

What Makes Good Language Learners? A Study of EFL Students' Motivational Profiles

Tsutomu Koga*
Ryukoku University

Katsuyuki Konno
Ryukoku University

Abstract

This study attempted to reveal Japanese EFL learners' motivational profiles through cluster analysis and to examine how these profiles were interrelated with communication variables. This approach made it possible to offer a clearer picture of so-called good language learners from the perspectives of motivation to learn and willingness to use the target language. The results of the cluster analysis identified four distinct groups of learners. Among them, two groups exhibited lower motivational and communication variables, which is not surprising in EFL learning contexts where English is not necessary for future living. By contrast, the remaining two groups showed higher motivational and communication variables, but one group showed higher extrinsic motivation and the ought-to L2 self than the other. A novel finding of this study pertained to the coexistence of intrinsic motivation/ideal L2 self and extrinsic motivation/ought-to L2 self, which was once believed to conflict with each other.

In the current Japanese English educational context, communication-oriented teaching methods are strongly recommended to meet the demands of this globalized society. However, the traditional teaching approaches are still widely used to help learners achieve their external learning objectives in the classroom. In this context, teachers are expected to deal with learners with diverse psychological needs and characteristics. For instance, some learners are intrinsically motivated to study and use English for their personal pleasures. Classified as good or ideal language learners, they can autonomously engage in learning activities and initiate communication in English (e.g., Noels, 2001; MacIntyre, 2007). In contrast, other learners are extrinsically motivated, but highly willing to communicate, as they may tend to focus on the development of communication ability to receive better school grades or better jobs, particularly in an English as a foreign language (EFL) context like Japan. Traditional linear statistical procedures interfere with close investigations of this type of learner because they overlook the interplay of multiple variables affecting learning in complex manners. Although cluster analysis has not been commonly used in L2 motivation research (e.g., Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005; Papi & Teimouri, 2014; Yamamori et al., 2003), it enables researchers to identify distinct and shared patterns of interrelated variables learners demonstrate in non-linear ways at a micro level. Therefore, this present study first attempts to uncover Japanese learner profiles by focusing on motivational variables (e.g., intrinsic and extrinsic motivation) through cluster analysis and then examines how different motivational patterns are interrelated with communication variables (i.e., willingness to communicate, communication apprehension, and perceived communication competence). This approach seeks to better understand complex learner characteristics in the Japanese EFL context.



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Website: Hawaii Pacific University <http://www.hpu.edu>.

*Email: a19015@mail.ryukoku.ac.jp. Address: 1-5 Yokotani, Seta Oe-cho, Otsu-shi, Shiga 520-2194, Japan.

L2 Motivational Research

No one doubts the claim that motivated learners are by and large good language learners. This claim, however, does not fully explain why some learners are more likely and efficiently able to acquire the target language than others, with the same quantity of motivation. To look deeply into successful language learners, the quality of motivation must be considered. A groundbreaking theory of motivation was proposed by Gardner (1985) who made an integrative and instrumental distinction of motivation. Learners are integratively oriented if they are highly willing to become a member of the target language community whereas instrumentally oriented learners learn the language for utilitarian purposes such as obtaining a better grade or occupation, and the former tend to outperform the latter (Gardner & Lambert, 1959). Approximately two decades later, considering the limitations of this dichotomous distinction of motivation and the nature of integrative motivation which presupposes the existence of the target language community (Gardner, 1985), Csizér and Dörnyei (2005) first introduced the L2 motivational self system to account for unique motivational patterns peculiar to the Hungarian FL context. Based on their findings of the cluster analysis, Dörnyei (2005) put forward three dimensions of motivational factors in the model of the L2 motivational self system: (a) ideal L2 self which represents a specific feature of one's ideal self, (b) ought-to L2 self which refers to the end-state that one should become to avoid negative consequences, and (c) L2 learning experience which refers to situation-specific motivation that is linked with one's immediate learning environment and experience (pp. 105-106). Many motivational researchers have explored relationships among various motivational components. In Japan, for instance, Taguchi et al. (2009) demonstrated that the ideal L2 self more strongly predicted intended efforts than the ought-to L2 self, and similarly Ryan (2009) stressed that integrativeness was only a part of the ideal L2 self that had a strong effect on intended efforts.

Similar to Gardner's instrumental motivation that also functions as a good motive to learn the target language, the ought-to L2 self can possibly lead to successful learning. Clustering learners into groups, Konno (2011), for instance, found that highly motivated learners, who demonstrated the highest scores for effort, the ideal L2 self, and intrinsic motivation, exhibited the highest ought-to L2 self and extrinsic motivation among the clusters. He pointed out that for Japanese EFL learners, both ideal and ought-to L2 selves can coexist and can form motivation to learn English. Papi (2010) showed that the ought-to L2 self led to higher anxiety and emphasized the negative side of the ought-to L2 self. However, in his later study, one group of learners displayed the highest scores of efforts, the ideal L2 self, and the ought-to L2 self (Papi & Teimouri, 2014). A coexistence of the ideal and ought-to L2 selves can be supported by the previous studies in different fields. For example, Rudy et al. (2007) argued that in a collectivism context where interdependence was highly featured, learners possessed inclusive ideal selves, which emphasized that learners may "conceptualize themselves as overlapping with the selves of others" (p. 985). These learners' ideal L2 self reflects their family's expectations or group norms in the immediate context. This is partially supported in a Japanese EFL context by Sugita McEwon et al. (2017) who demonstrated that the ideal L2 selves of Japanese learners of foreign languages (other than English) were predicted by parental encouragement, which could be considered a precedent variable of the ought-to L2 selves. Although the ideal L2 self is obviously vital to success in language learning and use, further research is needed to clarify the role of the ought-to L2 self in different language learning contexts.

The L2 motivational self system (Dörnyei, 2005) is suitable to explain the future visions and orientations of learners, but not adequate to explain motivation itself which consists of effort, desire, and enjoyment (Gardner, 2001). The investigation of complex learning processes in relation to L2-self-related variables is crucial, but motivation cannot be overlooked since it has the strongest relationship

with language achievement (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003). However, Gardner's viewpoint of integrative and instrumental motivation may be weak in that it can only distinguish high from low motivated learners in each type. In other words, what subtypes of motivation learners possess remains ambiguous or unclear. It is probably the self-determination theory (SDT: Deci & Ryan, 1985) that resolves this pitfall. SDT discusses the extent of self-determination with special focus on the fulfillment of three fundamental psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Within this theoretical framework, the following five motivational subtypes are assumed to lie on a continuum: intrinsic motivation, three subtypes of extrinsic motivation (i.e., identified, introjected, and external regulations), and amotivation. The most self-determined form of motivation is intrinsic motivation, and the least is amotivation. Previous studies have shed more light on intrinsic motivation than extrinsic motivation, since intrinsic motivation is significantly associated with language learners' effort or intention to continue to learn (Noels, 2001; Ramage, 1990), linguistic awareness (Tagashira et al., 2011), and strategy use (Matsumoto et al., 2013). Not only intrinsic motivation, but self-determined forms of extrinsic motivation (i.e., identified regulation) could also be important predictors of successful learning behavior (e.g., Koestner & Losier, 2002). However, since it is widely accepted that extrinsic motivation reduces intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2002), there is still a sense that extrinsic motivation is a counterpart of intrinsic motivation.

Learners' motivation and the positive future self are indispensable to continue to learn the target language. In addition, learners are required to be willing to communicate (WTC) in the target language in a real communication setting. WTC was carefully examined by the pyramid model (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 549) in which communication, behavioral, situational, motivational, affective, and social variables are placed in a hierarchical order with the L2 use at the top layer. The L2 use is deeply linked with not only language ability and competence, but also readiness to communicate in the target language (Khajavy et al., 2018), and thus learners' WTC must be promoted in L2 learning contexts (e.g., MacIntyre, 2007; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996). While two explanatory factors of WTC are communication confidence (i.e., low communication apprehension and high perceived communication competence) and a desire to communicate with a specific person, motivation and attitudinal factors (e.g., international posture: Yashima, 2009) also have a strong impact on learners' WTC (Shirvan et al., 2019). In the Japanese context, learners are reluctant to communicate in English (Tomita & Spada, 2013) and keep silent more than 90% in English classes (King, 2013). These studies suggest that unmotivated learners are reluctant to communicate, but do not clarify what motivational subtypes contribute to or suppress WTC.

Traditional motivation research has put emphasis on individual difference variables by means of correlational analyses. However, not many studies have turned their attention to individual learners who possess various affective, cognitive, and linguistic variables simultaneously in a complex manner. Cluster analysis makes it feasible to classify learners into certain groups with shared characteristics so that an overall picture of learner profiles that indicate unique combinations of several variables can be provided. This approach was taken by Csizér and Dörnyei (2005) who clustered 8593 learners learning five different languages in Hungary into four groups based on integrativeness, instrumentality, attitudes toward L2 speakers, vitality, and cultural interest. Whereas two groups showed predictable motivational patterns (i.e., the least and the most motivated learners), the remaining two demonstrated unique patterns. To efficiently account for the latter two groups, Csizér and Dörnyei (2005), by adopting the theories of possible selves and self-discrepancy (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Higgins, 1987), proposed two complementary domains of the ideal L2 self: (a) personally agreeable, which concerns learners' attitudes toward the target language culture and community and (b) professionally successful, which is

associated with instrumentality and pragmatic motives. This finding contributed to conceptualizing the L2 motivational self system. Targeting 1278 junior and senior high school students learning English in Iran, Papi and Teimouri (2014), for instance, reported that of five groups identified, four groups shared similar characteristics found in Csizér and Dörnyei (2005), but one group, with high promotion focus and positive attitudes toward L2 culture and community, was defined by the lowest scores of the ought-to L2 self and instrumentality prevention. Moreover, in the Japanese context, one group of first-year junior high school students demonstrated unique characteristics. Although the learners with high motivation implemented a variety of learning strategies that were considered effective to develop language achievement, they failed to use appropriate and correct strategies (Yamamori et al., 2003). One problem with cluster analysis is the difficulty in generalizing findings, as it is highly dependent on how the samples are gathered. (e.g., ages, countries, languages, and learning situations). However, cluster analysis would “enable us to recognize the varied interrelationships of multiple motives across individuals” (Papi & Teimouri, 2014 p.495). This statistical procedure may offer different insights into relationships among motivational variables than those provided by correlation-based techniques, which limit the focus to linear relationships between two variables.

Purposes of This Study

By targeting different grade levels and cluster variables from those in the previous studies (i.e., Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005; Papi & Teimouri, 2014; Yamamori et al., 2003), the present study examines learner profiles that give insight into complex motivational configurations of language learners. This study concerns university students learning in mandatory English classes in Japan and focuses only on motivational variables from two mainstream motivation research (i.e., SDT and the L2 motivational self system) as cluster variables. Unlike junior high school students or high school students in Japan, university students are free from competitive entrance examinations, but they are still required to pass at least four semesters of English classes to graduate. They are mature enough to have a clearer future vision after graduation. Considering these situations, some students may be intrinsically motivated with the positive ideal L2 self, and at the same time extrinsically motivated to get better grades and future jobs. This assumption contradicts the claim of SDT because the extrinsic self-regulations are fundamentally harmful to intrinsic motivation. Therefore, the first research purpose of this study is to investigate how motivational subtypes and selves are intertwined with each other in a nonlinear way.

The second purpose is to scrutinize how different motivational profiles contribute to the establishment of WTC, communication apprehension, and perceived communication competence. The ultimate goal of language learning is to utilize the language in a real-life situation, and thus examining WTC in relation to motivation helps to understand successful language learning. Moreover, the inclusion of apprehension and competence is justified by the fact that they directly predict WTC (Yashima, 2002), and anxiety is caused by the ought-to L2 self (Papi, 2010; Papi & Teimouri, 2014) and has a negative correlation with motivation (Koga, 2010). Therefore, the current study comprehensively investigates motivational and communication variables through cluster analysis to grasp unique motivational configurations of Japanese university students. The following research questions (RQs) are established:

RQ1: What motivational profiles of Japanese university learners are observed?

RQ2: How are learners’ motivational profiles interrelated with WTC, communication apprehension, and perceived communication competence?

Methodology

Participants

A total of 511 first- and second-year university EFL students in Japan participated in this study. They were chosen from one national and three private universities majoring in one of the following fields: science and engineering, informatics, Nordic studies, creative writing, English, media studies, psychological and sociological studies, economics, business administration, human development, mathematics, mathematical sciences, human and information science, tourism, physical education, competitive sports, and Judo and Kendo. The ratio of male and female students was not identified because of the ethical policy of the institutions. No formal test was administered to measure their general English proficiency levels. However, because most of these students were streamed based on the placement test administered by their universities, it was assumed that their levels varied from beginner to lower advanced. These learners were taking English classes which were mandatory to meet graduation requirements at their institution. In these classes, they learned about the four basic language skills, grammar, and vocabulary.

Materials

A questionnaire was developed based on various motivational constructs to reveal motivational profiles of the participants and how these profiles are interrelated to WTC. The questionnaire was composed of three parts. The first part was borrowed from Yashima (2009) to measure WTC and its predecessors, perceived communication competence (PCC) and communication apprehension (CA). A six-point Likert scale was adopted for the items asking how likely these learners would be willing to speak, be confident, and be anxious in certain conversational situations. For WTC and PCC items, 1 indicated *not willing / confident at all* and 6 indicated *very willing / confident*. With respect to CA, 1 indicated *not anxious at all* and 6 indicated *very anxious*. The second part included subscales of intrinsic and extrinsic motivational subtypes and amotivation in SDT. These subscales were developed drawing on Hiromori (2006) and Noels (2001) and validated in Konno (2011). A five-point Likert scale was used with 1 indicating *not true at all* and 5 indicating *very true of me*. The final part consisted of the L2 self subscales, which were developed based on Taguchi et al. (2009) and Ryan (2009). A five-point Likert scale was adopted with 1 reflecting *not true at all* and 5 reflecting *very true of me*. This questionnaire contained a total of 10 subscales as follows:

1. *WTC*: representing how likely the participants would be to speak English in 8 different conversational situations (eight items; $a = .87$)
2. *PCC*: representing how likely the participants would be confident to speak English in 8 different conversational situations (eight items; $a = .94$)
3. *CA*: representing how likely the participants would be anxious to speak English in 8 different conversational situations (eight items; $a = .94$)
4. *Intrinsic motivation*: representing the participants' intrinsic reasons (i.e., enjoyment, knowledge, and stimulation) to learn English (three items; $a = .82$)
5. *Identified regulation*: representing values pertaining to learning English (three items; $a = .75$)
6. *Introjected regulation*: representing the participants' sense of obligation to learn English (three items; $a = .77$)
7. *External regulation*: representing the participants' materialistic reasons to learn English (three items; $a = .62$)

8. Amotivation: representing the participants' lack of motivation to learn English (three items; $a = .66$)
9. *Ideal L2 self*: representing the participants' ideal model of an English learner they hope to become in future (four items; $a = .84$)
10. *Ought to L2 self*: representing the participants' end state as a learner of English that they hope to avoid possessing in future (four items; $a = .67$)

Procedure and Data Analyses

The questionnaire was administered during class time. The purpose of the data collection was carefully explained to the participants in advance to clearly inform them that their response to the questionnaire would not affect their course grades, and the survey was completely voluntary. They were also assured that the data would be anonymized and used only for research purposes. Only those who agreed with this consent participated in this study. The data was collected during the period from 2015 to 2018.

To investigate motivational profiles (i.e., five motivational subtypes in SDT and the ideal/ought-to L2 selves) of the participants, cluster analysis with squared Euclidean by means of the Ward method was performed. This exploratory statistical method is used to divide cases (e.g., participants) into groups (i.e., clusters) with shared features based on the variables without predetermined criteria. Each cluster has its own distinctive pattern of variables. This pattern is expected to reflect a certain kind of interrelationship among the variables (Isoda, 2006). The number of clusters was decided by the researchers with the aid of a dendrogram, which visually represents how each cluster is formed. To confirm that each cluster is a separate group with its own distinctive profile, sets of analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were performed. Finally, to examine the relationships between each cluster's motivational profile and WTC, another set of ANOVAs was performed with WTC, PCC, and CA as dependent variables and the cluster as an independent variable. SPSS 26 was used for all the analyses.

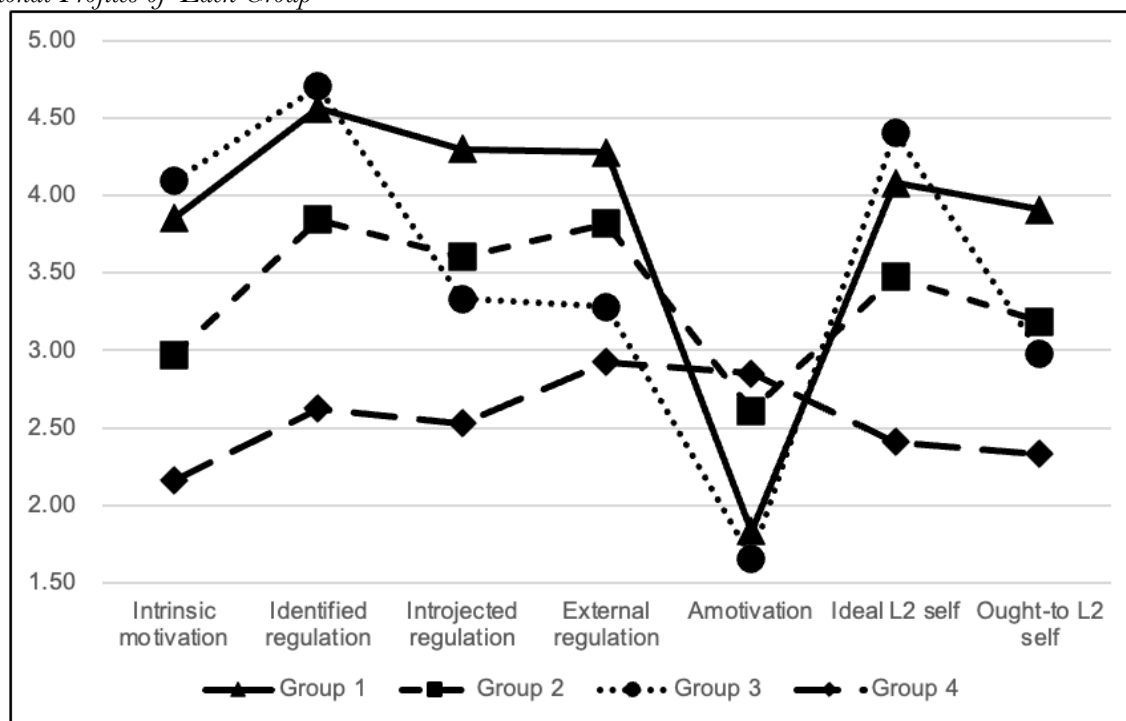
Results

Results of Cluster Analysis

To reveal motivational profiles underlying the participants, hierarchical cluster analysis was performed using seven motivational variables. With the aid of the dendrogram, four clusters were judged to be reasonable for further analyses. The motivational profiles of these clusters were described graphically in Figure 1.

Sets of ANOVAs were performed to see whether each cluster had a distinctive pattern of motivational variables. The results showed that significant differences were found for all variables: intrinsic motivation: $F(3, 507) = 154.21, p = .000, \eta^2 = .23$; identified regulation: $F(3, 507) = 320.87, p = .000, \eta^2 = .43$; introjected regulation: $F(3, 507) = 171.64, p = .000, \eta^2 = .25$; external regulation: $F(3, 507) = 91.71, p = .000, \eta^2 = .12$; amotivation: $F(3, 507) = 73.23, p = .000, \eta^2 = .09$; ideal L2 self: $F(3, 507) = 214.96, p = .000, \eta^2 = .31$; ought-to L2 self: $F(3, 507) = 94.93, p = .000, \eta^2 = .13$. Post hoc analyses with Games-Howell were conducted to find significant differences among the variables of each cluster. The results showed that significant differences were found among the groups below the .05 level in most cases. However, significant differences were not found for the following variables: Intrinsic motivation (Group 1 vs. Group 3); Identified regulation (Group 1 vs. Group 3); Introjected regulation (Group 2 vs. Group 3); Amotivation (Group 1 vs. Group 3), and Ought-to L2 self (Group 2 vs. Group 3).

Figure 1
 Motivational Profiles of Each Group



The four different motivational profiles could be described as follows. Group 1 learners ($n = 122$) demonstrated higher levels of all of the motivational variables, with external and introjected regulations and the ought-to L2 self the highest. This group was unique in that these learners' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and also the two types of L2 selves did not conflict, but rather coexisted. Perceiving external pressure from others and their own obligations in their school and future life, they could still find English learning enjoyable and advantageous. They were called *high motivation learners*. Group 3 learners ($n = 60$) shared similar characteristics with Group 1 learners in terms of intrinsic motivation, identified regulation, and the ideal L2 self, but what differentiated these two was the significantly lower levels of introjected and external regulations and the ought-to L2 self. This suggested that they were learning English genuinely for their own sake and had clear future selves that they wanted to become without caring about external pressure. They were named *ideally motivated learners*.

Group 4 learners ($n = 118$), by contrast, had the lowest scores of motivational subtypes and the L2 selves. This tendency indicated that they did not find any good reasons to study English and were lacking clear visions as English users. They were labeled as *unmotivated learners*. Compared with Group 4, Group 2 learners ($n = 211$) showed the significantly higher but still moderate levels of all the variables, with relatively high external and identified regulations. They seemed to consider English learning necessary and important for the current utilitarian reasons but failed to internalize it into their intrinsic and future purposes. Because the largest number of students belonged to this group, they were named *typical Japanese learners*. These two groups ($n = 329$) were considered to represent the reality of the Japanese EFL situation.

Interrelations Between Motivational Profiles and Communication Variables

To examine the relationships between motivational profiles and WTC, PCC and CA, ANOVAs were performed with the cluster groups as the between-subject factor. Table 1 summarizes means and standard deviations of communication variables of all groups. The result showed that there were significant differences in all the variables: WTC: $F(3, 507) = 33.36, p = .000, \eta^2 = .17$; PCC: $F(3, 507) = 25.23, p = .000, \eta^2 = .13$; CA: $F(3, 507) = 8.91, p = .000, \eta^2 = .05$.

To confirm whether there were significant differences among the groups, Games-Howell post hoc tests were performed. The results showed that, in terms of WTC, both two highest motivated groups, *high motivation* and *ideally motivated learners*, showed significantly higher WTC than the two less motivated groups, *typical Japanese* and *unmotivated learners* ($p < .001$, respectively). However, these two motivated groups did not significantly differ from each other. As for PCC, there were significant differences among all groups ($p < .001$), except between *typical Japanese learners* and *unmotivated learners*. *Ideally motivated learners* showed the highest self-confidence in communicating with others in English. *High motivation learners* demonstrated the second highest PCC, followed by *typical Japanese learners* and *unmotivated learners*. Regarding CA, the results showed that *high motivation learners* and *ideally motivated learners* were less anxious than *unmotivated learners* who felt the most anxious to speak English ($p < .001$, respectively). *Ideally motivated learners* also demonstrated significantly lower CA than *typical Japanese learners* ($p < .001$). There was no significant difference between *high motivation learners* and *typical Japanese learners*.

Table 1
The Summary of Means and Standard Deviations

	High motivation learners		Typical Japanese learners		Ideally motivated learners		Unmotivated learners	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
	CI [LL, UL]		CI [LL, UL]		CI [LL, UL]		CI [LL, UL]	
WTC	3.43	1.05	2.94	0.90	3.79	0.98	2.47	0.98
	[3.25, 3.62]		[2.82, 3.06]		[3.54, 4.05]		[2.30, 2.65]	
PCC	2.93	0.97	2.59	0.89	3.46	1.10	2.23	1.02
	[2.76, 3.11]		[2.47, 2.71]		[3.17, 3.74]		[2.04, 2.41]	
CA	4.19	1.02	4.43	0.91	3.79	1.14	4.57	1.19
	[4.01, 4.38]		[4.31, 4.55]		[3.50, 4.09]		[4.36, 4.79]	

Discussion

Two goals addressed in this study were to provide motivational profiles of Japanese university EFL learners (RQ1) and to examine the interrelationships among these profiles and three communication variables, WTC, PCC, and CA (RQ2). For RQ1, cluster analysis was performed using five subtypes of motivation and two L2 selves, and the result revealed four distinct groups: *high motivation learners*, *typical Japanese learners*, *ideally motivated learners*, and *unmotivated learners*. This finding highlights the diversity of motivational patterns in the Japanese EFL context.

There were two groups of learners with high motivation: *high motivation learners* and *ideally motivated learners*. They shared similar profiles concerning self-determined types of motivation and the ideal L2 self but showed completely different overall patterns. *High motivation learners* demonstrated high levels of all motivational variables, with particularly high introjected regulation, external regulation, and the ought-to L2 self, which was in line with the findings in Konno (2011). This profile indicated that their intrinsic and extrinsic motives and both the ideal and ought-to L2 selves coexisted rather than conflicted. Although it has long been believed that extrinsic motivation is detrimental to intrinsic motivation (e.g., Deci et al., 2001), these learners managed to enjoy and value learning English and with their ideal end-states as English users in mind while feeling external pressure and obligations.

The other group of motivated learners was *ideally motivated learners*. They shared similar characteristics with the *high motivation learners* in terms of intrinsic motivation, identified regulation, and the ideal L2 self, but what differentiates these two is the significantly lower levels of introjected and external regulations and the ought-to L2 self. Their profiles align with the theoretical notions that the ideal L2 self is closely related to self-determined types of motivation (Yashima, 2009) and that the ought-to L2 self was less likely to be related to motivated behavior than the ideal L2 self (Papi & Teimouri, 2014). It can be argued that these learners enjoy learning English for their own sake without being influenced by external pressure or fear of negative consequences.

One group commonly found in previous studies (e.g., Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005; Papi & Teimouri, 2014; Yamamori et al., 2003) and in the current study is *unmotivated learners*, who demonstrated the lowest levels of all the variables. One characteristic of this group was a higher level of external regulation though still below 3.0, suggesting that they did not have any good reasons to study English, but simply learned English only to get credits for graduation or better jobs. Unlike ESL learners, EFL learners can make a living without acquiring English. Thus, the presence of *unmotivated learners* across the studies is completely understandable.

Typical Japanese learners had moderate levels of all motivational variables, with relatively high external and identified regulations. They seemed to view English as important for utilitarian purposes such as grades or future employment. However, they failed to connect this to intrinsic interest or future self-images. Considering the EFL situation in Japan, many Japanese students might fall into this category. To answer RQ2, this study investigated the relationships between motivational profiles and communication variables (i.e., WTC, PCC, and CA). The result showed that two highly motivated groups (i.e., *highly motivation* and *ideally motivated learners*) showed higher WTC than less motivated groups (i.e., *typical Japanese* and *unmotivated learners*), indicating that higher motivation leads to stronger willingness to use English in real communication (Shirvan et al., 2019). While Konno and Koga (2020) argued that intrinsic motivation plays a more important role than other motivational subtypes in fostering WTC, interestingly, *high motivation learners* demonstrated that learners who are motivated by multiple sources, including intrinsic, extrinsic and both types of L2 selves, may develop stronger WTC.

In terms of PCC, *ideally motivated learners* showed the highest level, followed by *high motivation learners*. Generally speaking, extrinsic motivation and the ought-to L2 self have been considered to induce higher anxiety (Noels et al., 1999; Papi, 2010). However, the findings of this study suggest that multiple sources of motivation can lead to higher self-confidence, which can further promote WTC (Yashima, 2002). On the other hand, less motivated learners tended to feel more anxious and less competent, which hindered their WTC.

Finally, considering motivational and communicative variables comprehensively, *ideally motivated learners* can be regarded as the most effective learners who learn English for their own sake without external forces because they display higher levels of intrinsic motivation, identified regulation, and ideal

L2 self while showing lower levels of introjected regulation, external regulation, and ought-to L2 self. However, the total number of learners involved in this group was 60 out of 511, which is roughly only 12% of this relatively large sample. In other words, nurturing such learners poses considerable challenges and may not be realistic in the Japanese EFL context. Rather, attention needs to be paid to how intrinsic and extrinsic types of motives can coexist, both of which become the cornerstone of successful language learning in EFL situations, as observed in *high motivation learners*. Furthermore, as a general trend among Japanese EFL learners, a sense of anxiety tends to be high, while that of competence remains low. Japanese people are often described as modest and humble, but as far as language learning is concerned, they should be encouraged to take risks, learn from mistakes, praise themselves, and build confidence in a cyclical manner so that they can be autonomous language learners and users.

Conclusion

Before concluding this study, we will point out two methodological limitations and one pedagogical implication for future research. Regarding the methodological limitations, first, the data collected was self-reported and thus depended on the students' understanding of the questions posed to them and their subjective evaluation of their own attitudes and preferences. Second, the results were obtained based on slightly outdated data. During and after the impact of COVID-19, it is true that computer-mediated communication tools have been widely developed, which open the door for EFL learning to a more globalized world. Therefore, we admit that more recent data with more advanced statistical procedures may be needed to uncover learner profiles in the Japanese EFL context.

One pedagogical implication suggested by our findings is that promoting extrinsic types of motives is not an effective way to cultivate good language learners from an educational viewpoint, although they are not necessarily detrimental to intrinsic motivation. Instructors need to design and implement authentic and pedagogical communicative tasks that stimulate learners' interest and enjoyment in an anxiety-free environment where learners can build a sense of competence and efficacy.

This study suggests that intrinsic motivation and the ideal L2 self can coexist with extrinsic motivation and the ought-to L2 self without conflicting with each other. This feature is especially outstanding in EFL contexts in which learners still learn English for utilitarian reasons despite an increasing demand for communicative skills. Future research is needed to examine how intrinsic and extrinsic motivation can possibly collaborate with each other, which in turn promotes willingness to communicate in the target language with strong confidence.

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About the authors

Tsutomu Koga is Associate Professor at Ryukoku University in Japan. His research focuses on the dynamicity of individual differences with particular attention to language of instruction and cooperative learning.

Katsuyuki Konno is Associate Professor at Ryukoku University in Kyoto, Japan. His research interests include psychology of language learning, with a particular focus on learner motivation and willingness to communicate (WTC).