Motivational Practices for Enhancing EFL Learners' Self-Determination and the L2 Self

Katsuyuki KONNO
Shizuoka Institute of Science and Technology

Abstract

Although much attention has been paid to the concept of the ideal L2 self, there is still a lack of discussion on how language pedagogy helps learners develop it. The present study investigated how the L2 self of Japanese EFL learners can be changed through motivational interventions in university English classrooms. Focusing on the relationship between the L2 self and intrinsic/extrinsic motivation, interventions were designed that incorporated group work and informative feedback each of which was considered to encourage learners’ self-determination (intrinsic motivation) and internalization (extrinsic motivation). Interventions were administered to 10 classes of a reading and presentation course. Five-point Likert scale Questionnaires were completed by learners in the first and last lessons to measure ideal and ought-to L2 selves, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, as well as three psychological needs (autonomy, competence, and relatedness). The result showed that not all changes were statistically significant, and the effect of the intervention on these learners’ L2 selves and motivational variables varied across the classes. However, comparisons of effect sizes demonstrated that fostering intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation in English classrooms is one possible way to nurture Japanese EFL learners’ L2 selves. It was suggested that the perception that learners study English because it’s interesting and valuable is an important source of the ideal L2 self.

1. Introduction

It has been widely recognized that people in a globalizing world should learn English. Many Japanese English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners know that they need to learn English, not just because it is a school subject, but also because they need English to participate in the global society. However, these learners are not always motivated to learn English. One reason may be that they are mainly motivated by external pressures, such as expectations from parents and teachers or social demands. Many of these learners feel they need a very high TOEIC score, but they do not understand why they need it. Yashima (2009) suggested what they lack is a clear future vision of themselves as English users. Because they cannot imagine what kind of English users they want to become, these learners do not recognize why they need to learn English. This
reduces their motivation to learn English.

To solve this problem, researchers and language teachers have started focusing their attention on the L2 motivational self system, proposed by Dörnyei (2005). This framework of L2 motivation has three dimensions. One is the ideal L2 self, which is a powerful driving force for language learners to approximate their own ideal L2-using role model, or the L2-using self. With the clear ideal L2 self, L2 learners will be motivated to learn the L2 to reduce the gap between the current self and the envisioned L2-using self. The second dimension, the ought-to L2 self refers to the self that L2 learners feel they ought to become. This type of language self usually comes from a sense of duty, responsibility and obligation in order to avoid disappointing their parents or falling behind their friends through not learning English. The third dimension is L2 learning experience, which refers to L2 learners’ motivation aroused by the immediate learning situation.

If many Japanese EFL learners lack a clear vision of what kind of English user they want to become in the future, fostering the L2 self can help solve this problem. However, recent studies have put more weight on modeling the relationship between the L2 self and related variables rather than on finding how the L2 self can be developed pedagogically. Therefore, the purpose of the present study is to design and conduct motivational interventions in English classrooms, and to investigate how the L2 self and other motivational variables can be changed.

2. Background

2.1 Ideal and Ought-to L2 Self

Since Dörnyei (2005) proposed the L2 motivational self system, a number of studies have been conducted to reveal how important the ideal and ought-to L2 selves are to language learning. One consistent finding is that the ideal L2 self predicts motivated L2 learning behavior (e.g., language choice and effort expended) of L2 learners in various EFL contexts (e.g., Csizer & Kormos, 2009; Ryan, 2009; Taguchi, Magid, & Papi, 2009). While the ideal L2 self was confirmed to play an important part in L2 learning, there are two issues that need to be addressed. First, these studies have not shed light on the role of the ought-to L2 self in L2 learning and its relationship with the ideal L2 self. Previous studies of the possible and feared selves, each of which is a part of the ideal L2 self and the ought-to L2 self respectively, found that students’ school performance is improved when their possible and feared selves are closely balanced (Oyserman, Bybee, & Terry, 2006; Ruovo & Markus, 1992). This indicates that there might be a positive relationship between the ideal and ought-to L2 selves. Then, Konno (2011a) explored the relationship among Japanese university students’ ideal and ought-to L2 selves, their effort in learning English. He found that both the ideal and ought-to L2 selves needed to be strong enough for Japanese EFL learners to exert the highest effort, revealing that the ought-to L2 self also affects successful English learning positively. The second issue is that it is still ambiguous whether language learners’ L2 self can be fostered through classroom instruction. In other words, how
language pedagogy influences the formation of the L2 self has not been discussed. Konno (2011b) investigated whether Japanese university students' L2 selves change over 10 English lessons in a university, but failed to observe significant changes in these motivational variables. However, after dividing these students into groups according to the levels of the ideal L2 self, he found that students with very strong L2 self showed decreasing tendencies, while students with very low L2 self and motivation displayed increasing tendencies. This suggests that the L2 self can change over time.

Changes in either the L2 self or motivation can be can be explained using the trait and state dichotomy. Motivational variables can be classified into either state motivation or trait motivation (Tremblay, Goldberg, & Gardner, 1995). State motivation refers to a motivational state that can fluctuate over time from situation to situation. Changes in this type of motivation are believed to be caused by an interaction with situational factors (Dömyei, 2005; Isoda, 2008). Trait motivation refers to a motivational state that is consistently stable and generalized. The L2 self, as well as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, is usually considered as a trait motivational variable because it is formed through the cultural and social context and is likely to be generalized in one's mind (Taguchi et al., 2009). As Gardner, Masgoret, Tennant, and Mhich (2004) showed, trait motivation is unlikely to change over time. However, previous studies demonstrated that trait motivation, or intrinsic motivation in this case, can be manipulated through well-planned pedagogical interventions in the classroom (e.g., Hiromori, 2006; Tanaka, 2005). Then, such interventions can be effective for developing the ideal L2 self in the classroom environment.

2.2 Motivational Practice in the Classroom

Deci and Ryan's (1985) self-determination theory (SDT) has become the most widely accepted motivational theory in SLA studies, ever since Noels, Clément and Pelletier (1999) showed that the framework of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in SDT can be applied to SLA research. According to Deci and Ryan, intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation lie on a continuum based on the degree of self-determination. Intrinsic motivation refers to motivation derived from a person's own genuine interest and enjoyment in performing a task. Extrinsic motivation is divided into three subtypes. The most self-determined form of extrinsic motivation is identified regulation, which refers to a motive deriving from the value of a task and its relevance to one's own personal development. Introjected regulation is the second most self-determined form of motivation, and refers to motivation coming from one's own responsibility or perception of guilt for not doing a task. External regulation is the least self-determined form of extrinsic motivation, and is regulated by external rewards or threats. Amotivation refers to the state of a person who has no motivation. Although these motivational subtypes have different characteristics, Koestner and Losier (2002) demonstrated that both of intrinsic motivation and identified regulation are a crucial factor that positively influences outcomes of learning and performance.

Ryan and Deci (2002) argued that people will become more self-determined when the
following three psychological needs are satisfied: the need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. They also indicate that extrinsic motivation can be more self-determined when learners internalize external values. This internalization occurs when these needs are fulfilled.

Japanese researchers (e.g., Hiromori & Tanaka, 2006; Tanaka, 2005; Tanaka & Hiromori, 2007) have practiced pedagogical interventions to satisfy the three psychological needs and attempted to develop their students' motivation in the classroom. For example, Tanaka (2005) practiced his intervention during a 20-day session for a group presentation in his high school English class. He incorporated group work as the main part of his practice, and encouraged the learners to prepare for the presentation spontaneously, cooperating with other group members. This was expected to fulfill the sense of autonomy. In addition, group work was designed to promote a sense of coherence among the learners in the group. Through this, they could help each other under the same group objective, so the perceived competence and relatedness were considered to be supported. In the end, intrinsic motivation increased significantly. Tanaka then classified these learners into groups according to their motivational profiles, and found that there was quite a large increase in intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in those whose motivation was low.

Tanaka and Hiromori (2007) also conducted motivational interventions incorporating group work during a presentation activity. Following Tanaka (2005), they attempted to stimulate the learners' sense of autonomy by encouraging them to self-regulate their learning and to prepare the presentation through a five-week group work session. During the interventions, they gave the learners as much informative feedback as possible to support their perception of competence. It was hoped that the learners feel a sense of coherence through group work in which they helped each other and shared the same objectives. Their results showed that both intrinsic motivation and introjected regulation increased significantly. They also found a significant increase in their learners' perceptions of autonomy, competence and relatedness. Moreover, changes in autonomy were most highly correlated with changes in intrinsic motivation, indicating that autonomy plays a very important role in fostering intrinsic motivation (e.g., Hiromori & Tanaka, 2006; Noels, 2009).

These studies demonstrated two motivational strategies that are effective for motivating Japanese EFL learners. First, they showed that group work may be effective both in satisfying psychological needs and in developing intrinsic motivation. During group work, learners are encouraged to organize their individual work in self-regulated or autonomous ways, such that they can work collaboratively with other members in order to achieve the group goal and not fall behind. This helps to satisfy the three psychological needs. The second strategy is informative feedback. According to Ryan (1982), if feedback is positive and informative enough, learners will realize what they can do now, what they have achieved, and what they can do to make their performance better next time. The effects of informative feedback on EFL learners' motivation were confirmed by Hiromori (2006) and Tanaka (2010). In conclusion, the studies reviewed above have demonstrated that intrinsic motivation (and extrinsic motivation) can be fostered through motivational interventions that apply these two strategies.
2.3 The Context of the Study

Conceptually, the L2 self theory and SDT share the similarity that internalization and integration of external motives or regulations play a central role (e.g., Dörnyei, 2005; Ryan & Deci, 2002). Dörnyei (2005) further admitted that the ideal L2 self corresponds to self-determined motivation, while the ought-to L2 self is related to less internalized extrinsic motivation. This draws support from the following studies. Yashima (2009) found moderate correlations between subtypes of intrinsic and self-determined extrinsic motivation and the ideal L2 self. Konno (2011b) also reported that among five motivational subtypes, changes in identified regulation showed the highest correlations with changes in the ideal L2 self and effort expenditure, while introjected regulation was correlated with the ought-to L2 self. Using structural equation modeling (SEM), Noels (2009) proposed that internalizing values (i.e., identified regulation) and interests (i.e., intrinsic motivation) in language learning help learners visualize themselves as members of the target language community. From these findings, it can be concluded that learners' perceptions that their learning English corresponds with their interests and values is important for developing their ideal L2 selves.

Considering these findings, it was assumed that an English classroom experience in which learners perceive that they are learning English because it is enjoyable and valuable provides appropriate conditions for developing the ideal L2 self. In addition, previous studies (e.g., Hiromori & Tanaka, 2007; Tanaka, 2005) developed learners' intrinsic motivation as trait using motivational strategies. They implied that a motivational intervention incorporating group work and providing informative feedback is effective to facilitate learners' internalization and self-determination and, as a result, to develop learners' ideal L2 self, which is also a trait variable. The purpose of the present study was to design a motivational intervention and to investigate how it affects Japanese EFL learners' psychological needs, self-determination, and the ideal L2 self.

3. Method

3.1 Participants

A total of 58 first-year university students participated in the study. They were sampled from two different English classes at the Department of Information Sciences and Arts. One was a reading class for novice students \( (n = 29) \). The other was an English presentation class for advanced students \( (n = 29) \). Both the reading and presentation classes were mandatory for all first-year students. The students were assigned to both classes based on their TOEIC Bridge score (reading class: \( M = 99.66, SD = 2.27 \); presentation class: \( M = 129.66; SD = 1.61 \)).

This study adopted a repeated-measures design because the research purpose was to examine changes in motivational variables over time during the 10-lesson motivational intervention by collecting the data twice using questionnaires. Learners who did not complete the
questionnaire both times were excluded, leaving a total of 49 learners (n = 24 in the reading class and n = 25 in the presentation class) whose responses were available for further analysis.

3.2 Description of English Classes

In the reading class, learners usually read the main passage in each unit of the textbook and completed comprehension questions either in the textbook or prepared by the teacher. These learners also learned how to summarize English passages, and were required to write the various types of summaries of passages.

The presentation class was composed of two phases. During the first five lessons, learners read aloud model presentations in order to learn how presentations are organized and carried out. As a homework assignment, they were also required to write short paragraphs about presentation topics in the textbook in order to learn how to write the script for a presentation. In the latter five lessons, the learners wrote their own original presentation scripts, prepared presentation slides based on them, and practiced using their scripts and slides.

In both classes, homework assignments were given to learners every week. The students were graded based on the assignments mentioned above and the mid-term and final exams. In the reading class, the mid-term and final exams were based on the content of the textbook. In the presentation class, learners recited model presentations for the mid-term exam and gave their own presentation for the final exam.

3.3 Materials

The following three motivational constructs were measured through five-point Likert scale questionnaires: psychological needs, motivational subtypes, and the L2 self. The learners' psychological needs were measured using three subscales, namely perceptions of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, with a total of 11 items. Perception of autonomy (e.g., "I always have a lot of choices in an English learning activity."): Time 1: α = .70; Time 2: α = .62) was evaluated by three items that asked whether learners were provided with freedom of choice in their classroom. Perception of competence (e.g., "I believe I can do well in English classes, if I try."): Time 1: α = .71; Time 2: α = .70) was assessed using four items that asked whether they felt satisfaction and accomplishment. The four items measuring perception of relatedness (e.g., "In English classes, I'm doing well in a collaborative way."): Time 1: α = .78; Time 2: α = .84) asked learners about the atmosphere in the English classrooms and their relationships with their classmates. These items were adapted from Hiromori (2006).

Motivational subtypes were assessed using a total of nine items measuring the following three subscales: intrinsic motivation (e.g., "I'm studying English because I enjoy the feeling of acquiring knowledge about English."): Time 1: α = .83; Time 2: α = .82), identified regulation (e.g., "I'm studying English because it is good for my personal development."): Time 1: α = .82; Time 2: α = .86), and introjected regulation (e.g., "I'm studying English because I will feel ashamed if I
can't speak English.'': Time 1: α = .47; Time 2: α = .63). Unfortunately, Cronbach's alpha for introjected regulation at the first data-collecting point was incredibly low. However, the present study decided to include this motivational subtype in the further analysis because introjected regulation, which reflects a certain level of internalization, is related to the ideal and ought-to L2 selves (Konno, 2011a, 2011b). Each subscale comprised three items adapted from Hiromori (2006) and Noels et al. (1999). Scales for external regulation and amotivation were not included because the main focus of this study was placed on fostering self-determination (i.e., intrinsic motivation) and internalization (i.e., identified and introjected regulation) by administering motivational interventions.

For the L2 Self measures, the study assessed the ideal L2 self (e.g., "I often imagine myself as someone who is able to speak English."): Time 1: α = .84; Time 2: α = .84) and the ought-to L2 self (e.g., "Learning English is necessary because people surrounding me expect me to do so.": Time 1: α = .78; Time 2: α = .86). Each of the subscales comprised four items. The questionnaire also measured L2 learning effort (e.g., "I'm working hard at learning English.": Time 1: α = .71; Time 2: α = .81) using four items. All of these items were adapted from Konno (2011a, 2011b) which were originally developed based on Ryan (2009) and Taguchi et al. (2009).

3.4 Description of the Motivational Intervention

The motivational interventions were designed to incorporate group work and provide informative feedback, and it was modified for each of the English classrooms as follows. All learners were encouraged to make groups with anyone in the classroom. To foster the perception of autonomy, learners were given opportunities to work in a group where they direct their own learning and involve themselves actively in decision-making processes. In the presentation class, learners engaged in group activities to show their performance to other group members and exchange peer feedback in order to help each other learn various techniques for successful English presentations, including paragraph organization, slide design, grammatical expressions, pronunciation, accents and stresses. They were provided with guidelines for peer feedback, but how they managed their group work was up to the students. Thus, a highly autonomous learning environment was created.

Group work was utilized in the reading class in a similar way. Since most of these learners were not highly proficient readers, they needed assistance with reading passages and comprehension. In groups, these learners were encouraged to read the textbook together with their group members without becoming anxious. They were encouraged to manage their reading processes in their own way. This helped build a sense of cooperation and flexibility in their reading processes, leading to a higher sense of self-determination. Learners were also required to write a summary of each passage as a homework assignment based on what they learned during the class. They were also expected to read each other's summaries and give peer feedback to improve their summary writing skills. Therefore, not only were they responsible for their own
work, but they were also responsible for the work of the other group members.

A sense of competence was fostered by giving positive and informative feedback. In the presentation class, the teacher gave feedback on every script, slide and performance in every lesson. The teacher always commented on learners’ scripts as clearly and informatively as possible on what learners achieved and what they could do to improve their performance in the future. The teacher also gave to learners feedback on grammar, vocabulary their presentation slides with the hope that it can be a good hint for the next presentation. In each lesson, five to six learners were chosen to perform their presentation in front of the class. After each presentation, the teacher praised the good points in their performance and made suggestions on how they could improve their skills. In the reading class, informative feedback was given on the learners’ summaries of each passage.

As mentioned above, peer feedback was also incorporated in both classes. Using the guide and evaluation criteria prepared by the teacher, learners exchanged constructive feedback with other group members. They also filled in an evaluation sheet, and gave it to their members. This informative feedback was intended to reinforce learners’ perceptions of competence.

A sense of relatedness was hypothesized to be fostered through various processes in group work. As explained above, the learners were involved in various learning activities while working in a group. It was assumed that the learners’ sense of relatedness was stimulated both directly and indirectly through their collaboration with other group members. Moreover, during group work, the teachers walked around the classroom and gave feedback and hints to help the learners make progress. Learners’ sense of relatedness was supported in this way.

3.5 Procedure

The study took place during regular class periods and motivational interventions lasted for 10 lessons in the reading and presentation classes. The intervention was compatible with the pre-planned classroom instruction based on the syllabus. The questionnaire was administered at the beginning and the end of the study to monitor changes in motivational variables over time.

3.6 Statistical Analysis

The data were subjected to paired sample t tests to see significant increases or decreases in motivational variables. Since the two classes were essentially different from each other, these classes seemed not to be comparable. Therefore, a direct comparison between the groups was not carried out, and the study focused on the effect of the motivational interventions in each class. The effect size, r, was also calculated to interpret how large the effect of this study’s interventions was.
4. Result

4.1 Verification of Regression to the Mean Effect

Because this study adopted a repeated-measures design, the regression to the mean effect was examined on the basis of Rocconi and Ethington (2009), which refers to an erroneous increase or decrease of variables unexpectedly produced by the treatment. Negative correlations between the pre-test score and the difference between the pre-test and post-test scores are indicative of the effect. The result showed that no negative correlations were found (correlations ranged from .05 to .59 in the reading class; from .15 to .49 in the presentation class), and thus no regression to the mean effect was detected.

4.2 The Analysis of the Reading Class

Table 1 summarizes the descriptive statistics of the motivational variables of the learners in the reading class. In this class, most of the variables showed upward tendencies. Among them, effort, the ideal L2 self, intrinsic motivation, identified regulation, and the perception of autonomy demonstrated relatively large mean differences, ranging from about .40 to .50.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Time 1</th>
<th>Time 2</th>
<th>t (23)</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>LL</th>
<th>UL</th>
<th>r</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effort</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>-2.98</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-0.82</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal L2 self</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>-1.83</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-0.82</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ought-to L2 self</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>-1.94</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-0.65</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>-2.79</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-0.85</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identified</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>-2.92</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-0.83</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introjected</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>-2.40</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>-0.55</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>-2.81</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-0.68</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>-0.79</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>-0.34</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relatedness</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>-0.38</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Intrinsic = intrinsic motivation; Identified = identified regulation, Introjected = introjected regulation.

Table 1 also displays the results of t tests. In terms of the three psychological needs, the perception of autonomy showed a significant increase with a large effect. This suggests that group work with cooperative reading activities and opportunities for self-direction worked positively for those who are not highly proficient in reading. Perceived competence did not increase significantly. However, according to the effect size, motivational interventions probably had some
positive effect on perceived competence. Perceived relatedness did not show any change, indicating that motivational interventions did not have an impact on this variable.

As for motivational subtypes, all of them showed a statistically significant increase. Among them, intrinsic motivation and identified regulation produced a large effect, indicating that large increases were observed through the intervention. This suggests that motivational interventions designed for this study had a large impact on these learners’ internalization and self-determination, which was in line with Tanaka (2005) and Tanaka and Hiromori (2007).

Finally, with respect to the L2 self, changes in ideal and ought-to L2 selves did not reach statistical significance. However, medium effect sizes were found for the changes in these two variables. It can be said that if EFL learners found that learning English is interesting and enjoyable (i.e., intrinsic motivation) and valuable (i.e., identified regulation), they would start visualizing their future L2 selves or at least imagining themselves using English in a certain situation. The result showed that motivational interventions had a potential to make it happen.

As for effort, the result showed that the level of effort expenditure increased significantly with a large effect size. Konno (2011b) showed that there were significant relationships between changes in intrinsic motivation and identified regulation and changes in L2 selves. Thus, this suggests that in addition to medium-sized changes in L2 selves, large changes in intrinsic and extrinsic motivation contribute to a large increase in English learning effort.

### 4.3 The Analysis of the Presentation Class

The result of the descriptive statistics is summarized in Table 2. Again, most of the variables again displayed increasing tendencies overall.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Time 1</th>
<th>Time 2</th>
<th>t (24)</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>LL</th>
<th>UL</th>
<th>r</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effort</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>-2.41</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-0.45</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal L2 self</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>-1.26</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>-0.53</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ought-to L2 self</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>-1.90</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>-0.54</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>-1.58</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>-0.21</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identified</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>-0.58</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introjected</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>-2.34</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>-0.50</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>-4.62</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-0.83</td>
<td>-0.32</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>-0.16</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relatedness</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>-0.63</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>-0.30</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Intrinsic = intrinsic motivation; Identified = identified regulation, Introjected = introjected regulation.
Table 2 also shows the result of t tests and effect sizes. With respect to the three psychological needs, only the change in the perception of autonomy was statistically significant, and also showed a large effect size. As was demonstrated in the reading class and in previous studies (e.g., Tanaka, 2005; Tanaka & Hiromori, 2007), incorporating group work and constructive feedback into English presentation class ensured these learners' satisfaction of their need for autonomy, which plays a key role in fostering self-determination. Unexpectedly, the perception of competence slightly decreased with a small effect size, which was not statistically significant. This indicates that providing group work and giving informative feedback did not work for these learner's self-confidence in an expected way. There was also an increase in the perception of relatedness albeit with a small effect size suggesting that the intervention worked positively for the cohesiveness of these learners, however this did not reach statistical significance. Again, this study's interventions did not work as expected for their cohesiveness and cooperativeness.

In terms of motivational subtypes, not all were statistically significant. Intrinsic motivation showed an increasing tendency, but was not statistically significant. However, the effect was medium-sized, indicating that there was a considerable change in this variable. Surprisingly, identified regulation slightly decreased, although not significantly, and almost no effect was confirmed. The results indicated that these learners did not find learning English valuable through these interventions. Only introjected regulation displayed a significant increase with a moderately-sized effect.

As for the L2 self variables, a significant change with a moderately-sized effect was obtained for English learning effort but not for the ideal and ought-to L2 selves. This unexpected result was probably due to the fact that these interventions did not have an expected impact on learners' intrinsic motivation and identified regulation. However, the ideal and ought-to L2 selves showed a considerable size of effects: the former obtained a small effect, while the latter displayed a medium-sized effect. Again, this indicates that motivational interventions in this class have a potential to influence these learners' motivation and L2 selves.

5. Discussion

In this study, pedagogical interventions incorporating motivational strategies (e.g., group work and informative feedback) were designed and investigated as to how they affect Japanese EFL learners' L2 selves, motivational subtypes, and psychological needs. Admittedly, the effects of the motivational interventions on Japanese EFL learners' L2 self were not clearly supported, since the ideal L2 self, and the ought-to L2 self, did not change significantly in both English classes. Although some variables failed to show statistically significant changes, the results constitute empirical evidence of a possible association between motivational subtypes and the L2 self. The ideal L2 self showed a slightly larger increase in the reading class than in the
presentation class. Evidence supporting this was found in both groups: in the reading class, both intrinsic motivation and identified regulation increased with a large effect, while in the presentation class, intrinsic motivation showed a minimal increase and identified regulation did not change at all. The ought-to L2 self, on the other hand, increased with a medium effect consistently, although these increases were not statistically significant. A close examination of the changes in motivational subtypes reveals that introjected regulation increased significantly in both classes. These tendencies confirm Konno (2011b), who found that self-determined motivational subtypes are strongly related to the ideal L2 self, whereas less self-determined motivational subtypes are firmly associated with the ought-to L2 self. Therefore, it is suggested that the L2 self and intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of Japanese EFL learners changed together in a theoretical way.

The result also confirmed that motivational subtypes and psychological needs are also associated as expected. In the reading class, increases in intrinsic motivation and identified regulation were supported by a clear increase in the perception of autonomy and an increasing tendency of the perception of competence. On the other hand, in the presentation class, the perception of autonomy increased, whereas the perception of competence showed a decreasing tendency. Although the perception of autonomy may be the most important need to be satisfied for self-determination, the perception of competence is also as important a source for self-determination as the perception of autonomy (Noels, 2009; Ryan & Deci, 2002).

Furthermore, the nature of these classes contributed to different tendencies of motivational variation in the two classrooms. Learners in the presentation class needed to prepare English compositions and presentations and show these to their group in every lesson. In addition, group work continued through all 10 lessons, and these learners were required to give feedback to their group members’ regarding language forms and their performances. Although they were provided with freedom to plan how they work, it can be assumed that the learners perceived that these activities were strictly controlled and probably demanding. Thus, the intervention caused some learners to see these activities as a duty, but not as interesting and valuable. Moreover, some activities, such as preparing the presentation scripts, giving feedback to others on language forms, and giving presentations, usually require relatively high English proficiency, as learners strive to give a good presentation. However, these learners didn’t have ample opportunities to brush up their English skills due to the course structure, despite receiving instructions and feedback on language forms from their teacher. This probably led them to lose some confidence in their linguistic ability. As such, they were disappointed at their current self and failed to visualize their future self clearly.

On the other hand, in the reading class, the reading activities proved suitable. The main task for these learners was to read the text, complete the comprehension questions, and learn how to summarize the text effectively. They could do these activities as a group and they were allowed to manage the execution of these tasks. Hence, they had more freedom and control in classroom
activities than the presentation class did. Additionally, the group work appeared to help them scaffold their reading ability and proficiency. These factors probably led learners to perceive the collaborative group work as helpful, stimulating, and interesting, allowing them to feel comfortable learning and using English, contributing to increases in their self-determined regulations and the development of the ideal L2 self.

The results of this study highlight two important implications for the classroom. First, trait motivational variables can be molded by classroom practices. Isoda (2008) argues that how learners evaluate the classroom environment can affect both trait and state motivation. If a motivational intervention can influence learners’ evaluation of the learning environment, even trait motivation can change. Therefore, the development of EFL learners’ L2 selves is affected by fostering their self-determination and internalization, or encouraging EFL learners to perceive English learning as interesting (intrinsic motivation) and valuable (identified regulation). These two motivational substrates can be important sources for EFL learners to visualize their own future English using selves. Secondly, the result showed that these motivational strategies do not work in a similar way across different conditions. So, simply incorporating these strategies in the classroom does not guarantee the expected outcomes. Strategies and activities should always be carefully adjusted and modified to suit the learning conditions.

Two interesting but surprising results concern the learners’ sense of relatedness and their introjected regulation. First, the intervention did not foster a higher sense of relatedness. One explanation for this is the lack of an opportunity to produce a group outcome. For example, in Tanaka (2005) who reported an increase of learners’ perceived relatedness, they performed a group presentation in the end of the study. On the other hand, this study required learners to produce an individual outcome after collaborative group work. This may have contributed to the lack of cohesiveness in a group, preventing relatedness from changing. Second, introjected regulation and the ought-to L2 self showed consistent increasing tendencies, both of which share the following concepts: 1) a sense of responsibility and 2) the need for meeting expectations from others. In addition to reasons discussed above, all the activities were a part of the regular curriculum that all learners had to complete. Moreover, group work is sometimes associated with responsibility, especially when learners are grouped with people they do not know. However, introjected regulation and the ought-to L2 self does not always affect L2 learning negatively (e.g., Konno, 2011a; 2011b). Thus, the development of these two motivational variables does not necessarily have a negative impact on Japanese EFL learners.

6. Concluding Remarks

Unfortunately, a clear effect of motivational intervention on Japanese EFL learners’ L2 self was not observed in this study. However, the result demonstrated that intrinsic motivation and
extrinsic motivation play a potential role of in the development of the L2 self. More specifically, learners’ perceptions that they learn English because it is enjoyable and valuable are potential sources of the ideal L2 self. It is important for English teachers to support their students’ self-determination and internalization through daily classroom practices. This encourages Japanese EFL learners to visualize their English using selves and to work towards reaching that ideal.

The following pedagogical implications can be drawn from the results. First, teachers should carefully adjust and modify motivational strategies taking full account of learners’ characteristics, proficiency levels and needs, and classroom environments. As the results showed, motivational interventions do not always work in the same way. Interventions need to be optimized from situation to situation. Moreover, in some cases, it is necessary to modify learning activities, learning contents and even the syllabus itself, in order to make the intervention successful in a certain situation. Otherwise, the motivational intervention may have a negative impact on learners’ motivation. For example, learners in the presentation class were to give presentation and feedback on others’ language forms and performance, both of which probably invoked a sense of duty and overtaxed their English proficiency at the time. This may have led learners to lose confidence and fail to visualize their future language using selves. Another implication is that activities that require a group outcome should always be assigned when learners engage in group work. By comparing the present study with the previous studies such as Tanaka (2005), the results showed that group work resulting in an individual outcome is not as effective for stronger group cohesiveness as group work that results in a group outcome.

Finally, four limitations of the present study should be considered for further research. First, the present study was limited by its small sample size. It is necessary to replicate this study in a different context with a larger sample size to draw a more conclusive result. Secondly, the motivational interventions in the present study were limited to two strategies and these were not completely localized in the two research conditions. Future studies should design more strategies of varying types with lots of flexibility to adjust to the classroom situation. The third limitation was that the classes where the research was conducted, was limited to reading and presentation classes. Pedagogical interventions may function differently in different classroom contexts. Finally, this study did not include a control group. To be obtain more reliable and strict results, inclusion of a control group is necessary.

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my gratitude to the reviewers and Adam Jenkins for their insightful comments and suggestions.
References


205


