

# Language Learning Motivation :

A Case Study of Sri Lankan JFL Students in the University Level

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## 1. Introduction

Individual differences (ID) are a widely studied area in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) literature. Motivation is one such ID variable and it concerns ‘what moves a person to make certain choices, to engage in action, to expend effort and persist in action’ (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2001:3). Although motivation is an ID variable, it is affected by social, cultural and contextual factors in the learner’s environment (Ellis, 1985), suggesting differences in the motivational dimensions of students in different settings. Dörnyei (1990) also contends that research should consider the social and pragmatic dimensions of motivation. Moreover, motivational dimensions found in second language (L2) contexts may not be directly applicable to foreign language (FL) contexts (ibid).

This study attempts to explore the motivational dimensions of Sri Lankan university students and discusses the social, cultural and contextual background behind those motivations. Japanese has a history of more than 30 years in the Sri Lankan education system and is offered for national level qualifying exams<sup>(1)</sup> as an optional subject and in the university as a main subject. Number of students studying Japanese has been on the increase<sup>(2)</sup> and according to Japan Foundation (JF), in 2009 Sri Lanka was among the top 20 countries in terms of student number (JF, 2009).

When compared to other regions, especially South Asia, Sri Lankan education system is quite unique as it offers Japanese for high school graduation/university entrance exam and passing Japanese at the above exam is made a pre-requisite to continue Japanese study in the university. Moreover, Sri Lanka is only second to Maldives in terms of the number of Japanese learners per 10,000 people (JF, 2012)<sup>(3)</sup>. However, when compared to other languages, Japanese-related employment is fewer (JF, 2009; 2012) and the position of Japanese is not very high when compared to the prestigious position occupied by English which is taught from the primary school level. In addition, Japanese pop culture which is a top motivator prompting the choice of Japanese around the world (JF, 2012) is not so popular in Sri Lanka and only 15% of the total population used the internet as of 2011<sup>(4)</sup> suggesting that not many have access to information on Japan. In such a context, why do students choose and continue Japanese learning?

## 2. Studies on Motivation

The current study draws its insights from the social-psychological perspective of motivation which emphasizes on attitudes towards the target language, its community and social context of learning, distinguishing between the “integrative” (a sincere and personal interest in the target language, people and its culture), and “instrumental” (the practical value and advantages of the language) orientations (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). Drawing on the notion that student motivation is influenced by social, cultural and contextual factors, research on Japanese as a foreign language (JFL) motivation has been conducted in various settings i.e., Far-East Russia (*Ikari*, 2005), Nepal (*Hashino*, 2000), New Zealand (*Nuibe* et al., 1995), Singapore (*Guo & Okita*, 2001), Taiwan (*Yang*, 2011), Thailand (*Narita*, 1998), and Ukraine (*Onishi*, 2010) unveiling different motivational dimensions.

Although many students study Japanese in Sri Lanka, empirical research probing into their motivation is limited. Extant studies focusing on JFL education in general refer to various motives such as ‘economic’ (*Kano*, 1996), ‘educational’, ‘practical’

(*Miyagishi*, 2000; 2001), ‘integrative’, ‘instrumental’ (*Inoue*, 1999), ‘incentive’ (*Yamamoto*, 2001), ‘passing exams’ (*Ozaki*, 2002), ‘friendship’, ‘employment’ and ‘understanding Japanese people’ (*Wada*, 2007). In order to bridge the gap in the literature and in an attempt to capture the recent developments in JFL education and the social, cultural environment in Sri Lanka, this study aims at systematically exploring student motivation more comprehensively. Furthermore, many studies on language learning motivation are dominated by a quantitative research paradigm (*Ushioda*, 2001). This study is original in adopting a mixed methods approach: a quantitative component complemented by a qualitative component in order to uncover the thinking and underlying reasons to student motivations. The outcomes of this study would be beneficial in many ways. It would be useful in understanding student needs and the future direction of JFL education in Sri Lanka. Educators can utilize the findings to design curricula and teaching methodology to match their students and thereby help students sustain their motivation in the long run.

### 3. Methodology

Undergraduates and graduates (who have already passed out) of the Japanese language section of the Department of Modern Languages, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka participated in the study. 126 undergraduates (1<sup>st</sup> year: 44, 2<sup>nd</sup> year: 39, 3<sup>rd</sup> year: 43) took part in the quantitative questionnaire survey yielding 120 completed scripts. A convenience sample of 8 undergraduates representing the 3 academic years and 10 graduates participated in the interviews where participation was on a voluntary basis. Undergraduates ranged from 20 to 24 years in age, and graduates ranged from 25 to 35 years. Survey participants had studied Japanese for 2 years in the high school and/or another 2 years in the middle school. Depending on the credit requirement in the university they take Japanese with 1 or 2 other main subjects, and several auxiliary/elective subjects. At the entrance to university their Japanese language knowledge is expected to be equivalent to level 4 of the Japanese Language Proficiency Test, level 2 or above at the completion of the Bachelor of Arts (General)

Degree. Graduate participants in the interview had graduated within the past 10 years and represented miscellaneous professional areas (i.e., language teachers, tour executives, foreign employment officials, development officers, embassy employees, translators and interpreters) in both government and private sectors. Individual interview participants will be referred to in the discussion as U1–U8 (undergraduates) and G1–G10 (graduates).

I conducted the current study in July 2012, using a questionnaire with 7-point Likert scales developed in light of extant literature (Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Ikari, 2005; Narita, 1998; Nuibe et al, 1995; Onishi, 2010; Schmidt & Watanabe, 2001) as the primary source of data. I developed the questionnaire in English first and then translated into Sinhala<sup>(5)</sup>. Two independent native speakers back translated it into English later and checked for equivalence. I pre-tested the questionnaire with a randomly selected student sample through their Japanese language instructors in Sri Lanka, discussed comprehension issues and made slight revisions. Adopting a semi-structured interview technique, I conducted follow up interviews with undergraduates and graduates which was the secondary source of data. Each interview was 20–30 minutes in duration and they were audio-recorded with the participants' consent. I used the first language of the participants: Sinhala. Undergraduate interviews included questions on reasons for choice of Japanese, student conceptions of its utility, future expectations, language study and environment, interest on traditional and popular culture, external influence on study, attitudes towards Japanese language study and how their motivation changed over time. Graduate interviews were based on their previous learning experiences as Japanese learners and included additional questions about the utility of the language, prior expectations and how they were met after graduation, situation experienced in the job-market and change in attitudes and motivations towards study.

To explore the dimensions of student motivation in learning Japanese, I conducted an exploratory factor analysis using the SPSS software (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). A data validation test using Cronbach's  $\alpha$  ( $> 0.7$ ) fulfilled acceptance criteria (Gerbing and Anderson, 1988). A 7-factor solution was deemed

best to describe the data after varimax rotation (open ended question, and 8 questions with low communality  $< 0.45$  were removed) and total variance explained was 58%. Adopting items with factor loadings of more than 0.40 as constituents of each factor, I labeled the factors based on their contents. In light of previous research results (Ushioda, 2001), I used a deductive content analysis method in analysing interview data. Subsequent to transcription of all interviews I read and re-read through the text several times to identify possible themes and categories, which were to be adopted as initial codes. This codification process generated 12 codes. I repeated this procedure until it was deemed that the codes sufficiently represented the data. Finally, I clustered closely related codes and assigned them broader labels which resulted in 5 final codes. I arranged them in a hypothetical hierarchical order by placing the dominant codes at the top, the least important ones at the bottom, and others in between.

#### 4. Results

Factor analysis of questionnaire data resulted in 7 motivational dimensions. F1 “Incentive Orientation” deals with incentives such as qualifying for university education, gaining social recognition and a high status through Japanese language study. F2 “Understanding Japan” concerns acquiring information about Japanese economy, politics, history and literature, interest in reading Japanese magazines, newspapers and novels. F3 “Goal Achievement” pertains to accomplishment of future goals such as study, work, permanent residency and travel in Japan, and F4 “Interest in Culture” constitutes of items dealing with interest in cultural artifacts such as *Noh*, *Kabuki*, movies, dramas, and understanding the Japanese way of life. Q 44 ‘I want to write a letter to my Japanese friends’ also loaded on this factor, indicating that correspondence with friends such as pen friends might give first hand information on cultural aspects. F5 “Enthusiasm in Japanese Language Study” consists of items related to Japanese language study i.e., fondness towards teachers, feeling of enjoyment derived through study and class. However, Q 32 ‘I like Japanese food’ and Q 16 ‘I am inter-

ested in Japanese fashion' which seem less related to Japanese language study also loaded on this as young students might naturally associate these non-curricular aspects with language study. F6 "Knowledge and Exchange Orientation" constitutes of items related to the importance of foreign language education and broadening the world vision, utilizing acquired knowledge in developing their own country and for international exchange with Japan. F7 "External Influence Orientation" comprises items that concern influence on Japanese language study by various external parties such as family, friends, and relatives (refer Table 1). F5 'Enthusiasm in Japanese Language Study' and F4 'Interest in Culture' showed the highest correlation (0.62), while F7 'External Influence Orientation' and F3 'Goal Achievement' showed the lowest correlation (0.22, refer Table 2).

Qualitative content analysis of interview data yielded 5 codes: "Personal Goals", "Learning Experience", "Attitudes towards Japan its Culture and People", "L2 Related Motivation", and "External Pressures/Incentives" (refer Table 3). These codes show common motivational dimensions with those of the factor analysis except for 'L2 Related Motivation'.

## 5. Discussion

Current study investigates the motivational construct of Sri Lankan university students of JFL, and the following section explores possible social, cultural, educational, and contextual background to the findings focusing on phenomena that can be seen unique to the Sri Lankan context.

Several factors (F1 Incentive Orientation, F5 Enthusiasm in Japanese Language Study, F6 Knowledge and Exchange Orientation, Learning Experience) are related to the education system, academic culture, and consciousness towards education. Particularly, university entrance procedure for Japanese which makes passing Japanese at the G.C.E. A/L examination<sup>(6)</sup> mandatory to continue in the university, is not common in the South Asian region and many other countries. The limited number of universities<sup>(7)</sup> in the country restricts the number of students eligible for university

Table 1 : Factor loadings and contents of Japanese language learning motivation

	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7
<b>F1 Incentive Orientation (<math>\alpha = 0.80</math>)</b>							
Q 8 I wanted to get good marks in the A/L exam.	0.73	0.07	-0.06	0.05	-0.05	0.10	0.07
Q 10 I studied Japanese at secondary/ high school.	0.73	0.06	0.00	-0.16	-0.03	0.13	0.06
Q 6 I can gain the respect of other people if I know a third language and it will add to my social status.	0.65	0.04	-0.04	0.19	0.11	0.15	0.09
Q 40 I am proud of myself, because I can learn a third language that others do not.	0.59	-0.12	0.14	0.31	0.06	0.19	0.08
Q 9 It is an easy language compared to other languages offered in the university.	0.56	0.08	0.09	0.09	0.13	-0.07	0.34
Q 12 Japanese is a popular language in Sri Lanka these days.	0.50	0.41	0.24	-0.10	0.25	-0.01	0.11
Q 35 It will enable me to be a more knowledgeable person.	0.46	0.20	0.30	0.01	0.19	0.34	0.15
Q 13 I want to read and understand Japanese comics ( <i>Manga</i> ).	0.43	0.40	0.20	0.14	0.34	0.01	-0.13
<b>F2 Understanding Japan (<math>\alpha = 0.85</math>)</b>							
Q 15 I am interested in Japanese economy and politics.	0.19	0.80	-0.01	-0.08	0.03	0.11	0.06
Q 14 I am interested in Japanese literature.	-0.05	0.73	0.04	0.29	0.21	0.04	0.03
Q 11 I want to know about Japanese history.	0.14	0.62	0.12	0.17	0.28	0.18	-0.02
Q 18 I want to read Japanese magazines, newspapers and novels.	0.09	0.62	0.12	0.45	0.15	-0.01	0.03
Q 36 I am interested in Karji characters.	-0.07	0.61	0.07	0.12	0.16	0.24	0.13
Q 19 I want to write articles and essays in Japanese.	0.10	0.57	0.05	0.53	-0.09	0.19	0.00
<b>F3 Goal Achievement (<math>\alpha = 0.92</math>)</b>							
Q 24 I want to pursue further study in Japan in the future.	0.06	0.09	0.81	0.02	0.15	-0.12	0.04
Q 27 I am interested in working in Japan after graduation.	0.04	0.12	0.80	0.06	0.04	0.20	0.14
Q 25 I want to live in Japan permanently in future.	-0.01	0.14	0.80	0.09	0.13	0.12	0.04
Q 43 I want to visit and travel in Japan.	0.13	-0.10	0.66	0.27	0.22	0.12	0.00
<b>F4 Interest in Culture (<math>\alpha = 0.88</math>)</b>							
Q 21 I am interested in traditional culture ( <i>Noh</i> , <i>Kabuki</i> , <i>Sado</i> , <i>Ikebana</i> etc.).	0.08	0.16	0.05	0.67	0.12	0.10	0.19
Q 22 I want to have a further understanding of Japanese people, their culture and their way of life.	-0.07	0.26	0.05	0.66	0.10	0.20	0.08
Q 20 I want to watch Japanese movies, TV dramas and videos.	0.33	0.07	0.30	0.59	0.34	-0.06	0.03
Q 44 I want to write a letter to my Japanese friend(s).	0.12	0.12	0.11	0.57	0.24	0.14	0.07
Q 17 I want to sing and listen to Japanese (pop) songs and understand them.	0.39	0.33	0.19	0.43	0.36	-0.02	-0.08
<b>F5 Enthusiasm in Japanese Language Study (<math>\alpha = 0.95</math>)</b>							
Q 4 I like my Japanese language teachers.	0.02	0.26	-0.02	0.04	0.75	0.02	0.05
Q 3 I enjoy the Japanese class.	0.03	0.15	0.19	0.27	0.75	-0.01	0.10
Q 32 I like Japanese food.	0.27	0.09	0.27	0.19	0.60	0.05	0.01
Q 2 I enjoy the learning of Japanese language.	0.01	0.13	0.29	0.34	0.57	0.17	-0.05
Q 16 I am interested in Japanese fashion.	0.34	0.29	0.23	0.10	0.43	0.14	0.24
<b>F6 Knowledge and Exchange Orientation (<math>\alpha = 0.90</math>)</b>							
Q 28 It will help me gain new ideas and broaden my worldview.	0.09	0.25	0.05	0.18	-0.02	0.69	0.05
Q 29 Studying foreign languages is an important part of education.	0.09	-0.04	-0.14	-0.16	0.39	0.61	0.28
Q 30 I want to make Sri Lanka a technologically and economically developed country like Japan.	0.27	0.27	0.15	0.16	-0.17	0.60	0.09
Q 31 I want to be a bridge/mediator between Sri Lanka and Japan in cultural & international relations.	0.17	0.24	0.41	0.25	0.00	0.54	-0.12
Q 48 It will enable me to get self-esteem boost.	0.46	-0.03	0.15	0.26	0.19	0.49	-0.18
Q 33 I want to be friendly with Japanese people and knowing Japanese would enable me to communicate with them easily.	0.18	-0.04	0.30	0.37	0.31	0.46	-0.21
<b>F7 External Influence Orientation (<math>\alpha = 0.88</math>)</b>							
Q 34 My friends influenced me to learn Japanese.	-0.02	-0.03	-0.04	-0.11	0.11	0.06	0.71
Q 46 My parents urged me to study Japanese language.	0.16	-0.11	0.22	0.13	-0.14	-0.14	0.67
Q 47 Member/s of my family/ relative works in a Japanese related company or engages in activities related to Japan.	0.14	0.10	-0.06	0.26	-0.06	-0.06	0.58
Q 37 It will help me to get a promotion more easily in my future career.	0.21	0.12	0.13	0.01	0.18	0.32	0.54
Q 38 I think it is one of the most widely used languages in the Asian region.	0.03	0.22	0.02	0.05	0.05	0.39	0.49
Q 39 I like playing Japanese video and internet games.	0.42	0.08	0.16	0.26	0.24	0.00	0.45
Cumulative variance %	25.9	33.33	39.73	45.0	49.87	54.06	58.02

Table 2 : Inter-item correlation matrix

	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7
F1							
F2	0.39						
F3	0.32	0.26					
F4	0.48	0.58	0.40				
F5	0.47	0.47	0.46	0.62			
F6	0.51	0.43	0.35	0.46	0.44		
F7	0.45	0.25	0.22	0.34	0.32	0.29	

Note: All correlation items are significant at the 0.01 level.

Table 3 : Codes and definitions

	Code	Definition
1	Personal goals	Local/foreign employment, study, work and live in Japan
2	Learning experience	Ease/difficulty of acquisition, Attitudes towards foreign language learning, student pro-activeness towards learning
3	Attitudes towards Japan its culture and people	Traditional/popular culture, image of Japan and the Japanese, popularity of Japanese in Sri Lanka
4	L2 related motivation	Temporal evolution of motivation
5	External pressures/ incentives	Education system, influence of parents, siblings, relatives and peers, social recognition/treatment

education<sup>(8)</sup> and creates a highly competitive and exam-oriented context. Student perception of Japanese as an easy-to-score subject (*Ozaki, 2002*) due to the similarity in the sentence structure of their mother tongue and Japanese (*JF, 2009*), ease in pronunciation since Sinhala sound system has more sounds than Japanese were pointed out by all participants in the interview survey. Moreover, a high Z-score<sup>(9)</sup> for Japanese (U2, G3) make students opt for Japanese at the A/L examination. Higher loadings (0.73) seen in Q 8 'I wanted to get good marks at the A/L exam' reasons out students' choice motivation, and Q 10 'I studied Japanese at secondary/high school' reasons out their motivation to continue. However, the high correlation (refer Table 2) between F1 Incentive Orientation and F6 Knowledge and Exchange Orientation (0.51) shows that students are also aware of the importance of foreign language education suggesting that these two orientations are not mutually exclusive. Q 4 'I like my Japanese teachers' and Q 3 'I enjoy the Japanese class' (0.75) illustrate student attitudes towards the teacher and the class. Traditionally, teacher is a highly



respected figure in the general Sri Lankan society and this is further accentuated in the case of a foreign language such as Japanese as only a handful are able to teach it. Japanese learners perceive that their teacher should know everything, have strong leadership qualities (*Miyagishi*, 2001) placing utmost faith in the teacher and the teacher's instruction (*Wada*, 2007). Less pro-activeness in self study by half of the undergraduates interviewed (U1, U3, U5, U7) also implicates heavy reliance and confidence placed on the teacher for subject matter.

Quantitative (Q 21 'I am interested in traditional culture: *Noh*, *Kabuki*, *Sado*, *Ikebana* etc.') and qualitative data (all participants) reveal that interest in Japanese culture is largely dominated by a liking towards its traditional aspect, in contrast to motivation studies conducted in Singapore (*Guo & Okita*, 2001), and Taiwan (*Yang*, 2011) where interest in pop culture emerged as a distinct, individual factor. JF survey (2012) also places interest in *manga*, *anime* and J-pops as the 3<sup>rd</sup> motivator which spurs Japanese language learning around the world. The preference towards traditional culture among Sri Lankan students is a result of the traditional image promoted by the media (dramas such as '*Oshin*', '*Suzuran*'), Japanese text books, renowned works depicting Japan (popular novels such as '*Malagiya Aththo*', '*Mala-wunge Awurudu Da*', dramas having the influence of *Noh* and *Kabuki* such as '*Maname*' based on '*Rashomon*')<sup>(10)</sup> and its perception as unique. Moreover, several interview participants (U3, U5, U7, G2, G3, G10) pointed out the lack of information and less access to popular cultural artifacts as reasons for the negative attitude towards pop culture. For example, Japanese *anime* are rarely telecast on TV, *manga* are seldom for sale in bookshops and limited internet facilities and usage restrict easy access to them. Nonetheless, the interest in pop culture was seen as a means to enhance language knowledge. F4 Interest in Culture and F5 Enthusiasm in Japanese Language Study showed the highest correlation (0.62), indicating that students consider culture as an integral part of language study.

Q 24 'I want to pursue higher studies in Japan in the future' (0.81), Q 27 'I am interested in working in Japan after graduation' (0.80), and Q 25 'I want to live in Japan permanently in future' (0.80), reflect upon student goals. An important find-

ing is that student goals are not inbound but rather outbound towards the target language country. While local employment was a dominant motivator in the literature (*Guo & Okita, 2001; Hashino, 2000; Ikari, 2005; Narita, 1998; Nuibe et al., 1995; Onishi, 2010; Yang, 2011*) quantitative data of this study did not reflect on local employment suggesting that students attach more importance to working in Japan rather than finding employment locally. Nevertheless, the interview survey revealed finer details. All participants were positive with regard to studying in Japan (short/long term) whereas their opinion was at odds concerning employment and permanent residency (PR). Undergraduates interviewed were confident that there are many Japanese-related employment opportunities locally (U1, U2, U3, U4, U6, U7, U8) while graduates (G1, G2, G4, G5, G7, G8) were skeptical about ample opportunities. The lack of Japanese-related employment is repeatedly reported by JF (2009; 2012) as well. On the other hand, G4, G6 and G10 mentioned about a scarcity of high-ability human resources with a practical knowledge in Japanese to match the job market demands and said that “it’s not that jobs are unavailable, it’s simply we do not look for them properly”. Undergraduates’ lack of awareness of current job market trends caused by a dearth of vocational orientation or training especially at the high school level and graduates’ actual experiences in the industry may have caused this discrepancy of opinion. A similar kind of disagreement in opinion was seen with regard to PR in Japan. The majority of undergraduates (U2, U3, U4, U6, U7, U8) was of affirmative to the idea of settling down in Japan, whereas the majority of graduates (G1, G2, G3, G4, G5, G7, G8, G10) was of negative referring to the overly busy life in Japan, resulting stress and predominantly Japanese-speaking society which they referred to as ‘less-international’ and would limit the potential of them and their families.

Several other motivational dimensions emerged through the study though space limitations do not permit of a lengthy description. A desire to acquire more information on Japan, since students have limited access to such information except for their Japanese lessons, internet usage still being only 15% of the total population was highlighted by especially F2 Understanding Japan. F7 External Influence Orientation

is an embodiment of the influence by parents, siblings, peers and relatives and has a low correlation with F3 Goal Achievement (0.22) suggesting that student goals are more self-regulated and autonomous rather than being influenced by external parties. Furthermore, qualitative interviews shed light on a new dimension: the temporal evolution of motivation which could not be observed through the quantitative factor analysis. Although overall student motivation (undergraduates and graduates) increased when compared with the commencement of study through university, graduates witnessed fluctuations and decrease in their motivation as a result of contextual influences such as the low utility in the current job and lack of chances for further study. Findings of motivation research in South Asian contexts (*Hashino, 2000; Lukmani, 1972*) suggest that instrumental motivation is a better predictor of FL achievement when compared to integrative motivation. Therefore, I assume that F1 Incentive Orientation and F3 Goal Achievement which can be classified as sub dimensions of instrumental motivation might have a positive influence on Japanese language achievement of JFL students in Sri Lanka. Despite the fact that students are motivated to know more about current affairs in Japan (F2 Understanding Japan), and are interested in Japanese culture (F4 Interest in Culture), the current curriculum does not provide sufficient impetus. Moreover, predominantly teacher-centered classroom environment and teaching methodology prevent students from being autonomous.

## 6. Conclusion

Findings of this study show that student motivation to study Japanese constitutes of various dimensions and unique factors to the Sri Lankan context. Furthermore, a number of issues which need prompt attention emerged. As pointed out by the JF (2009, 2012), lack of employment for Japanese graduates has been a burning problem during the past few years. Yet, the findings of this study suggest that the actual problem rather lies elsewhere. Information regarding employment opportunities and prospective human resources available does not seem to circulate leaving the industry

and the Japanese language education sector unaware of the demands and the supply. Therefore, the need for creating a proper network between these parties is of prime importance. In addition, vocational orientation at high school level, vocational training in higher education institutions, and internship opportunities in the industry would ensure the future of JFL education. This would prevent students losing their motivation in learning Japanese even after they graduate and prevent students from opting for other lucrative subjects. Furthermore, incorporating pop culture and current affairs in the curriculum, providing information on pop culture would impart a complete knowledge about Japanese culture and society. Encouraging and providing necessary facilities i.e., internet facilities to promote pro-active learning among students will make them positive and more responsible towards their learning making them less dependent on the teacher. However, results of this study may be specific to the university level. Thus, future research may consider Japanese language students in the school level and in private language schools in order to improve these findings. Further research may also focus on how student motivation, particularly the liking towards traditional culture changes if students are provided with more exposure to pop culture such as opportunities to study and live in Japan.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the students of the Japanese language section, Department of Modern Languages, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka for their valuable support in conducting this survey. Assistance given by Tamara Beznosyuk on English expression is greatly appreciated. Also, I am grateful to my supervisors, Prof. Yeounsuk Lee and Prof. Kasuya Keisuke for the support given throughout.

## Notes

- (1) General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level (G.C.E. O/L) which is the middle school graduation/high school entrance exam and General Certificate of Education Advanced Level (G.C.E. A/L) exam which is the high school graduation/university entrance exam.
- (2) Student numbers according to JF survey 2,962 (1998), 4,241 (2003), 9,133 (2006), 12,430 (2009). However, a sudden drop (3,665) can be seen in 2012.
- (3) In the Maldives 41 and in Sri Lanka 18 students study Japanese per 10,000 people.
- (4) Source-Telecommunication Union, World Telecommunication/ICT Development Report and database, and World Bank estimates.
- (5) Sinhala is the majority language and one of the two official languages in Sri Lanka.
- (6) This procedure applies for French as well.
- (7) There are 15 national universities in Sri Lanka.
- (8) Total percentage of university entrants against the number of candidates is 12% in 2012.
- (9) Z-score is the statistical co-efficient of marks calculated considering the difficulty level of subjects and acts as a cut-off mark for university entrance.
- (10) Written by the eminent Sri Lankan writer Prof. Ediriweera Sarachchandra based on his experiences in Japan.

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- (ウダーラ・I・ディ シルヴァ／博士後期課程)