Self-Determination Theory: Research and Practice for Language Educators

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Self-determination theory is a meta-theory of human motivation and wellness which has applications to language teaching and learning. In this summary of the 2022 forum, the authors share examples of research and practice that have applications to Japanese university contexts. These include research methods for understanding our learners' motivation and exploring teaching and advising both inside and outside the classroom and in online environments to support learner involvement and well-being.

自己決定理論は人の動機づけとウェルネスについてのメタ理論であり、言語教育・学習にも応用されている。本稿は2022年の大会で行われたフォーラムを要約したものであり、日本の大学における外国語学習者動機づけ研究や実践を共有するものである。具体的には、学習者の動機づけ研究法の他、学習者の取り組みとウェルネスを向上させるための、オンラインを含む教室内外における教育実践や指導・助言について取り上げる。

Self-determination theory (SDT) is a meta-theory of human motivation and wellness (Deci & Ryan, 1987; Ryan & Deci, 2017) which helps us to understand how humans can grow and thrive in different life domains, including business, sports, and more recently, language education. This paper is a summary of the forum 'Self-determination theory: Research and practice for language educators' held at JALT 2022 in Fukuoka, Japan. The authors begin with a brief explanation of SDT, including details of one of the most widely applied of the six mini-theories of SDT, basic psychological needs (BPN) theory (see Reeve, 2022 and Ryan & Deci, 2017 for an account of all six mini-theories), and then present examples of methods in which this can be investigated. There then follows a brief summary of each of the presentations from the forum, which showcased SDT applied to universities in Japan in different ways: in language classrooms, in one-to-one dialogues, in outside-classroom contexts, in online environments, and in research.

BPN theory proposes that humans have three basic needs that must be satisfied for people to thrive. These are autonomy, competence, and relatedness. From an SDT perspective, autonomy is a sense of agency or ownership over one's choices. It is a person's inner thoughts and endorsements of their goals, feelings, and behaviors. Competence is a person's need to feel effective when interacting with their environment. To do this, they must feel optimally challenged and feel they are developing a degree of mastery which leads to a sense of confidence. Finally, relatedness is a person's connection with others and a sense of belonging. People perform best when they experience mutual respect and warmth from others.

In the field of education, extensive research into classroom conditions and teaching approaches with learners of all ages in different kinds of institutions has led to a general understanding that an autonomy-supportive teaching style is likely to result in greater active engagement by learners and enhanced well-being (Reeve et al., 2022b; Ryan & Deci, 2017). We can see from meta-analyses of control group studies that students experiencing autonomy-supportive conditions show higher motivation, classroom functioning, and academic achievement, among other benefits, than students not experiencing such conditions (Cheon & Reeve, 2014; Reeve et al., 2022a). As we will see in the examples shared in this summary, meaningful learning takes account of both the environment and the role of the teacher (Reeve, 2009).

Research Methods for Understanding Motivation in the Classroom

Tomoko Hashimoto

The first presenter, Tomoko Hashimoto, shared details of two quantitative and one qualitative research methods that can be used to understand language learner motivation in classroom settings. These were used in a study that examined cooperative learning in university classrooms (Classes 1 and 2) using the theoretical framework of SDT (Hashimoto, 2022). Although cooperative learning has already been explored from different angles in previous studies (e.g., Hashimoto, 2020; Johnson et al., 2014), Hashimoto's study (2022) specifically explored how the effects of cooperative learning can be understood through the application of two of the six mini theories of SDT: organismic integration theory and BPN theory. Organismic integration theory deals with the process and effects of the integration of extrinsic values within an individual. It describes four types of extrinsic motivation that vary in their relative autonomy, affecting both persistence and performance. From feeling highly autonomous to feeling controlled, the four types are: integrated regulation, identified regulation, introjected regulation, and external regulation. BPN theory deals with individuals' three innate needs, autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The degree of satisfaction of these affects the pursuit or attainment of a goal (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

A questionnaire by Agawa and Takeuchi (2016), semi-structured interviews conducted in Japanese, and written student comments, were used to collect data. Agawa and Takeuchi's (2016) questionnaire is composed of a BPN scale that assesses autonomy, competence, and relatedness, and an English learning motivation scale that measures intrinsic motivation, identified regulation, external regulation, and amotivation. The reason integrated regulation was not tested was that the scale was tailored and validated to suit the Japanese EFL setting. According to Agawa and Takeuchi (2016), constructs which lie next to each other on the regulation continuum may not always be easy to distinguish for students studying English at Japanese universities. This could also be the reason why items for identified and introjected regulation were combined and coined identified regulation (Agawa & Takeuchi, 2016).

Prior to the application of this questionnaire, reliability for each factor was examined for Hashimoto's (2022) study, which revealed a high level of internal consistency determined by Cronbach's alpha: intrinsic motivation $\alpha = .914$, identified regulation $\alpha = .914$, external regulation $\alpha = .895$, amotivation $\alpha = .892$, autonomy $\alpha = .913$, competence $\alpha = .861$, and relatedness $\alpha = .810$. For the investigation, a total of 52 students were tested at three points, pre-, mid-, and post-study. IBM SPSS Version 26 was used to conduct one-way ANOVAs on the data: Eight to measure motivation (intrinsic motivation, identified regulation, external regulation, and amotivation) and six to investigate BPNs (autonomy, competence, and relatedness). F-statistics were calculated in the ANOVAs, and post hoc comparisons using Bonferroni correction were conducted when there were significant differences ($p < .05$).

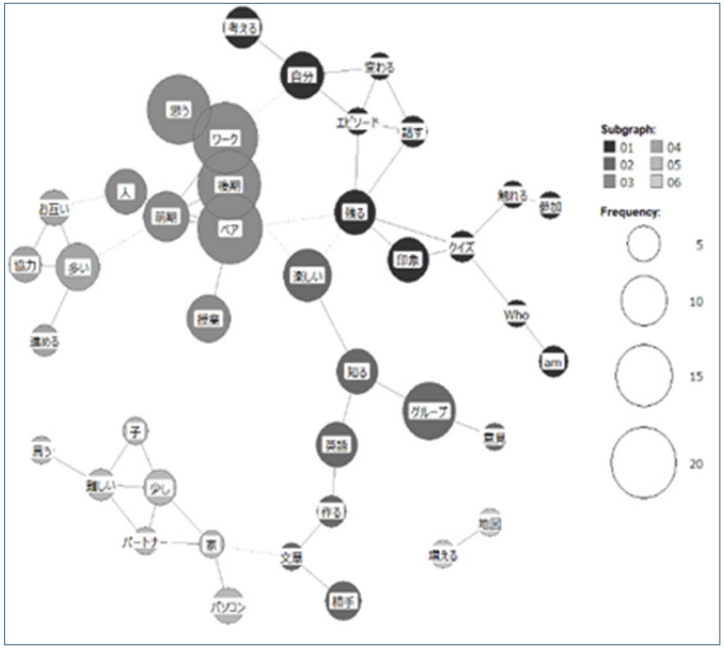
Interviews were conducted to analyze how students' backgrounds and prior experiences affected their perceptions of the cooperative learning they engaged in, which involved tasks and projects related to their textbook. These were recorded using voice recorders and carried out over three days on students who were chosen by convenience sampling (Dörnyei, 2007). The average time for interviews was 55 minutes and 07 seconds per interviewee. After the interviews, the audio was transcribed into text.

The purpose of the written student comments was to elucidate the specific experiences students in Classes 1 & 2 had in terms of their motivation and BPN satisfaction while

engaging in cooperative learning activities. For written comments, students were asked to write about their cooperative learning experience during the spring and fall semester, and over the course of the academic year. KH Coder, a free, quantitative content analysis software created by Higuchi (2020), was used for analysis. Settings for KH Coder can be altered to produce different diagrams and charts. For Hashimoto (2022)'s study, a frequency list of words, and a co-occurrence network diagram were created for investigation. A frequency list of words counts the number of times a certain vocabulary item is used in a text. A co-occurrence network diagram shows words that are related to each other using circles and lines. The size of the circle depicts how often the word is used. An example of a co-occurrence network diagram is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Example of a Co-occurrence Network Diagram Created to Analyze Written Student Comments



Note. From Hashimoto, 2022, p. 130.

There are also other functions, such as KWIC Concordance, which shows how an extracted word is used in the data being examined. In using KH coder for analysis, it is important not only to focus on the quantitative results but also to refer back to the original text (Higuchi, 2020; Higuchi et al., 2022).

Interviews were conducted with one student each from Classes 1 and 2. This was to further investigate how student perceptions of cooperative learning vary depending on experience and background. Interview questions were composed of two categories: background information, and questions pertaining to motivation and BPNs during and after students' participation in cooperative learning. The data were analyzed as narratives, which are said to be constructed accounts by individuals that reveal their past experiences and affect their future actions (Bruner, 2004; Kohler Riessman, 2008). According to some researchers, there are three methodological stances in narratives one can take: sociocultural, naturalist, and literary. Naturalists pay attention to "rich descriptions of the content of people's stories about significant issues" (McAlpine, 2016, p. 36). Since the study focused mainly on cooperative learning and motivation, the naturalist approach was employed. Therefore, attention was given to the content of what was told, rather than to how, or the environment in which it was told.

Overall, this section presented research methods that can be employed for understanding motivation in the classroom.

One-to-one Advising Dialogue for Supporting the Three Basic Psychological Needs

Scott Shelton-Strong

The second presenter, Scott Shelton-Strong, shared details of a research project grounded in SDT. SDT postulates that satisfaction of people's basic psychological needs (BPNs) of autonomy, competence, and relatedness leads to optimal functioning and flourishing, while frustration of these needs undermines motivation and leads to negative outcomes in relationships and self-development (Roth et al., 2019).

This research investigated language learners' experiences in one-to-one advising dialogue with learning advisors. Advising in language learning (advising) refers to conversations about learning, or a "dialogical intervention" (Mozzon-McPherson, 2019, p. 96), where the language learner is invited to reflect on their learning experience, their goals, and needs through the use of intentional reflective questioning, empathetic

and active listening, and specific advising strategies used to co-construct the reflective dialogue (Mozzon-McPherson & Tassinari, 2020; Mynard, 2021). In these advising sessions, the learning advisor normally uses nondirective language to scaffold and enhance a sense of self-endorsement or ownership of the learning process (Mynard & Shelton-Strong, 2022; Shelton-Strong, 2022a; Shelton-Strong & Tassinari, 2022).

Background

The research took place at a university in Japan specialising in foreign language degree programmes and cultural studies where all students learn languages, and in most cases, more than one (English and another language). Ninety-six Japanese students (aged 18-21) took part in this research. Everyone had been involved in at least one advising session in the year of the data collection.

Study Aims and Research Questions

The aims of the study were to investigate whether learners' involvement in advising sessions was supportive of BPN satisfaction and, if so, to understand how this experience enhanced learner well-being and flourishing.

RQ1: To what extent was participation in advising sessions supportive of learners' basic psychological needs, and did this support increase with repeated sessions?

RQ2: What elements (if any) of learners' self-reported experiences in advising can be identified as leading to basic psychological need satisfaction (or frustration) and the well-being and flourishing associated with it?

To achieve these aims, a mixed-methods approach was adopted. For the quantitative data, an adapted version of the BPN satisfaction and frustration scale (Chen et al. 2015) was used to determine the extent advising was supportive of the study participants' BPNs. To understand and identify the antecedents leading to need satisfaction, participants' experiences in advising sessions were collected through anecdotal self-reports (Shelton-Strong, 2022b).

Results

Quantitative Results

To summarize the questionnaire results, the descriptive statistics showed that advising sessions were perceived as highly need supportive with low levels of need frustration reported (see Table 1).

To determine if the number of sessions attended influenced the strength of need satisfaction, a one-way ANOVA was run. The results indicated a significant difference for those who had attended more than five sessions compared to those who had attended only one, and between two and five sessions (see Table 2).

Table 1

Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction and Frustration in Advising

	Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction			Basic Psychological Need Frustration			Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction	Basic Psychological Need Frustration
	Autonomy	Competence	Relatedness	Autonomy	Competence	Relatedness	Composite	Composite
M	4.03	3.57	3.84	2.01	2.13	1.74	3.81	1.96
SD	.56	.71	.87	.82	.77	.66	.63	.66

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations, and One-Way Analyses of Variance for Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction and Frustration According to Number of Advising Sessions Attended

Sessions	1		2-5		6-10+		F	η^2
n	41		49		6			
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	(7,28)***	(.13)
Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction	3.65	.64	3.86	.59	4.62	.22		
Basic Psychological Need Frustration	2.11	.77	1.87	.57	1.62	.29	(2,34)	(.04)

$p < .001$***

The number of sessions had a significant effect on need satisfaction for the three conditions, $F(2, 93) = 7.28$, $p = .001$. For need frustration, the results of the ANOVA were not statistically significant, $F(2,93) = 2.34$, $p = .101$. The effect size was large for need satisfaction ($\eta^2 = .13$). Post hoc comparisons using the Games-Howell test for need satisfaction showed that being involved in more than five advising sessions (M = 4.62; SD = .21) was statistically significantly different to that of attending only one (M = 3.65; SD = .63), as well as two to five advising sessions (M = 3.86; SD = .68).

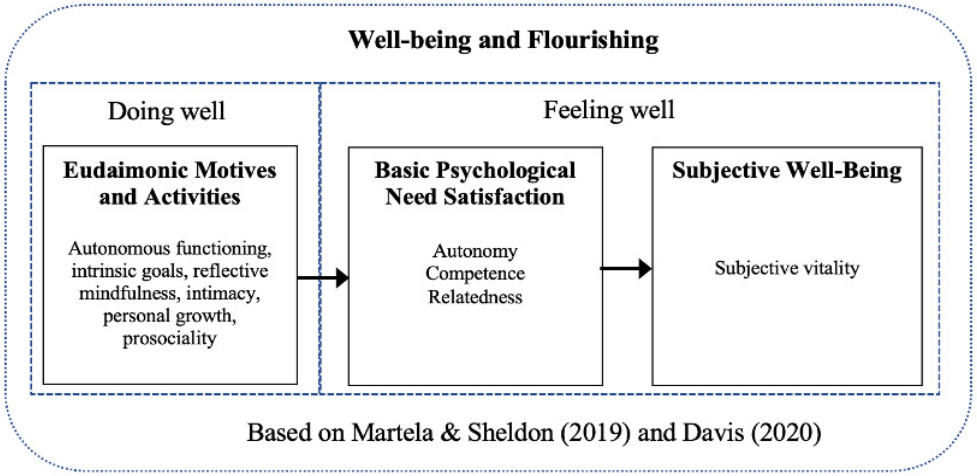
These results suggest that the number of advising sessions a learner participates in can influence basic psychological need satisfaction. Particularly, the results suggest that when learners participate in advising sessions, their needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness are highly satisfied.

Qualitative Results

The qualitative data underwent an interpretive analysis (Hatch, 2002) using the lens of the Eudaimonic Activity Model (EAM) (Martela & Sheldon, 2019 - see Figure 2). This model distinguishes between aspects of *feeling well*, that is, basic psychological need satisfaction and subjective well-being, and *doing well*, eudaimonic motives & activities, as components of well-being and flourishing, and as antecedents to BPN satisfaction. The qualitative results informed the quantitative findings, facilitating a finer-grained understanding of how advising can support a learner's BPNs. Specifically, it showed ways the advising experience can promote well-being and flourishing, which was at the heart of this study.

Figure 2

The Eudaimonic Activity Model



The qualitative analysis through the lens of the EAM showed the learners' involvement in advising sessions; the intentional reflective dialogue with the advisors was associated with autonomous functioning, feeling energized through volitional activity and self-endorsed action, closeness to the advisors, and the experience of being listened to. There were examples suggestive of personal growth through experiencing and learning new things (see Table 3 for examples).

Table 3

BPN Support (Autonomy): Indicators of Flourishing and Well-being

Learner comments on involvement with LAs in advising encounters	*Coding	BPN support
"I haven't thought about 'How I study' although I was taught 'What to study'. I found that what I learn from learning advisors are so important and good for me to keep motivation high and make my dream come true."	AV - PG	Autonomy Competence
"The LAs answered my questions sincerely and gave me logical explanations for their recommendations, and encouraged me. He gave me more choices. For that reason, I was motivated and I was able to study from many angles by giving me many choices, which was very helpful! They widened my perspective of learning."	AV – PG - LI	Autonomy Competence Relatedness
"They are very kind and listen to me about what I want to do. We were able to overcome the difficulties I had together, and I could calm myself when I talk to them. Learning advisors are indispensable to me."	LI - PG	Autonomy Relatedness Competence
"Every time I have an advising session, I feel I can achieve this goal with the advice that LA gives me. When I have some difficulties in learning and negative feelings, I use an advising session. Learning advisors always listen to me carefully and cheer me up. Therefore, for me, advising sessions is one of my elements to keep my motivation and be myself."	LI – PG - AV	Relatedness Autonomy Competence
"They are the adults who will listen to my stories personally and with care, and someone who I can talk to like a friend. Someone who I can count on.	LI	Relatedness Autonomy Competence
"They make me feel positive about learning English."	*PG*	

Note. LI = Listened to / Intimacy; AV = Autonomous Functioning / Vitality; PG = Personal Growth

The self-reports shown in Table 3 were identified as antecedents to the satisfaction of autonomy, competence, and relatedness and situates advising as a practice supportive of BPN satisfaction and the well-being and flourishing associated with it (see Shelton-Strong, 2022b for the full published study).

Conclusion

This summary shares key details of the study and, in response to the research questions, illustrates how advising in language learning aids in supporting learners' BPNs and how this experience can lead to enhanced well-being and flourishing.

Designing Learning Spaces to Support Students' Basic Psychological Needs

Jo Mynard

The third presentation, by Jo Mynard focused on the application of SDT to outside-class learning, in this case, a self-access learning center (SALC). A SALC is an inclusive and supportive pro-social multilingual community that promotes language learning and learner autonomy (Mynard et al., 2022). Some features of a SALC include learning resources, study spaces, events and communities, conversation lounges, tutoring, and one-to-one advising. Ongoing developments in technology and pedagogy have changed the field of self-access significantly since SALCs first appeared in the late 1960s (Mynard, 2022). Currently, there is a focus on holistic well-being and the emotional side of learning, including using an SDT framework to explore features of a SALC to ensure that students' BPNs are being met (Mynard & Shelton-Strong, 2022).

An example of a feature of a SALC is a conversation lounge which is (ideally) designed to create a comfortable, supportive and non-threatening environment in which to practice the TL. Researchers in Japan (e.g., Hughes et al., 2012; Mynard & Shelton-Strong, 2020; Murray & Fujishima, 2013, 2016) have noted that interacting with others in the target language is a profound source of autonomous motivation for using a SALC. These fulfill the need of *autonomy* as long as students are free to exercise agency and choose how and whether or not to participate. Conversation lounges also have the potential to enable learners to experience successful communication in the target language, which can satisfy the BPN of *competence*. However, students' negative perceptions of their own language abilities, along with a need for perfectionism, have hindered this sense of competence (Mynard et al., 2020; Mynard & Shelton-Strong, 2022). Conversation

lounges have the potential to fulfill the BPN for *relatedness* as they bring learners together in a mutually supportive community (Mynard & Shelton-Strong, 2022). However, some learners actively avoid such places for various reasons, such as feelings of anxiety, feeling intimidated by other learners, perceiving that it is culturally inappropriate to interact with students outside their usual social group, or having alternative ways to practice the TL more in line with their personalities, comfort zones, or identities (Mynard et al., 2020). Conversation lounges can be made more accessible and need-supportive through intentional actions on the part of the staff. For example, supporting competence by:

- providing orientations,
- making linguistic support tools accessible, and
- scaffolding initial visits.

Supporting relatedness by:

- rearranging furniture, and
- holding "mixer" events.

Supporting autonomy by:

- exploring feelings, beliefs and anxieties in one-to-one advising sessions, and
- helping learners to identify ways that would be comfortable for them to use the facilities available.

Involving the community of learners in creating a more accessible environment is also a way of enhancing BPN support. One of the advantages of a SALC is that learners can find spaces, resources, and opportunities that match their individual interests. One recent growth area in self-access is the emergence of interest-based learner-led social learning communities (Watkins, 2021; Watkins & Hooper, 2023). These may be informal groups that form and disband organically, or they can persevere, grow, and thrive with a little active encouragement, logistical support, and mentoring from staff working in SALCs. The communities satisfy the BPN for autonomy as they are run by students for students, attendance is optional, and exist due to an identified need and shared interest on the part of the members. In such groups, the BPN of relatedness is supported as members make connections and friendships, enjoy being together, and discuss areas of mutual interest in the TL in a supportive environment. Members may develop a reciprocal system of teaching and learning from one another and communicate freely without social or age-related barriers or hierarchies. Community members experience competence as they learn and discover new things, make noticeable progress together, and develop their confidence simultaneously.

This short section has summarized some ways educators can draw on SDT when designing facilities to support learners outside the classroom. Ensuring students' PBNs are being met is a systematic way to focus on holistic well-being to help learners to flourish while engaging in language learning activities.

Classroom Activities to Fulfill Students' Basic Psychological Needs

Toshie Agawa

In the fourth presentation, Toshie Agawa shared examples of classroom activities designed to fulfill students' three BPNs. She also showed the results of a pedagogical intervention using such activities.

In the pedagogical intervention, two groups of students enrolled in compulsory TOEFL preparation courses participated in the study: the Contrast Group (CG) (N=23) and the Treatment Group (TG) (N=24). These classes were chosen for the study because the course objectives were virtually the same, and students' characteristics were similar. Both CG and TG students were majoring in medicine, and some of them were interested in participating in a clerkship program abroad in the future. (Approximately 20% of undergraduate students participated in clerkships abroad before COVID-19.)

Before the pedagogical intervention was administered, the CG's and TG's degree of needs fulfillment were measured (Time 1) using a survey administered with the participants' written consent. Two-tailed t-tests found no statistically or practically significant differences between the two groups (t (45) = .64, p = .53, r = .10 for autonomy; t (45) = -.91, p = .37, r = .14 for competence; t (45) = -.32, p = .76, r = .05 for relatedness). The results indicated that, in addition to the characteristics mentioned above, the groups were considered the same with regard to the needs characteristics. The same questionnaire was conducted at the end of the course (Time 2), which was approximately ten months after Time 1.

The CG received conventional test-preparation classes in which students answered questions and checked their answers before the instructor explained them. This type of instruction for test preparation has been widely employed in many universities in Japan.

The TG received instruction designed to satisfy their needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Regarding autonomy needs fulfillment, previous studies have indicated

at least four points to be noted: (a) explaining the rationale, value, and significance of tasks (Reeve, 1996; Reeve & Jang, 2006); (b) using tasks that are somewhat related to the real world (Dörnyei, 2009), (c) having students reflect on their study (Murphey & Jacobs, 2000; Nakata, 2007, 2010), and (d) giving students informative feedback (Agawa, 2021; Reeve, 1996; Reeve & Jang, 2006). In one example task, students were asked to correct an error in an English sentence which was provided to them with an illustration to convey its meaning. As the illustrated scene was set in an ordinary, common context for students, students were able to imagine the actual scene of English language use while working on the task. Students were able to understand that a subtle linguistic error could make a significant difference in meaning, which was useful for students to notice the error (Schmidt, 1990). Another activity shared was reflection sheets that students filled out. In addition to the obvious benefit of a reflection sheet (i.e., giving students opportunities to reflect on their study), asking students if they understood the rationale of a certain classroom task can help teachers finetune their teaching.

Regarding competence needs fulfillment, the literature suggests at least three points for teachers to keep in mind: (a) using cooperative pair and group work (Johnson & Johnson, 2003), (b) repeating the same type of task (Maekawa & Yashima, 2012), and (c) adjusting the pacing and difficulty of tasks based on students' feedback (Agawa & Takeuchi, 2017). One example of a common cooperative speaking task was a pair-work task where one student (Student A) made a speech using a TOEFL prompt while the other (Student B) timed Student A's speech (15 seconds for preparation and 45 seconds for the speech). After Student A's speech, Student B gave Student A feedback on the speech. Then, they switched roles and repeated the task. The students' comments on reflection sheets showed that, by repeating the same type of task while using different speech prompts, students felt more competent in completing the task over time. In addition, based on the students' comments, it was evident that they learned from each other, which, in theory, helps students feel more competent as well as autonomous.

Regarding relatedness needs fulfillment, previous studies have suggested that teachers use cooperative and group work as well as activities in which students can get to know each other (Johnson & Johnson, 2003). However, the teacher should consider separating students who are close to each other. As another study by Agawa (2020) showed, when learners have not become well acquainted with their classmates, whether inside or outside of class, becoming connected with them may enhance their motivation. Conversely, when learners have already built good relationships with their classmates outside of class, it may have various impacts on their in-class motivation, depending on the nature of the relationship.

The CG's and TG's degree of the needs fulfillment were measured before (Time 1) and after (Time 2) the courses. The collected data were compared using a mixed two-way repeated analysis of variance (ANOVA) including two variables (see Figures 3-5).

Figure 3

Group Means of Autonomy Items at Time 1 and Time 2

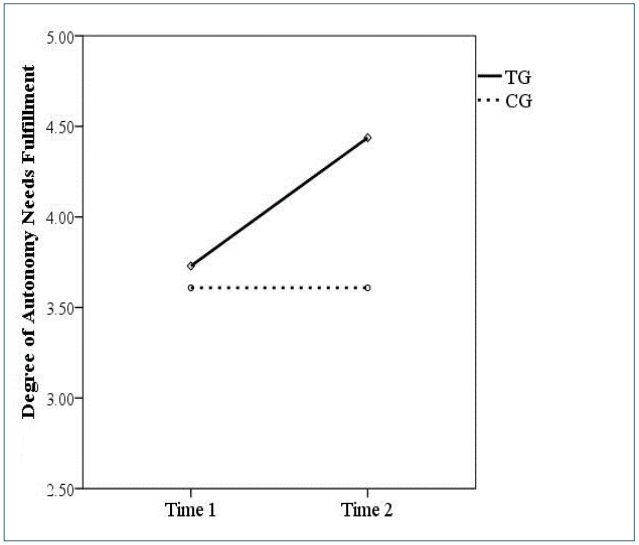


Figure 4

Group Means of Competence Items at Time 1 and Time 2

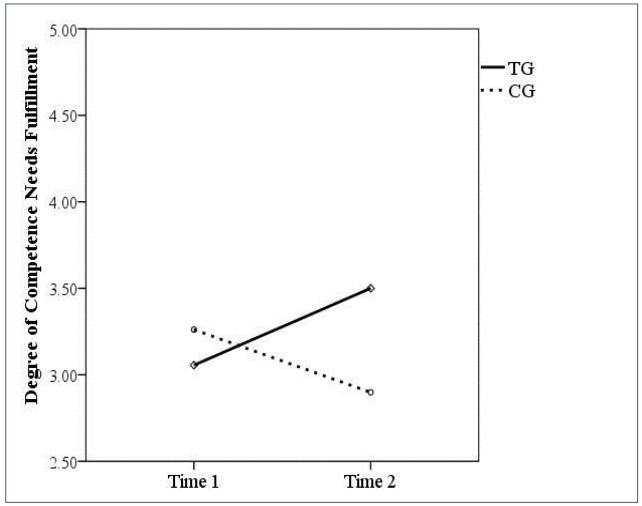
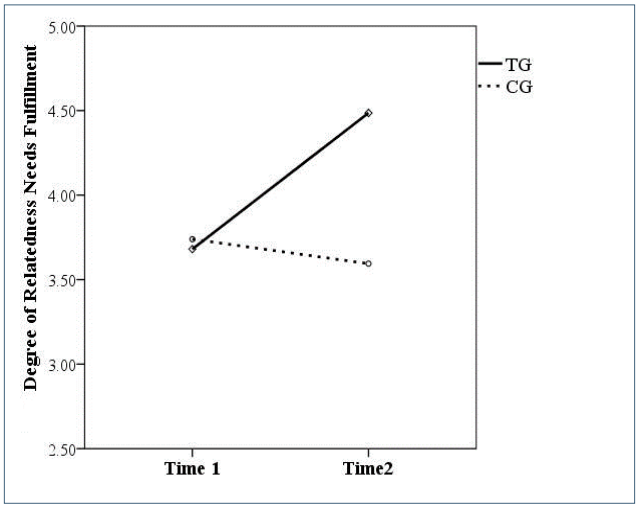


Figure 5

Group Means Related Items at Time 1 and Time 2



Given the results of pedagogical intervention based on SDT, the TG students' needs were more satisfied than those of the students who did not receive SDT-based instructions (i.e., the CG). In the CG, the degree of students' needs satisfaction did not show a significant difference. These results indicate the effectiveness of SDT-based intervention.

Fostering Relatedness Between Students in Online Classrooms to Facilitate their Willingness to Communicate (WTC)

Phillip A. Bennett and Amelia Yarwood

In the final presentation, Phillip A. Bennett and Amelia Yarwood introduced findings from an action research project (Yarwood et al., 2019; Bennett & Yarwood, 2021) that used targeted discussion prompts used twice-weekly in a single, synchronous online classroom to inspire a more self-aware, positive social climate. It was anticipated that if learners could share their experiences, worries, and ideas about common language learning issues (e.g., the fear of making mistakes, difficulties in focussing during online classes), they could build a supportive online classroom environment within which L2 willingness to communicate (L2 WTC) is facilitated.

A review of the literature shows that students' BPNs are the same in online and offline learning contexts (Chiu, 2021). However, not sharing a physical space reduces the opportunities for interactions, and this can undermine feelings of relatedness (Chiu, 2021; Ryan & Deci 2017). This reduced physical proximity and social interaction has significant implications for online L2 WTC. When researching online L2 WTC, a dynamic state perspective is necessary (Lee & Liu, 2022; Zhang et al., 2018) to understand the learners' subjective perceptions and interpretations of the complex, unpredictable nature of online communication. Some examples of elements within the online environment that may influence L2 WTC include devices (e.g., iPads vs. computers), technical difficulties, nonverbal or virtual affective support such as the use of emojis, and learners' openness to online classrooms and unfamiliarity with interlocutors.

Data from synchronous, online focus groups consisting of nine students and reflections submitted by all students via Google forms were subject to a reiterative process of inductive coding that borrowed from SDT and WTC frameworks (Yarwood

& Bennett, 2022). One of the key findings was that learners value and recognize the importance of relatedness vis-à-vis a sense of collective responsibility (i.e., reciprocity) and the gradual building of trust and familiarity.

In terms of collective responsibility, the students frequently cited affective barriers that impeded the co-construction of a WTC environment, such as shyness and feeling embarrassed by the attention they were receiving. Furthermore, the absence of nonverbal cues, worries over L2 competencies, and the perception of disengagement brought on by camera inactivity were among the other challenges mentioned. Students concluded through their discussions that their responsibility to remove any actual or imagined barriers to effective peer communication was vital. Consequently, they also underscored that they expected others to do the same in return. Individual-level strategies that arose from the discussions included the use of discourse strategies (e.g., asking questions), the use of non verbal gestures (e.g., nodding) and self-study to improve L2 competencies. Group-level strategies focused primarily on reciprocating the efforts made by others and building rapport in alternative online contexts (e.g., online games).

The second communicative need was for the fostering of familiarity and trust between communicative partners. Lower L2 WTC was attributed to relatedness-thwarting variables such the inability to see classmates, particularly in classrooms where camera usage was limited, and the lack of incidental communication before, during, and after online lessons. Ultimately, students did not initially feel secure enough to initiate conversations, take charge, or disclose personal information and opinions. This finding is prevalent in both face-to-face (Kang, 2005; Sato, 2020) and online classrooms (Lee & Liu, 2022). Although familiarity and trust are developed gradually over time, students believe that stronger bonds may be encouraged through a balance of everyday interpersonal disclosures (e.g., hobbies) and more academic discourse (e.g., language learning concerns). By emphasizing the necessity for students to make their online presence visible, the final recommendations reaffirmed the significance of reciprocal responsibility—particularly by turning on cameras, using chat features, and using emoticons.

The project aimed to promote the development of a positive online learning environment that encourages L2 communicative willingness. Students were able to identify their communicative needs and work together to develop answers when given specific opportunities to address personally relevant topics. Thus, interventions that focus on student-led, teacher-supported discussions of concerns could be a strategy to encourage L2 WTC because the open dialogue seems to foster a sense of reciprocal responsibility, familiarity and trust.

Concluding Comments

In this short summary, the authors shared examples of research and practice in Japanese university contexts. The research methods included word analysis, questionnaires, interviews and written reflections, drawing on qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method approaches. As SDT is very well- established as a field, there are many ready-made methods, tools, and instruments that researchers in language education can use or adapt as the authors have shown. Researchers can, for example, measure students' BPNs and motivation before and after an intervention (see section by Hashimoto); measure different outcomes in comparison with a treatment group (see section by Agawa); investigate learners' qualitative experiences (see sections by Shelton-Strong, Bennett, & Yarwood); or look at changes over time (see sections by Agawa; Shelton-Strong). The authors also present some practical ideas (see sections by Mynard; Agawa; Bennett & Yarwood). The research methods, teaching applications and advising applications show there is great potential for supporting learner involvement and well-being within and outside the classroom in online and face-to-face environments. However, more workshops and publications which include practical examples are necessary to make it more accessible for practitioners in Japan.

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