Exploring Motivational Changes for Short In-class Extensive Reading

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This study examined longitudinal changes in motivation for short in-class extensive reading (ER) and the relationship between these motivational changes and English proficiency, using self-determination theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 1985). Japanese university EFL learners \( n = 133 \) took pre- and post-English proficiency tests and responded to a questionnaire designed to measure the five subtypes of SDT motivation (i.e., intrinsic motivation, identified regulation, introjected regulation, external regulation, and amotivation) thrice in one academic year. The results of one-way within-subjects repeated-measures MANOVA showed that while three subtypes of SDT motivation (i.e., intrinsic motivation, identified regulation, and external regulation) tended to decrease, amotivation increased, revealing that learners’ motivation for short in-class ER significantly decreased over time. The results of a recursive path analysis included that 1) initial English proficiency had significant direct effects on initial motivational status, but generally had only indirect effects on the subsequent motivational profiles via the initial motivational status; and 2) final motivational status was statistically irrelevant to final English proficiency. These findings revealed that although English proficiency initially influenced motivation, the relationship between motivation and English proficiency eventually became insignificant in short in-class ER. Low-level reading abilities do not ultimately demotivate learners to engage in ER.

Keywords: extensive reading, sustained silent reading, graded readers, motivation, self-determination theory
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Introduction

Extensive reading (ER) using graded readers has gained popularity in the teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL). Although ER can be implemented in various ways (e.g., both in and out of class, exclusively out of class, or using only a small portion of class time), ER researchers have focused on both in- and out-of-class ER (e.g., Beglar, Hunt, & Kite, 2012; Yamashita, 2013) or out-of-class ER (e.g., Mori, 2002; Takase, 2003). Research focusing on short in-class ER or sustained silent reading (SSR) is scarce. Using the framework of self-determination theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000), this study examines longitudinal changes in motivation for short in-class ER and the relationship between motivational changes and English proficiency.

Literature Review

Self-Determination Theory

SDT (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000) was developed with self-determination or intrinsic motivation as its core concept. In the SDT framework, motivation is classified into three broad categories: a) intrinsic motivation, which refers to the motivation to perform activities for pleasure; b) extrinsic motivation, which refers to the motivation to perform activities for external rewards; and c) amotivation, which refers to a lack of motivation.

Extrinsic motivation is further categorized into four subcomponents, three of which (external regulation, introjected regulation, and identified regulation) have been employed in the field of L2 motivational research (e.g., Noels, Pelletier, Clément, & Vallerand, 2000; Tanaka, 2013). The least self-determined form of extrinsic motivation is external regulation, which comprises motivation regulated by external factors such as rewards and punishment. A typical case of external regulation in this study is learners’
motivation to read English books to obtain good grades. A slightly more internalized form of extrinsic motivation is introjected regulation, in which learners are regulated by externally imposed values or self-worth. In the case of this study, this would involve learners engaged in reading to maintain high self-worth or avoid feelings of shame that would result from poor performance. For instance, learners would be motivated to read books in English because they feel that it would look bad if they could not read English books. A more internalized form of extrinsic motivation is identified regulation. This is motivation regulated by personal values attached to an activity in relation to an individual’s goals. For example, learners read English books because they think it would be useful to read English in the future.

Deci and Ryan (2002) argued that these types of motivation and regulation lie along a continuum, from intrinsic motivation (the most self-determined type of motivation) to amotivation, and have a simplex-like structure in which SDT scales that are closer together on the continuum have higher correlations than those that are farther apart.

SDT includes important variables for ER motivation. For instance, intrinsic motivation is a crucial predictor for actual engagement in ER (e.g., Takase, 2007). Identified regulation, which is similar to perceived value, is considered important as it is associated with the willingness to read more (Day & Bamford, 1998). Understanding amotivation is also important for enhancing ER motivation. Because it incorporates well-understood motivational variables, SDT provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the systematic organization of motivation discussed in L2 motivation literature (Noels, Clément, & Pelletier, 1999). It also enables a systematic understanding of ER motivation.

**Extensive Reading Motivation**

Although numerous studies have examined the effects of ER on L2 development (e.g., Beglar et al., 2012; Yamashita, 2008), studies
investigating its impact on affective domains are still scarce (Yamashita, 2013). From a theoretical perspective, the expectancy value model for L2 reading motivation (Day & Bamford, 1998) is the only model that can explain affective variables in ER. The model comprises reading materials, reading ability, attitudes, and the sociocultural environment. Day and Bamford (1998) argued that materials and attitudes are crucial components influencing L2 reading motivation.

The model has also been empirically supported. Takase (2003) examined Japanese high school students’ motivation for ER using a questionnaire and interviews. The students were engaged in ER exclusively out of the classroom. She confirmed the crucial role of materials and attitudes and argued that the reading proficiency levels and sociocultural environments are only of secondary importance. In addition, she reported the importance of intrinsic motivation for a larger amount of reading materials.

Nishino (2007) examined two young (age 14) EFL learners’ changes in motivation for ER over 2.5 years using interviews and observations. She suggested that a) L2 reading motivation is not static but changes over time; b) intrinsic motivation can be enhanced by the realization of achievement, flow experiences in reading, and confidence in L2 reading; and c) the sociocultural environment (e.g., English classes at school, entrance exams, L1 reading experiences, and support from significant others) might play a more important role than Day and Bamford (1998) had proposed.

Drawing on Wigfield and Guthrie’s (1997) L1 reading motivational framework based on expectancy value theory, Mori (2002) investigated Japanese university learners’ ER motivation using a questionnaire. ER was assigned to the learners as an out-of-class activity. One of the major findings was that the intrinsic value of reading in English was a positive predictor of the total reading amount. She also found that some learners’ motivation decreased when they were continuously engaged in the same task (i.e., reading extensively) for a long time.

Although Mori (2002) found a decline in motivation for ER, several studies demonstrated positive changes in affective variables from ER.
Yamashita (2013) examined changes in attitudes toward ER with Japanese university EFL learners. In Yamashita’s study, ER was assigned as both an in- and out-of-class activity and was found to have adaptive effects on affective variables, enhancing positive feelings (e.g., comfort and intellectual value) and decreasing anxiety.

Fujita and Noro (2009) investigated Japanese high school students’ motivation for 10-minute in-class SSR activities performed over a year. Their study is particularly relevant to this study as its focus was on short, in-class ER activities. They demonstrated that SSR activities increased both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and motivation changed according to proficiency. While motivated, higher-proficiency students increased their intrinsic motivation, motivated, lower-proficiency students read extensively only out of obligation. This finding suggests that proficiency influences the dominant motivation held by learners.

Matsui and Noro (2010) focused on short, in-class ER activities. They examined the effects of a 10-minute in-class SSR activity with Japanese junior high school students. At the end of the year, a questionnaire was administered and the data were analyzed using factor analyses. The results showed that self-confidence surfaced as a factor only in the ER group but not in the control group, indicating that ER enhanced learners’ self-confidence in L2 reading. However, anxiety and negative attitudes toward English reading were also identified only in the ER group. These findings suggested that ER may cultivate both positive and negative attitudes toward L2 reading.

**L2 Motivational Changes in Japanese EFL Learners**

As the sociocultural environment is one of the four key components of Day and Bamford’s (1998) model, it is important to understand the general sociocultural environment in which the study was conducted.

In general, Japanese EFL learners study English for six to eight years and experience significant motivational fluctuations over time. Hayashi (2005) reported a gradual decline in motivational intensity from the first year of
junior high school through university, but showed that motivation rose in the third year of junior high, senior high, and university. Some studies, however, reported a gradual increase in motivational levels as educational levels rose (Miura, 2010; Sawyer, 2006). Sawyer (2006) reported that his participants’ motivation decreased in the first two years of junior high school and the first year of high school and university, but increased in the third year of junior high school and the second and third years of high school and university. Miura (2010) showed that her participants’ motivation increased in the second and third years of both junior and senior high schools, but decreased in the first year of both high school and university. She argued that entrance examinations for high school and university have a strong impact on Japanese learners’ motivation for learning English.

Consistent with the reported decline in first-year university students’ motivation, Berwick and Ross (1989) reported that their first-year university participants had a low motivational intensity for learning English and showed that English proficiency was statistically irrelevant to changes in motivation over the course of the year. As the participants of this study were first-year university students, it was expected that they would have a decline in motivation for learning English, which might have been reflected in their ER motivation.

**Research Questions**

As discussed earlier, research focusing on short in-class ER and affective domains is scarce in ER studies. There is also a lack of L2 reading research to examine longitudinal motivational changes in relation to English proficiency. To address these gaps in the literature, this study investigates the following research questions:
1) To what extent do the learners’ motivational profiles for short in-class ER change over one academic year?

2) To what extent does initial English proficiency influence the most and more self-determined forms of motivation (i.e., intrinsic motivation and identified regulation) and amotivation for short in-class ER at Times 1 to 3?

3) To what extent do the three types of motivation (i.e., intrinsic motivation, identified regulation, and amotivation) for short in-class ER at Times 1 to 3 influence final English proficiency?

Method

Participants

This study was conducted at a private women’s university in Japan. The participants (n = 203) were first-year Japanese university students majoring in child science (n = 123), psychology (n = 60), or health nutrition (n = 20). They took two mandatory 90-minute English classes per week. The classes were based on task-based language teaching (TBLT) and used Interchange intro (Richards, 2005) and Oxford word skills basic (Gaims & Redman, 2008) as their main textbooks.

Their initial English proficiency levels ranged from 45 to 233 (M = 139.39, SD = 37.06) according to the assessment of communicative English (ACE) placement test, developed by the Association for English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA). According to ELPA (2015), a score of 140 on the ACE placement test is estimated to be a score above 340 on the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC). Learners who passed Eiken Grade 3 had an average score of 150 on the placement test. The Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) set Eiken Grade 3 as a benchmark for junior high school graduates (Eiken Foundation of Japan, n.d.). As such, the participants of this study had
relatively low English proficiency.

As with the other longitudinal studies, a relatively large rate of attrition occurred in this study. Many participants withdrew from the study before the post-test. As a result, only 137 of the initial 203 participants completed all the measures, i.e., pre- and post-tests, and three survey measures.

**Instruments**

**Assessment of Communicative English (ACE) placement tests**

To measure the participants’ initial and final English proficiency, ACE placement tests (versions 0277 and 0328) were administered at the beginning and end of the 2011 academic year. The ACE placement test targets learners with TOEIC scores ranging from 300 to 700 and Eiken Grades 2 to 3 (ELPA, n.d.). As such, the test level is appropriate for participants in this study with relatively low English proficiency.

The ACE placement test consists of three parts (reading, vocabulary and grammar, and listening), and possible scores range from 0 to 300. The test taker’s English proficiency is estimated using item response theory. More details on the ACE placement test are available in Japanese on the ELPA website (ELPA, n.d.).

**Questionnaires**

A 6-point Likert scale questionnaire was developed in Japanese for this study to measure the five SDT constructs (see Appendix A for an English translation). Items were developed mainly by drawing on Tanaka (2014). As Tanaka (2014) focused on avoidant aspects of introjected regulation, items for approach facets of introjected regulation were created based on earlier L2 SDT studies (Hiromori, 2006; Noels et al., 2000). All the items were tailored for extensive reading. The unidimensionality and reliability of each construct were examined using Rasch analyses with Winsteps 3.69.0. The person reliability estimates, which are analogous to a Cronbach’s reliability estimate,
ranged from .75 to .87 and were adequately high. See Table 1 for more detailed information on the Rasch reliability estimate of each construct.

**TABLE 1**

| Rasch Reliability and Separation Statistics for SDT Motivational Constructs |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
|                  | IM  | ID  | II  | EX  | AM  |
| **Time 1**       |     |     |     |     |     |
| Item Separation  | 6.29| 3.35| 4.71| 2.61| 3.92|
| Item Reliability | .98 | .92 | .96 | .87 | .94 |
| Person Separation| 2.44| 2.37| 1.85| 2.34| 1.97|
| Person Reliability| .86 | .85 | .77 | .85 | .79 |
| **Time 2**       |     |     |     |     |     |
| Item Separation  | 4.77| 1.91| 3.33| 3.90| 4.01|
| Item Reliability | .96 | .78 | .92 | .94 | .94 |
| Person Separation| 2.54| 2.27| 1.74| 2.24| 2.12|
| Person Reliability| .87 | .84 | .75 | .83 | .82 |
| **Time 3**       |     |     |     |     |     |
| Item Separation  | 3.86| .92 | 3.59| 2.07| 2.64|
| Item Reliability | .94 | .46 | .93 | .81 | .87 |
| Person Separation| 2.41| 2.29| 2.13| 2.42| 2.14|
| Person Reliability| .85 | .84 | .82 | .85 | .82 |

*Note.* Rasch reliability is analogous to Cronbach’s alpha, and ranges between 0 and 1 with optimal values being > .90. The Rasch separation statistic shows the spread or separation of items or persons on the logit scale with optimal values being > 3.00. IM = Intrinsic Motivation; ID = Identified Regulation; II = Introjected Regulation; EX = External Regulation; AM = Amotivation.

Theoretically, the five SDT motivational variables should form a simplex-like structure as discussed earlier. The pattern of intercorrelations among the variables shows a simplex-like structure, indicating that the measurement of each construct utilized in this study adequately represented SDT. See Table 2 for the correlation matrix of the five constructs.
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### TABLE 2
**Correlation Matrix of SDT Motivational Constructs**

|       | 1     | 2     | 3     | 4     | 5     |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| **Time 1** |  |       |       |       |       |
| 1. Intrinsic Motivation | – |       |       |       |       |
| 2. Identified Regulation | .63 | – |       |       |       |
| 3. Introjected Regulation | -.01 | -.04 | – |       |       |
| 4. External Regulation | .04 | .15 | .47 | – |       |
| 5. Amotivation | -.42 | -.43 | .50 | .18 | – |
| **Time 2** |  |       |       |       |       |
| 1. Intrinsic Motivation | – |       |       |       |       |
| 2. Identified Regulation | .70 | – |       |       |       |
| 3. Introjected Regulation | .12 | .11 | – |       |       |
| 4. External Regulation | -.07 | .24 | .26 | – |       |
| 5. Amotivation | -.44 | -.38 | .22 | .16 | – |
| **Time 3** |  |       |       |       |       |
| 1. Intrinsic Motivation | – |       |       |       |       |
| 2. Identified Regulation | .67 | – |       |       |       |
| 3. Introjected Regulation | .14 | .09 | – |       |       |
| 4. External Regulation | .05 | .20 | .33 | – |       |
| 5. Amotivation | -.45 | -.58 | .39 | .03 | – |

Note. n = 133. All the estimates are based on Rasch logits.

### Procedure

**Tests**

The pre-test was administered at the beginning of the academic year (April, 2011) to establish placement in the first-year English courses; the post-test was conducted at the end of the academic year (February, 2012) for course placement in second-year English courses. Participation in the tests was mandatory for all the participants. The results of the post-test were also used as part of the students’ final course grade.
Questionnaires

Questionnaires were distributed every 10th week (Week 8, Week 18, and Week 28) during a regular class. Approximately three quarters of the participants (76%) completed the questionnaires during class time. The remaining participants completed the questionnaires on their own time and returned them one week later. Participation was voluntary for all participants.

Short in-class extensive reading

A 20-minute in-class ER was conducted once a week in one of the two English courses the learners took. ER was a part of the students’ final course grade. As such, they were assumed to have a certain level of external regulation, but could still enjoy reading and appreciate the value of reading even when reading was required. Short in-class ER started in Week 7 (the beginning of June) and ended in Week 29 of the 2011 academic year (January). There was no ER in Weeks 10, 15, 16, 25, 28, and 30 due to other teaching requirements in the English curriculum. As a result, the participants were engaged in 18 ERs over the year. Each student purchased two graded readers selected by the English curriculum coordinators to share in class. As a class contained 10 to 18 students, 20-36 readers were available to the learners. The books were the Macmillan Readers at starter (300 basic words) and beginner levels (600 basic words) and Penguin Readers at the easy start level (200 basic words) and level 1 (300 basic words). Appendix B lists book information including titles and word counts.

The students chose a book they wanted to read from the class library and read silently at their own pace. When finished, they returned the book and borrowed a new book. In many of the 16 classes, the students were required to keep a record of their reading, such as book titles and the perceived difficulty of the books, and were to enter short comments in Japanese. According to the reports, the learners read books at appropriate levels. They were also allowed to change books if they found one difficult. As instructors
kept the books and brought them to class every time, the students did not read outside the classroom. For the remainder of each lesson, the students received TBLT class instruction using Interchange intro (Richards, 2005) as the main textbook. Based on the common TBLT framework, each TBLT lesson comprised three principal phases: pre-task, during task, and post-task (Ellis, 2003). The students engaged in English communication with their peers during the task and they reflected on their language use to learn ideal language forms in the post-task. The topics covered in the TBLT sessions include personality, family, direction, and personal history.

**Preliminary Analyses**

**Data Screening**

Before the main analyses were performed, the assumptions of the multivariate analyses were checked based on Tabachnick and Fidell (2007). As a result of data screening, four outliers were excluded from the main analysis, which reduced the sample size to 133.

**English Proficiency**

For the second and third research questions on participants’ English proficiency, their development in English proficiency was examined prior to the main analyses. A one-way within-subjects repeated-measures univariate analyses of variances (ANOVA) showed that the participants’ English proficiency significantly improved from pre-test ($M = 147.49, SD = 38.33$) to post-test ($M = 154.24, SD = 36.73$), Wilks’ lambda ($\Lambda = .92, F(1, 132) = 11.15, p = .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .078.$)
Results

Research Question 1:
Motivational Changes over One Academic Year

To investigate the extent to which the learners’ motivational profiles for short in-class ER change over one academic year, one-way within-subjects repeated-measures multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted with SPSS 19.0. The dependent variables were the five subtypes of SDT motivation. The within-subjects factor was the testing time with three levels (Times 1, 2, and 3). Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics for the five SDT motivational variables at Times 1 to 3. Figure 1 plots changes in mean Rasch person measures. Note that item difficulty and person ability estimates are displayed on an interval scale of log odd ratios, or logits. The average logit is arbitrarily set at 0, with positive logits indicating higher-than-average probabilities and negative logits indicating lower-than-average probabilities (Bond & Fox, 2007).

The results of MANOVA showed significant changes in their motivational profiles, $\Lambda = .30$, $F(10, 123) = 28.44$, $p = .00$, partial $\eta^2 = .70$. Mauchly’s test indicated that the assumption of sphericity had been violated for identified regulation ($\chi^2(2) = 9.61$, $p = .008$); therefore, degrees of freedom were corrected for this construct using Greenhouse-Geisser estimates of sphericity ($\varepsilon = .93$). The results of the follow-up ANOVA indicated that the effects of time were significant for intrinsic motivation ($F(2, 264) = 37.26$, $p = .00$, partial $\eta^2 = .22$), identified regulation ($F(1.87, 246.57) = 14.36$, $p = .00$, partial $\eta^2 = .10$), external regulation ($F(2, 264) = 6.64$, $p = .002$, partial $\eta^2 = .048$), and amotivation ($F(2, 264) = 83.96$, $p = .00$, partial $\eta^2 = .39$), but not for introjected regulation ($F(2, 264) = 1.47$, $p = .23$). Introjected regulation was low overall throughout the year ((Time 1 ($M = -1.05$), Time 2 ($M = -1.00$), and Time 3 ($M = -.76$)).
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**TABLE 3**
*Descriptive Statistics for SDT Motivational Constructs*

|                      | M   | SE  | LB  | UB  | SD  |
|----------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| **Intrinsic Motivation** |     |     |     |     |     |
| Time 1               | .67 | .17 | .34 | 1.01| 1.97|
| Time 2               | -.03| .18 | -39 | .34 | 2.12|
| Time 3               | -.61| .20 | -1.00| -21| 2.33|
| **Identified Regulation** |     |     |     |     |     |
| Time 1               | 1.60| .20 | 1.21| 2.00| 2.32|
| Time 2               | .57 | .20 | .18 | .97 | 2.29|
| Time 3               | .96 | .22 | .52 | 1.40| 2.54|
| **Introjected Regulation** |     |     |     |     |     |
| Time 1               | -1.05| .18 | -1.41| -.70| 2.08|
| Time 2               | -1.00| .16 | -1.32| -.68| 1.86|
| Time 3               | -.76| .20 | -1.16| -.36| 2.34|
| **External Regulation** |     |     |     |     |     |
| Time 1               | .87 | .20 | .47 | 1.26| 2.31|
| Time 2               | .19 | .22 | -.25| .63 | 2.57|
| Time 3               | .27 | .24 | -.20| .75 | 2.76|
| **Amotivation**      |     |     |     |     |     |
| Time 1               | -2.44| .18 | -2.79| -2.10| 2.03|
| Time 2               | -.17| .21 | -58 | .24 | 2.38|
| Time 3               | -1.95| .19 | -2.32| -1.57| 2.18|

*Note: n = 133. All the estimates are based on Rasch logits.*
Follow-up contrasts were measured for the Time 1 - Time 2, and Time 2 - Time 3 pairs for the four SDT motivational constructs that showed significant time effects. The alpha level of .05 was corrected with the Holm’s sequential Bonferroni procedure to avoid Type I errors. First, significant differences were found between Time 1 - Time 2, and Time 2 - Time 3 for intrinsic motivation and amotivation. Overall, intrinsic motivation started slightly high at Time 1 ($M = .67$), but decreased to average by Time 2 ($M = -.03$) and further decreased to being slightly low at Time 3 ($M = -.61$). Amotivation started as being very low at Time 1 ($M = -2.44$), but increased to average at
Time 2 ($M = -0.17$) and decreased again to very low at Time 3 ($M = -1.95$). Second, a significant difference was observed between Time 1 - Time 2, but not between Time 2 - Time 3 for identified regulation and external regulation. Overall, identified regulation decreased while staying rather high. It started as being very high at Time 1 ($M = 1.60$), and decreased but was still slightly high at Time 2 ($M = 0.57$) and Time 3 ($M = 0.96$). External regulation was relatively high at Time 1 ($M = 0.87$) but decreased to average at Time 2 ($M = 0.19$) and Time 3 ($M = 0.27$).

A Recursive Path Model

In order to answer the second and third research questions, a recursive path model was developed following prior research and tested with EQS 6.1. The assumption of multivariate normality was met with Mardia’s normalized estimate (5.712) < 6.00; the parameters were estimated using the maximum likelihood method. The recursive path model yielded the following fit indices: $\chi^2(29) = 23.57$, $p = 0.75$, comparative fit index = 1.00, and root mean-square error of approximation [90% CI] = .00 [.00, .05], suggesting that the hypothesized model fits the data well. Figure 2 shows the path model with estimated parameters. Table 4 shows the significant paths and predictors in the model.
Figure 2. The hypothesized path model with estimated parameters. IM1, IM2, IM3 = Intrinsic Motivation at Times 1, 2, and 3, respectively; ID1, ID2, ID3 = Identified Regulation at Times 1, 2, and 3, respectively; AM1, AM2, AM3 = Amotivation at Times 1, 2, and 3, respectively.
TABLE 4

Predictor Effects of the Recursive Path Model

| Outcome | $R^2$ | Predictor | $B$ | SE $B$ | $\beta$ | $t$ |
|---------|-------|-----------|-----|--------|---------|-----|
| IM1     | .054  | Pre-test  | .012| .004   | .233    | 2.755 |
| ID1     | .047  | Pre-test  | .013| .005   | .216    | 2.538 |
| AM1     | .032  | Pre-test  | -.009| .005  | -.179   | -2.085 |
| IM2     | .500  | IM1       | .763| .066   | .707    | 11.481 |
| ID2     | .290  | IM1       | .405| .102   | .349    | 3.961 |
| AM2     | .345  | AM1       | .443| .091   | .377    | 4.854 |
| IM3     | .557  | IM1       | .293| .093   | .251    | 3.154 |
| AM3     | .425  | Pre-test  | .008| .004   | .150    | 2.335 |
| AM2     | .357  | AM1       | .301| .079   | .284    | 3.812 |
| AM3     | .357  | AM2       | .301| .079   | .284    | 3.812 |
| Post-test | .672 | Pre-test  | .747| .048   | .784    | 15.558 |
| AM2     | -2.355| .774      | -.153| -.153  | -3.043 |

Note. $t$-values greater than ±1.96 are significant at $p < .05$. IM1, IM2, IM3 = Intrinsic Motivation at Times 1, 2, and 3, respectively; ID1, ID2, ID3 = Identified Regulation at Times 1, 2, and 3, respectively; AM1, AM2, AM3 = Amotivation at Times 1, 2, and 3, respectively.

Research Question 2: The Effects of Initial English Proficiency

The second research question concerns the extent to which initial English proficiency influences motivational profiles for short in-class ER activities measured at Times 1 to 3. The results of the path analysis showed that initial
English proficiency had significant direct effects on initial motivational status (a positive effect on intrinsic motivation ($\beta = .233$) and identified regulation ($\beta = .216$), and a negative effect on amotivation ($\beta = -.179$)), as well as on final levels of amotivation ($\beta = .150$). In general, initial English proficiency had only indirect effects on subsequent motivational profiles via the initial motivational status. The impact of initial proficiency on intrinsic motivation (Time 2) was mediated by intrinsic motivation (Time 1). The impact of initial proficiency on intrinsic motivation (Time 3) was mediated by intrinsic motivation (Times 1 and 2) and amotivation (Time 2). A similar trend was also observed for identified regulation and amotivation.

**Research Question 3: The Effects on Final English Proficiency**

The third research question concerns the extent to which motivational profiles for short in-class ER at Times 1 to 3 influenced final English proficiency. The results of the path analysis showed that only one motivational variable (amotivation at Time 2 ($\beta = -.153$) had a direct effect on final English proficiency. Two variables, amotivation (Time 1) and intrinsic motivation (Time 1), had indirect effects on final English proficiency via amotivation (Time 2). The final motivational status was statistically irrelevant to final English proficiency.

**Discussion**

Using the SDT motivational framework, this study investigated changes in motivation for short in-class ER activities in relation to English proficiency. With regard to the first research question – the extent to which the learners’ motivational profiles for short in-class ER change over one academic year – the results indicated that motivation for short in-class ER significantly decreased over time. Initial motivation was high at a group level. Participants found great value in ER (identified regulation: $M = 1.60$), were motivated to
read for course grades (external regulation: $M = .87$), and were not demotivated (amotivation: $M = -2.44$). They also enjoyed reading graded readers (intrinsic motivation: $M = .67$). Their motivational profiles, however, showed a significant downward trend toward Time 2. Given that intrinsic motivation ($M = -.03$), and external regulation ($M = .19$) and amotivation ($M = -.17$) were around average, they were neither motivated nor demotivated at Time 2, although they still placed a somewhat high value on ER (identified regulation: $M = .57$).

As Nishino (2007) argued, the sociocultural environment might play a more crucial role in L2 reading motivation than Day and Bamford (1998) proposed. The first semester at university is a period of adjustment for many freshmen as they adapt to their new environment. Knowing little about the university educational system, some might feel mild anxiety about failing courses, which might have increased their external regulation at Time 1 ($M = .87$). Time 2, however, occurred at a time when they had already earned course credits from the first semester and had become accustomed to university life. Having gained confidence in school, some might have felt secure about their academic life, which resulted in a significant decline in external regulation ($M = .87 \rightarrow .19$). Interestingly, amotivation also increased significantly toward Time 2 ($M = -2.44 \rightarrow -.17$). While the participants did not initially feel a lack of motivation at the group level, they were neither motivated nor demotivated at Time 2.

As previously discussed, Japanese EFL learners’ motivation for learning English declines after the university entrance examinations (Miura, 2010; Sawyer, 2006). While the primary motive for learning English in the final year of high school is to pass the university entrance examination, students have no such straightforward purpose for learning English once they have passed the entrance examination. Some students have no apparent academic purpose at university (Berwick & Ross, 1989). At university, they receive a variety of stimuli from a new, wider world after graduating from high school, where education is virtually compulsory. They may have discovered other interests unrelated to English. First-year students’ motivation changes
throughout the year, and initial motivational attitudes are only temporary (Berwick & Ross, 1989). As with the general motivational trend for English in Japan, participants’ motivation for learning English might have decreased once they became accustomed to university life, which also might have led to the sharp decline in motivation for ER.

Amotivation for ER, however, decreased at Time 3. Learners’ motivation fluctuated from time to time. In general, motivation increases during an exam week, but decreases during a time of social activities and other matters. Time 3 occurred immediately before the final examinations. As with the university entrance examination, final examinations might also have affected motivation for ER.

The participants were intrinsically motivated to read at Time 1 ($M = .67$), but this motivation decreased at Time 2 ($M = -.03$) and reading was even found uninteresting by Time 3 ($M = -.61$). Meaning-focused reading using graded readers was a new experience for many of them. Perhaps they enjoyed it at Time 1 partly out of curiosity or for the pleasure derived from interesting stories or a sense of accomplishment. The initial intrinsic motivation, however, was only temporary. As Mori (2002) reported, some learners can start to feel jaded after repeating the same task continually over time. This would account for the decline in intrinsic motivation.

With regard to the second research question – the extent to which initial English proficiency influenced the motivational profiles over the course of the study – the results showed that initial English proficiency had a significant direct effect on initial levels of motivation. It positively affected intrinsic motivation ($\beta = .233$) and identified regulation ($\beta = .216$) but negatively affected amotivation ($\beta = -.179$) and had only indirect effects on the subsequent motivational profiles via the initial motivational status. The association between initial motivation and initial English proficiency support Day and Bamford’s (1998) arguments for the importance of reading ability. The positive effects of initial English proficiency, however, were only temporary. English proficiency is important only for initial motivation for ER, but did not significantly impact sustaining motivation.
Surprisingly, initial proficiency also had direct positive effects on final amotivation ($\beta = .135$). Although it is unknown why higher initial proficiency led to higher amotivation at Time 3, it is worth noting that lower initial English proficiency did not decrease motivation to read. Day and Bamford (1998) argued that low-level reading abilities are not demotivating since learners read books at appropriate levels, and attitudes are a greater influence on L2 reading motivation than reading ability. This study’s findings support this claim.

In respect to the third research question – the extent to which motivational profiles for short in-class ER at Times 1 to 3 influence final English proficiency – the results showed that among the motivational variables, only amotivation (Time 2; $\beta = -.153$) had a direct effect on final English proficiency, and two initial motivational variables, amotivation and intrinsic motivation, had indirect effects on final English proficiency via amotivation (Time 2). Furthermore, final levels of motivation were statistically irrelevant to final English proficiency.

Initial English proficiency lost its impact on motivation over time. Similarly, motivation became irrelevant to final English proficiency as learners were engaged in ER. Takase (2003) also found that motivation was not associated with English proficiency following an ER program. Because learners choose books at appropriate levels for themselves and thus can sustain meaning-focused reading with ease, reading ability is less important for reading motivation than attitude (Day & Bamford, 1998). This study’s findings are consistent with these findings, revealing that although English proficiency initially influenced motivation, the relationship between motivation and English proficiency eventually became insignificant.

**Conclusion**

Although this study revealed some aspects of Japanese EFL learners’ changes in motivation for short in-class ER, several limitations need to be
addressed. First, because the study was conducted at only one private women’s university, the results might reflect the particular characteristics of the students attending this school. Second, this was a longitudinal study conducted thrice in one academic year. Although attrition is common in longitudinal studies, the attrition rate for this study was relatively high. A large difference was held between the mean pre-test scores of the original 203 participants \((M = 139.39, SD = 37.06)\) and those of the 133 participants who completed all three measures in the main analyses \((M = 147.49, SD = 38.33)\). Given that learners with lower proficiency dropped out of the study, the results could reflect the characteristics of students with certain motivational profiles. Third, the sample size of this study \((n = 133)\) was somewhat small. Thus, the results must be confirmed with larger samples.

Despite these limitations, this study revealed that English proficiency gradually lost its effect on motivation, and supported Day and Bamford’s (1998) claim that it plays only a secondary role in ER. This study also clarified longitudinal motivational changes for short in-class ER and suggested that the sociocultural environment plays a significant role. The students in this study were initially motivated for ER, but their amotivation increased and their motivation (i.e., intrinsic motivation, identified regulation, and external regulation) decreased, particularly after the first semester. The initial motivational attitudes of first-year Japanese university students are only temporary and change over the year (Berwick & Ross, 1989). This general motivational pattern for learning English was also evident in the participants’ motivation for in-class ER. As Nishino (2007) argued, the sociocultural environment might have more significant impacts on L2 reading motivation in some learning contexts than Day and Bamford (1998) argued.
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Appendix A

Questionnaire Items (English Translation)

Why do you read graded readers?

| Factor 1: Intrinsic Motivation for Short In-Class ER (IM) |
|---------------------------------------------------------|
| IM1 Because reading English books is enjoyable.         |
| IM2 Because the contents of the English books are interesting. |
| IM3 Because I feel pleasure about increasing my English proficiency through reading English books. |
| IM4 Because I feel pleasure about increasing my English knowledge through reading English books. |
| IM5 Because I like reading English books.               |

| Factor 2: Identified Regulation for Short In-Class ER (ID) |
|----------------------------------------------------------|
| ID1 Because it is useful to read English.                |
| ID2 Because it would be useful to read English in the future. |
| ID3 Because it is important to read English.             |
| ID4 Because it is necessary for me to read English.      |
| ID5 Because it is important to acquire English.          |

| Factor 3: Introjected Regulation for Short In-Class ER (IM) |
|------------------------------------------------------------|
| IJ1 Because it looks good if I can read English books. *   |
| IJ2 Because it looks bad if I cannot read English books.  |
| IJ3 Because I don't want my classmates to think that I cannot read English. |
| IJ4 Because I feel awkward if I don't read.               |
| IJ5 Because I feel ashamed if I cannot read as well as my classmates. |

| Factor 4: External Regulation for Short In-Class ER (EX) |
|---------------------------------------------------------|
| EX1 Because I don't want to get bad grades.              |
| EX2 Because I want to get the course credit.             |
| EX3 Because I want to pass a test, such as TOEIC and/or EIKEN. * |
| EX4 Because I want to get good grades.                   |
| EX5 Because I don't want to fail the English course.     |
Factor 5: Amotivation for Short In-Class ER (AM)

AM1  There isn't anything I can gain through reading English books.
AM2  I don't know what I am getting out of reading English books.
AM3  It is useless to read English books.
AM4  I can't see why I have to read English books.
AM5  It is meaningless to read English books.

Note. All the questionnaire items are randomly ordered 6-point Likert scale items. Items marked with an asterisk [*] represent items identified as misfitting and were thus deleted.
Exploring Motivational Changes for Short In-class Extensive Reading

Appendix B

A List of Book Titles Available to the Students

| Publisher | Level | Title                                | Word Count |
|-----------|-------|--------------------------------------|------------|
| Penguin   | Easystarts | Between Two World                      | 933        |
| Penguin   | Easystarts | The Big Bag Mistake                    | 806        |
| Penguin   | Easystarts | Tinkers Farm                          | 1065       |
| Penguin   | Easystarts | Dino’s Day in London                   | 801        |
| Penguin   | Easystarts | The Fireboy                            | 967        |
| Penguin   | Easystarts | Flying Home                            | 974        |
| Penguin   | Easystarts | The Last Photo                         | 800        |
| Penguin   | Easystarts | The Leopard and the Lighthouse         | 1003       |
| Penguin   | Easystarts | Lucky Break                            | 720        |
| Penguin   | Easystarts | Maisie and the Dolphin                 | 973        |
| Penguin   | Easystarts | Marcel and the Mona Lisa               | 999        |
| Penguin   | Easystarts | Marcel and the White Star              | 962        |
| Penguin   | Easystarts | A New Zealand Adventure                | 803        |
| Penguin   | Easystarts | The Pearl Girl                         | 949        |
| Penguin   | Easystarts | Pete and the Pirates                   | 1397       |
| Penguin   | Easystarts | Simon and the Spy                      | 978        |
| Penguin   | Easystarts | Girl Meets Boy                         | 800        |
| Penguin   | Level 1 | Marcel goes to Hollywood               | 842        |
| Macmillan | Starter | Alissa                                | 800        |
| Macmillan | Starter | Blue Fins                              | 770        |
| Macmillan | Starter | In the Frame                           | 554        |
| Macmillan | Starter | L.A. Detective                         | 600        |
| Macmillan | Starter | The Lost Ship                          | 570        |
| Macmillan | Starter | Lucky Number                           | 525        |
| Macmillan | Starter | The Magic Barber                       | 543        |
| Macmillan | Starter | Sara Says No!                          | 552        |
| Macmillan | Starter | Shooting Stars                          | 550        |
| Level          | Book Title              | Pages |
|---------------|-------------------------|-------|
| Starter       | Ski Race                | 448   |
| Starter       | The Umbrella            | 560   |
| Starter       | The Well                | 948   |
| Level 2-Beginner | Picture Puzzle       | 1171  |
| Level 2-Beginner | Anna and the Fighter | 2600  |
| Level 2-Beginner | Dangerous Journey     | 2000  |
| Level 2-Beginner | House on the Hill     | 3500  |
| Level 2-Beginner | L.A. Raid             | 2800  |
| Level 2-Beginner | Long Tunnel           | 2523  |

*Note: Book selection varies slightly according to class.*