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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MOTIVATION AND PROFICIENCY IMPROVEMENT

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Introduction

- Among several factors that affect the level of success in language learning.
 - Motivation to learn the language is of particular importance.
- Motivational factors are diverse and the debate over the most influential factors in language learning has not reached a consensus.
- Comparisons
 - between instrumental vs. integrative
 - between intrinsic vs. extrinsic factors

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Motivation & Improvements

- This study aims
 - (1) to investigate whether motivation influences academic achievement
 - (2) to explore the relationship between various motivational factors and improvements to participants' scores
- Demotivation: a profound negative impact on language learning
 - exploring the reasons and causes of demotivation
 - eliminating any detriments
 - can enhance the effectiveness of language learning
- The results are expected to suggest ways
 - to prevent demotivation
 - to eventually improve learning effect.

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Literature Review

- Gardner and Lambert (1972)
 - instrumental motivation: learners study a language in order to achieve practical goals such as *getting a job* or completing translation tasks
 - integrative motivation: learners study English to become more knowledgeable about the cultures of English speaking countries and societies and to integrate themselves into the culture.
- Deci (1975, cited in Brown, 2007)
 - intrinsic motivation: inclinations without any extrinsic rewards such as prizes or money
 - extrinsic motivation: related to those same extrinsic rewards
- It has been argued that intrinsic motivation is more effective than extrinsic motivation in language learning for long-term retention.

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Literature Review

- Ellis (1997); Gardner & Lambert (1972): emphasize the importance of integrative motivation.
- Chong & Kim (2001); Gardner & MacIntyre (1991): instrumental motivation plays a critical role in language learning.
- TY Kim (2006, 2009); Lamb (2007):
 - influence of integrative motivation -- ESL learners
 - influence of instrumental motivation -- EFL learners

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Literature Review

- Dörnyei (2005)
- The ideal L2 self: learners visualize positive aspects of learning outcomes such as getting a good job or a promotion at work.
- Ought-to L2 self:
 - learners are motivated to study L2 due to external forces or
 - they visualize negative aspects of learning outcomes such as losing a job or unsuccessful promotion

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Literature Review

- Proficiency levels, major, and classroom environment influence language learners' motivation.
- KJ Kim (2009)
 - (1) teachers should consider learners' proficiency levels and interest when choosing a textbook.
 - (2) teachers need to give students freedom to choose their reading materials and space to read.
 - (3) teachers need to listen to and try to understand learners' difficulties.

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Literature Review

- Sakai and Kikuchi (2009)
- Five demotivating factors for Japanese high school students
 - (1) learning content and materials
 - (2) teachers' competence and teaching styles
 - (3) inadequate school facilities
 - (4) lack of intrinsic motivation
 - (5) test scores

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Literature Review

- Falout and Maruyama (2004)
 - advanced level Japanese university learners think (1) teachers and (2) poor educational environments weakened their learning motivation
 - low level participants: (1) their lack of effort and (2) a loss of self-confidence were demotivational factors
- Falout et al. (2009)
 - Japanese university students thought:
 - grammar-centered curriculum reduced learning motivation
 - teachers played a positive role toward inspiring learning motivation

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Research Questions

- Does English proficiency among Korean EFL students determine the factors that serve as their primary motivation?
- Among diverse motivational factors, what are the motivational factors which contribute to the participants' proficiency improvement?

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Method

- **Participants:** ninety-two first-year Korean university students who took a mandatory English course
- They
 - (1) completed a questionnaire on their motivation to learn English
 - (2) answered short essay questions related to their preferences in English courses
 - (3) also provided demographic information

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Participants

- They have learned English for nine years
- They registered for a course appropriate to their proficiency level
- Each class comprises 24 to 28 students
- Four classes, two mid level and two low level classes, participated in this study
- Their majors were varied

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Questionnaire

- 60-items were selected in order to measure their motivation, demotivation, level of interest, usefulness, and participation.
- The questionnaire incorporated a five-point Likert scale that ranged from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1).
- Fourteen motivational factors were selected from previous research; (1) instrumental motivation, (2) intrinsic motivation, (3) integrative motivation, (4) extrinsic motivation, (5) ideal L2 self, (6) ought-to L2 self, (7) self-development motivation, (8) competitive motivation, (9) heuristic motivation, (10) interest, (11) expectation of utility, (12) participation, (13) self-confidence, (14) demotivation.

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Questionnaire

- Cronbach's alpha for extrinsic motivation and ought-to L2 self were lower than .4
- Correlation for extrinsic motivation was $r=.196$ and that for ought-to L2 self was $.198$
- As both of the correlations were not statistically significant at $p<.05$, these two factors were excluded from the analysis

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Results

- Participants consider English the cornerstone for their success in life regardless of their major
- Means were higher for
 - (1) instrumental
 - (2) integrative
 - (3) ideal
 - (4) self-development
 - (5) competition factors for all participants than other seven factors.

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- On the placement test;
 - the average for the mid-level participants: 543
 - the low-level participants: 379
- At the end of the semester;
 - the average for the mid-level participants: 648
 - the low-level participants was 518

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- 89% improved their scores
- The average improvement for all participants was 123 (SD: 108).
- Mid-level participants' improvement was less than that of low-level participants.

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- There were statistically significant group differences for
 - Instrumental motivation
 - Intrinsic motivation
 - Integrative motivation
 - Heuristic motivation on the placement test.

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- The higher the instrumental, intrinsic, integrative and heuristic motivation, the higher the proficiency level.
- This result can be interpreted as teachers and researchers needing to provide learners with ways to improve their motivation with regard to these factors.

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- Contrary to other research (Ellis, 1997; Gardner & Lambert, 1972), this study found that the mean for integrative motivation was higher than that for instrumental motivation.
- The participants in this study were all freshmen, so for the underlying factors for instrumental motivation such as getting a job may have been less intense than participants in other studies.
- Another reason is likely the small number of items in the category of integrative factors; there was only one item.

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- Consistent with the previous research (Kim et al., 2011), no participants, regardless of their proficiency level, were demotivated after taking this course.
- The means for all demotivation items were much lower than items under other factors, $m=2.08$ (mid-level) and 2.14 (low-level), and group differences were not statistically significant.

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- The regression analysis shows that no factors were significant predictors for the semester-end TOEIC score.
- Only one factor, interest, was statistically significant at $p < .1$.

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- In addition to a high score, improvement is another critical factor when measuring learners' effort in the language classroom.
- In order to explore influential motivational factors with respect to score improvement, bivariate linear regression analysis between all factors and TOEIC improvement was performed
- The score improvement was regressed on only one factor, interest.

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- Score improvement of participants with higher interest is greater than that of participants with lower interest in English learning.
- As the mean for interest increased, so did improvement.
- This result indicates that language teachers and researchers need to inspire interest in learners and to maintain their interest in order to improve scores.

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- Even though several elements may have contributed to the increase in interest,
- the answers for the short essay questions reveal that various communication-focused activities such as card games or watching video clips aroused students' interest.
- However, curriculum designers should not just eliminate every boring component
- because the participants indicated that TOEIC practice was boring as they also said that it helped them to improve their proficiency.
- Therefore, language teachers and curriculum designers need to be cautious when organizing language classes,
- considering both students' interest and the indispensable elements for language learning.

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- Moving forward, more integrated research is needed.
- Mere comparison between instrumental and integrative or between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation will not provide language educators with meaningful insight.
- (1) Uncovering factors that contribute to group differences between high- proficiency groups and low-proficiency groups and (2) determining how to manage those factors can provide language learners with relevant scaffoldings.

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Thank you!

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