statistics – means, standard deviations, as well as a t-Test, and Pearson's chi-squared test were used to analyze the data. The findings indicated that both Years 4 to 6 and Years 7 to 9 non-Thai students at the target school had slightly low levels of motivation toward learning Thai and both Years 4 to 6 and Years 7 to 9 non-Thai students' orientation of motivation was instrumental. Motivation for learning Thai between Years 4 to 6 and Years 7 to 9 non-Thai students was not significantly different, while Years 4 to 6 and Years 7 to 9 non-Thai students' orientation of motivation was found to be significantly associated. Recommendations for school administrators, teachers, and future researchers are provided.

Keywords: Motivation, Orientation of Motivation, Non-Thai Students, Foreign/Second Language Acquisition, Socio-Educational Model, Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB), Bangkok, Thailand.

Introduction

In the past 10 years, the growth of the number of international schools has increased in Thailand. There were 110 international schools which were licensed by the Ministry of Education by 2007. There were around 32,397 students studying in international schools in 2007, and 50 percent of these were Thai. By 2015, there were 138 international schools belonging to The International Schools Association of Thailand (International Schools Association of Thailand, 2017).

The Thai Ministry of Education mandates that Thai students studying in international schools continue learning Thai language. For non-Thai students, the Thai Ministry of Education mandates that they learn Thai language and culture as well. Therefore, The Thai Ministry of Education has regulations for the establishment and operation of International schools that the schools should arrange and provide Thai language and culture courses for students at all levels for at least one period per week for foreign students and five periods per week for Thai students (Office of the National Primary Education Commission, 2003).

Lightbrown and Spada (2006) stated that the factors that influence the acquisition of second/foreign languages (L2s) can be categorized into two main types: internal factors and external factors. Internal factors are individual learner characteristics such as age, personality, motivation, past experiences, cognitive abilities and language aptitudes that can have an effect on second language learning.

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The external factors that influence second language acquisition are curriculum, teacher variables, instructional methods, social context, as well as learning situations that originate from the outside environment (Lightbrown & Spada, 2006). Among the stated factors above, studies have indicated that motivation is one of the most crucial factors that can affect second language learning, as it has major impact on the rate and success of second language learning (Dörnyei, 1998; Gardner, 1985b; Skehan, 1991). Without sufficient motivation, even the most talented and gifted students cannot achieve; neither a quality curriculum nor good instruction alone can ensure a language learner's achievements (Dörnyei, 1998). Furthermore, Gardner and Lambert's (1972) study suggested that a high level of motivation can compensate for deficiencies in a learner's language aptitude and learning conditions. Moreover, motivation in children can forecast motivation later in life. Studies have indicated that children begin their schooling with high levels of intrinsic motivation, even though their motivation has a tendency to decrease when they advance through the school years (Lai, 2011). Thai language proficiency can help students, especially international or non-Thai students to develop a deep understanding of Thai culture. In addition, international or non-Thai students may have different purposes in learning Thai language – to benefit their future careers or to understand profoundly Thai life and culture (Penglee, 2010).

Objectives

There were four main objectives, with three sub-objectives:

1. To determine the level of motivation toward learning Thai between Years 4 to 6 and Years 7 to 9 non-Thai students at an international school in Bangkok.
 - a. To determine the attitude toward learning Thai between Years 4 to 6 and Years 7 to 9 non-Thai students at an international school in Bangkok.
 - b. To determine the level of motivational intensity toward learning Thai between Years 4 to 6 and Years 7 to 9 non-Thai students at an international school in Bangkok.
 - c. To determine the level of desire toward learning Thai between Years 4 to 6 and Years 7 to 9 non-Thai students at an international school in Bangkok.
2. To determine the orientation of motivation toward learning Thai between Years 4 to 6 and Years 7 to 9 non-Thai students at an international school in Bangkok.
3. To determine if there is a significant difference between Years 4 to 6 and Years 7 to 9 non-Thai students' level of motivation toward learning Thai at an international school in Bangkok.
4. To determine if there is a significant association between Years 4 to 6 and Years 7 to 9 non-Thai students' orientation of motivation toward learning Thai at an international school in Bangkok.

Literature Review

Thai Language Learning in International Schools in Thailand

Over the past three decades, the growth in the number of international schools has increased rapidly in Thailand. There were 110 international schools licensed by the Thai Ministry of Education by 2007. There were around 32,397 students studying in international schools by 2007, and 50 percent of them were Thai. In 2015, there were around 41,952 students and 138 international schools, which were members of The International Schools Association of Thailand (International Schools Association of Thailand, 2017). The Thai Ministry of Education insists that Thai students continue learning Thai language and non-Thai students studying in international schools must learn Thai culture. Hence, the Thai Ministry of Education has regulations mandating that international schools should offer Thai language and culture courses for at least one period per week for foreign students and five periods per week for Thai students in all levels (Office of the National Primary Education Commission, 2003).

Motivation in Language Learning

Motivation is one of the most important factors which defines second/foreign language learning's success or failure (Dörnyei, 1994). Motivation is an abstract concept that is used to explain the reasons behind people's thoughts and behaviors (Dörnyei, 2001).

The Socio-Educational Model of Second Language Acquisition

Gardner's socio-educational model of second language acquisition explains the role of individual difference variables in second language learning. Motivation in this model is a complex of variables. In other words, the model is a combination of effort with real intention to accomplish the objectives of learning the language, including positive attitudes toward language learning (Gardner, 1985b). Language aptitudes and motivation are the two main variables that are assumed to support achievement in second language learning. The theory accepts that second language learning motivation is affected by both the cultural and educational contexts of the learning situation (Gardner, 2010). Additionally, motivation in the model consists of affective dimensions, which are integrativeness and attitudes in the learning process. Moreover, the attitudes and motivation complexity generate an integrative variable that supports learning the language (Gardner, 2005).

Studies have emphasized that learning language is different from other academic subjects. Language learning is related to both the skills of acquisition and the behavioral backgrounds from different cultural contexts. Accordingly, the quality of success in second language learning will be affected by what a learner believes and feels about the target language itself as well as the culture and community represented by that language (Gardner, 1985b). Figure 1 presents the socio-educational model of second language acquisition (Gardner, 2005).

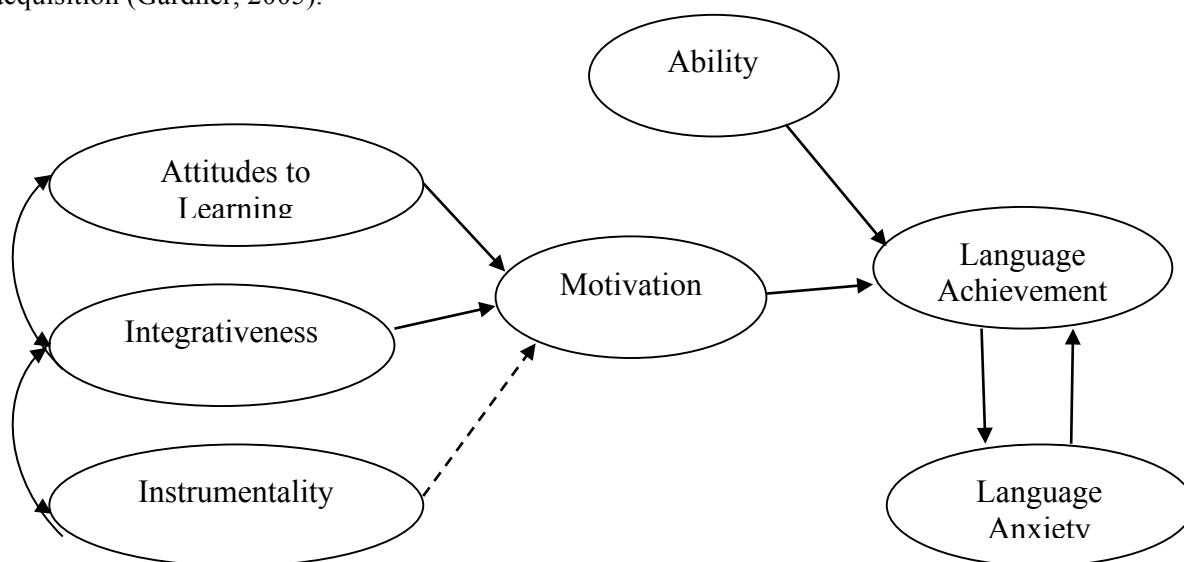


Figure 1. The socio-educational model of second language acquisition (adapted from Gardner, 2005, p. 6).

Figure 1 indicates, an individual's second language learning motivation is involved into two classes of variables: attitudes toward the learning situation and integrativeness. The first one is attitudes toward the learning situation. A learner's level of motivation is influenced by the nature of the learning situation. For instance, an experienced teacher who is attentive with a good command of the language, well designed lesson plans, purposive evaluation process that encourages higher motivation levels will create a positive learning environment (Gardner, 2005). The second one is integrativeness, which is a key variable in affecting motivation. Moreover (1950, cited in Gardner, 2005) explained and gave examples about motivation that a child has to learn the parents' language. According to the reinforcements, a child is motivated to naturalize characteristics of the parents that could promote a reward and drive fulfilling substitutes when the parent is absent.

Gardner's definition of motivation. Gardner's definition of motivation entails 3 primary outcome components: 1) an individual with high motivation is keen to put more effort toward language learning; 2) an individual with high motivation will have determination to achieve the goals of language learning; 3) an individual with high motivation will show their enthusiasm toward language learning, and will seek further challenging and engaging language learning tasks.

The Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB). The Attitude/Motivation Test Battery is a research instrument was developed by Gardner and his colleagues to investigate and measure the main affective variables related to second language acquisition in the socio-educational model. The Attitude/Motivation Test Battery provides a reliable and valid measure of a variety of characteristics of second language learning attitudes and motivation (Gardner, 1985a).

Individual Learner Differences in Language Learning

There is a broad range of variables that influence learners in language learning. They include age and gender, aptitudes, beliefs, IQ and previous experience. Learners also come to learn with their own personalities, attitudes, motivations and expectations. Learners respond to and interpret the learning materials whether the variables are categorized as cognitive or affective. In short, much applied linguistics research has determined a range of important individual differences among language learners that can have a significant impact on second language learning (Ellis, 2004).

Conceptual Framework

This comparative-correlational study aimed to examine if there was a significant difference in level of motivation between Years 4 to 6 and Years 7 to 9 non-Thai students at an international school in Bangkok and to examine if there was a significant relationship between Years 4 to 6 and Years 7 to 9 non-Thai students' level of motivation and orientation of motivation toward learning Thai at an international school in Bangkok. Figure 2 presents the conceptual framework of this study.

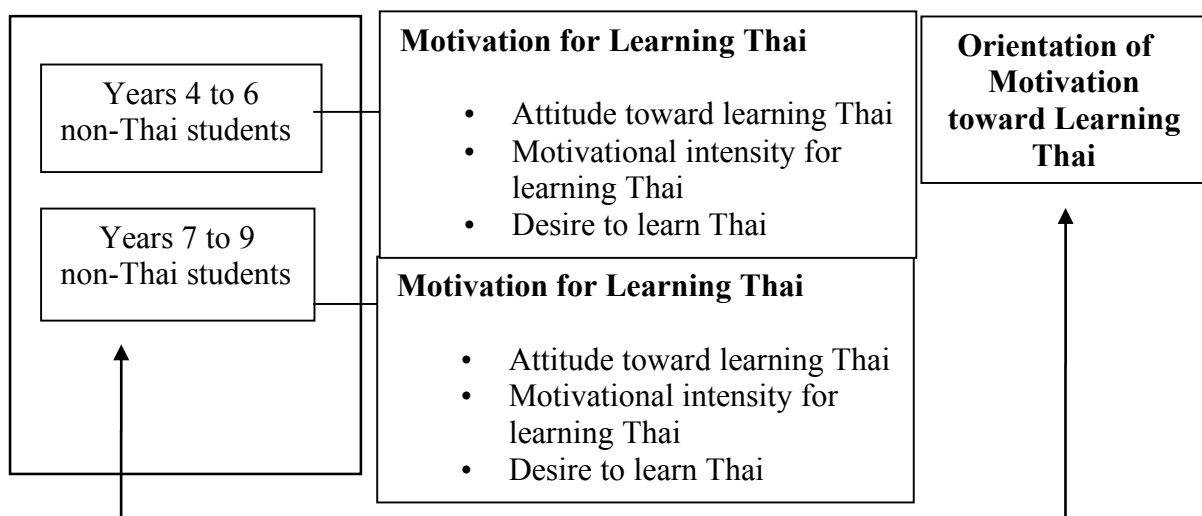


Figure 2. Conceptual framework.

Method

This research was a comparative-correlational quantitative study which utilized a questionnaire as the research instrument.

Population

The research population was Years 4 to 6 and Years 7 to 9 non-Thai students who were learning Thai at an international school in Bangkok, Thailand, during the 2nd semester of academic year 2017-2018.

Sample

There were 29 Years 4 – 6 non-Thai students and 44 Years 7 – 9 non-Thai students during the 2nd semester of academic year 2017 – 2018. All 73 students participated in this study.

Research Instrument

The research instrument of the study was the motivation and orientation of motivation for learning Thai questionnaire, it was a set of research items which was used in this study. It was an adjusted version of the international attitude/motivation test battery (AMTB) for English as a foreign language (Gardner, 2004). The research instrument was used to measure the students' level of motivation for learning Thai, and the orientation of students' motivation for learning Thai. It is consisted 31 items: motivation-30 items and orientation of motivation-1 item.

Validity and Reliability

The Attitude/Motivation Test Battery was standardized and validated on several large samples of Anglophone Canadian students in Grades 7-11 in 1977. These samples were drawn from seven regions in Canada, and there were around 1000 students at each grade level involved in the research (Gardner, 1985b). The AMTB has been accepted worldwide and been widely used by many researchers examining the affective elements of second language acquisition.

Table 1: Reliability Data of International AMTB, the Attitudes and Motivation, and Orientation of Motivation for Learning Thai Questionnaire

Scales	Number of items for each component	Cronbach's alpha of AMTB (Gardner, 1985b)	Cronbach's alpha of international AMTB (Gardner, 2004)	Cronbach's alpha of this study
Attitudes toward Learning the Language	10	.93	.90	.88
Motivational Intensity	10	.82	.75	.74
Desire to Learn the Language	10	.85	.83	.86
Orientation of Motivation	1			

Procedures

A total of 73 questionnaires were distributed during the fourth week of November and the first week of December, 2017. The return rate was 100%. Descriptive statistics involving means and standard deviations were used to measure non-Thai students' level of motivation for learning Thai, attitudes toward learning Thai, level of desire to learn Thai, level of motivational intensity to learn Thai, and orientation of motivation respectively. A *t*-Test was used to measure the difference of students' level of motivation for learning Thai between two groups of non-Thai students. The Pearson's chi-squared test was used to determine the relationship between students' motivation and orientation of motivation for learning Thai between two groups of non-Thai students.

Findings

The findings are presented according to the four research objectives.

Research Objective 1

The first research objective was to determine the students' level of motivation toward learning Thai of Years 4 to 6 and Years 7 to 9 non-Thai students at an international school in Bangkok. Both of Years 4 to

6 and Year 7 to 9 non-Thai students had slightly low level of motivation. The three sub-objectives were used to measure attitude, motivational intensity, and desire to learn Thai.

Research Objective 1.1

The research found that Years 4 to 6 non-Thai students had slightly positive attitude while Years 7 to 9 non-Thai students had slightly negative attitude.

Research Objective 1.2

The research found that both of Years 4 to 6 and Years 7 to 9 had slightly low level of motivational intensity.

Research Objective 1.3

The research found that both of Years 4 to 6 and Years 7 to 9' non-Thai students had slightly low desire to learn Thai.

Table 2: Years 4 to 6 Non-Thai Students' Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for Level of Motivation Toward Learning Thai (n=73)

Level of motivation toward learning Thai	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Interpretation
Attitude toward learning Thai	4.08	0.66	Slightly high
Motivational intensity to learn Thai	3.81	0.64	Slightly low
Desire to learn Thai	3.90	0.60	Slightly low
Motivation for learning Thai	11.79	1.90	Slightly low

Table 3: Years 7 to 9 Non-Thai Students' Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for Level of Motivation Toward Learning Thai (n=73)

Level of motivation toward learning Thai	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Interpretation
Attitude toward learning Thai	3.68	0.53	Slightly low
Motivational intensity to learn Thai	3.55	0.56	Slightly low
Desire to learn Thai	3.64	0.60	Slightly low
Motivation for learning Thai	10.87	1.69	Slightly low

Research Objective 2

The second research objective of this study was to determine the orientation of motivation toward learning Thai between Years 4 to 6 and Years 7 to 9 non-Thai students. The research found that both Years 4 to 6 and Year 7 to 9 non-Thai students chose an instrumental orientation of motivation for learning Thai.

Table 4: Years 4 to 6 Non-Thai Students' Frequencies and Percentages of Orientation of Motivation Toward Learning Thai (n=73)

Orientation of motivation	Frequency	Total frequency	Percentage	Total percentage
Instrumental orientation		17		58.6
<i>I think it will be useful in getting a good job.</i>	6		20.7	
<i>A knowledge of two or more languages will make me a better educated person.</i>	11		37.9	
Integrative orientation		12		41.4
<i>I think it will help me to better understand Thai people and way of life.</i>	4		13.8	
<i>It will allow me to meet and converse with more and varied people.</i>	8		27.6	
Total	29	29	100	100

Table 5: Years 7 to 9 Non-Thai Students' Frequencies and Percentages of Orientation of Motivation Toward Learning Thai (n=73)

Orientation of motivation	Frequency	Total frequency	Percentage	Total percentage
Instrumental orientation		24		54.6
• I think it will be useful in getting a good job.	12		27.3	
• A knowledge of two or more languages will make me a better educated person.	12		27.3	
Integrative orientation		20		45.4
• I think it will help me to better understand Thai people and way of life.	15		34.0	
• It will allow me to meet and converse with more and varied people.	5		11.4	
Total	44	44	100	100

Research Objective 3

The third research objective of this study was to determine if there was a significant difference between Years 4 to 6 and Years 7 to 9 non-Thai students. The research found that there was no significant difference between the two groups of non-Thai students' level of motivation toward learning Thai.

Table 6: Comparing Years 4 to 6 and Years 7 to 9 Non-Thai Students' Level of Motivation Toward Learning Thai (n=73)

Year group	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Years 4 to 6 non-Thai students	29	3.93	.49	71	2.68	.62
Years 7 to 9 non-Thai students	44	3.62	.46			

Research Objective 4

The fourth research objective of this study is to determine if there is a significant association between Years 4 to 6 and Years 7 to 9 non-Thai students and orientation of motivation toward learning Thai. The research found that there was no significant association between the orientation of motivation toward learning Thai and the year groups.

Table 7: Association Between Years 4 to 6 and Years 7 to 9 Non-Thai Students and Orientation of Motivation Toward Learning Thai (n=73)

Year group	Orientation of motivation toward learning Thai		<i>Df</i>	χ^2	<i>p</i>
	Instrumental	Integrative			
Years 4 to 6 non-Thai students	17	12	1	.12	.73
Years 7 to 9 non-Thai students	24	20			

Discussion

The findings are discussed for 1) motivation toward learning Thai, and 2) orientation of motivation toward learning Thai.

Motivation toward Learning Thai

The findings of this study showed that Years 4 to 6 and Years 7 to 9 non-Thai students' overall level of motivation toward learning Thai were slightly low. The findings was in line with Marangelli (2001) which investigated the correlation between attitudes, motivational variables and achievement among students in grade six learning French. The research found that students with high levels of anxiety would have low motivation and low achievement. The motivation and achievement also relied on a determined teacher who could help foster students' motivation that could lead to academic achievement by creating interesting environment and situation. The researcher also believed that according to the slightly high levels of anxiety could be one reason of students' slightly low motivation.

Learning Thai language and culture is a compulsory subject for non-Thai students at the target international school in Bangkok. All non-Thai students are required to learn Thai since they are in kindergarten until Year 9. Since English is the primary language all students use at the target international school in Bangkok, there could be several factors explaining why some students in this school had less interest in learning Thai. First, the lack of students' interest in learning Thai may be owing to the topics which may have been neither be engaging enough nor helpful to the students in applying Thai language in their daily lives. Second, the class activities may not have been be interesting enough to engage students' attention to fully and enthusiastically participate. Third, the complexities of the Thai language structure and pronunciation could have been a challenge for non-Thai students, especially for new students who entered the school during the academic year. Lastly, the number of hours of learning Thai per week was three hours which may be insufficient for students in mastering a language. All of these factors may account for some students exhibiting low motivation in learning Thai.

Orientation of Motivation toward Learning Thai.

The orientation of motivation of the majority of non-Thai students at the target international school in Bangkok was instrumental. It indicates that the students tend to be motivated to learn Thai language in order to be able to make the use of language learning for practical reasons such as being able to communicate when shopping or travelling in Thailand. This is similar to a study done by Wong (2011) which investigated whether instrumental motivation or integrative motivation were stronger for third year Chinese students in their English learning. The findings indicated that the undergraduates were more likely to have a greater instrumental orientation in their second language learning. The students reported that they learnt the second language due to certain academic and professional reasons such as to meet the requirements for school, to pass an examination, or to apply for a well-paid job.

The orientation of motivation of the majority of non-Thai students at the target international school in Bangkok was instrumental. This suggested that the students tended to be motivated to learn Thai language in order to be able to make the use of it for practical reasons such as being able to communicate when shopping or travelling in Thailand. Moreover, English is the primary language every student uses at the school. Hence, most of the non-Thai students rarely experienced or practiced Thai language with friends at school. However, the findings of this study also revealed an increase in the proportion of integrative orientation of motivation. Approximately 45% of the Years 7 to 9 non-Thai students reported that they were learning Thai because it would allow them to meet and converse with more and varied people, as well as help them to better understand Thai people and way of life. Some of the non-Thai students had been studying at the target international school had been living in Thailand for more than three years and so their integrative orientation to learning Thai may have been an outcome of their lengthy stay in the Kingdom. Therefore, this could be a reason some students had positive understanding toward Thai culture and language, which resulted in an integrative orientation of motivation in learning Thai.

Recommendations

According to the aforementioned findings of this research, the researcher would like to present the following recommendations to school administrators, teachers, and future researchers.

Recommendations for school administrators

The findings of this study indicated the importance of students' motivation in their Thai language learning. Thus, it is highly advocated that the school stakeholders = are aware of the concepts of learning motivation and its relation to success in studying Thai.

As motivation is one of the most important factors for being successful in language learning, administrators as well as curriculum developers are highly recommended to place importance on students' motivation and take it into account when imposing school policies and curricula. Administrators can consider arranging teacher in-service sessions emphasizing motivational strategies in teaching to help teachers foster students' motivation in learning Thai.

Recommendations for teachers

It is highly recommended that teachers understand the critical importance of students' motivation and incorporate motivational teaching strategies such as promoting individualized learning or learner-centered activities into lessons to encourage students' enthusiasm, creativity, and engagement in learning Thai language. The teachers can also try different teaching techniques to cultivate more active and creative learning environments. Specific recommendations for teachers to help foster students' motivation are as follows:

- Teachers should create a friendly atmosphere in the classroom where everyone feels safe and comfortable. It will make students feel recognized and valued after they know their teacher and their peers. This will also encourage students to feel more comfortable in participating in classroom activities.
- Teachers should help and encourage students to accommodate to the individualized classroom environment by engaging in student-centered teaching to increase the friendly environment to help relax the students. This will enhance students' desire and attitude to learn and improve their language learning outcomes.
- Teachers should create situations with a sense of accomplishment which is a great factor to motivate students in learning. Teachers can create situations with a sense of success by giving positive feedback and reinforcement to students when they merit it. This technique can enhance students' satisfaction and promote positive self-evaluation. Students will have a greater attitude to convey their own studies and learning outcomes when they feel a sense of accomplishment.
- Teachers should promote pair and group activities. This technique can help develop students' confidence, enthusiasm, and engagement in the learning tasks, which affect class quality as an opportunity for students to learn. Pair work or small group work can give an opportunity for quiet students to express their ideas and feelings on a topic as they may find it easier to speak to a partner or few members in a group than to an entire class.
- Teachers should connect students' interests outside of class to language learning. This technique can help students develop their language skills to be more relevant. For example, learning Thai language on the topic *Going Shopping* could help students use Thai language in a practical context that the students will recognize as important. As well, learning Thai language about transportation could be linked to real life transportation services in Thailand, especially taking a taxi which is also necessary for students to know basic Thai vocabulary to make their lives easier in Thailand.

Recommendations for future researchers

- Future researchers could consider applying larger sample sizes in each year group of students to investigate the relationships between students' motivation in learning a second language. With larger samples, the results will be more reliable and generalizable.
- Future researchers could consider conducting longitudinal studies that can track changes in students' motivation for learning Thai throughout the school years to explore the relationship between the changes of their motivation with their language achievement.
- Future researchers could compare the different grade levels of students' motivation. This would locate the possible differences in motivation toward learning Thai in different grade levels.
- Future researchers could consider conducting mixed studies using both quantitative and qualitative methods to explore students' motivation for learning Thai. Through the qualitative method, a more insightful perspective can be developed to understand the factors that influence students' motivation for learning Thai.
- Future researchers could also include more subscales from the AMTB (attitudes toward the learning situation, integrativeness, language anxiety, and instrumentality). A thorough study will allow researchers to develop a more accurate understanding of the factors that influence students' learning in Thai language, which will help the teachers and administrators in planning the curriculum and enhancing student learning ultimately.

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