

# Do Japanese JHS Students Have Ideal L2 Selves? Evidence From Research in Progress on the Influence of Multimedia Use on Affective Variables

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This paper reports the results from two surveys of an in-progress study of student motivation ( $N = 140$ ) at a junior high school (JHS) in Japan. The Self-Determination Theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 1985) survey was adapted from Yashima, Noels, Shizuka, Takeuchi, Yamane and Yoshizawa (2009) and Noels, Pelletier, Clément and Vallerand (2003). SDT distinguishes between an amotivation component and extrinsic and intrinsic motivational orientation sub-types (Noels et al., 2003). The Willingness to Communicate (WTC, McCroskey & Baer, 1985) survey, based on Matsuoka (2004), and Sick and Nagasaka (2000), checks for perceived anxiety (nervousness), desire and confidence for 30 scenarios. Results from the third month of a fifteen month longitudinal research project provide a cross-sectional 'snapshot' of the first administration of the surveys. The WTC results reveal a low level of confidence and desire to speak English, and a high degree of nervousness about using English. The SDT results, in contrast, indicate that students are eager to learn English as a foreign language (EFL) and desire to become proficient in using the language for instrumental reasons. The findings are discussed in relation to Dörnyei's theory of Ideal L2 Selves (2001), and plans for later stages of the research project.

本論文では、日本の中学校の学生のモチベーションについて研究中の2つの調査 ( $N=140$ ) からの結果を報告する。自己決定理論 (SDT, Deci & Ryan, 1985) 調査は、Yashima, Noels, Shizuka, Takeuchi, Yamane, Yoshizawa (2009)及びNoels, Pelletier, Clément, Vallerand (2003)を基にしている。SDTはamotivationコンポーネントおよび外因性および内因性動機方向のサブタイプを区別する (Noels et al, 2003)。話す・話そうとする意欲 (WTC, McCroskey & Baer, 1985) についての調査はMatsuoka (2004) とSick, Nagasaka (2000) の調査を基にしており、30のシナリオにおいて知覚不安 (緊張) と欲望と自信を調査した。15ヶ月にわたる縦断研究における3ヶ月目の調査は、第1回目の質問紙調査の横断分析の簡単な結果を示す。WTC調査の結果から、英語を話したいという気持ちや自信の程度が低く、また、英語を使うことに対する緊張度が高いことが明らかになった。それはとは対照的に、SDT調査の結果は、学習者が外国語としての英語を学びたいことに熱心で、道具的動機で英語を上達したいと思っていることを示している。調査結果は、DörnyeiのIdeal L2 Selves (2001) との関連において考察し、また、本研究の後期段階に関連付けられる。



**P**REVIOUS STUDIES in the Japanese English as a foreign language (JEFL) have shown that orientations and motivation influence proficiency (Yashima, 2000), and that anxiety, intrinsic motivation based on Self-Determination Theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 1985) and gender are inter-related (Yashima et al., 2009). In a JEFL university setting, proficiency and affective variables such as international posture, motivation, and confidence have been found to influence student Willingness to Communicate (WTC) (Yashima, 2002). Finally, attitudes and affect have been shown to influence WTC amongst high school students (Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide & Shimizu, 2004).

Research on JEFL classrooms has focused on the use of digital video to promote communication (Foss, 2008; Rawson, 2008) and increase student motivation (Shrosbee, 2008) and confidence while speaking (Wyers, 1999, in Shrosbee, 2008). An additional use of video involved taping students on task and allowing them to view their successful performance. Doing so created and fortified “specific positive possible selves for children that functioned as powerful incentives and standards for future successful task performance” (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 962). In the present study, students were recorded speaking in English, and then were shown a video that had been edited to show their most successful use of English. A comparison of initial surveys with surveys of SDT and WTC conducted after the video showings suggest a similarly positive influence.

### **The L2 Learning Experience: SDT Motivational Orientations in EFL**

Self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) has been used in a variety of fields over the past twenty five years with consistent results. According to Dörnyei (2001) regarding SDT in educational contexts, there are three distinctions on the SDT continuum. First, there is *amotivation* (AM; having no desire to

perform a task or engage in an activity). Next is *extrinsic motivation* (EM; engaging in an activity in order to achieve an external reward such as good grades, a raise in salary or to please others). Finally, and of particular interest for this study, there is *intrinsic motivation* (IM; doing a task for the “inherent satisfactions rather than for some separable consequence” quoted from Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 56).

Furthermore, EM has been subdivided into four categories: *external regulation* (i.e., motivation coming entirely from external sources such as rewards or threats); *introjected regulation* (i.e., externally imposed rules that students accept as norms they should follow in order not to feel guilty); *identified regulation* (i.e., engaging in an activity because the individual highly values it and sees its usefulness); *integrated regulation* (i.e., activity involving choiceful behavior that is fully assimilated with the individual’s other values, needs, and *identity*” [italics added]) (see Dörnyei, 2001, p. 47).

In SDT research in education, much of the research has consistently pointed to the importance of intrinsic motivation (see Deci & Flaste, 1996; Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier & Ryan, 1991). This “motivation from within” is believed to sustain the learning process more effectively than motivation that is externally regulated or controlled by the teacher, and the research evidence thus far supports this view (e.g., Pintrich & Schunk, 2002; Ryan & Deci, 2000). The message for educators clearly shows that in order to help our students, we need to have ways of finding, supporting and maintaining students’ own motivation to learn (Ushioda, 2006).

SDT research in the JEFL environment involving university students by Yashima et al. (2009) used an SDT survey in Japanese which was adapted by one used by Noels, Pelletier, Clément and Vallerand (2003). These surveys include three sub-categories of IM: knowledge (i.e., doing an activity for the feelings associated with exploring new ideas and developing

knowledge), accomplishment (i.e., for the sensations related to attempting to master a task or achieve a goal) and stimulation (i.e., for the sensations stimulated by performing the task, such as aesthetic appreciation or fun and excitement) (see Noels et al., 2004, p. 38). Their research also revealed that female students overall show a higher level of self-regulation, indicating that “gender is a crucial dimension of learner profiles” (Yashima et al., 2009, p. 58) amongst university students. Kobayashi (2002) has also reported that female high school students have more interest and positive attitudes toward learning English.

The results of the SDT survey will determine whether there are differences and/or similarities in the responses amongst the sub-sections as shown in the previous studies. If so, then a second administration of the survey will test whether the curriculum and/or use of the video in the classroom had any influence on the motivation orientations of these students.

### **Willingness to Communicate**

The willingness to communicate (WTC) construct was first presented by McCroskey and Baer (1985). Since then, McCroskey and his associates have researched and reported extensively on WTC and the implications for language learning (see McCroskey, 1992; McCroskey & Richmond, 1987, 1991). WTC captures the major implications that affective variables such as anomie (personal unrest, feelings of alienation and/or anxiety that come from lack of purpose or ideals), communication apprehension, introversion, reticence, self-esteem and shyness have in regards to their influence on communicative behavior (McCroskey & Richmond, 1991), resulting in the individual’s “readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons using a L2” according to MacIntyre, Clement, Dörnyei and Noels (1998, p. 547). McCroskey (1992) has broken down the interactions into contexts (public, meeting, group and dyad) and receiver (stranger, acquaintance

and friend). In his research, the results for the various contexts differed by culture (McCroskey, 1992, pp. 19-20).

Yashima and her associates have conducted research on WTC in the JEFL context. Their studies examine, for example, the relationships between motivational orientations, motivation and proficiency (Yashima, 2000) and the relationship between motivation and willingness to communicate amongst university students (Yashima, 2002); the influence of attitudes and affect on willingness to communicate and L2 communication amongst high school students (Yashima et al., 2004); and the interplay of classroom anxiety, intrinsic motivation, and gender amongst university students (Yashima et al. 2009).

In her 2002 study, Yashima found a positive, causal relationship between a latent variable, motivation (which was comprised of two indicator variables, desire and intensity) and the latent variable communication confidence (comprised of the indicator variables communication anxiety, aka nervousness, and perceived communication competence) in the L2, which led to WTC. The present research project replicates several aspects of the Yashima (2002) study, which involved JEFL university students. In addition, Yashima (2004) found that “self-confidence in communication in an L2 is crucial for a person to be willing to communicate in that L2” (p. 141). The current study will check for Japanese JHS students’ levels of nervousness (anxiety), confidence and desire (WTC) to use English in various contexts. Since it remains the goal of The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT; 2003) “To develop students’ basic communication abilities such as listening, speaking, reading and writing, deepening their understanding of language and culture and fostering a positive attitude toward communication through foreign languages” (p. 1), this research will help educators better understand exactly how students’ attitude can be influenced for the improvement of their language use.

## Language Learner Ideal L2 Selves

In their large-scale longitudinal survey, Dörnyei and Csizer (2002) speculated that the process of personal identification theorized to make up the construct of *integrativeness* might be more readily explained as an internal process of identification with the person's self concept, rather than identification with an external reference group (p. 453). Dörnyei (2005) developed this line of thought further by drawing on the psychological theory of *possible selves* (Higgins, 1987; Markus & Nurius, 1986). Accordingly, this theory provides that as a basis of self-identity, possible selves represent an individual's idea of "what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming", and therefore "provide a conceptual link between the self-concept and motivation" (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 157). Dörnyei (2005) builds on this theory of possible selves to develop a new conceptualization of L2 motivation, known as the *L2 Motivational Self System* (p. 9). The central concept is the ideal self, which refers to the representation of the attributes that someone would like to possess in the future. Yashima et al. (2004) postulate that students "who clearly visualize 'possible' or 'ideal' English-using selves are likely to make an effort to become more proficient and develop WTC" (p. 143). Specifically, the identified regulation items on the SDT scale (see below) refer to carrying out an activity to achieve a specific goal such as learning an L2 and "appears to capture a positive motivational disposition and conceivably relates to the kind of self or self-image that a person identifies with" (Yashima et al., 2009, p. 55). The use of the SDT survey in this specific study will help us understand if JEFLL students as young as 13 years old are already developing an Ideal L2 Self. The larger study will test whether this self-concept influences their WTC directly or indirectly via intrinsic motivation.

The purposes of the present study were to: 1) establish baselines for three sections of the SDT survey: (a) amotivation,

(b) extrinsic motivation sub-types, and (c) intrinsic motivation sub-types; and, 2) find the baseline of the WTC survey items for 2a) desire to communicate in English, 2b) confidence to communicate in English, and 2c) the level of nervousness while communicating in English for 30 different scenarios. A regression analysis determined the degree to which Confidence or Nervousness on any of the SDT sub-sections were antecedents to Desire.

## Methods

### Participants

The participants were 142 second-year Japanese students at a junior high school in Nagano City, Japan. Two surveys were discarded since they were incomplete; the final sample consisted of 68 male and 72 female ( $N=140$ ) students. Students were either 13 or 14 years old, with the majority having reached 14 years at the time the surveys were administered.

### Instruments

Two surveys were used to gather the data at this stage of the project. The surveys were translated into Japanese. Back-translation was used to determine the accuracy of the translation. A Japanese language SDT motivation survey, consisting of 21 Likert-type items, asks the students to rate items from 1 (*That is not applicable to me at all*) to 6 (*That absolutely applies to me*). Appendix A presents the English version of the SDT survey.

A WTC survey consists of three sections. The first section tests for *confidence* and asks the students to rate 30 scenarios related to using English in various circumstances from 1 (*I absolutely don't think I could do that*) to 6 (*I think I could do that easily*). The second section tests for *nervousness* and asks the students to rate

the same scenarios from 1 (*I would definitely not be nervous*) to 6 (*I'd be extremely nervous*). The third section, for *desire* (to communicate in English), asks the respondents to rate the same scenarios from 1 (*If I could, I'd run away!*) to 6 (*I would absolutely want to try that!*). Appendix B presents the English version of the WTC survey.

### Procedures

The surveys were completed in during regular class time in March, 2011. Student participation was voluntary and anonymous. The questionnaires were completed without a time limit. Both the SDT and the WTC surveys were completed in Japanese during regular class time. The students were asked to provide their age and gender only. All students agreed to participate in the study. Grades were not affected for participating in the project.

### Results

Means, standard deviations, correlation coefficients and Cronbach's *alpha* of the SDT survey sub-sections are presented in Table 1. The highest scored sub-section for means is Identified Regulation, which consists of the following three items: *Because I want to be a person who can speak a foreign language* (mean score of 4.09); *Because I want to be a person who can speak English* (mean score of 3.91) and *Because I think studying English is important for my personal development* (mean score of 3.45). These results are similar to those of Noels et al. (2003) and Yashima et al. (2009) involving university students, indicating that age may not be a significant factor for the SDT results. Furthermore, the strong correlations between the SDT and WTC sub-sections indicate that an increase in IM could influence Desire as hypothesized.

Table 2 shows the mean score of the seven sub-sections of the SDT survey by gender. The girls reported higher scores on all

Table 1. The SDT and WTC Survey Sub-Section Correlation Matrix and Cronbach's alpha (N=140)

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
(Cronbach's <i>alpha</i> )			(.75)	(.68)	(.69)	(.75)	(.81)	(.81)	(.83)	(.94)	(.96)
1 Amotivation	2.41	1.33									
2 EM External Regulation	2.64	1.3	-.15								
3 EM Introjected Regulation	2.85	1.27	-.08	.60**							
4 EM Identified Regulation	3.81	1.46	-.48**	.49**	.53**						
5 IM Knowledge	3.10	1.28	-.33**	.65**	.57**	.70**					
6 IM Accomplishment	2.99	1.22	-.39**	.63**	.52**	.70**	.81**				
7 IM Stimulation	2.87	1.33	-.34**	.50**	.51**	.61**	.75**	.72**			
8 WTC Confidence	2.66	1.52	-.25**	.32**	.28**	.34**	.48**	.41**	.63**		
9 WTC Nervousness	3.78	1.68	.17*	.02	-.03	.04	-.09	-.04	-.22**	-.41**	
10 WTC Desire***	2.34	1.38	-.21*	.37**	.33**	.43**	.53**	.42**	.60**	.73**	-.36**

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); \*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed); \*\*\*WTC Desire, Cronbach's alpha equals .91

Table 2. The SDT Motivational Orientation Means and SD as a Function of Gender

Gender	Amotivation	Extrinsic Regulation	Introjected Regulation	Identified Regulation	IM Knowledge	IM Accomplish	IM Stimulation
Male (N=37)	2.72[1.51]	2.56 [1.26]	2.79 [1.34]	3.38 [1.51]	2.86 [1.37]	2.86 [1.23]	2.78 [1.45]
Female (N=35)	2.31 [1.17]	2.88 [1.28]	2.88 [1.28]	4.11 [1.37]	3.12 [1.24]	2.90 [1.17]	2.74 [1.23]

sub-sections except Identified Regulation and IM Knowledge. These results support previous findings by Yashima et al. (2009) that gender plays a role in self-regulation, but perhaps not as significantly amongst students this young.

The means show which scenarios on the WTC scale are challenging for the students. The individual items with the least amount of Confidence and Desire, and the most Nervousness are presented in Table 3. For these results, Confidence and Desire are in tandem: the higher the score, the more the participants endorse possessing this trait. On the other hand, for Nervousness, a low score indicates a low amount of this variable. In other words, low Nervousness and high Confidence and Desire scores are ideal. These results reveal four scenarios that are particularly difficult or emotionally challenging for these students: Item 17, *Greet a group of medical professionals who came from the United States to visit your school*; item 19, *Stand in front of your class and talk about your memories of your summer vacation for two minutes*; item 21, *Take a small number of English speaking people sightseeing in Tokyo for one day*; and item 30, *Participate in an English language speech contest for Japanese students. Judges are native speakers*.

Table 3. The WTC Survey Sub-Section Cronbach's alpha and Challenging Items' Mean and SD (N= 140)

Individual item statements	Confidence	Nervous	Desire
(Whole sub-section Cronbach's <i>alpha</i> )	(.94)	(.96)	(.93)
4 Giving a reply for an American television program covering student life in Japan.	2.31 [1.37]	<b>4.57 [1.59]</b>	2.38 [1.64]
8 Speaking to a foreigner sitting next to you on the train.	<b>2.16 [1.52]</b>	4.24[1.67]	2.09 [1.36]
13 Stand in front of the entire class and talk about a TV program which you watched.	<b>2.24 [1.33]</b>	4.19 [1.73]	<b>1.99 [1.31]</b>
17 Greet a group of medical professionals who came from the United States to visit your school.	<b>2.00 [1.40]</b>	<b>4.78 [1.61]</b>	<b>1.77 [1.33]</b>
18 In front of your class, answer a native teacher's questions about your trip during summer vacation.	2.34 [1.37]	4.19 [1.63]	<b>2.08 [1.26]</b>
19 Stand in front of your class and talk about your memories of your summer vacation for two minutes.	<b>2.21 [1.28]</b>	<b>4.27 [1.71]</b>	<b>1.94 [1.15]</b>

Individual item statements	Confidence	Nervous	Desire
21 Take a small number of English speaking people sightseeing in Tokyo for one day.	<b>1.96 [1.34]</b>	<b>4.48 [1.65]</b>	<b>1.98 [1.38]</b>
29 Help a foreigner who looks troubled at the station.	2.43 [1.35]	<b>4.25 [1.61]</b>	2.24 [1.34]
30 Participate in an English language speech contest for Japanese students. Judges are native speakers.	<b>1.80 [1.24]</b>	<b>4.64 [1.81]</b>	<b>1.64 [1.16]</b>

Not surprisingly, these scenarios involve interactions in public or in a group with a stranger. This finding suggests that any influence due to the use of video may be detectable as a change in the three WTC variables after the second administration of the surveys.

A principal components analysis (PCA) was conducted to test if items on the Desire and Confidence scales on the WTC survey would cluster into components, hypothetically by either the context or receiver. The scree plot indicated that two components could be extracted; three components accounted for more than 50% of the variance; and seven components had eigenvalues greater than one. Furthermore, the rotated component matrix attempts failed to converge in 25 iterations, all indicating that a more detailed attempt will have to be made to establish the internal validity of the instrument.

In order to determine the antecedents of Desire to communicate in English, a regression analysis with Desire as the dependent variable was undertaken. Confidence, Nervousness and the SDT sub-sections were the independent variables. The only independent variable showing a significant predictive influence on Desire was Confidence. IM Knowledge has a smaller predictive ability, as shown in Table 4.

**Table 4. The Result of Regression Analysis  
(Dependent Variable: Desire)**

Step	Variables entered	R squared	beta	t	P
1	Confidence	.53	.53	9.86	.000
2	IM Knowledge	.57	.57	3.56	.001

These results indicate that none of the other IM variables had a direct influence on Desire. Further analysis will inform us of whether the IM variables have an indirect influence on Desire, perhaps through Confidence. There were a lot of communalities, indicating that the IM sub-sections should be grouped into a single variable in subsequent analyses.

## Discussion, Conclusions and Future Research

Several results merit particular attention. First, the three items that comprise the EM Identified Regulation sub-section refer to a future ideal self with English or other foreign language ability. The results presented herein confirm that the items in identified regulation, which refer to a future ideal L2 language speaking self, were endorsed the highest of all the subscales, the same as Noels et al. (2003) and Yashima et al. (2009, p. 51, Table 2). Furthermore, the aggregations by gender on the SDT survey indicate differences in motivational orientations by gender were not as great as found by Noels et al. (2009). The young age of the students involved in this project may be the reason. A longer, longitudinal study would help shed light on this question.

In addition, students were reluctant to use English in dyads with native speakers, and in front of a group, whether the group is made up of their peers or native speakers of English. Yet these same students are strongly motivated to learn English. Additional questions might ask, "Why would they hesitate to use their language skills in certain situations?" and "What can

educators do to alleviate nervousness, increase confidence and desire to use English under similar conditions?" For example, in Yashima's (2002) study, no significant path was found from L2 learning motivation to WTC. However, a significant path (.41) was found from motivation to L2 communication confidence. For this study, it has been hypothesized that recording the students in class and replaying the successful use of English will increase student intrinsic motivation, thereby stimulating WTC. The high correlations within SDT survey and between the two instruments show that the two constructs are closely related. These results support Dörnyei's (2001) theory of an Ideal L2 Self (as a basis for their language learning during the duration of their studies. Furthermore, the ability to increase student Confidence via IM may improve their spoken language fluency—a primary goal of the Japanese education system (MEXT, 2003).

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## Bio data

**David Ockert** has a BA in Japanese and pre-law from James Madison College, Michigan State University and a MEd from Temple University. He has recently passed the N2 of the NJLPT and now believes that the impossible may in fact be possible.

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## Appendix A. An English Translation of the SDT Survey

### Amotivation

I don't know why I must study English. Plainly speaking, I'd rather do anything other than study English.

Honestly, I don't know. I truly have the impression of wasting my time in studying English.

As for studying English, I cannot come to see why I study English.

### External Regulation

As for studying English, I do so in order to get a more prestigious job later on.

As for studying English, I do so because I have the impression that it is expected of me.

As for studying English, I do so in order to have a better salary later on.

### Introjected Regulation

Because I would feel ashamed if I couldn't speak to my friends from the English-speaking community in English.

Because if I can speak English, I will be aware that I am an internationally-minded person.

Because I would feel guilty if I didn't know English.
<b>Identified Regulation</b>
Because I want to be a person who can speak a foreign language.
Because I think it is important for my personal development.
Because I want to be a person who can speak English.
<b>Intrinsic Motivation (Knowledge)</b>
For the pleasure that I experience in knowing more about English literature.
For the satisfied feeling I get in finding out new things.
Because I enjoy the feeling of acquiring knowledge about the English-speaking community and their way of life.
<b>Intrinsic Motivation (Accomplishment)</b>
For the pleasure I experience when surpassing myself in my English studies.
For the enjoyment I experience when I grasp a difficult construct in English.
For the satisfaction I feel when I am in the process of accomplishing difficult exercises in English.
<b>Intrinsic Motivation (Stimulation)</b>
For the "high" I feel when hearing foreign languages spoken.
For the "high" that I experience while speaking English.
For the pleasure I get from hearing English spoken by native speakers.

## Appendix B. An English Translation of the WTC Survey

1	Asking a Japanese teacher for a copy of an audio recording.
2	Complaining to a Japanese teacher that the speed of the listening test was too quick to catch.
3	Complaining to a native teacher that the speed of the listening test was too quick to catch.
4	Giving a reply for an American television program covering student life in Japan.
5	Making a telephone call in order to make a reservation at a hotel in English speaking country.
6	Interviewing a native English speaker for an article in the school paper.
7	Asking a pair work partner for the time now.
8	Speaking to a foreigner sitting next to you on the train.
9	Asking a native English speaking teacher the meaning of a word.
10	Making a phone call to invite a friend who can speak only English to a party.
11	Asking a native teacher for a handout given when you were absent from class.
12	Talking to your pair work partner about a TV program which you watched.
13	Stand in front of the entire class and talk about a TV program which you watched.
14	Helping a foreigner that looks troubled because he cannot read a restaurant menu.
15	Asking a foreigner for the time when you do not know it.
16	Help a troubled foreigner because he cannot understand what the salesclerk says at the supermarket.

17	Greet a group of medical professionals who came from the United States to visit your school.
18	In front of your class, answer a native teacher's questions about your trip during summer vacation.
19	Stand in front of your class and talk about your memories of your summer vacation for two minutes.
20	To buy a rare CD sold only overseas, call a CD store in the United States by telephone to order one.
21	Take a small number of English speaking people sight-seeing in Tokyo for one day.
22	Call your host family and thank them for letting you stay with them.
23	Tell your pair work partner in English the way to a place using a map.
24	Say five English words which start with S to your pair work partner.
25	Ask a native English speaking teacher to copy a CD.
26	Ask the meaning of a word to a Japanese teacher using classroom English.
27	Stand and tell your entire class five words using classroom English.
28	Talk to your pair work partner about your memories of summer vacation for two minutes.
29	Help a foreigner who looks troubled at the station.
30	Participate in an English language speech contest for Japanese students. Judges are native speakers.

Adapted from Matsuoka (2004), which was adapted from Sick and Nagasaka (2000).