L2 Motivation and Its Surrounding Variables : Their Relationships to L2 Achievement and Pedagogical Implications

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1. Introduction

In the field of second language (L2) research, researchers have tried to explain the variations in the rate of L2 learning as well as in the ultimate attainment of an L2. In doing so, they have examined interrelationships among variables that might partly explain such variations. These variables include L2 motivation, which has widely been examined in L2 acquisition research, and its surrounding variables, namely L2 willingness to communicate (WTC), L2 communication confidence, and international posture. In this review, I will first describe how one of the major individual difference variables, L2 motivation, has been conceptualized, then move on to the discussion of L2 WTC, L2 communication confidence, and international posture, including their relationships to L2 achievement and proficiency. Finally, I will discuss the pedagogical implications these research findings might have on Japanese learners of English, who live in a typical English as a foreign language (EFL) context.

2. L2 Motivation

Before discussing L2 motivation, it is important to briefly describe how L2

achievement and L2 proficiency have been measured.　In studies on L2 motivation and the variables surrounding it, these have often been measured by taking, for example, course grades at school (e. g., Gardner, Tremblay, & Masgoret, 1997), scores on norm-referenced tests such as the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) (e. g., Yashima, 2002), or self-ratings of proficiency (e. g., Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993). L2 achievement and L2 proficiency seem to have been operationalized in similar ways as general learning outcome measures, and both of them are concerned with how much success a learner has had in learning an L2, which is one of the central interests in L2 acquisition research.

　　Researchers have not come to a complete agreement as to what shapes L2 motivation.　However, they seem to agree at least that motivation entails the action of initiating the learning of an L2 and the effort needed to sustain the learning. Various models have been proposed to date focusing on different aspects of L2 motivation, such as the socio-educational model (Gardner, 1985, 2001), the L2 motivational self system (Dörnyei, 2009), and the self-determination theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2002).

　　A dominant model in the early days of L2 motivation research was the socio-educational model, which was popular mainly because of a contrast the model made between integrative orientation (reasons for learning an L2 that involve interaction with the target language community) and instrumental orientation (one's pragmatic reasons for learning an L2).　In addition, two other points are noteworthy in the model.　First, according to the model, one of the most important constructs closely related to L2 achievement is integrative motivation, which was defined as a motivation "to learn a second language because of positive feelings toward the community that speaks that language" (Gardner, 1985, pp. 82-83), including cases where learners study an L2 because they want to be like native speakers of the L2. This was a particularly important construct in the bilingual Canadian context, where

the target language community was easily defined.   Also important in the model was the fact that motivation itself referred to （a） motivational intensity （amount of effort）, （b） the extent to which a learner wants to achieve a high level of L2 competence, and （c） the amount of his/her enjoyment while learning the language. Thus, this model offered insight in that it captured the importance of the quantity of L2 motivation.

Since Gardner and his associates proposed their model, it has met with some criticism （e. g., Au, 1988 ; Crookes　&　Schmidt, 1991 ; Dörnyei, 1990, 2009）. Especially in terms of English learning, English is now considered to be a primary international language with the globalization of the world, and for learners in EFL contexts, including Japan, it means that there may be no specific target L2 community.   That is, they learn English not to come closer to native speakers of English or to identify themselves with them but to communicate with both native and non-native speakers because the common language is English.   As a result, these situations undermined Gardner's idea of integrative motivation, which led researchers to try to explain L2 motivation with alternative models.   These models do not presuppose a clear target language community, which makes them applicable to contexts with and without such clear target language communities.

One alternative model that has recently been popular is Dörnyei's L2 motivational self system.   This is based on the psychological theory of self-discrepancy （Higgins, 1987） and Markus and Nurius' possible selves research （1986）.   The self-discrepancy theory proposes that human beings are motivated because they wish to close the gap between their ideal self （i. e., representation of attributes that they imagine they would ideally have） and their actual self （their present self-state）.   Markus and Nurius （1986） also proposed "ideal self" （what someone would ideally like to become） and "feared self" （what someone is afraid of becoming）.   These possible selves draw on hopes, wishes, and fantasies, and "act

as 'future self-guides,' reflecting a dynamic, forward-pointing conception that can explain how someone is moved from the present toward the future"（Dörnyei, 2009, p. 11）．The L2 motivational self system is made up of the following three constituents：（a）ideal L2 self（one's idealized self-image regarding an L2），（b）ought-to L2 self（the attributes regarding an L2 that one believes one ought to possess to meet expectations and to avoid possible negative outcomes），and（c）L2 learning experience（situated, 'executive' motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience）（Dörnyei, 2009, p. 29）．If, for example, learners wish to become a proficient L2 speaker and have a vivid and elaborate image of themselves as a competent L2 speaker in the future, this ideal L2 self exerts a strong motivational power to learn the L2 because of a discrepancy between this ideal L2 self and their actual self（i. e., a non-proficient L2 speaker）．Recent studies have shown high correlations between ideal L2 self and intended L2 learning effort（e. g., $r = .68$ for the Japanese sample in Taguchi, Magid, & Papi, 2009），pointing to the possibility that ideal L2 self and L2 learning effort are closely related．The idea of ideal L2 self does not require a clearly defined "target language community" in the Gardnerian sense, and is considered to be applicable to EFL contexts as well.

Another important advancement in the field is the application of SDT（Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2002）．SDT is one of the widely applied motivational theories in psychology．In SDT, it is postulated that by supporting the three fundamental human needs, i. e., for autonomy, for competence, and for relatedness, learners are intrinsically motivated．When human beings are intrinsically motivated they engage in an activity because of the inherent enjoyment of the activity．In contrast, learners may have more extrinsic types of motivation, i. e., external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation, or integrated regulation．These are types of motivation that are less self-determined than intrinsic motivation．Extrinsic types of motivation work based on rewards external to the activity itself．For

example, when L2 learners have high external regulation they study an L2, for instance, only to pass an examination or because their parents want them to. Identified regulation and integrated regulation are more self-determined and at this point learners study an L2 because it is personally important to them.   In addition, amotivation represents the lack of intention to act, which is "a sort of antithesis to motivation" (Noels, 2009, p. 297).   What is important in the theory is that rather than being dichotomous in nature, different kinds of motivation lie along a continuum from the most autonomous or self-determined (intrinsic motivation) to the least internalized or self-determined (amotivation), thus casting light on qualities of motivation.

Regardless of the differences among various models, L2 motivation is considered to be related to L2 achievement/proficiency, namely in that motivation is "a central mediator in the prediction of language achievement" (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993, p. 3).   For example, Masgoret and Gardner (2003) did a meta-analysis of 75 studies within the socio-educational model, involving 10, 489 individuals in total in Canada in order to examine the accumulated research findings. They examined the correlations between the five attitude/motivation variables on the one hand, and achievement as measured by self-ratings, objective tests, and grades on the other hand.   The study found moderate correlations between motivation and achievement ($r = .29$ to $.39$) (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003, p. 141).   Thus, the researchers argued that "integrative motivation promotes successful second language acquisition" (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003, p. 154).

The relationship between L2 motivation and L2 achievement has also been examined in terms of whether L2 achievement leads to L2 motivation.   This is understandable given that a high correlation between L2 motivation and L2 achievement does not necessarily mean that L2 motivation leads to L2 achievement. For example, in Gardner, Masgoret, Tennant, and Mihic (2004), the researchers

investigated whether "the level of achievement students attained in the course influenced their language attitudes, motivation, or anxiety at the end of the course relative to the beginning" (p. 21). In this longitudinal study, the researchers investigated motivational and other affective variables and L2 achievement over a year-long period with intermediate French students. The researchers found that whereas those who ultimately achieved A grades in the course had relatively stable and positive levels of motivation, those who achieved less than a B grade in the course began the course with low levels of motivation and became even less motivated than they were at the beginning of the year (Gardner et al., 2004, pp. 24-25). This suggests that not only is L2 motivation likely to lead to L2 achievement, but it could be that L2 achievement leads to L2 motivation, or that low L2 achievement leads to low L2 motivation. As Gardner and MacIntyre (1993) suggest, L2 motivation and L2 achievement can be considered to have "reciprocal causation" (p. 2).

Thus, when it comes to the discussion of the cause-effect relationship between L2 motivation and L2 achievement, researchers have regarded it to be "a dynamic cyclical relationship with positive learning experience and achievement outcomes" (Ushioda, 2001, p. 119). However, regarding this cyclical relationship, Ushioda raised an important point that the relationship between motivation and language learning success or achievement is not simply a "cause-and-effect" relationship (Ushioda, 2001, p. 119). Ushioda investigated the qualitative content of L2 learners' motivational thinking and tried to tap into the patterns of thoughts and beliefs that might affect the degree of involvement in L2 learning. By interviewing 16 college students learning French in Ireland twice with a 15-16-month interval, the researcher identified changes in quality of motivation for each individual participant. Furthermore, the researcher found that negative experiences regarding L2 learning are filtered by what learners choose to think and believe. This pointed

out the possibility that learners can still be motivated even if they have negative L2 learning experiences and low L2 achievement, because they can choose to focus on the positive rather than the negative side of L2 learning (Ushioda, 2001, p. 119). In other words, rather than being a simple cause-and-effect relationship, the relationship between L2 motivation and L2 achievement can be mediated by what learners choose to believe and focus on.

3. L2 Willingness to Communicate and L2 Communication Confidence

WTC is a construct closely related to L2 motivation as discussed later and is defined as the tendency of an individual to initiate communication when he/she has free choice (McCroskey & Richmond, 1987). It is a construct that was first proposed in first language (L1) communication literature, but has been particularly popular in L2 communication and L2 learning literature as well. This is because it "offers the opportunity to integrate psychological, linguistic, educational, and communicative approaches to L2 research that typically have been independent of each other" (MacIntyre, 2007, p. 564). L2 WTC has also been widely investigated because in many contexts, including Japan, one of the main goals as well as the means of L2 education is now considered L2 communication. In L1 communication literature, WTC is basically regarded as a personality trait. However, when communicating in an L2, learners are not considered to simply transfer L1 WTC to L2 WTC, because unlike L1 WTC, L2 WTC is likely to interact not only with L2 competence but also with various contextual factors, i. e., "a number of intergroup issues, with social and political implications, that are usually irrelevant to L1 use" (MacIntyre, Dörnyei, Clément, & Noels, 1998, p. 546). L2 WTC is considered to be "the most immediate determinant of L2 use" (Clément, Baker, & MacIntyre, 2003, p. 191), and this L2 use in turn is likely to

affect L2 learning, since "[t]o improve communicative skills one needs to use language" (Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide, & Shimizu, 2004).

MacIntyre (1994) proposed that L2 WTC is based on a combination of perceived L2 communicative competence and L2 communication anxiety, which together make up L2 communication confidence. High L2 communication confidence is made up of high perceived L2 communicative competence and low L2 anxiety. Baker and MacIntyre (2000) investigated learners of French in both immersion and non-immersion schools and found that whereas immersion students showed a strong correlation between communication anxiety and L2 WTC ($r = -.44$, $p < .01$), non-immersion students showed a strong correlation between perceived competence and L2 WTC ($r = .72$, $p < .01$) (p. 324). The researchers explained this difference in the following way : In immersion settings with ample L2 communication opportunities, learners' proficiency tends to be high. Still, they feel the pressure to speak well, which makes anxiety "a central factor for these students." On the other hand, non-immersion students with limited L2 exposure usually have lower proficiency than immersion students, which makes perceived L2 competence a key factor affecting L2 WTC (Baker & MacIntyre, 2000, p. 336). This pattern is supported by a study done in Japan in an EFL context (Yashima, 2002). The relationships between perceived L2 competence and L2 WTC on the one hand and between L2 anxiety and L2 WTC on the other hand resembled those in non-immersion schools ; the correlation was higher between perceived L2 competence and L2 WTC ($r = .56$, $p < .01$) than between L2 anxiety and L2 WTC ($r = -.39$, $p < .01$) (Yashima, 2002, p. 65). Thus, in contexts like Japan, it might be particularly important to help students become confident in L2 communication by making them feel that they can really communicate in the L2 with their L2 competence.

4 . International Posture

Yashima (2002, 2009) has developed the attitudinal construct of international posture by conducting studies in the Japanese context. Japan is a typical EFL context, where there are no frequent opportunities for most learners to use English. Japanese learners of English are likely to need English competence because they need to communicate with both native and non-native speakers using their common language, English. Furthermore, although the government has emphasized the importance of improving the communicative competence of Japanese learners of English, this comes "without a vision of where [the government] lead[s] learners to" (Yashima, 2009, p. 144). In this respect, it is unlikely that learners are motivated to learn English in order to identify themselves with "the target language community," a situation described in Gardner's studies.

Yashima's conceptualization of international posture grew out of such a context. Thus, unlike integrativeness, international posture "tries to capture a tendency to relate oneself to the international community rather than any specific L2 group" (Yashima, 2009, p. 145), and is made up of four aspects in the most recent version : (a) intergroup approach-avoidance tendency ; (b) interest in international vocation/activities ; (c) interest in international news ; and (d) having things to communicate to the world (Yashima, 2009, pp. 162-163). Yashima argues that it is not easy to distinguish between integrativeness and instrumentality because English, a primary international language today, has some utilitarian value in most cases, even when we discuss integrativeness as an attitude toward learning English. Thus, the researcher goes on to propose that international posture "seizes both integrative and instrumental aspects of motivation" (Yashima, 2009, p. 146).

When we consider the relationship between international posture and ideal L2 self in EFL contexts, the importance of international posture becomes clear.

Typically, in EFL contexts, L2 learners do not possess the ideal self that is related to an L2.　As Yashima（2009）points out, if a teenager envisions an ideal self as a medical doctor, this ideal self does not necessarily involve an L2 aspect.　He/she may learn English as well as other academic subjects in order to pass the university entrance examinations, but this does not necessarily require L2 competence（p. 148）. However, if the same teenager has high international posture and therefore envisions him/herself as having an international career and, for example, attending international medical conferences, this will lead to an ideal self that has an L2 component.　Thus, international posture might be able to create an ideal self that includes an L2 component, leading to high levels of ideal L2 self.　Indeed, in Kormos and Csizér（2008）the researchers found that in the Hungarian EFL context, international posture was the best predictor of the ideal L2 self for all three age groups that they investigated（secondary school students, university students, and adults）.

　　Yashima（2009）investigated the inter-correlations among international posture, motivation as conceptualized in SDT, L2 WTC, frequency of communication, and ideal L2 self.　The following three findings are noteworthy.　First, the researcher found a higher correlation between self-determined types of extrinsic motivation （i. e., identified regulation and integrated regulation）and international posture than between intrinsic motivation and international posture.　This is understandable given that international posture tries to capture both integrativeness and instrumentality （Yashima, 2009, p. 157）.　Second, the correlation between ideal L2 self and international posture was relatively high　（$r = .43$, $p < .001$）, which is in accordance with the findings in Kormos and Csizér（2008）as described above. Third, even higher correlations were found between identified regulation and ideal L2 self（$r = .47$, $p < .01$）and between integrated regulation and ideal L2 self （$r = .48$, $p < .01$）.　The researcher argued that it indicates that "as internalization

of learning progresses, the tendency to visualize an ideal L2 self intensifies and the current self gradually approximates toward the ideal self" (Yashima, 2009, p. 157).

5. Interrelationships Among Variables

Researchers have investigated the interrelationships among L2 motivation, L2 WTC, L2 communication confidence, international posture, and L2 proficiency/ achievement by utilizing a statistical analysis called structural equation modeling (SEM). This is because only examining the relationship between any two of the variables may lead to erroneous conclusions, considering that other related variables may be mediator and moderating variables (Pae, 2008). General findings have been that (a) international posture leads to L2 motivation (in Gardner's sense, focusing on the intensity of motivation) as well as L2 WTC (e. g., Yashima, 2002 ; Yashima et al., 2004), (b) L2 motivation leads to L2 proficiency/ achievement (e. g., Gardner, Tremblay, & Masgoret, 1997 ; Pae, 2008 ; Yashima, 2002 ; Yashima et al., 2004), and (c) L2 communication confidence leads to L2 WTC (e. g., Clément, Baker, & MacIntyre, 2003 ; Yashima, 2002 ; Yashima et al., 2004). However, the relationships between (a) L2 motivation and L2 WTC, (b) L2 communication confidence and L2 achievement, and (c) L2 motivation and L2 communication confidence seem to require more theorizing and empirical verifications.

To illustrate these interrelationships, first Yashima (2002) investigated the interrelationships among L2 WTC, international posture, L2 motivation (as measured by motivational intensity and desire to learn English), L2 communication confidence, and L2 proficiency as measured by TOEFL, Institutional Testing Program (ITP) (Yashima, 2002, p. 59). By analyzing the data with a sample of 297 Japanese university students using SEM, the researcher found that international

posture predicted L2 motivation, which in turn predicted English proficiency. Motivation also predicted L2 communication confidence, which in turn predicted L2 WTC. Furthermore, international posture directly predicted L2 WTC as well （Yashima, 2002, p. 61）.

　　Second, Yashima et al. （2004） investigated the results and antecedents of L2 WTC by conducting a questionnaire with two sets of samples of Japanese EFL high school students. They either had an opportunity to communicate with their native English teachers on a daily basis or went to a study-abroad program. The samples had these characteristics so that frequency of L2 communication would be a relevant variable to them. The researchers again found from SEM and intercorrelation analyses that international posture predicted L2 motivation, which led to L2 communication confidence, which in turn predicted L2 WTC. L2 motivation did not have a direct path to L2 WTC, as in Yashima （2002）. L2 WTC predicted frequency of L2 communication, and international posture directly led to L2 WTC and frequency of L2 communication as well （Yashima et al., 2004, p. 134）.

　　Third, Pae （2008） investigated the structural relationships among motivation as captured in SDT, L2 communication confidence, L2 motivation （in Gardner's sense）, and L2 achievement with a sample of 315 Korean university students learning English. The results of SEM indicated that （a） intrinsic motivation, but not extrinsic motivation, led both to motivation and to L2 communication confidence, （b） L2 communication confidence both directly and indirectly （through motivation） led to L2 achievement, and （c） motivation led to L2 achievement. It is noteworthy that motivation in Gardner's sense, which focused on the quantity of L2 motivation, was important in that it had a direct relationship to L2 achievement and it also played a mediating role between intrinsic motivation and L2 achievement and between L2 confidence and L2 achievement （Pae, 2008, p. 21）. This casts light on the importance of the magnitude of motivation.

Researchers have hypothesized and confirmed some contrasting relationships. First, although Yashima（2002）hypothesized a direct path from L2 motivation to L2 WTC, the study did not find a significant path.　The researcher argued that this suggests that in order for a learner to be willing to communicate in the L2, being motivated is not enough and that he/she needs to have confidence in L2 communication（Yashima, 2002, p. 62）.　Indeed, there seem to be complicating results in terms of the relationship between L2 motivation and L2 WTC.　For example, MacIntyre and Charos（1996）hypothesized that L2 WTC leads to motivation ; however, the data did not create a significant path from L2 WTC to motivation.　These results seem to suggest that L2 motivation is not a direct cause or a product of L2 WTC but is mediated by L2 communication confidence （composed of perceived L2 competence and communication anxiety）.　The relationship between L2 motivation and L2 WTC needs further clarification.

Second, in Gardner et al.（1997）there was a path from L2 achievement to L2 communication confidence, whereas Pae（2008）hypothesized a link from L2 confidence to L2 achievement and found such a path.　An effect of higher achievement/proficiency on L2 communication confidence seems theoretically sound, and the relationship seems to require more theoretical understanding and contextual considerations, as well as further empirical investigations.

Third, in Gardner et al.（1997）, Yashima（2002）, and Yashima et al.（2004）, there was a significant path from L2 motivation to L2 communication confidence, whereas in Pae（2008）the direction was the opposite.　This might mean that the relationship is dynamic in that L2 motivation（which basically means studying harder）leads to higher L2 communication confidence, which then leads to even higher L2 motivation.

These contrasting results are partly due to a weakness of SEM in that a model that a researcher hypothesizes is “only one of many that might fit the data equally

well"（Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 226）．　In other words, SEM cannot prove a cause-effect relationship. Thus, in the future, researchers need to hypothesize a model based on firm theorizing and their model should be tested repeatedly in order to enhance our understanding of the structure of these variables.

6．Pedagogical Implications

　　Past research findings as discussed above have some important pedagogical implications for Japanese learners of English, who live in a typical EFL context. First, considering the importance of L2 motivation, its antecedent, namely international posture, might be a particularly important variable that has the potential of stimulating the L2-related aspect in a learner's ideal self.　If teachers can introduce various contexts in which learners could use English in the future and stimulate their interests in international affairs, news, and careers, this high international posture has the potential of helping learners develop elaborate ideal L2 selves and become motivated.

　　Second, given the importance of L2 WTC in L2 communication, its antecedents of L2 communication confidence, particularly perceived L2 competence, should be firmly formulated.　This means that teachers need to help students have positive communication experiences in an L2 so that these accumulated experiences will make them confident in L2 communication, thereby making them more likely to be willing to communicate in the L2, which will open more communication opportunities to them.　To put it another way, the cycle may go in the opposite direction in that not being confident in L2 communication might lead to being unwilling to communicate in the L2, which is likely to deprive learners of L2 communication opportunities.　This is then likely to lead to less L2 use. Considering that learners could practice L2 communication with little anxiety with

Japanese teachers in particular（Takahashi, 2013）, Japanese teachers might be able to play a particularly important role in forming learners' L2 communication confidence.

7．Conclusion

In sum, the variables of L2 motivation, L2 WTC, L2 communication confidence, and international posture are closely interrelated. Together, these variables create a dynamic interrelationship with L2 achievement and proficiency. Thus, rather than assuming a simple cause-effect relationship between any two of these variables, future researchers are likely to benefit from examining the interrelationships among them.

Pedagogically speaking, past research findings point to the importance of helping learners have high international posture and high L2 communication confidence. Japanese learners of English, who are in a typical EFL context and who use English primarily for intercultural communication, may be able to achieve more L2 by having a high international posture, which is likely to stimulate an ideal self that has the L2-related component. Also, Japanese teachers might play an important role in helping their students become confident in L2 communication, which is likely to lead to more L2 use and L2 achievement.

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