



Title	A Qualitative Analysis of Motivation, Self, and Identity of EFL Learners in a Japanese Context
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## Abstract of Thesis

Name (Nooshin Goharimehr)	
Title	A Qualitative Analysis of Motivation, Self and Identity of EFL Learners in a Japanese Context (日本において第二外国語として英語を学ぶ学習者のモチベーション、自己及び自己同一性に関する質的研究)
<p>Drawing on Gardner's model of motivation, Dörnyei's motivational self system and Norton's identity framework, this qualitative study explored the impact of contextual and cultural factors on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' motivations and negotiations between the self-identity and target language socio-cultural practices. Data were collected through conducting ethnography and online surveys among 70 undergraduate EFL learners in a public university in Kansai. The descriptive statistics revealed a high level of learning motivation and orientation toward all the factors measured by the motivation battery adopted from Gardner (2004). However, although EFL learners appeared to be highly motivated, they were not equally invested in learning the foreign language. Furthermore, it appeared that international orientation was the main motivational factor for learning English as opposed to integrative motivation in its strongest sense which refers to a strong desire to identify with the target culture. Learners' ideal self was associated with instrumental orientations which were Learning English for international communication, accessing to knowledge, and obtaining better academic and career positions revealed from thematic analysis. The ethnography rendered several facts about teaching practices and learning approaches. While the learning outcomes were satisfactory, several participants expressed a desire to improve the teaching methods. The improvement could be achieved through an increase of interactions in English, decrease of the teacher talk time, and introduction of topics which are in line with the learners' portable identities and incorporate their life histories. Finally, those learners whose ideal self was associated with English learning had a higher investment in learning and speaking practices. However, few participants showed traces of identity changes as a result of English learning. Most of the participant didn't mention a specific affinity with the English culture or a desire to join English communities for integrative purposes. In terms of inhibitory factors operating against English learning motivation, identity construction and speaking practices, the variables of anxiety, low linguistic self-confidence, lack of speaking opportunities, and identity conflicts resulted from interference of cultural traits such as ethnocentrism, silence, and conformity were among the effective factors. In sum, the research findings revealed that the participants constructed their identities as situated and multiple within their immediate and imagined learning communities. Their investment in English learning was linked to the cultural and contextual factors, multiple identities, and hopes and desires for the future. The students' learning narratives provided rich descriptions that contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between language and identity in foreign language learning both in Japan and internationally.</p> <p>Keywords: Ideal self, Motivational self system, Motivation, Identity, Investment, Imagined communities.</p>	

## 論文審査の結果の要旨及び担当者

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**論文審査の結果の要旨**

**Title: A qualitative analysis of motivation, self, and identity of EFL learners in a Japanese context**

Despite a considerable investment of resources (human, monetary and time-based) into English language education, Japanese students do not appear to gain a high level of proficiency as measured by standard tests such as TOEFL. Japanese students are also noted to lack confidence to use the English proficiency they have acquired. A considerable body of research exists to understand enablers and disablers of English as a foreign Language (EFL) learning in the Japanese context. This notwithstanding, Goharimehr has identified an important gap in the literature with this doctoral study and further our understanding of the challenges involved for the Japanese EFL learning. This research makes a novel contribution to this body of literature both conceptually and in terms of the methodological approach that was taken. This study can be located within the field of applied and socio linguistics.

The starting point for this study is the desire to understand how English fits or fails to fit into the EFL learners' sense of self, goals for the future and their own cultural value system. Drawing on poststructuralist theories of identity and self, the research sets out to examine Japanese 'EFL learners' motivational orientation in order to provide a more in-depth and relevant understanding of the challenges that are faced by teachers and students in classrooms in Japan. As a result of the research design, it also brings us insights into the practice of EFL in the Japanese classroom. This study focuses specifically on the higher educational classroom setting.

Conceptually the research is sophisticated in that the researcher combines three models or perspectives to understand the relationship between the EFL learner and acquisition of English. The first is Garner's socio-educational model of language learning that measures motivational orientation in terms of integrative or instrumental orientations. Goharimehr then combines this with Dörnyei's model of the L2 motivational self-system and Norton's idea of identity to understand the degree of investment a learner has towards acquiring English proficiency. The extent of investment is seen to be mediated by ideas about the imagined or desired community that English proficiency grants the learner access to, as well as other perceived benefits directly or indirectly accrued as a result of such proficiency. This conceptual framing provides a complex and nuanced instrument to understand the EFL classroom and learners in Japan.

The mixed methods approach was used with a strong qualitative arm to address the three research questions: 1) What are the motivational orientations of Japanese EFL learners from the lenses of motivational self-system and identity theories? 2) Are there any conflicts between students' cultural identity and L2 identity? 3) What are the affective and contextual barriers to EFL learning perceived by Japanese students? A single university was taken as a case study. A survey instrument adapted from Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Battery Test was conducted using a three-point rather than the original five-point Likert Scale and distributed to first and second year undergraduate students taking classes that the researcher was attending weekly to carry out participant observation. In addition, an open-ended questionnaire consisting of six questions was also distributed to these students. Ethnographic data was collected over one academic year with the researcher attending 6 CALL courses and 3 Integrated English speaking courses over the entire fifteen weeks. Class webpages, teaching materials, activity materials were also collected to gain additional insights into the learning process. Overall a large volume of data was collected and the ethnographic arm of the study produced rich insights that could not have been gained just from a survey-based approach.

The thesis is generally well written and is thorough. It begins with a fairly focused introductory chapter that outlines the context for the study, the theoretical framework, aims and the research questions. The contextualization section offers a basic introduction to the issues around EFL in Japan, but failed to note the most recent changes in teaching at grade-school level. The next chapter reviewed in detail the scholarly literature on second language (L2) learning and EFL. It is this chapter that introduces the conceptual tools used in the study. Overall it was felt that the chapter could benefit from further editing to make it more focused. However, it was also acknowledged that the chapter demonstrated the student's detailed knowledge of the scholarly landscape around L2 and EFL acquisition. The methodology chapter was also extremely detailed and lacked focus in places. The results chapter started from page 77 and amounted to just short of 90 pages. The data is presented in a clear manner and makes a good job of addressing the research questions.

By presenting both the survey and ethnographic data it was clear that there was a gap between perceived and actual proficiency for many students. Regardless of actual proficiency, the students tended to position themselves as poor in English and in ability to express opinion. At the same time, the survey data revealed that the ELF learners were generally positive about learning English and highly motivated. While motivated to learn, they were not as equally invested in the learning process. In the discussion it was concluded that while motivation was high, a number of socio-cultural barriers prevented equivalence in terms of investment in learning English. The ethnographic data also revealed pedagogical barriers. It highlighted the extent to which class time was dominated by the teacher speaking, with instructions sometimes given in Japanese. Added to this was the tendency for students to carry out assigned group work in Japanese rather than English, further reducing the time actually practicing the L2. Only around one third of students reported an identity change as a result of learning English, which may also be explained by the limits to the experience of learning English in the Japanese university classroom.

Overall, there is a lot for those interested in EFL and L2 language acquisition to take from this study. The time investment made in following 9 courses each over a whole semester and the insights

this brought is the most valuable aspect of this study. Most researchers do not have the time to do this kind of sweat and toil ethnography. The use of close and open-ended questionnaires provided a point of contrast with the ethnographic data and allowed for additional insights. While the overall quality of the writing could have been further improved with additional editing, the value of the results is evident and makes the thesis well worth reading. The Committee judged that the research makes an important contribution to the field.