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A MOTIVATIONAL PROGRAM FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LEARNERS OF ENGLISH

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A Motivational Program for Elementary School Learners of English

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Introduction

Language teachers all over the world are faced with the challenge of motivating their students to learn. In response to this challenge, there have been some publications on motivational strategies in the language classroom during the past 20 years (e.g., Chang 2010; Cheng & Dörnyei 2007; Dörnyei & Csizér 1998; Guilloteaux & Dörnyei 2008; Oxford & Shearin 1994), with Zoltán Dörnyei's (2001) book offering the most comprehensive summary of second language (L2) motivational strategies to date. My L2 motivational program that I will describe is novel in the sense that it contains new motivational strategies to motivate English language learners based on the recent theoretical approach to L2 motivation, Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System (see Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009, 2011, and especially Dörnyei, 2009), including the use of scripted imagery.

Imagery is defined as “an internal representation of a perception of the external world in the absence of that external experience.” (Hall et al., 1990: 28). Hall et al. (1990) define scripted imagery as a situation in which a script on a variety of themes, especially as a stimulus for an imagined journey, is read to an individual or group, who is usually relaxed with their eyes closed. Scripted imagery have been used in schools as a part of social and health education development (e.g., E. Hall & C. Hall 1988; Hall et al., 1990; Hornby et al., 2003). Imagery is employed in subjects such as drama and art to generate creativity and imagination. Imagery activities have also been developed especially for L2 learners (e.g., Arnold et al., 2007; Hadfield &

Dörnyei 2013). In this chapter, I will describe my motivational program in which imagery was incorporated as a key component to motivate learners of English from Singapore to devote more time and effort to learning English by enhancing their vision of their Ideal L2 self. This chapter has three main objectives: (1) to describe the main components of my intervention program, (2) to demonstrate that my program effectively motivated my participants to learn English, made them more confident in their English, improved their attitudes toward learning English and offered numerous other benefits, and (3) to share recommendations with language practitioners who may be interested in designing L2 motivational programs following a similar approach.

The L2 Motivational Self System

The L2 Motivational Self System has been widely tested and validated in a number of different countries such as Hungary, Saudi Arabia, China, Japan, and Iran (Al-Shehri 2009; Csizér & Kormos 2009; Ryan 2009; Taguchi et al., 2009). It is based on the theory of possible selves (Higgins, 1987; Markus & Nurius, 1986). In their seminal paper about possible selves, Markus and Nurius (1986: 954) identified three main types of possible selves when they wrote that, “possible selves are the ideal selves that we would very much like to become. They are also the selves we could become, and the selves we are afraid of becoming”. The three kinds of possible selves they referred to were ideal selves, expected selves and feared selves. Markus and Nurius (1986: 954) provided examples of ideal selves including “the successful self,

the creative self, the rich self, the thin self, or the loved and admired self” and the feared selves being “the alone self, the depressed self, the incompetent self, the alcoholic self, the unemployed self, or the bag lady self”. However, they did not elaborate on the meaning of the selves that we could become. According to Dörnyei (2009), these selves refer to our expected selves; the selves that we are likely to become. Among the other possible selves that Markus and Nurius (1986: 958) mentioned in their paper were the ought selves which they defined as “an image of self held by another”.

Possible selves, especially the ideal selves and ought selves, are often called future self-guides since they have the capacity to regulate behaviour. Higgins and his associates (e.g. Higgins, 1987, 1998; Higgins et al. 1985; Higgins et al. 1994) have conducted a great deal of research which demonstrated that learners’ ideal selves act as academic self-guides. It is noteworthy that Higgins’s work on selves precedes that of Markus and Nurius and that the two key components of Higgins’s theory of possible selves (e.g. Higgins, 1987; Higgins et al., 1985) are the ideal self and the ought self, which he defined more precisely than Markus and Nurius. According to Higgins (1987: 320) the ideal self refers to the “representation of the attributes that someone would ideally like to possess (i.e. a representation of hopes, aspirations, or wishes)” and the ought self is defined as the “representation of the attributes that someone believes you should or ought to possess (i.e., a representation of someone’s sense of your duty, obligations, or responsibilities)”.

The Ideal L2 self is a central component of the construct of L2 motivation

within Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System which consists of three dimensions: the Ideal L2 Self, the Ought-to L2 Self, and the L2 Learning Experience. The Ideal L2 self as defined by Dörnyei (2009: 29) is "the L2-specific facet of one's ideal self". According to Dörnyei (2009: 29), the Ought-to L2 Self is defined as "the attributes that one believes one ought to possess (i.e. various duties, obligations, or responsibilities) in order to avoid possible negative outcomes". The L2 Learning Experience refers to "situation-specific motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience" (Dörnyei, 2009: 29).

We can think of our ideal self and our ought-to self as forming parts of our possible selves. In their seminal paper about possible selves, Markus and Nurius (1986: 954) identified three main types of possible selves when they wrote that, "possible selves are the ideal selves that we would very much like to become. They are also the selves we could become, and the selves we are afraid of becoming". The three kinds of possible selves they referred to were ideal selves, expected selves and feared selves.

Since our possible selves are perceptions we hold of ourselves in the future, they include images and in this way are related to vision. Marilyn King, a former Olympic athlete said that it's not will-power and determination that enables Olympic athletes to work so hard. "It's the vision. It's the power of an image that inspires great passion and excitement – so much so that you have enormous energy to do what you want." (Murphey, 2006: 95).

Possible selves, especially the ideal selves and ought selves, are often called

future self-guides since they have the capacity to regulate behaviour. It has been found that nine conditions are required in order for future self-guides to exert their full motivational capacity. Firstly, the L2 learner should have a desired future self-image. Ruvolo and Markus (1992) found that there are differences in how easily people can generate a positive possible self. Therefore, it is not expected that everyone will possess a developed ideal or ought self guide.

Secondly, the future self should be sufficiently different from the current self. The L2 learner should be aware of a gap between his/her current and future selves in order to feel that an increased effort in learning the L2 is necessary.

Thirdly, the future self-image should be elaborate and vivid. Markus and Ruvolo (1989: 228) remarked that the more specific and vivid one's positive possible selves are, "the more one's current state can be made similar to the desired state". They concluded that the more elaborated the possible self is in terms of imaginal representations, the more motivationally effective it will be.

The fourth condition is that the future self-guides should be plausible. Ruvolo and Markus (1992) affirmed that possible selves must be perceived as being plausible in order to have their full impact on motivation. Therefore, in terms of motivational strategies employing imagery, it is important that the imagery be presented in a realistic manner.

The fifth condition is the future self-image is not perceived as comfortably certain. The L2 learner must believe that the future self-image will not automatically occur without a significant increase in effort. Oyserman and James (2009) point out

that effort will not be exerted if the attainment of the future self is too likely or too unlikely, which takes into account the condition about plausibility as well.

The sixth condition is that there should be harmony between the ideal and ought selves. According to Dörnyei (2009: 20), effective possible selves “should feel congruent with important social identities” because a clash between the future self-guides could have a negative impact on motivation. For example, one’s ideal self could be to excel in one’s studies, but one’s ought self, especially for adolescents, may contain views from peers that being popular does not involve academic achievement. Oyserman et al. (2006) discovered that among school children, negative group images of academic achievement are often highly accessible and conflict with academic self-guides. The researchers suggested that the most effective strategy to increase the motivation toward academic achievement is to augment the perceived congruence between the academic possible selves and social identity.

The seventh condition that is required for the future self-guides to exert their full motivational capacity is for them to be activated. Sherrill and Hoyle (2006) affirm that possible selves need to be activated in order to become a part of the working self-concept so that they can have an impact on behaviour.

The eighth condition is that procedural strategies to achieve language learning goals are in place. Oyserman et al. (2006) state that future self-guides will only be effective if they contain plausible and specific action plans that are automatically cued by images. Therefore, according to Dörnyei (2009: 21) “effective future self-guides need to come as part of a ‘package’, consisting of an imagery component and a

repertoire of appropriate plans, scripts and self-regulatory strategies”.

The ninth condition is that the desired self is offset by the feared self. Oyserman and Markus (1990) proposed that a hoped for possible self will have maximal motivational effectiveness when it is offset or balanced by a countervailing feared self in the same domain. They argued that this kind of balance would create an optimal motivational situation because there would be both a goal to achieve and a goal to avoid.

The motivational program that I designed and that I will describe in the following section applied the L2 Motivational Self System with the purpose of developing an ideal language self by generating a language learning vision and through imagery enhancement. It was an application of the L2 Motivational Self System since I motivated learners of English by enhancing their vision of their Ideal L2 self.

Design

The main objectives of my program were to motivate my participants to put more time and effort into learning English (1) by enhancing their vision of their Ideal L2 self; (2) helping them to develop clear and specific goals and action plans in order to attain their Ideal L2 self; and (3) helping them to create action plans to achieve their goals.

My program included some components that were based on Oyserman’s (2003, see also Oyserman et al., 2002) nine week possible selves intervention program,

called the School-to-Jobs Program, involving 62 African American middle school students in which she developed an after school program to enhance the students' abilities to imagine themselves as successful adults and connect these future images to current school involvement. The School-to-Jobs Program had the three following main objectives: (1) to help youth develop proximal and distal goals as well as strategies to achieve these goals, (2) to increase the youth's concern about school and create a sense of academic efficacy, and (3) to develop positive communication skills and active listening. The activities in the intervention that I will be describing below were created in order to improve the students' academic self as a short term goal and connect that self to their ideal adult future selves.

In one of the first sessions, in order to enhance the students' vision of their ideal selves, they were asked to choose at least 10 photographs out of 200 that were provided portraying successful African American adults that they would like to become in four life domains: work, family, community, and lifestyle. They were instructed to state the age that they think they will be when they will achieve these ideal selves and explain each of their choices to the rest of the class. The photos depicted positive and plausible future self-guides, which was an important aspect of the intervention. In addition, the photos portrayed successful African Americans in order to ensure harmony between the ideal self and the ought self.

In a follow-up session, students were given four sheets to fill out which each contained one of the four domains mentioned above. They were asked to write down as many goals as they could for each domain as well as the name of a positive and a

negative role model in each domain. The positive role model served to activate their vision of their ideal self and the negative role model activated their vision of their feared self, in this way creating a balance between them.

In the next session, students were instructed to draw a timeline to depict their future. They had to include their future goals, forks in the road when one or more options were available, obstacles they thought they might encounter, and strategies to overcome these obstacles. The students were again encouraged to consider the domains of work, family, community, and lifestyle. Thinking about obstacles and ways to overcome them taught the students to think about their future in a realistic manner.

In one of the following sessions, students were asked to write down specific action plans to achieve the goals they had noted on their timeline in each of the four domains. They were instructed to write down which actions they would take to achieve their goals and when they intended to perform these actions. Two of the sessions focused on the students' possible selves. In the first of these sessions, the students had to list their ideal and feared next year selves as well as the strategies they would adopt to attain their ideal selves and avoid their feared selves. In the second session, they were instructed to list their ideal and feared adult selves as well as the strategies they would employ to achieve their ideal selves and avoid their feared selves. Following sessions included discussions about university entrance requirements and careers, so that students could develop realistic strategies to achieve their goals.

The main findings were that the intervention helped the students to develop more balanced possible selves, gain strategies to attain these possible selves, and link the possible selves to the effort that they put into their studies. It increased their concern about school and also helped them to develop positive communication skills as well as active listening. In the section on the structure of my program, I will indicate which parts of my program were based on Oyserman's program.

My intervention program lasted a total of three months. The program consisted of a series of eight two-hour workshops that I delivered to both a control group and an experimental group. During the first hour of each workshop, I helped my participants to develop their imagination by having them listen to scripted imagery situations and imagine scenes in stories that I read to them as well. In addition to these activities, I read specific scripted imagery situations to my participants in the experimental group to enhance their vision of their Ideal L2 self that I did not read to the participants in the control group. I also helped my participants in the experimental group to develop clear and specific goals and action plans in order to attain their Ideal L2 self. During the second hour of each workshop, I prepared my participants in both groups for an oral examination which consists of the three following three tasks: (1) reading aloud, (2) picture description, and (3) conversation. Due to space limitations, I will focus on the motivational part of my program in the rest of this paper.

Participants

The intervention program involved 16 participants (10 males and 6 females) who were grade five students at an elementary school in Singapore. They ranged in age from 10 to 13 with a mean age of 11. The control group and the experimental group both contained 8 students who received between 17 to 21 out of 30 on their oral examination with scores ranging from 5 to 7 out of 10 on the reading aloud, picture description, and conversation tasks.

Instruments

The intervention program employed three questionnaires composed of items which were drawn from Taguchi et al. (2009). The first questionnaire consisted of questions about the learners' background information as well as questions about their motivation toward learning English, their attitudes toward learning English, and the strength of their vision of their Ideal L2 Self. Besides questions on the participants' motivation and attitudes toward learning English as well as the strength of their vision of their Ideal L2 Self, there were questions in the second questionnaire that measured changes in the participants' confidence in their English and changes in their ability to use their imagination as a result of my program. The third questionnaire contained questions that measured changes in the participants' motivation and attitudes toward learning English as well as the strength of their vision of their Ideal L2 Self, confidence in their English and ability to use their imagination. All of the workshops as well as interviews with the participants and their teachers were recorded and

transcribed. A focus group interview was conducted with all of the participants in the experimental group in the final workshop in order to obtain qualitative data about the changes in their motivation and attitudes toward learning English as well as their confidence in their English as a result of my program. I also obtained feedback from my participants during the interview on the program and its benefits. I conducted an interview with the English teacher of the control group and the experimental group after the final workshop in order to see if they had noticed any changes in those participants' motivation and attitudes toward learning English as well as their confidence in their English since the time that they had started participating in my program. Having a qualitative aspect to my research in the form of interviews enabled me to gain a deeper understanding of the changes in my participants' motivation and attitudes toward studying English as well as their confidence in their English.

The Structure of the Program

I will briefly describe the main components of the workshops by presenting the structure of the program which was divided into eight sessions. In all the sessions, I asked my participants to imagine different situations in order to help them train their imagination. I had them close their eyes and listen to recordings of various situations that I will describe. The recordings were on a CD that accompanies a teacher's resource book by Arnold et al. (2007). In the last three sessions, I also had the participants imagine their Ideal L2 self in order to enhance their image of their Ideal L2 self by listening to scripted imagery situations describing themselves in the future

using English very well. In the first session, they imagined that they were writing their name in pen. In preparation for the second session, I asked my participants to think about their role model in order to help them build an ideal future self and bring a photo of this person to the second session. This task was based on one of Oyserman's (2003) activities that was used in the School-to-Jobs Program in order to help the participants think about the personality traits that they admire.

During the second session, each participant talked about their role model and described the personality traits that they admired about this person. I also played a recording for them about washing their hands. After they imagined washing their hands, they described to me what they had imagined. I gave them a handout on which they wrote down their strengths and then asked their classmates to also write down the strengths they thought their friends had in order to make everyone in the class feel appreciated and confident in themselves.

In the third session, my participants imagined that they were holding and stroking a kitten. I also asked them to imagine that they were with their best friend and think about what their friend likes about them in order to build their self-confidence. They also imagined if there was anything that they could change about themselves to help them develop an ideal future self.

In the fourth session, I asked my participants to imagine a very happy moment that either actually happened in their life or that they hope will happen. Then, I asked them how they dream to use English in the future after they finish their studies in order to help them start to imagine their Ideal L2 self.

In the fifth session, the participants imagined that they were walking near a large lake and that they threw a rock into the water. They imagined the sound that the rock made as it hit the water and went deeper into the lake. They also imagined that they were climbing a mountain to ask a wise man any question they liked. Then I asked my participants to think about their dreams for learning English by answering the following questions on a handout: 1) How do you dream to use English next year (at school and in your free time)? 2) How do you dream to use English when you are in secondary school (at school and in your free time)? 3) How do you dream to use English after you finish school? 4) What kind of student do you dream you could be? 5) What is your dream job and why do you like that job? 6) Who do you admire and why?

During the sixth session, I asked my participants to imagine that they found a time machine which enabled them to travel to any moment in time in the past, present or future. Then, I asked them to describe to me everything that they imagined seeing, hearing, feeling, tasting, touching, and smelling in as much detail as possible. They also imagined their Ideal L2 self by listening to a recording describing themselves in the future when they will be able to speak English perfectly, have many international friends and be successful at work due to their excellent English. After these imagination activities, I asked my participants to write down the goals that they have for learning English next year, five years from now and ten years later in terms of improving their speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

In the seventh session, I read a scripted imagery situation to my participants

which I had written in which I had them imagine that they were the best students of English in their secondary school class. Then, I asked them to describe to me what they had imagined. They also imagined that they were creating a movie in their mind about themselves achieving one of their goals. Then, I asked each of them to describe their goal to me. I then gave my participants a handout on action plans for learning English on which they were asked to write down at least two goals they have for learning English and some steps that they can take to achieve those goals. Then, they had to decide on a date when they would start working on their objectives, as well as when and how they would review their progress. The action plans activity was based on Oyserman's (2003) program, although this activity in her program did not deal with possible L2 selves.

During the eighth session, I read another scripted imagery situation to my participants which I had written in which they imagined themselves ten years from now using English very well at work. Then, I had them describe what they imagined they were doing and how speaking English so well made them feel. This scripted imagery situation as well as the one in the seventh session were used to strengthen my participants' vision of their Ideal L2 self by making it more elaborate and vivid. Then my participants listened to a recording which described them opening a door and seeing themselves in the future. They had a chance to ask their future self anything that was on their mind. Then, I asked each of them to describe what they had imagined. I asked them how their physical appearance and personality had changed in the future and how many years in the future they imagined this was.

Procedure

The data were collected in Singapore in 2012. The first questionnaire was administered at the very beginning of the first workshop. The second questionnaire was administered at the end of the final workshop. The third questionnaire was administered one month after the program had ended. A focus group interview was conducted with all of the participants in the experimental group in the final workshop. I conducted an interview with the English teacher of the control group and the experimental group after the final workshop. All of the workshops as well as interviews with the participants and their teachers were recorded and transcribed.

Data Analysis

The data that I collected were both quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative data consisted of my participants' ratings of their motivation and attitudes toward learning English, confidence in their English, and the strength of their vision of their Ideal L2 self on the pre and post-workshop questionnaires. In order to analyse the quantitative data, I compared the means of these ratings before and after the program since there were not enough participants to test for statistical significance.

The qualitative data consisted of the recorded workshops, my participants' written responses to the open-ended questions on the questionnaire, as well as their responses during the focus group interviews and their teachers' responses during the interviews that I conducted with them. The recorded workshops and interviews were transcribed, resulting in a corpus of more than 22,000 words. The interviews were coded into the

following four broad categories: (1) An Evaluation of the Program, (2) The Impact of the Activities, (3) The Relationships between Variables, and (4) Recommendations for Future Programs. The emerging themes were the effect of the program on motivation, confidence, and attitudes toward learning English, the additional benefits of the program, the relationships between motivation, vision and emotions as well as recommendations for future programs.

Results

The Quantitative Data

The main findings from the quantitative data were that 90% of the participants in the experimental group became more motivated to learn English, more confident in their English and exhibited more positive attitudes toward learning English as a result of the program. The vision of the Ideal L2 self increased among half of the participants in the experimental group. In the control group, only 50% of the participants became motivated, 75% became more confident and 90% improved their attitudes toward learning English in the control group. The vision of the Ideal L2 self of only 13% of the participants became stronger within the control group. These findings were also supported by the participants' responses to open-ended questions in the questionnaires, their responses during the focus group interviews as well as their teachers' responses with regard to how these participants had changed as a result of the program.

The Qualitative Data: Questionnaires

I will now proceed to describe the main findings from the qualitative data by firstly examining the participants' responses to the open-ended questions in the questionnaire. With regard to motivation, one of the participants wrote that I motivated him to devote more time and effort to learning English by inspiring him that learning English is a way for him to have a bright future. Another participant felt more motivated to learn English because I told her that if she studies English hard, she may be able to live and work in another country. Some participants felt motivated to learn English when I told them that studying English hard will help them to do better in their examinations. Others felt more motivated because they were able to learn more words as a result of my program. Some participants felt more motivated because they now find learning English more interesting. One participant wrote that she feels more motivated to learn English when she thinks about using it well in the future.

Those who have more positive attitudes toward learning English tend to be more motivated to learn it. In this way, there is a relationship between motivation and attitudes toward learning English. A participant wrote that I helped him to enjoy learning English more by making the lessons fun through imagination activities and reading. Another one appreciated my suggestion to make learning English enjoyable by listening to English songs or watching English films. A few participants wrote that they enjoyed it when I read exciting stories to them that were written by Fleetham and Fleetham (2009). Others appreciated the films that I showed them during the workshops. I chose films that were based on books such as *Charlie and the Chocolate*

Factory and *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*. A few participants enjoyed learning new words and being able to use difficult words correctly.

One participant wrote that he now feels more confident in his English because he found my workshops interesting, which suggests a relationship between positive attitudes and confidence. Another participant felt more confident because I helped him to feel proud of himself. I tried to help my participants to gain confidence by making them aware of their strengths. I asked them to write down their strengths on a piece of paper and then asked their classmates to also write down on the same piece of paper what they thought their friends' strengths were. Another participant wrote that he felt more confident in his English when I told him that one day he will be able to communicate in English with people from other countries if he studies English hard. A few participants wrote that they are now more confident to speak English because I told them not to be afraid of speaking, remain calm and read louder. One wrote that she now feels more confident to speak English because I taught her long words.

In terms of their ability to use their imagination, 63% of the participants in both the control group and the experimental group wrote in their post-workshop questionnaire that they now use their imagination more often and can imagine things more clearly than before as a result of the program. This is not surprising because I provided my participants in both groups with the same imagination training activities from a teacher's resource book by Arnold et al. (2007). The only difference was that I didn't have the participants in the control group imagine their Ideal L2 self. Some of the participants in the experimental group mentioned that they now imagine speaking

English well with friends from other countries in the future as a result of my workshops. A few participants from the experimental group wrote that their imagination improved because they had an opportunity to train their imagination in my workshops.

As I had mentioned when describing the structure of my program, I focused on preparing the participants for their oral English examination in the second part of every workshop. During that time, I would help them to practise reading aloud, describe pictures and answer short questions on different topics to prepare them for these three tasks that make up the oral examination. 88% of my participants wrote that they felt they did better on their oral examination as a result of my workshops and 94% of the participants received a higher mark on the oral examination that they took after they finished my workshops as compared to the one that they took just before my workshops began.

The Qualitative Data: Interviews with Participants

Relationships Between Motivation, Vision and Emotions

The main findings from the interview data revealed interesting relationships between my participants' motivation, their vision of their Ideal L2 self, confidence as well as other positive emotions and their goals for learning English. I will illustrate each of my main findings with key extracts which I have selected from the interview data.

When I asked my participants to describe their Ideal L2 self after listening to a

recording which was a description of themselves being popular with friends and successful at work in the future due to their knowledge of English, most of them told me that imagining themselves speaking English really well made them feel confident and proud. Ryan said, “I was very proud when I speak good English and speak very fluently. I am so happy that I can speak perfect English. ”

After reading a scripted imagery situation (see Appendix A) which I wrote that had the participants imagine that they were the best student of English in their secondary school class, most of them told me that imagining this situation made them feel proud, admired and respected by people around them. Harry said, “I imagined that I’m speaking very good English in class and write many good compositions. I read thick books and I read all the difficult words and make more improvement. I feel proud and great.” Cheaming stated, “I imagined I can speak English very well. My classmates admire me. I felt very proud of myself.”

Pride was an emerging theme that was closely connected to the participants’ vision of their Ideal L2 Self. When I asked my participants how they would feel if they knew English better, Yasha said, “I will feel proud and respected.” Ryan said, “I will feel like I want to study even more difficult words. It gives you passion.” This demonstrates the impact that imagining one’s Ideal L2 self has on one’s motivation toward learning English.

Not only did the participants mention that they felt proud when they imagined their Ideal L2 Self. They also said that important people in their lives felt proud of them, which motivated them to study English hard. When I read a scripted imagery

situation (see Appendix B) to my participants which I wrote in which I had them imagine themselves ten years from now being very successful in their work thanks to their knowledge of English, many of them mentioned that their boss, colleagues and family members were very proud of them and admired them because of their success due to their excellent English.

I imagined that I succeeded in the job and I speak very well in English to my colleagues and my boss. They are very proud of me because I speak good English. It helps me to communicate with other friends and chat in English with my friends and colleagues. I feel very proud and great! (Harry)

Ruzhazree said, “I imagined my colleagues admire me and I speak good English. I go to another country to communicate fluently with other people. That made me feel proud.” Yasha stated, “I imagined that I was in Singapore. I can communicate well. My family was proud of me. It made me feel really happy.” Ryan told me that he is motivated to study English hard to make his father proud of him.

When I asked Ryan to describe how he imagines using English in the future, he said, “I speak perfectly. I make friends with Americans and Australians when I travel. I also imagine using English to take exams.” Other participants also mentioned that they imagine themselves speaking English perfectly, correctly, and fluently, which demonstrates that having them imagine their Ideal L2 self helps them to focus on the importance of speaking accurately, which then becomes one of their goals as was reflected in the action plans that they wrote for me.

During their focus group interview, I asked my participants how they felt

when they imagined situations involving themselves using English very well in the future. They told me that they felt “proud”, “amazed” and “great”. Then, I asked them if feeling proud, amazed and great motivated them to learn English. All of them said that those feelings did motivate them to learn English, which illustrates the motivational impact of the positive emotions brought about by imagining one’s Ideal L2 self. It is also interesting to note that all of my participants enjoyed using their imagination. In fact, they mentioned that was the aspect that they liked most about my program. When I asked Ryan what he enjoys about using his imagination, he replied by saying, “I can think about my future.”

My participants were also motivated to learn English in order to make their parents proud of them. Therefore, the feeling of pride that was generated by my participants’ vision of their Ideal L2 self as well as wanting to make their significant others proud both motivated them to study English hard.

Benefits of the Program

As a part of the focus group interview, I asked my participants to describe what they learned as a result of my program in general and more specifically from each of the main activities. When I asked my participants what they learned in my program, they told me that they learned to be confident when speaking with teachers, to speak loudly, to improve their oral skills and that they learned many new and difficult words. They also learned some new ways to motivate themselves to learn English. Although I never explicitly told my participants during the workshops that

they can imagine their Ideal L2 self in order to motivate themselves to learn English, I was astonished that Ryan automatically started to use this motivational strategy without being asked to do so. He told me that imagining positive situations of himself using English helps him a great deal to learn English, especially when he feels tired of studying. Ryan said, “I think about my future when I need to study for an examination. I imagine that I do very well on the examination. That makes me want to study English hard.” Participants also learned in my workshops that they can motivate themselves to learn English by doing the kinds of activities that they enjoy such as listening to English songs, making friends with English-speaking people from other countries and watching English films. They also learned that they can plan a schedule for learning English and write in their notebook the day and time that they plan to study English in order to motivate themselves to study English hard.

The following activities were all done only by the participants in the experimental group since they were meant to enhance their vision of their Ideal L2 self. These participants told me that writing about their strengths helped them to understand each other. They also told me that it made them feel more confident because it made them aware that they are good at many things. With regard to the activity where the participants wrote about their dreams, they all felt that it helped them to feel more confident. The activity in which the participants wrote about their goals helped them to think more about their goals and their future. Writing about their action plans taught some of the participants new ways to improve their vocabulary and grammar. All of my experimental group participants said that after they started

working on their action plans, they felt more interested in learning English and put more effort into learning it, which demonstrates the impact of writing action plans on language learning motivation.

All of the participants in the experimental group felt that my program helped to make their goals for learning English more clear and gave them more goals for learning English than they had before they attended my program. One of my participants said that when she imagined the positive situations that I read to her about using English well as a student and at work, it made her goals for learning English more clear. 75% of my participants in the experimental group said that imagining themselves using English very well in the future motivated them to study English hard and achieve their goals.

The Qualitative Data: Interviews with Teachers

The interviews that I conducted with the English teacher of the control group and the experimental group supported my findings with regard to the participants' increase in motivation, confidence, and positive attitudes toward learning English as a result of my program. I would like to highlight some key extracts from my interviews with these teachers by starting with the teacher of the experimental group. He told me that in terms of motivation, his students who attended my program are now spending more time studying English than before they enrolled in my program. He also mentioned that these students are now more motivated to answer questions and read aloud in class. This teacher said the following in terms of the change that he noticed with regard to the students' confidence in their English:

They are much more comfortable now when I ask them to read aloud. Those who attended your program were more than willing to stand and share with the class. The extra boost of confidence and your pointers really help. They have more confidence in speaking English, showing some public speaking skills and answering questions.

With regard to the change that this teacher noticed in the students' attitudes toward learning English, he said that they are now more excited about learning English than before they took my program.

The English teacher of the experimental group also noticed a marked increase in her students' motivation toward learning English, their confidence in their English and improved attitudes toward learning English as a result of my program. With regard to motivation, she said besides the fact that all of the students in the experimental group became more motivated to learn English, she has noticed a substantial increase in the motivation of her two least motivated students who were in that group. One of them didn't want to participate in class before he took my workshops. Now he participates much more than before. The other student now does all of his English homework, whereas he didn't do that before he attended my program. Their English teacher said, "These two have always been very hard to teach. They are the ones who really stood out for me. I can see that they are working very hard on their revision which we started last week." With regard to the students' attitudes toward learning English, their teacher said that they all enjoy learning English more than before they attended my program. She said the following in terms of their

increased confidence in their English:

I would say they are more confident because they are more comfortable to speak in English with me and their friends. When I listen to their conversations in their group work, they do use English now as opposed to using their mother tongue which they used to use before. They normally spoke their mother tongue in class, but this time around I can see that they are trying to speak English.

Recommendations for Future Programs

In terms of scripted imagery situations, it would be useful for participants to write their own scripted imagery situations because I found that most of the participants who did this in a previous study (Magid, 2011; in press) found their own situations more motivating than the ones that I had written since they could identify with them more closely. If teachers correct the situations that they write, this can also be an effective way for participants to improve their writing.

It could be also be helpful for participants to draw what they imagine right after listening to the scripted imagery situation. One of my participants suggested this and I think that it could help participants to visualise what they have imagined more clearly than simply describing it orally.

I would also recommend encouraging participants to feel free to use gestures and even body language while they imagine situations because some of my participants told me that this helped them to imagine situations more clearly. I saw that these

participants were pretending to turn on the tap, wash and dry their hands while they listened to the recording that described them washing their hands. When I asked them if that helped them to imagine the situation more clearly, they told me that it did.

In order to help the participants to imagine situations clearly, I asked them to try to use all of their senses when they use their imagination. I found that my participants were able to use all of their senses extremely well. Not only were they able to imagine what they saw, but they were also able to describe when they heard, felt, tasted, and smelled. For example, in an activity where the participants were asked to imagine writing their name, some of them could imagine the weight of the pen and that there was friction when they wrote. When the participants listened to a recording describing themselves washing their hands, some of them were able to imagine hearing the water running, that the water was hot, that the soap was slippery and that it smelled like strawberries. When they listened to a recording that described them holding a kitten, some of them could imagine that the kitten's fur felt soft and that its body felt warm. They could feel that its claws were sharp. When asked to describe what he imagined, Harry said, "I imagine the colour of the fur was light pink mixed with white. The colour of the eyes was light green. The texture of the fur was soft, almost as smooth as a feather." I asked the participants to imagine that they were holding a red apple and then biting into it. Some of them told me that they imagined the apple felt smooth and hard like a rock and that it tasted sweet and smelled fresh. When the participants listened to a recording that described them climbing a mountain, Ruzhazree said, "I

could hear the birds chirping and saw the mountain and feel the gentle wind on my skin. I could smell the fragrance of the woods.”

In my previous study (Magid, 2011; in press) on a motivational program that I designed for university students, I had my participants imagine both positive and negative situations in order to meet the ninth condition that I described above in order for the future self-guides to exert their full motivational capacity, namely that the desired self should be offset by the feared self. I found that most participants were motivated by both positive and negative situations. However, some of them mentioned to me that the negative situations gave them pressure which they didn't need because they already worried a lot about the negative consequences of not learning English well. Therefore, since I was dealing with children in this current study, I decided to only have them imagine positive situations because I didn't want to add to the anxiety and pressure that many of them face to succeed in school and in their examinations. Since elementary school students may not be able to deal as effectively with pressure as high school students and adults, I feel that it would be best not to expose them to negative situations for ethical reasons.

Conclusion

One of the main findings with regard to my intervention program was that there was an increase in the strength of my participants' Ideal L2 self as a result of my program. This finding showed that it is possible to enhance L2 learners' vision of their Ideal L2 self through visualisation training and that strengthening the vision can be

done in a relatively short amount of time. The enhancement of language learners' vision of their Ideal L2 self through the use of imagery is an effective motivational strategy that may be employed by language teachers, writers of language textbooks, and language learners themselves.

My program made my participants more motivated to learn English for the following reasons. Firstly, my program enhanced their vision of their Ideal L2 self. Secondly, their vision of their Ideal L2 self and their goals for learning English became more clear and specific due to my program. These findings lead me to conclude that it is possible to motivate language learners by enhancing their vision of their Ideal L2 self.

Furthermore, my program helped my participants to become more confident in their English. With regard to the relationship between motivation and confidence, I found that motivation and confidence mutually affect each other. The findings demonstrated the key role that confidence in the target language plays in the language learning process. It motivates language learners to continue improving their target language and helps to make their vision of their Ideal L2 self more clear, which was also found to be motivating.

My findings supported the conditions that are required in order for the future self-guides to exert their full motivational capacity, namely that the future self-image should be elaborate and vivid, the future self-guides should be plausible and should contain specific action plans that are automatically cued by images. It was found that language learners are motivated to learn their target language when they have clear

and specific language learning goals.

Besides increasing my participants' motivation toward learning English and their confidence in their English, there were many other benefits of the program that I would like to mention. Most of my participants' imagination improved as a result of my program. This finding demonstrates that it is possible to improve one's imagination through visualisation training. My participants' speaking and listening improved and their vocabulary expanded. In addition, my participants became more aware of the importance of English and their attitudes toward learning English became more positive.

My program can be easily implemented by language teachers and offers a wide variety of benefits to language learners ranging from increasing their motivation and their confidence in learning languages to improving their L2 proficiency and their attitudes toward learning languages. The program does not need to be long in order to be effective and all of the activities in the program are done in the target language, which allows learners to improve their L2 proficiency while at the same time becoming more motivated and confident.

I strongly believe that there is a great potential to develop many more of these types of programs based on Dörnyei's (2009) L2 Motivation Self System that will be suitable for language learners of all ages, levels of proficiency, and target languages. I would like to see programs designed for learners of languages besides English as well as for working professionals. My dream is to collaborate with linguists, L2 teachers, and L2 students all over the world in order to create programs that will make the

process of learning languages more motivating and enjoyable. I hope that I will be able collaborate with others by using one of my second languages: Chinese, French, and Russian. In that sense, I will achieve my vision of my Ideal L2 self!

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Appendix A

A Day at School

Now close your eyes. Imagine that you can see yourself in the future a few years from now. You are sitting in your English class at secondary school and you are the best student of English in the class. All of your classmates admire you because you can speak so fluently, read thick books and newspapers and write compositions so well. You know so many English words and can understand anything you hear in English very easily. You are very proud of your abilities in English.

When your classmates have some questions about English grammar or problems with their English homework, they always ask you for advice. This makes you feel really good and important. Your teacher often praises you in front of all of your classmates because of your excellent English and your very high marks in English examinations. Your classmates think of you as their role model. You are working on a group project and the other group members have chosen you to be the group leader because they respect you so much. They want to know your ideas about how to do the project well. They ask you many questions during the class and you are happy that you know all of the answers and can explain everything well in English.

Now, the class has ended and you are going to meet some of your friends for lunch. You are one of the most popular students in your class and everyone thinks you are so cool because you speak English so well. Also, everyone likes you very much because you are kind, helpful, caring, honest, hardworking and intelligent. You have many friends with whom you speak in English. Many of them are from English-speaking countries like Australia, America, England, and Canada. You have

many interesting things to talk about while you are having lunch with a large group of friends. You tell them some funny stories in English and everyone smiles and laughs. Then, you make a plan to get together with your friends on the weekend. Everyone wants to spend time with you! You often go out with them to restaurants, to the movies, to do some sports and go shopping. You like to talk about everything in English and always have lots of fun together! Think about all of the things you talk about for a moment before coming back to this classroom.

Appendix B

The Perfect Job

Close your eyes. I would like you to imagine yourself ten years from now as being very successful in your work thanks to your knowledge of English. You were able to get the job of your dreams because you studied so hard and because of your excellent English. You have colleagues from many different countries, so you need to use English all the time at work to communicate with them. All of your colleagues admire you very much because you do your job so well and have such excellent English. They often ask you for help because you are so helpful and hardworking. You are a leader to your colleagues and you make many important decisions at work every day since you are so good at your job and speak English so well.

Your dream job might be in Singapore or it might be in any country where you wish to live. If you live in an English-speaking country like Australia, America, England or Canada, then you use English all day wherever you go and whatever you do. In your free time, you love reading in English, watching English movies with your friends, and listening to English music. During your holidays, you often take trips with your family and friends to English-speaking countries and many countries around the world that you dream about visiting. Since you are so kind and friendly, you easily make friends everywhere you travel and now have so many friends all around the world. You often write them e-mail in English and chat online with them when you are free.

You are able to take good care of your family and this makes you feel very happy and proud. They helped you so much when you were a student and now you

can help them whenever they need your help. You are excited about your bright future and are sure that all of your dreams will come true. Stay with this feeling of excitement as you open your eyes and come back to this room.