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The Impact of Motivational Teaching Practice on Students' L2 Motivation, Positive L2 Self, and Classroom Engagement

Jiayu Zhuo
Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, University of Technology Malaysia, Malaysia

Zuhana Mohamed Zin*
Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, University of Technology Malaysia, Malaysia

Abstract—**Motivational teaching practice (MTP) is regarded as a determining factor on students' L2 (second language) motivation in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. However, few studies have explored how MTP specifically enhances students' L2 motivation and their classroom engagement. The study investigated the impact of MTP on students' classroom engagement and evaluated its effectiveness in guiding students to develop positive L2 motivation. A six-week MTP intervention was conducted in university EFL classes. Likert-scale questionnaires were used to measure students' L2 motivation, positive L2 self, and classroom engagement pre-MTP and post-MTP intervention. Results of within-group and between-group comparisons revealed that the experimental class exhibited higher levels of post-experimental results in L2 motivation, positive L2 self, and classroom engagement compared to the pre-experimental results. Additionally, the experimental class also demonstrated higher levels of post-experimental results in L2 motivation, positive L2 self, and classroom engagement compared to the controlled class. These findings confirmed that MTP is an effective approach for enhancing students' L2 motivation, positive L2 self and classroom engagement in university EFL classrooms. Integrating MTP with positive psychology offers effective strategies in maintaining students' L2 motivation through the positive L2 learning experience.**

Index Terms—**motivational teaching practice (MTP), L2 motivation, positive L2 self, classroom engagement, tertiary education**

I. Introduction

Second language (L2) learning motivation, or L2 motivation, has been a heatedly discussed topic in second language acquisition (SLA) area for over 50 years (Taguchi et al., 2009). L2 motivation is a psychological drive that initiates and keeps the process of learning a second or foreign language (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008). For many L2 learners, lack of L2 motivation is one of the primary challenges hindering language learning progress. As a result, understanding how to keep and enhance L2 motivation has become a major focus in the L2 motivational research (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021).

The significance of L2 motivation has received rising recognition and brought attention to the L2 self in L2 learning (Lake, 2013), which was further supported by Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS) (2005, 2009). However, the problem remains that L2 learners can show varying levels of motivation, and some even show negative L2 motivation in L2 learning experiences. For example, Lake (2013) linked Dörnyei's L2MSS theory with positive psychology, proposing the concept of positive L2 self. As Lake (2013) claimed, L2 learners who exhibit positive learning behaviors and approach their research with enthusiasm can easily develop positive L2 selves.

In English-expanding countries where English has limited attention in society, like China, Korea, and Japan (Kachru & Smith, 2008), creating a motivational classroom through effective teaching practices is still challenging for many EFL teachers. The English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom is a key context for EFL learning in these countries (Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017), making the implementation of motivational teaching practice (MTP) framework essential. MTPs, or motivational teaching practices, include teaching strategies to generate students' initial L2 motivation and maintain their ongoing motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021).

The relationship between MTP, students' self-perception, and in-class responses to the teaching has been investigated in previous studies. Findings have shown that the implementation of MTP directly affects the students' motivational level and their classroom engagement (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008), as well as learning outcomes (Bernaus et al., 2009). In this way, students' classroom engagement has been regarded as a crucial measurement of both students' L2 motivation and the effectiveness of EFL teaching. Students' engagement in school is a broad concept that includes various school activities (Appleton et al., 2006; Fredricks et al., 2004); however, it narrows to students' classroom learning activities (Skinner et al., 2009) in this study, involving behavioral, emotional and cognitive engagement (Fredricks et al., 2004).

* Corresponding Author

By linking students' classroom engagement and positive L2 selves with teachers' implementation of MTP, this study reinforced the significance of positive psychology in enhancing students' L2 motivation, particularly on the aspect of boosting students' positive emotions in EFL classrooms.

A. Increasing Awareness of Positive Psychology in L2 Motivational Research

In the 2000s, L2 motivational research started to focus on the process-oriented approach. Dörnyei's (2005, 2009) L2 motivational self-system (L2MSS) consisted of constructs ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 and L2 learning experience. However, researchers in the SLA field soon realized that not all motivated L2 learners have a high level of L2 motivation and enjoy the L2 learning process (Lake, 2013). In other words, these motivated L2 learners had L2 motivation but are too weak to maintain a long duration and tended to terminate the L2 learning when their L2 motivation was removed. Therefore, L2 motivational research began viewing L2 motivation as a complicated and dynamic concept. This was the critical time when positive psychology theories were brought into the L2 motivational research.

Lake (2013) proposed an L2 learner who has positive L2 motivation is known as a positive L2 self. A positive L2 self helps extend the language learning process, aligning with the focus on maintaining high learning quality (Lake, 2013). Meanwhile, influenced by the positive psychology, higher demands were given to EFL teachers to enhance learners' emotions, interest and attitudes, which were significant qualities of positive L2 self (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012).

Different categories have been made based on the learners' affection for learning languages (Lake, 2013). By linking L2 individuals to positive psychology, attempts have been made to demonstrate its positive functions, and it is believed that L2 learners can transform themselves into individuals who are more creative, knowledgeable, resilient, socially integrated, and healthy, which enables them to experience happiness simultaneously in the L2 classroom (Fredrickson, 2001). Dewaele (2012) argued that basic emotions play a significant role in triggering a sense of higher L2 motivation in the L2 learning process. This caused current L2 motivational research to look into the factors influencing L2 motivation from the lens of the L2 learning process (Lake, 2013).

The development of L2 motivation research, combined with the positive psychology, contributes to L2 learners' longer and stronger L2 motivation and further achieve authentic happiness from their L2 learning experiences. Achieving the authentic happiness of L2 learning is not solely based on sense and emotion but also requires L2 individuals to find the meaning within L2 learning, which is able to get from meaningful L2 learning activities and contexts.

B. Motivational Teaching Practice, Positive L2 Self and Classroom Engagement

Figure 1 introduces the focuses of MTP framework on four aspects: creating the basic motivational conditions, generating initial motivation, maintaining and protecting motivation, and encouraging retrospective self-evaluation (Dörnyei, 2001). Current MTP investigations have validated its practical application, such as Guilloteaux and Dörnyei (2008) and Sugita et al. (2010). In more recent investigations, Henry et al. (2018) explored specific classroom activities that can enhance students' L2 motivation.

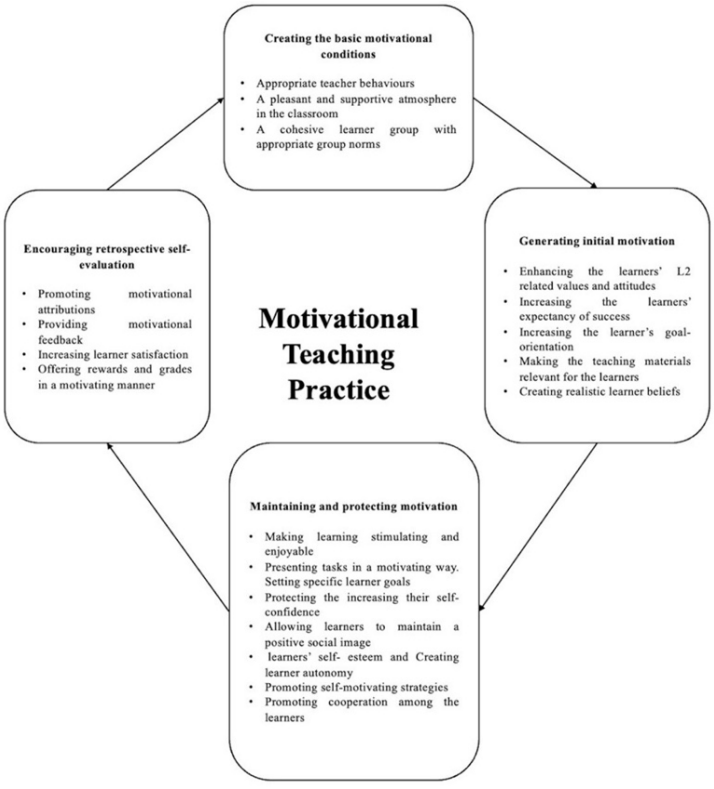

Figure 1. Caption: Four Key Components of Motivational Teaching Practice

L2 motivational research has evolved from traditional, static models to dynamic and multidimensional models (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021). Recent research on L2 motivation has developed to focus on how emotions affect learning (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012). Research on positive L2 self focuses on students' positive traits, such as confidence (MacIntyre et al., 2016) and willingness to communicate (MacIntyre et al., 1998); however, few studies have explained how to assist L2 learners in building and developing positive L2 selves in EFL classrooms, which is the gap in this study. This gap connects students' self-perceptions to their L2 motivation, and raises teachers' awareness of designing positive and motivating EFL classrooms for more effective EFL teaching and learning outcomes, rather than relying on traditional curriculum-based motivating teaching methods.

Classroom engagement (CE) reflects students' responses to MTP, and has gained rising attention. Recent studies have shifted from behavioral engagement to emotional engagement, including students' interests (Skinner et al., 2009), and its impact on learning outcomes (Liu et al., 2024). Cognitive engagement has also become a key focus, especially the ways to enhance it (Reeve, 2012). Therefore, in this study, students' classroom engagement is regarded as a response to their self-perceptions and teacher's implementation of MTP, suggesting that MTP is effective in helping L2 learners develop positive L2 selves. The three research questions (RQs) were:

RQ1: What are the pre-MTP intervention levels (T1) of students' L2 motivation, positive L2 self and classroom engagement in both experimental and controlled classes?

RQ2: What are the effects of MTP intervention in the experimental class?

RQ3: What are the post-MTP intervention levels (T2) of students' L2 motivation, positive L2 self and classroom engagement in both experimental and controlled classes? What are the differences between the two classes?

II. Research Design

This study designed an interventional experimental research method to examine the effects of MTP during a six-week EFL course. As shown in Figure 2, before the MTP intervention, students' levels of L2 motivation, positive L2 self, and classroom engagement were measured in two classes. Based on the experimental results, this study compares the differences within each class and between the two classes.

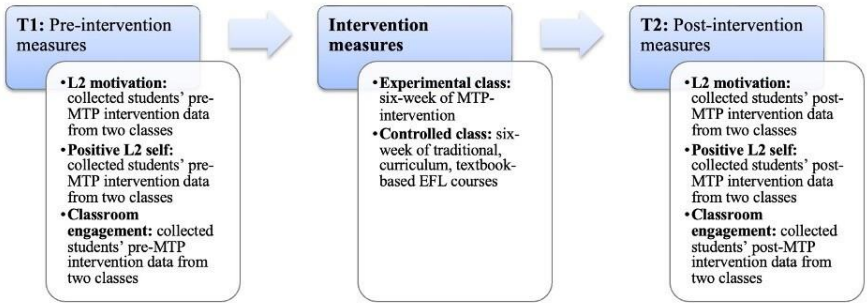

Figure 2. Caption: Research Design

A. Participants

All students from the two non-English major classes were invited to take part in this study. The students were 61 first-year undergraduates aged 19 to 21. They had been studying English for a minimum of ten years. The teacher had been teaching the College English Course at a Chinese university for more than five years. Before completing the questionnaires, students were reminded by the teacher to respond to all items, which avoided any missing data.

B. Instruments

(a). Intervention Instrument

The teacher designed MTP-based activities following Dörnyei's MTP framework (2001a) in the experimental class for 12 sessions, but only used motivating activities as required by the curriculum in the controlled class, the comparisons of the teaching in the two classes are displayed in Table 1.

TABLE 1
IMPLEMENTATION OF MOTIVATIONAL TEACHING PRACTICE IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

Dimensions	Experimental class	Controlled Class
Creating basic motivational conditions	using visualized methods, various teaching resources	not deliberately created, textbook-based
Unit 2 (Session 1 & 2)	Yes (music)	-
Unit 2 (Session 3 & 4)	Yes (music)	-
Unit 3 (Session 1 & 2)	Yes (video)	-
Unit 3 (Session 3 & 4)	Yes (video)	-
Unit 5 (Session 1 & 2)	Yes (video)	-
Unit 5 (Session 3 & 4)	Yes (video)	-
Generating initial motivation	generate earlier	generate later or not prepared
Unit 2 (Session 1 & 2)	unit and today's learning objectives	unit learning objectives
Unit 2 (Session 3 & 4)	today's learning objectives	unclear
Unit 3 (Session 1 & 2)	unit and today's learning objectives	teacher-student interaction
Unit 3 (Session 3 & 4)	today's learning objectives	unclear
Unit 5 (Session 1 & 2)	unit and today's learning objectives	teacher-student interaction
Unit 5 (Session 3 & 4)	today's learning objectives	unclear
Maintaining and protecting motivation	use different MTP-based activities	based on curriculum
Unit 2 (Session 1 & 2)	9 times	3 times
Unit 2 (Session 3 & 4)	8 times	5 times
Unit 3 (Session 1 & 2)	8 times	3 times
Unit 3 (Session 3 & 4)	10 times	5 times
Unit 5 (Session 1 & 2)	8 times	3 times
Unit 5 (Session 3 & 4)	9 times	4 times
Encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation	included in the activities	not included in the activities
Unit 2 (Session 1 & 2)	Yes	-
Unit 2 (Session 3 & 4)	Yes	-
Unit 3 (Session 1 & 2)	Yes	-
Unit 3 (Session 3 & 4)	Yes	-
Unit 5 (Session 1 & 2)	Yes	-
Unit 5 (Session 3 & 4)	Yes	-

(b). Pre- and Post-Intervention Measuring Instruments

The *L2 Motivational Questionnaire* was in five-point Likert scale, adapted from Taguchi's (2009) validated questionnaire to measure EFL learners' L2 motivational level. During the pilot study, some repetitive items in the original questionnaire were removed to avoid overlap. A total of 29 items were included in the final questionnaire with three subscales: ideal L2 self (n = 12), ought-to L2 self (n = 9), L2 learning experience (n = 10). The Cronbach's alpha values were: overall motivation (0.961), ideal L2 self (0.934), ought-to L2 self (0.842), and L2 learning experience (0.930), indicating a high reliability. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used to identify the three constructs of L2 motivation. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value was 0.902, and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant ($\chi^2 = 3058.652$, df = 406, p = 0.000), showing the adequacy of the data for factor analysis. The cumulative variance explained by the extracted components was 61.003%.

The *Questionnaire of Positive L2 Self* was in five-point Likert scale. It experienced the same procedure of reliability and validity check. It was adapted from Lake (2013) for assessing students' positive L2 self with constructs of ideal L2 self, interested L2 self, harmonious passion, and mastery L2 goal orientation. The final questionnaire had 26 items with four subscales: ideal L2 self (n = 6), interested L2 self (n = 7), harmonious passion (n = 6), and mastery L2 goal orientation (n = 7). In this study, the Cronbach's alpha values were: overall positive L2 self (0.969), ideal L2 self (0.906), interested L2 self (0.891), harmonious passion (0.928) and mastery L2 goal orientation (0.916). The KMO value was 0.926, and Bartlett's test was significant ($\chi^2 = 3042.137$, df = 325, p = 0.000), showing that the variables were sufficiently correlated for factor analysis. The cumulative variance explained by the extracted components was 73.015%.

The *Questionnaire of Classroom Engagement*, a five-point Likert scale, was adapted from the *Questionnaire of Learners' School Engagement* (Fredricks et al., 2004), which was originally designed to measure students' overall school engagement. This study focused on classroom engagement, so items not applicable to the classroom context were removed. The final questionnaire had 12 items with three subscales: behavioral engagement (n = 4), emotional engagement (n = 4), cognitive engagement (n = 4). The Cronbach's alpha values were: overall classroom engagement (0.847), behavioral engagement (0.954), emotional engagement (0.893), and cognitive engagement (0.876). The KMO value was 0.809, and Bartlett's test was significant ($\chi^2 = 1131.750$, df = 66, $p < 0.001$). The cumulative variance explained by the extracted components was 79.544%.

(c). Data Collection Procedure

Data collection started after receiving participants' consent forms. To evaluate pre-MTP intervention levels (T1) of students' L2 motivation, positive L2 self and classroom engagement, three questionnaires were given to two classes. During the experimental stage, the experimental class followed the four-step MTP framework, while the controlled class

received traditional, curriculum, textbook-based EFL course. In the post-experimental stage, students were asked to complete the same three questionnaires one more time and their post-MTP intervention levels (T2) were measured. This study applied independent-samples t-tests and Mann-Whitney U tests to analyze T1 and T2 data. Methods of log10 transformation and bootstrap were used to deal with non-normal data and independent-samples t-tests were applied for the normal data. To measure the effect of MTP intervention within the experimental class, paired-samples t-tests were applied.

(d). Data Analysis

This study used SPSS to do statistical analyses. Descriptive statistics for measuring students' L2 motivation, positive L2 self, and classroom engagement taken at pre-MTP intervention (T1) and post-MTP intervention (T2) are explained in the following section. The main findings were displayed to three decimal places from the statistical analyses conducted to address the research questions.

III. Results

A. Pre-Intervention Measures (T1)

Figure 3 presents the measurements of pre-intervention results for both experimental and controlled classes. In the experimental class, students' L2 motivation was 2.930, positive L2 self was 3.190, and classroom engagement was 2.830. The controlled class showed slightly higher but no significant difference, with L2 motivation at 3.058, positive L2 self at 3.439, and classroom engagement at 2.911.

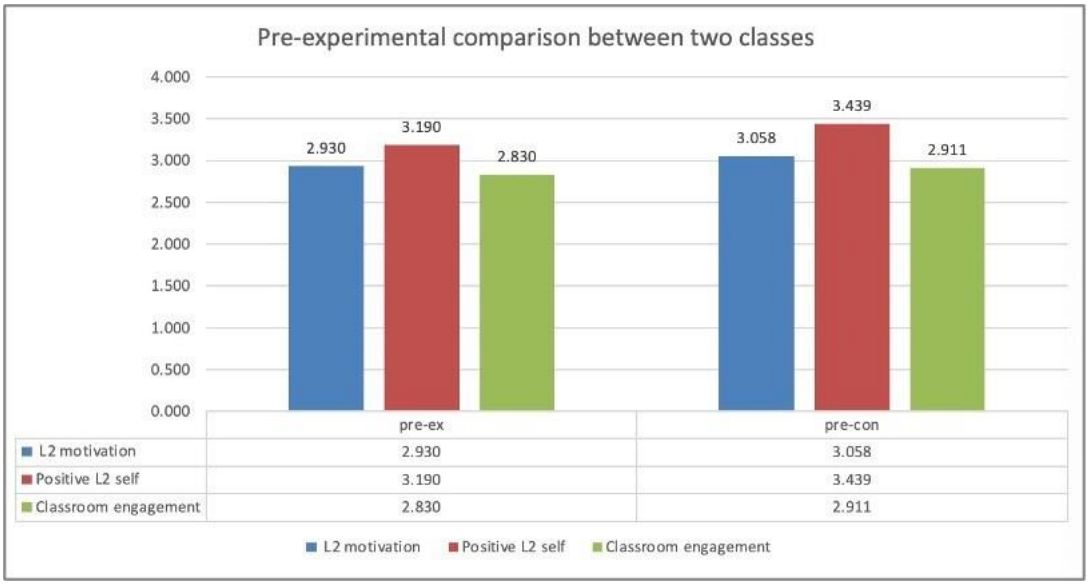

Figure 3. Caption: Comparison of Pre-Experimental Data Between Two Classes

Statistical tests were applied to measure the pre-MTP intervention data, as displayed in Table 2. For students' L2 motivation, after applying log10 transformation and bootstrap methods, the data of ought-to L2 self remained non-normal. Therefore, the Mann-Whitney U test was used to analyze the data of ought-to L2 self, while the independent-samples t-test was used to assess L2 motivation, ideal L2 self, and L2 learning experience. The results indicated no significant differences between the two classes before the experiment in L2 motivation ($p = 0.374$), ideal L2 self ($p = 0.526$), ought-to L2 self ($p = 0.876$), and L2 learning experience ($p = 0.380$).

For students' positive L2 self, the data for harmonious passion and mastery L2 goal orientation remained non-normal after using log10 transformation and bootstrap methods. Consequently, the Mann-Whitney U test was employed to analyze the harmonious passion and mastery L2 goal orientation data, while the independent-samples t-test was used to examine positive L2 self, ideal L2 self, and interested L2 self. The results indicated no significant differences between the two classes before the experiment in positive L2 self ($p = 0.113$), ideal L2 self ($p = 0.062$), interested L2 self ($p = 0.296$), harmonious passion ($p = 0.127$) and mastery L2 goal orientation ($p = 0.313$).

The classroom engagement and its three constructs remained non-normal after using log10 transformation and bootstrap methods. Consequently, the Mann-Whitney U test was utilized for analysis. The results indicated no significant differences between the two classes before the experiment in classroom engagement ($p = 0.930$), behavioral engagement ($p = 0.616$), emotional engagement ($p = 0.923$), and cognitive engagement ($p = 0.427$).

TABLE 2
CAPTION: PRE-MTP INTERVENTION RESULTS

Tests	Measurements	t-value or U-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Independent-samples t-test	L2 motivation	-0.896	0.374
	ideal L2 self	-0.638	0.526
	L2 learning experience	-2.117	0.380
Mann-Whitey U test	ought-to L2 self	452.500	0.867
Independent-samples t-test	positive L2 self	-1.611	0.113
	ideal L2 self	-1.903	0.062
	interested L2 self	-1.055	0.296
Mann-Whitey U test	harmonious passion	360.000	0.127
	mastery L2 goal orientation	394.500	0.313
Mann-Whitey U test	classroom engagement	458.000	0.930
	behavioral engagement	430.000	0.616
	emotional engagement	457.500	0.923
	cognitive engagement	410.500	0.427
Note: No statistically significant results were observed (P ≥ 0.05)			

B. Effect of Intervention

Presented in Table 3, paired-samples t-test results revealed significant changes between the pre- and post-experimental data in the experimental class, with three questionnaires showing p-values below 0.05, except the emotional engagement of the classroom engagement.

TABLE 3
CAPTION: EFFECT OF MTP INTERVENTION IN THE EXPERIMENTAL CLASS

Paired-samples t-test	Pairing Dimension	Mean Difference	Std. Deviation	P-value
Pair 1	L2 motivation 1– L2 motivation 2	1.037	0.513 0.642	<0.001***
Pair 2	ideal L2 self 1– ideal L2 self 2	0.779	0.705 0.792	<0.001***
Pair 3	ought-to L2 self 1 – ought-to L2 self 2	0.665	0.545 0.755	<0.001***
Pair 4	L2 learning experience 1– L2 learning experience 2	1.606	0.411 0.519	<0.001***
Pair 5	positive L2 self 1 – positive L2 self 2	1.075	0.594 0.520	<0.001***
Pair 6	ideal L2 self 1– ideal L2 self 2	0.730	0.747 0.782	<0.001***
Pair 7	interested L2 self 1– interested L2 self 2	1.094	0.599 0.558	<0.001***
Pair 8	harmonious passion 1– harmonious passion 2	1.299	0.629 0.470	<0.001***
Pair 9	mastery L2 goal orientation 1– mastery L2 goal orientation 2	1.163	0.598 0.447	<0.001***
Pair 10	classroom engagement 1– classroom engagement 2	0.707	0.570 0.550	<0.001***
Pair 11	behavioral engagement 1– behavioral engagement 2	1.017	1.068 1.026	0.01*
Pair 12	emotional engagement 1– emotional engagement 2	0.327	0.897 0.682	0.154
Pair 13	cognitive engagement 1– cognitive engagement 2	0.776	0.831 0.855	0.001***
Note: *Significance level: *P < 0.05, **P < 0.01, ***P < 0.001, no significance (P ≥ 0.05)				

In Table 4, the results for the controlled class revealed a clear contrast to the experimental class. While the ideal L2 self and L2 learning experience scales from the *L2 Motivational Questionnaire*, along with the interested L2 self scale from the *Questionnaire of Positive L2 Self*, had p-values below 0.05, indicating some statistically significant changes, the remaining scales exhibited p-values above 0.05. This indicated that the traditional curriculum textbook-based EFL course had limited impact on the controlled class in general, with only small changes in the measured variables.

Although the overall effect of the traditional curriculum textbook-based EFL course was small, three pairs of variables showed changes. Ought-to L2 self (Pair 3) increased (mean difference = 0.121, p = 0.007), implying students felt a stronger sense of responsibility for learning. Mastery L2 goal orientation (Pair 9) also increased (mean difference = 0.145, p = 0.015), implying that students became more focused on their learning goals. Classroom engagement (Pair 10) increased as well (mean difference = 0.242, p = 0.003), implying that students participated more in classroom activities. These changes were likely caused by other factors or natural growth during the study, which was explained in the data analysis part in this paper, not some motivational teaching activities designed by the curriculum.

TABLE 4
CAPTION: EFFECT OF EFL COURSE IN THE CONTROLLED CLASS

Paired-samples t-test	Pairing Dimension	Mean Difference	Std. Deviation	P-value
Pair 1	L2 motivation 1– L2 motivation 2	0.068	0.597 0.404	0.113
Pair 2	ideal L2 self 1– ideal L2 self 2	0.044	0.780 0.585	0.307
Pair 3	ought-to L2 self 1 – ought-to L2 self 2	0.121	0.718 0.599	0.007**
Pair 4	L2 learning experience 1– L2 learning experience 2	0.059	0.482 0.245	0.372
Pair 5	positive L2 self 1 – positive L2 self 2	0.051	0.489 0.611	0.085
Pair 6	ideal L2 self 1– ideal L2 self 2	0.088	0.834 0.701	0.161
Pair 7	interested L2 self 1– interested L2 self 2	0.049	0.532 0.423	0.261
Pair 8	harmonious passion 1– harmonious passion 2	0.031	0.608 0.585	0.031*
Pair 9	mastery L2 goal orientation 1– mastery L2 goal orientation 2	0.041	0.710 0.567	0.419
Pair 10	classroom engagement 1– classroom engagement 2	0.145	0.670 0.591	0.015*
Pair 11	behavioral engagement 1– behavioral engagement 2	0.242	1.241 1.096	0.003**
Pair 12	emotional engagement 1– emotional engagement 2	0.203	0.983 0.800	0.185
Pair 13	cognitive engagement 1– cognitive engagement 2	-0.008	0.711 0.665	0.891
Note: *Significance level: *P < 0.05, **P < 0.01, ***P < 0.001, no significance (P ≥ 0.05)				

C. Post-Intervention Measures (T2)

According to the post-intervention results, the MTP intervention led to significant increases in students' L2 motivation, positive L2 self, and classroom engagement, with the experimental class showing a higher score than the controlled class.

(a). Students' L2 Motivation

Independent-samples t-tests were used to measure students' post-L2 motivation and its dimensions. Initially, the data were non-normal, so a log10 transformation was performed. After the log10 transformation, the data for L2 motivation, ideal L2 self, and L2 learning experience were normalized, so the independent-samples t-test was conducted on the ought-to L2 self and transformed L2 motivation, transformed ideal L2 self, and transformed L2 learning experience.

The results showed significant differences between the experimental and controlled classes in L2 motivation ($p < 0.001$). The experimental class scored significantly higher in overall L2 motivation (mean = 0.593) than the controlled class (mean = 0.491). To further explore the three dimensions of L2 motivation, the ideal L2 self showed a significant difference, as the p-value of log10 ideal L2 self was 0.002, with the experimental class (mean = 0.568) scoring higher than the controlled class (mean = 0.493). The ought-to L2 self also showed a significant difference ($p = 0.002$), with the experimental class scoring higher (mean = 3.798) than the controlled class (mean = 3.228). The most significant difference was in L2 learning experience ($p < 0.001$), where the experimental class had a mean of 0.631 compared to 0.476 in the controlled class.

(b). Positive L2 Self

Independent-samples t-tests were applied to measure students' post-positive L2 self and its four constructs, as the data were normally distributed. Following the MTP intervention, students' positive L2 self showed a significant difference between two classes ($p < 0.001$). The experimental class had a mean score of 4.265, while the controlled class scored 3.490. Table 5 further presented four dimensions of students' positive L2 self. The MTP intervention had a strong effect on students' interested L2 self ($p < 0.001$). The experimental class had a mean of 4.227, compared to 3.335 for the controlled class. Harmonious passion also showed a significant difference ($p < 0.001$) between the two classes. The experimental class showed a higher mean of 4.483, compared to 3.479 in the controlled class. Additionally, mastery L2 goal orientation was significantly different ($p < 0.001$), with the experimental class achieving a higher mean of 4.404 compared to 3.495 in the controlled class. However, for the ideal L2 self, although the experimental class had a slightly higher mean of 3.931 compared to 3.677 for the controlled class, the difference was not statistically significant ($p = 0.186$).

(c). Students' Classroom Engagement

For students' post-classroom engagement, the data were initially non-normal. After applying the log10 transformation and bootstrap methods, log10 classroom engagement and log10 cognitive engagement became normally distributed;

however, the behavioral engagement and emotional engagement remained non-normal. As a result, the Mann-Whitney U test was used to analyze behavioral and emotional engagement, while the independent-samples t-test was used to analyze classroom engagement and cognitive engagement.

In Table 5, the results of independent-samples t-test showed the impact of the MTP intervention on classroom engagement, particularly the cognitive engagement. For classroom engagement, the experimental class had a higher mean under log10 classroom engagement (mean = 0.509) compared to the controlled class (mean = 0.408), with the difference being statistically significant (p = 0.019). Similarly, for cognitive engagement, the experimental class scored significantly higher (mean = 0.544) than the controlled class (mean = 0.478) under log10 cognitive engagement, with a p-value of 0.001, highlighting a significant improvement. Meanwhile, the Mann-Whitney U test was used to analyze behavioral engagement and emotional engagement. For behavioral engagement, the experimental class had a median of 4.000 and IQR of 2.250 while the controlled class had a median of 3.750 and IQR of 4.000. However, p-value (p = 0.288) suggested the MTP intervention did not lead to meaningful differences between the two classes. In contrast, for emotional engagement, the experimental class had the median of 3.250 and IQR of 3.000 while the controlled class had the median of 2.500 and IQR of 2.500. The p-value (p = 0.002) suggested a significant difference between two classes on emotional engagement after MTP intervention.

TABLE 5
CAPTION: POST-MTP INTERVENTION RESULTS

Tests	Measurements	Class	Mean		t value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Independent-samples t-test	log10 L2 motivation	ex	0.593		6.067	<0.001***
		con	0.491			
	log10 ideal L2 self	ex	0.568		3.236	0.002**
		con	0.493			
	ought-to L2 self	ex	3.798		3.284	0.002**
		con	3.228			
	log10 L2 learning experience	ex	0.631		3.328	<0.001***
		con	0.476			
Independent-samples t-test	positive L2 self	ex	4.265		5.997	<0.001***
		con	3.490			
	ideal L2 self	ex	3.931		1.337	0.186
		con	3.677			
	interested L2 self	ex	4.227		7.078	<0.001***
		con	3.335			
	harmonious passion	ex	4.483		7.339	<0.001***
		con	3.479			
	mastery L2 goal orientation	ex	4.404		6.901	<0.001***
		con	3.495			
Independent-samples t-test	log10 classroom engagement	ex	0.509		2.404	0.019*
		con	0.408			
	log10 cognitive engagement	ex	0.544		3.432	0.001***
		con	0.478			
Mann-Whitey U test	Measurements	Class	Median	IQR	U value	Sig. (2-tailed)
	behavioral engagement	ex	4.000	2.250	391.000	0.288
		con	3.750	4.000		
	emotional engagement	ex	3.250	3.000	254.500	0.002**
		con	2.500	2.500		
Note: *Significance level: *P < 0.05, **P < 0.01, ***P < 0.001, no significance (P ≥ 0.05)						

IV. DISCUSSION

This study aimed to examine the impact of the MTP intervention in EFL teaching in terms of students' L2 motivation, positive L2 self, and classroom engagement. T1 data addressing RQ 1 showed no statistically significant differences between the experimental and controlled classes before the MTP intervention, confirming that the post-intervention changes can be attributed to the MTP intervention rather than pre-existing differences.

The results of RQ 2 showed significant differences in all dimensions of the L2 motivation, positive L2 self, and classroom engagement, except the emotional engagement, emphasizing the impact of the MTP intervention, confirming its potential as a valuable tool for the SLA area, which was connected with earlier research (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008). The results implied the MTP intervention was effective in supporting the development of positive L2 self, L2 motivation, and classroom engagement. As shown in Figure 4, following the six-week MTP intervention, average increases were: L2 motivation (1.037), positive L2 self (1.075) and classroom engagement (0.707), suggesting the MTP intervention could largely increase students' participation in the classroom.

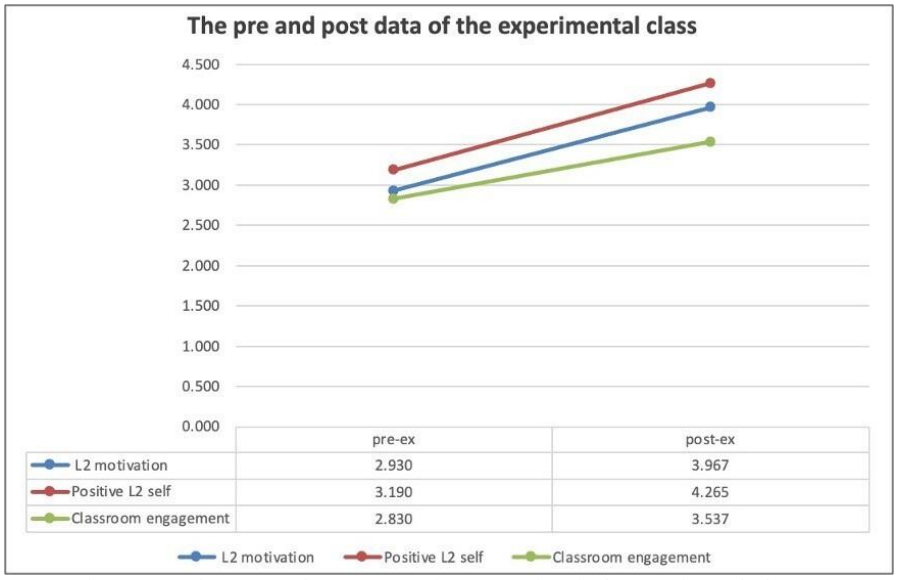

Figure 4. Caption: Pre- and Post-Intervention Comparison in the Experimental Class

However, the emotional engagement in the experimental class displayed a higher but not significant difference. One possible reason for its slight but not significant difference could be the short duration of MTP intervention. Another critical reason could be the influence of external pressure. In Chinese higher education, all the first-year university students face academic demands, particularly from English proficiency examinations such as College English Test (CET) 4 and 6. These examinations are graduation requirements, so students' emotions towards EFL learning may be subconsciously influenced (Wang & Zhan, 2020). The data revealed that students struggled to feel more positive emotions under such circumstances; hence, promoting students' emotional engagement to the greatest extent has always been a huge challenge for teachers (Wang & Liu, 2023).

In contrast, the controlled class showed slight changes primarily in classroom engagement, which were likely due to students' ongoing participation in structured EFL courses where external factors are present rather than the MTP intervention (Lamb, 2017). As shown in Figure 5, the mean change of L2 motivation, positive L2 self, and classroom engagement was 0.068, 0.051, and 0.145 respectively, suggesting the traditional curriculum-based EFL course could increase students' participation in the classroom, the effect of which was limited.

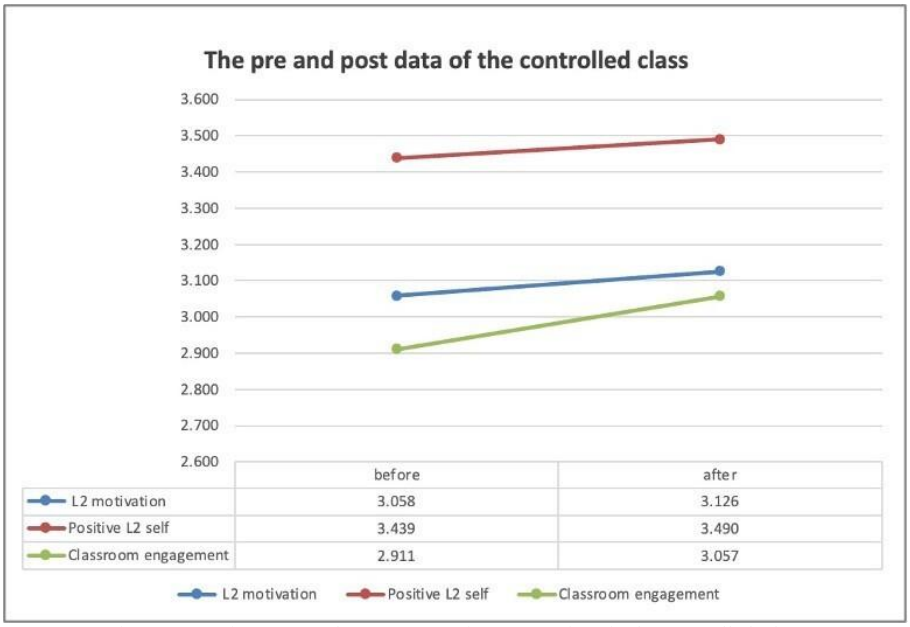

Figure 5. Caption: Pre- and Post-Intervention Comparison in the Controlled Class

The slight increases in the variables in the controlled class were likely due to some applied MTP activities based on the teaching syllabus, such as discussions and visualized tasks. However, these activities, such as Q&A discussions, were less frequent than those applied in the experimental class. In addition, most students in the controlled class who continued learning English during their first year at university might have been driven by external factors, such as the necessity of taking required English proficiency examinations, including the CET 4 and 6 (Wang & Zhan, 2020).

The results addressing RQ 3 confirmed significant differences between the experimental and controlled classes across three variables. As shown in Figure 6, the MTP intervention had a clear impact on the experimental class. Before the MTP intervention, there were no significant differences between the two classes. The controlled class had slightly higher scores in L2 motivation (by 0.758), positive L2 self (by 0.249), and classroom engagement (by 0.081) compared to the experimental class. However, after the MTP intervention, the experimental class achieved higher levels in all three variables compared to the controlled class, with L2 motivation higher by 0.841, positive L2 self by 0.775, and classroom engagement by 0.480.

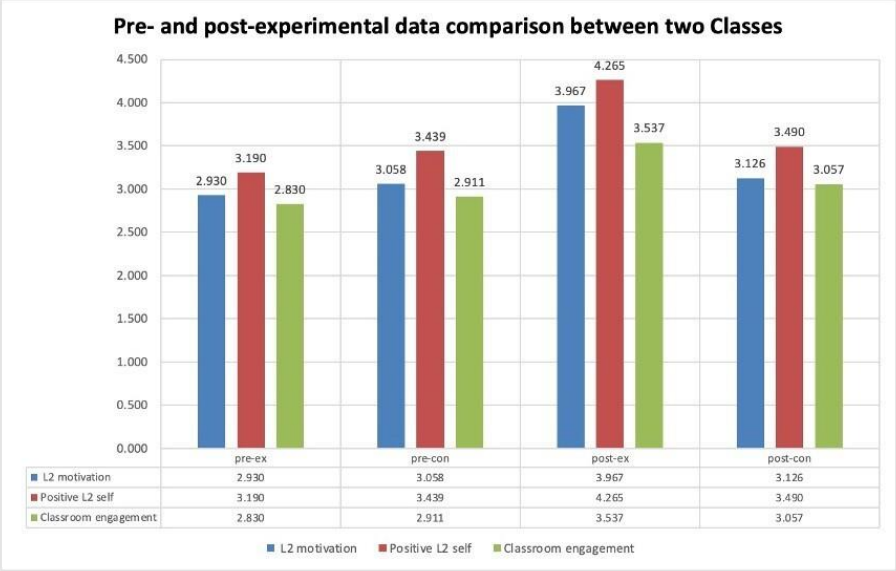

Figure 6. Caption: Pre- and Post-Experimental Data Comparison Between Two Classes

The findings expanded L2MSS by emphasizing the critical role of positive emotions in the EFL learning process. Data from the experimental class showed the use of MTPs, such as cultural-based discussions or role plays, connected English learning to real-life contexts, providing a stronger sense of commitment to their L2 learning journey (Lamb, 2017). It developed students' positive emotions, making them perceive language learning as a meaningful and enjoyable part of their personal growth.

The findings also suggested that the MTP intervention could encourage learners to imagine themselves as capable English users. Activities such as scenario-based discussions (Xie, 2019) and reviewing daily learning objectives (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021) may have helped students create a clearer picture of their future L2 selves. However, no significant changes were found in behavioral engagement, requiring further exploration into strategies to enhance external L2 motivation. It also showed that external factors, such as meeting social expectations or fulfilling responsibilities, were less effective than intrinsic motivation in sustaining long-term engagement and learning outcomes (Wang, 2024). Therefore, teachers should be aware of the importance of helping students develop a sense of achievement and see themselves as successful language users who actively participate in and accomplish classroom activities.

The MTP intervention also proved effective in enhancing students' L2 motivation, contributing to their personal growth (Lake, 2013). Post-classroom engagement data revealed that MTP activities greatly increased students' cognitive engagement in EFL classes. As Yashima (2002) mentioned, a deeper cross-cultural understanding can increase students' L2 motivation and cognitive engagement; hence, collaborative and interactive discussions, especially cultural-based discussions, should be frequently applied and highly valued in the MTP framework. Incorporating cross-cultural content, the MTP intervention offers a balanced approach to enhance both language skills and cultural understanding in EFL learning.

V. Conclusion

As a result of the MTP intervention, significant positive effects were observed in the experimental class on students' L2 motivation, positive L2 self, and classroom engagement. By integrating positive psychology with L2 motivational research and developing students' positive L2 self, the MTP framework enhances the connection between MTP and students' self-perceptions as well as their positive responses. This study contributes to the limited research on students' L2 motivation, positive L2 self, and classroom engagement in English classrooms where the MTP framework is implemented. Frequent use of the MTP framework, especially focusing on maintaining L2 motivation, can enhance students' L2 motivation for EFL learning.

In addition, this paper calls on EFL teachers to be aware of their role as facilitators rather than knowledge transmitters in promoting students' classroom engagement through L2 motivational research. First, teachers should focus on

facilitating rather than controlling or demanding students' L2 learning, which helps create an engaging and motivating context to encourage students' active participation. Second, the findings suggest that EFL teachers integrate positive psychology when implementing MTP, providing a supportive and relaxing learning atmosphere for students, which is essential for the development of EFL teaching.

A key limitation of the current study is that it lacks a universally effective MTP for maintaining L2 learners' L2 motivation. Therefore, future research is important to explore more details on the application of MTP in EFL classrooms in various learning themes. Additionally, the study focused only on university students, limiting the applicability of the findings to other demographic groups. Furthermore, the six-week duration of the MTP intervention may not fully capture its long-lasting effects, so longitudinal research is needed to evaluate the sustained impact of the MTP intervention.

Future research should address these limitations. Future research can explore the dynamic interactions among L2 motivation, positive L2 self, and classroom engagement using structural equation modeling (SEM). Another direction for future research is to analyze differences across subgroups, such as students with varying levels of initial motivation or cultural backgrounds, to reveal which conditions make MTP intervention more effective. In addition, longitudinal studies are necessary to assess the durability of the intervention's impact, and advanced analytical methods such as SEM could provide insights into the dynamic relationships among L2 motivation, positive L2 self, and classroom engagement. Finally, it is essential to expand the scope of MTP to different students learning various themes under diverse cultural contexts. This can enhance the adaptability and applicability of MTP and provide valuable far-reaching implications and contributions to the improvement in EFL teaching practices worldwide. In conclusion, enhancing EFL teachers' ability to design positive and motivating EFL classrooms through the MTP framework broadens the application of L2 motivational research and enhances students' awareness of the importance of EFL learning.

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Jiayu Zhuo is a doctoral candidate in Applied Linguistics, currently pursuing research at University of Technology Malaysia. With a deep interest in second language motivation, Zhuo focuses on motivational teaching practice and their impact of students' self-perceptions and responses in EFL classrooms. The research aims to equip EFL teachers with strategies to design more effective and engaging lessons, offering significant contributions to the field of SLA. Committed to advancing knowledge in L2 motivation, Zhuo intends to continue exploring the intersection of EFL teaching theory and practice, with the goal of contributing to both academic literature and practical applications.

Zuhana Mohamed Zin is a distinguished scholar and professor in the Department of Language Academy at University of Technology Malaysia, specializing in applied linguistics, TESL and language education. With extensive expertise in the field of second language acquisition, Dr. Zuhana Mohamed Zin has focused much on understanding the phenomenon of reading anxiety and critical reading skills among language learners. Through groundbreaking studies, significant advancement was made in the field of understanding critical literacy and L2 literacy issues. Dr. Zuhana Mohamed Zin received her PhD from University Putra Malaysia. Her work has not only been influential in SLA studies but has also led to the development of practical strategies for teachers to support readers in EFL classrooms. In addition to her research achievements, Dr. Zuhana Mohamed Zin has mentored and supervised numerous postgraduate students, guiding them toward successful careers in academia and research institutions around the world. Her dedication to the next generation of scholars is reflected in the active involvement in various mentoring programs at the university, as well as their collaborative work with other academic institutions and research centers.