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FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE LEARNING OF THE SPANISH LANGUAGE OF ENGLISH PROGRAM STUDENTS IN SATRI SUKSA ROI ET SCHOOL

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Abstract

Especially in the last ten years, Spanish has become a more popular language among secondary and high school students in Thailand. This study aims to investigate the motivations, i.e., the internal and external factors that influence secondary and high school English program students who choose to study Spanish as a foreign language. Thirty-six English program students from Satri Suksa Roi Et School who were studying Spanish as a foreign language participated in the survey. The findings showed that their motivations of learning Spanish, both intrinsic and extrinsic, is moderate (58%). In comparison, the intrinsic motivations play a more important role than the extrinsic (61.8% vs. 54.2%). The most important internal factors that influence the students are that they want to communicate and read in Spanish and that they think that Spanish is one of the most important languages in the world. The external factor that is most often selected is that they would like to travel to countries where people speak Spanish. In conclusion, both secondary school and high school students are interested in studying Spanish because they would like to be able to communicate in Spanish and they recognize that it is one of the important languages in the world. However, according to the results, some external factors, related to Hispanic culture and media (including social media) in Spanish, were not so important as we expected.

Keywords: Language learning, Internal factors, External factors, Motivation, Spanish in Thailand

The significant finding:

Students in secondary and high school are interested in studying Spanish because they would like to be able to communicate in Spanish. Moreover, they recognize that it is one of the important languages in the world.



ARTICLES

I. INTRODUCTION

In the modern world, communication has become more open and interconnected, whether it is for economic, social, or information transfer, all of which are impossible without language as the main medium. Spanish is the third most widely spoken language in the world, after Chinese and Hindi. However, English is the most widely spoken language. For more than 20 years, teaching Spanish has been a rising trend in Thailand. Teaching Spanish as a foreign language began in Thailand at the university level. Later, it was also permitted at the higher education level and in secondary education, Spanish has expanded throughout all regions of Thailand, not only with respect to the language

itself, but also with respect to its history and culture. This could be a reason why many individuals turn to learning Spanish. From the past to the present, a range of factors can be identified that influence students' decision to study a foreign language other than English in Thai general schools. One of the important factors is a preference or motivation on the part of the learners for learning a third language, which can be regarded as some extra knowledge that may give them an edge in terms of their intentions or expectations.

There are two different types of incentives for learning a foreign language: integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. Integrative motivation refers to learners' desire to learn about a society's

culture and harmony, language, and goals, while instrumental motivation refers to learners' desire to benefit from language study, such as the desire to apply for a job. Many researchers divide motivation into two types: intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Due to intrinsic motivation, learners learn a language by internal stimulation. This entails having interests, preferences, and satisfaction from learning the language without considering the rewards. Extrinsic motivation is related to exploitative motivation, that is, when language learners are motivated by a desire for rewards or by the influence of friends (**Gardner and Lambert, 1972** cited in **Yupka Fukushima et al., 2013**).

Individuals may have different motivations, which manifest themselves and meet the needs of the person who achieves the objectives, sets goals, or instills enthusiasm in people to demonstrate their behavior (**Netphanna Yawirat, 2010**), which all play a role in language learning. This is because if a person lacks the motivation that drives them to do things, it will be difficult to achieve the goals they have set and some people may not be able to achieve their goals at all.

English is taught as a second language in Thailand, and students who attend government, private, or home schools are taught at the basic level, with some schools offering additional third language courses. "Western language subjects are French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, and so on, and Eastern languages are Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Malay, Arabic, and so on," students are told. There are also other options for junior high school students to consider. Foreign languages other than English can also be

electives or optional subjects of interest." Ministry of Education, Office of the Basic Education Commission, 2008, cited in **Sirima Purinthraphiban, 2017, p. 207**).

As a result of the increasing popularity of foreign languages nowadays, western languages like Spanish are taught at the secondary level in 19 schools across the country, and one of the schools that teaches Spanish is SatriSuksa Roi Et School As a special project, the English Program, which allows students in the project to choose another foreign language course as a third language within the project, there are three language courses for students to choose from, namely Spanish, Japanese. and Chinese. In the present research, a total of 36 students who took Spanish as an elective course for at least one academic year were asked about their motivations, 19 of them were in the second grade of both middle school and high school, namely Secondary School 2 and 17 of them were in Secondary School 5.

The objectives of this study are, firstly, to find out why English program students at Satri Suksa School chose Spanish as a foreign language. Secondly, to find out what internal and external motivations influence their Spanish learning. The results of this study can be applied as an instrument to help secondary school teacher to develop new materials for their future students.

Literature review

In language education, it is necessary to understand the significant role of motivation in learning a foreign language. It has been confirmed by a large number of researchers that motivation is strongly correlated with success

in learning a foreign language. This is a fact that could support learners to be interested in and have a positive attitude towards what are they learning, as well as a greater willingness to study to make their learning more effective. Motivation plays a key role in every educational project. Motivated learners will do better since it is the process through which a person endeavors to successfully satisfy certain needs.

According to **Kidd (1973)**, the word *motivation* is related to the Latin verb *movere*, which corresponds to the English word *to move*, referring to something that influences or induces a person to proceed or perform an action.

This study focuses on the theories of **Gardner (1996)**. His theories have been considered the foundation to inspire other researchers to better understand motivation in the L2 field. The theories emphasize two types of motivation in language learning: integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. Integrative motivation refers to the desire that drives learners to communicate with native speakers or people who use the target language, which allows learners to integrate themselves as part of the destination language society. Instrumental motivation refers to reasons for learning an L2 of taking some advantage. Some learners could be inspired to learn as a requirement of their study, for example; to pass the studies program, get a better job, or get a higher salary. So, these two types of motivation are quite different: the first is learning on the basis of an inner call, and the second is to achieve some goal.

Furthermore, **Moore (2009)** and **Cuq (2003)** (cited in **Purinthrapibal, 2017**) stressed

that motivation can be separated into two groups: Intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is the individual need for learning or wanting to find out something without the involvement of others. These are also known as internal factors that act as an incentive for work, learning, and activities that push learners to feel in need of learning and communicate with the L2 community. The drive to learn the L2 comes from inside a learner. Extrinsic motivation is the state of a person receiving external impulses or drives which lead to a change in one's behavior. This type of motivation is not always stable. It can occur frequently or it might be eradicated because a person will act in response to an incentive only if a reward is desired. They pursue honor, reputation, praise, acclaim, recognition, etc. Once they get what they want, their motivation may be gone.

In addition, the scope of this study is on the motivation in learning languages. This is related to the academic research by **Triviño (2015)**, which recommends observing what happens in class to obtain the results on how to motivate university students. This study selected a survey group and applied the tools to observe, test, interview, survey and self-assessment to discover the students' strategies. The results were divided into six categories: English difficulty level, English proficiency level, interest in the topics, the role of teachers, and the organization of grammar. The investigation suggested the modification of variables by documenting the learning process and theories, and then the learning process was discussed. After that, the concept of motivation was examined. Finally, the conclusion focused on how to motivate the students and observe their success. This work is relevant in three

ways: 1) the motivational process of learning depends on what students perceived. The more they learn, the more they want to know. 2) Being conscious of the type of learning in students is important, since as a result we know how to apply each strategy for each learner. 3) The process of metacognition is an essential strategy in the classroom as a conscious and measured insight into one's own learning.

As background, there is also Thailand-based work on motivation in language learning by **Sirima Purinthrapibal (2017)**. This research was based on multistage sampling of 549 students in the French language learning program in Mathayom 4, 5, and 6, during the second semester of the 2010 academic year held in 32 secondary schools in 14 southern provinces. This research used a questionnaire as a research tool. The results showed that these students chose to study French because of different motivations: 66.1% chose the French study plan because they liked the country, language, and culture. 60.4% chose it because they wanted to know the French language for further study at the university level and because they thought French would be useful for their future work. 52% chose to study French because they had no scientific and mathematical aptitude. 44.6% thought they had an aptitude and interest in the language. 39.8% thought French was useful in everyday life, and 31.8% liked the language educators.

According to **Parilak Klinchang and Supaporn Suwanopas (2017)**, motivation is part of the reason for success in learning German and affects the choice of learning strategies and trends in the further education of learners. The analysis of 255 researcher-generated questionnaires showed that

motivation can be divided as follows: 1) Individual Motivation, which is the wish to speak the language, and satisfaction in using language. 2) Social and cultural motivation, which entails that learning a foreign language requires socialization practice using the language. 3) Educational and occupational motivations, which means that learning a foreign language is required to use it in further study or work in a specialized field; and 4) Economic and financial motivations, which are inspired by the furtherance of better income and career.

II. METHODOLOGY

The researchers used a method to select a specific sample (Purposive Sampling) resulting in a total number of 36 students in Secondary School 2 and High School 5 in the English Program at Satriuksa Roi Et School who chose to study Spanish as an elective course. The study period was from 4 January 2022 - 25 March 2022.

Participants

The sample populations consisted of 8 students of Secondary School 2/13, 3 males and 5 females, 11 students from Secondary School 2/14, 2 male and 9 female, 13 students from High School 5/8, 9 males and 4 females, and 4 female students from High School 5/19.

Research instrument

The tool used to collect data for this research study was an online questionnaire administered through Google Forms, based on a review of related research theory concepts. The questionnaire was designed in accordance with each variable in the conceptual framework

used in the study so that the questionnaire consisted of four parts:

Part 1: General information on the respondents, such as name, grade level, gender, and length of time studying Spanish.

Part 2: Who motivated the students to learn Spanish? The variables were defined by the researchers as themselves, family, friends, teachers, celebrities, singers, and athletes.

Part 3: Internal Motivation, where the variables were defined as interest in the language and Spain or Latin American countries, interest in Spanish or Latin American culture such as involving music, cartoons, movies, TV, and fashion, Spanish as one of the most important languages, desire to be able to communicate in Spanish, and need to be able to read Spanish.

Part 4: External Motivation, where the variables were defined as desire to travel to a country that speaks Spanish, and wish to study Spanish abroad, the possibility that Spanish is easier than other languages, desire to work using the Spanish language and live in a country that speaks Spanish, learning Spanish will result in good grades. Answers were scored on an Interval Scale in accordance with the Likert guidelines (1967). This is a type of survey question that uses responses that are ordered so one response is more important than another. For example: 1 = very incompetent, 2 = somewhat incompetent, 3 = neither competent, 4 = somewhat competent, or 5 = very competent.

Data collection

This research involves a survey to study internal and external motivational factors that

encourage students to take Spanish as an elective course in the English Program at Satriuksa Roi Et School by collecting questionnaires in order to use the data obtained to analyze content. We collected information (Source) from documents and research related to motivation which is a secondary source both in Thailand and abroad. Then, we generated an online questionnaire through Google Forms for *Students Motivation for Secondary School 2 and High School 5 English Program of Spanish as an elective course at Satriuksa Roi Et School*, and then distributed the questionnaires to students and analyzed the data by descriptive statistics.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research population: 36 students from the Special English program, Satri Suksa Roi Et School. malefemale , as showed in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Sex/ Gender of students.

Sex	Number of students
Male	10
Female	26
Total	36

They are from Middle School 2 and High School 5; 17 students had studied Spanish at least for 1 semester, 14 students had studied Spanish for 2 semesters, 2 students had studied Spanish for 3 semesters and 3 students had studied Spanish for 5 semesters, as presented in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Spanish learning duration and the number of the students.

Spanish learning duration	Number of students
For 1 semestre	17
For 2 semestres	14
For 3 semestres	2
For 5 semestres	3
Total	36

We gave the questionnaire to the students, and the results showed that students chose to study Spanish mostly because of their friends, followed by themselves, their teacher, their family, singers, superstars, and athletes.

Table 3 is the percentage and standard deviation of the level of extrinsic motivation towards learning Spanish as an elective course at Middle School 2 and high school 5 students of the special English Program at Satri Suksa Roi Et School, Thailand.

Table 3. Percentage and standard deviation of the level of extrinsic motivation towards learning Spanish

Intrinsic motivation	Number of students (n = 36)		Motivation level
	%	S. D	
I want to communicate in Spanish.	77.8 %	1.46	high level
I think of Spanish as one of the important languages.	76.2%	1.45	high level
I want to read in Spanish	75%	1.57	high level
I like and I am interested in Spanish language and country of Spain or Latin America.	71.2%	1.27	moderate
I am interested in Spanish or Latin American culture such as music, cartoons, movies, TV, and fashion.	61.6%	1.64	moderate
Total (average)	61.8%	1.04	moderate

Table 4 shows the overall average values for the subjects’ internal motivation. It was at a moderate level of 61.8% (S.D.=1.04). “Want to communicate in Spanish” received the highest average score of 77.8 % (S.D.=1.46), classified as high motivation, followed by “Think Spanish is an important language” with an average score of 76.2% (S.D.=1.45). High motivation and “interested in Hispanic or Latin American culture such as music, cartoons, movies, TV and fashion” received the lowest mean score of 61.6% (S.D.=1.64), classified as low motivation.

Table 4. Overall average values for the subjects’ internal motivation.

Extrinsic motivation	Number of students (n = 36)		Motivation level
	%	S.D	
I want to travel to a country that speaks Spanish.	82.8%	1.26	high level
There are opinions that Spanish is easier than other languages.	63.4%	1.40	moderate
I think learning Spanish will get good grades and grades.	63.4%	1.54	moderate
I want to study Spanish abroad	62.8%	1.47	moderate
I want to live in a country that speaks Spanish.	49.4%	1.40	low level
I want to work in Spanish	45.6%	1.30	low level
Total (average)	54.2%	1.00	moderate

In addition, **Table 4** shows the overall average values for the subjects’ extrinsic motivation. It was at a moderate level 54.2% (S.D.=1.00). “Want to visit a Spanish-speaking country” received the highest average score of 82.8% (S.D.=1.26), rated as high motivation, followed by “the idea that Spanish is easier than other languages”, with an average score of 63.4% (S.D.=1.40) and “think that studying Spanish will result in good grades and average grades” 63.4% (S.D.=1.54); these are rated as high motivation and “want to work in Spanish” with the lowest average score are 45.6% (S.D.=1.30).

Summarizing the results of the research, it was found that the overall average of the level of intrinsic and external motivation in studying Spanish as an elective course for Middle School 2 and High School 5 of the special English Program at Satri Suksa Roi Et School was at a moderate level, in which the intrinsic motivation received an average score 61.8% (S.D.=1.04) and the external motivation received an average score 54.2% (S.D.=1.00).

IV. DISCUSSIONS

The results of this study show that the motivation of English Program students at Satri Suksa, both intrinsic and extrinsic, can be classified as moderate. In comparison, intrinsic motivation received a higher percentage than extrinsic motivation. The most often selected type of intrinsic motivation was that the students wanted to travel to Spanish-speaking countries and the extrinsic motivation that was most often chosen was that they wanted to be able to communicate in Spanish. Their choice

for Spanish as a second foreign language was most often influenced by their friends.

The results show that the most important factor that influence the students' choice for Spanish is internal factors. They decided to learn Spanish because they want to speak Spanish and they want to get good grades in Spanish courses. From the findings, we can assume that the students who have taken Spanish courses don't really have previous knowledge about the Spanish language or Hispanic culture.

V. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Moreover, external factors such as actors, singers, celebrities from media and sports, nowadays, do not play an important role for Thai secondary students since TV series, songs or movies in Spanish, are not as popular in Thailand as celebrities from Asian countries like Korea, China, Japan, etc. We think the teachers should consider this point and add cultural elements as well as Spanish speaking media to the curriculum, such as songs, movies, series or even podcasts, to motivate the students to learn and practice Spanish outside class. It is important to design and develop materials that suit their age and their interests. However, cultural elements should not be abandoned, so that teachers can also introduce some Spanish songs or mass media to motivate them together with learning the language.

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