

A STUDY ON STUDENTS MOTIVATION IN LEARNING CHINESE AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN SRI LANKA AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING STRATEGIES

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This study examines student motivation in learning Chinese as a foreign language in Sri Lanka and explores effective teaching strategies to enhance the language learning process. With the increasing economic, political, and cultural exchanges between Sri Lanka and China, proficiency in Chinese has become crucial for communication and trade relationships. Understanding learner motivation is essential for providing academic support and improving students' Chinese communicative competency. The research focuses on first-year students in the Chinese department at the University of Kelaniya and weekend class learners at the Confucius Institute, representing different levels of learners in terms of age, gender, and professional qualifications. The study employs a combination of research methods, including questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations, to gather data and analyze students' motivations. Findings indicate that the motivations of Sri Lankan learners vary across dimensions such as gender, age, and proficiency in Chinese. Most students are motivated by employment prospects, followed by interest in the Chinese language itself. Additionally, interest in Chinese culture, communication with Chinese friends, travel to China, and other factors contribute to students' motivations. The study highlights the consistency of learner motivation among students and observes a higher motivation level among male students. Notably, female students show a greater interest in the teaching profession to become Chinese language teachers due to the shortage of qualified instructors in Sri Lanka. Based on the research findings, it is recommended that practical content related to teaching Chinese as a foreign language be introduced in university study programs. This will provide necessary training for students interested in becoming Chinese language teachers in Sri Lanka. By understanding students' motivations and tailoring teaching strategies accordingly, educators can effectively support students in their Chinese language learning journey and foster their proficiency in the language. Overall, this study emphasizes the significance of learner motivation in the acquisition of Chinese as a foreign language and highlights the need for appropriate teaching strategies to facilitate effective language learning in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Chinese language, Effective teaching strategies, foreign language learning, Sri Lanka, Students motivation.

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