

# Motivational Commercials

Assessing commercials aimed at supporting students' interest in language learning

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This study aims to assess the degree to which each of 14 video commercials stimulated 2 critical components of **student interest** in language learning: **ability beliefs** and **value**.

## Background

- Decline in **motivation** and **ability beliefs** in education are persistent issues. (Frenzel et al., 2012; Jacobs et al., 2002; Wigfield et al., 1997).
- However, **psychological interventions** have been capable of improving **motivation** and **ability beliefs**. (Hulleman & Harackiewicz, 2009; Yeager et al., 2016; Yeager et al., 2019).
- Harackiewicz et al. (2012) took a **value-based** approach to psychological intervention to support **motivation** and desire to re-engage with STEM education. It featured a **light touch**, **low cost**, and **sustainable impact**.
- This type of intervention may be underutilised, relative to more direct approaches (Hulleman et al., 2009).
- This study seeks to expand upon the work of Harackiewicz et al. (2012) in a new direction by utilizing **video commercials**, which also feature a **light touch** and **low cost**.

## Methods

- 14 commercials with Japanese subtitles were created using the whiteboard animation software *VideoScribe*.
- Commercials varied in length from 26 to 62 seconds, with an average of 42 seconds.
- Students ( $n = 394$ ) viewed 1 – 14 randomly selected commercials. They could quit at any point.
- After viewing each commercial, students answered a 4-question survey which utilized **5-point Likert scale** questions.
- Commercials targeted **ability beliefs**, **value**, and **effort** in order to support student interest in language learning.



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## Results

Commercial	Target	Length (sec)	Synopsis	Mean Interest	Viewers	Std Error
Lingua Franca	Value (employment / identity)	49	English has become the lingua franca of the world. In a business setting, you are more than likely to use it to communicate with other non-native speakers.	3.70724	228	0.06508
Interlanguage	Ability Beliefs / Effort (nature of language)	62	The development of language ability must necessarily pass through an intermediate stage of flawed production. So don't be shy, as practice is essential.	3.53219	233	0.06437
Comfort Zone	Value (increasing opportunities)	41	English is the key that will help you leave your comfort zone of familiar surroundings and unlock a variety of new opportunities.	3.52917	240	0.06343
Salary	Value (employment)	40	In Japan, individuals with English language skills command a 17% to 40% higher salary than those who lack it.	3.48144	229	0.06493
Choices	Value (increasing opportunities)	43	English will broaden your options after graduating from college, whether for travel, employment, meeting new people, or influencing others.	3.46848	230	0.06479
Study Time	Ability Beliefs / Effort (prior knowledge)	40	By the time you graduated high school, you had studied some 1,200 words in 800 hours of English classes. You know more than you think; take advantage of it.	3.44022	230	0.06479
Internet	Value (connecting to the world)	53	Most of the information available on the Internet is in English. If you are interested in the wider world, English is essential.	3.39914	233	0.06437
Accents	Ability Beliefs (nature of language)	40	Unlike Japanese, English is spoken around the world, and there is no single perfect accent—so don't let pronunciation be a barrier to your learning.	3.39209	234	0.06424
Children	Value (for your family)	36	English ability benefits not only you, but also the children you may someday have. Set an example for the people you love.	3.33983	231	0.06465
Your Chance	Effort (use time wisely)	38	University is a special time set aside for you to focus on learning. Many people are too busy to study after graduating, so don't let this chance pass you by.	3.32751	229	0.06493
You can do it, too!	Ability Beliefs / Effort (comparison with peers)	26	Other students at your university have improved their English in a short amount of time. Many have even studied abroad. If they can do it, so can you.	3.29933	223	0.0658
Tunnel	Value (employment)	51	Once you pass through this tunnel of education, you will probably look for a job. English ability will help you stand out from the crowd.	3.29221	231	0.06465
Communicating	Ability Beliefs / Effort (nature of language)	38	Willingness to communicate is more important than pronunciation or grammar. Don't worry about the small things.	3.18991	233	0.06437
What do we want?	Value / Ability Beliefs / Effort (general)	32	English will help you get the things you want in life. It is fundamentally no different from learning any other skill. You just need to decide to do it.	3.17065	230	0.06479

## Implications

- Content delivery **style** may have been more important than theoretical framing in supporting student interest in these commercials.
- Commercial **length** did not adversely affect student interest.
- Viewing the commercials generated interest in most students, although the duration of that interest is unknown.

## Future Research

- Determine if **high school** and **junior high school** students' interest in language learning can be increased by viewing commercials.
- Determine which **specific messages** and content delivery **styles** are the most effective at supporting student interest **long-term**.
- Determine ideal **frequency of viewing** motivational commercials to ensure **lasting positive impact**.
- Improve upon technical and visual aspects of commercials.