

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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