

The Relationships of Self-directed Learning Readiness and Motivation with the English Proficiency of Korean EFL Learners

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Li, Nanyun and Park, Hyesook. "The Relationships of Self-directed Learning Readiness and Motivation with the English Proficiency of Korean EFL Learners." *Studies in English Language & Literature* 45.4 (2019): 153-181. This study aims to explore the relationships between self-directed learning readiness (SDLR), motivation, and English proficiency of Korean EFL learners. A questionnaire was administered to collect data on background information, SDLR, motivation, and the English proficiency of 234 Korean university students. The participants were divided into two levels according to their SDLR scores: a low-level group of SDLR (LSG) and a high-level group of SDLR (HSG). Descriptive statistics, ANOVA, MANOVA, Pearson correlation, and regression were used to analyze the data. Results showed significant differences in English proficiency and motivation according to the different SDLR levels. The three variables were significantly correlated overall, but SDLR had a closer correlation with English proficiency. Results further indicated that L2 learning experience and ideal L2 self were strongly connected with SDLR. Finally, SDLR and L2 learning experience were confirmed to be predictors of English proficiency. From the results, suggestions for enhancing L2 learners' SDLR and English proficiency are given. (Kunsan National University)

Key Words: Self-directed Learning, Self-directed Learning Readiness, motivation, English Proficiency, Korean EFL Learners

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I. Introduction

Recently there has been increasing recognition of the importance of second language (L2) learners' individual differences in the field of L2 learning/teaching. Research has suggested that as much attention should be paid to L2 learners' individual differences, as to teaching methods and language training (Benson, 2013; Gan, 2004; Wenden, 1985). Non-cognitive individual differences have received special attention. Among the possible non-cognitive factors, self-directed learning (SDL) and motivation have been identified and studied as important learner variables that support learners achieve success in L2 learning. With the advent of the 4th Industrial Revolution in particular, L2 learners may face a greater need to be equipped with SDL ability to survive and cope with a rapidly changing environment. Correspondingly, research has been conducted to clarify the meaning of SDL and if SDL has a clear relationship with learning outcomes (Abdollahi, 2009; Benson, 2013; Bordonaro, 2006). Some studies have tried to define the meaning of SDL and describe self-directed language learners' characteristics (Bordonaro, 2006; Knowles, 1975; Long, 2005), while others have examined which factors have an influence on L2 learner's SDL ability (Chan, 2015; Garrison, 1997; Orawiwatnakul & Wichadee, 2016).

Motivation also has been much studied in the L2 learning context as a key individual difference determining the rate and success of L2 learning. Substantial studies have examined the relationships between motivation and success of L2 learning (Cho, 2013; Lamb, 2012; Lee, 2014). Furthermore, the relationships between learners' SDL ability and motivation has been studied for a better understanding of L2 learning processes (Ellis, 1997; Littlewood, 1996). Some researchers argue that it is self-directedness that leads to motivation, stating that "learning success and enhanced motivation is conditional on learners taking responsibility for their own learning" (Dickinson, 1995, p.174). However, others showed that motivation might precede self-directed language learning or that they

work in both directions (Jung & Kim, 2018; Spratt, et al., 2002). In this way, research has not converged, and different relationships between SDL and motivation have been found (Gan, 2009; Nenniger, 1999; Spratt, et al., 2002). Considering the importance of SDL and motivation in L2 learning and instruction, it is time that more research is conducted to better understand the relationships between SDL, motivation, and English proficiency (Gan, 2009; Jung & Kim, 2018; Lee, 2014).

Against this background, this study seeks to explore the relationships between SDLR, motivation, and English proficiency from various angles: whether there is any difference in English proficiency and motivation depending on different SDLR levels; whether relationships can be found among SDLR, individual motivational components, and English proficiency; and whether SDLR and motivation affect English proficiency. Based on the results of this study, practical teaching suggestions and future directions for research in the field of L2 learning/teaching and motivational studies are provided.

II. Literature Review

2.1 Self-directed Learning

Knowles (1975) first defined self-directed learning (SDL) as:

. . . a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes (p.18).

Later, Holec (1981) applied SDL to foreign language learning and described it as “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning” (p.3). Many other researchers

have also tried to define the meaning of SDL. Long (2005) asserted that SDL is a process in which the learner is charged with beginning, planning, implementing, and regulating their own learning. Bordonaro (2006) offered that being self-directed in learning a new language means a learner is attempting “to progress independently of a language classroom in which the teacher directs the learning” (p.29). Abdollahi (2009) argued that SDL is an ongoing approach that can occur in any situation and allows individuals to identify their own learning goals and personal approach. These definitions indicate that learners with SDL ability are active learners who are leading their own learning by setting their own goals, identifying appropriate material resources, and employing effective learning strategies.

With these definitions of SDL, self-directed learning readiness (hereafter SDLR), is defined as the degree the individual learner possesses the abilities, attitudes, and personality characteristics necessary for SDL (Fisher & King, 2010; Guglielmino, 1977; Wiley, 1983). Accordingly, learners with self-directed learning readiness are likely to be responsible for their own learning, understand the situation of their learning, and decide what to learn and how to learn by themselves. To measure learners’ SDLR, Guglielmino (1977) constructed an SDLR scale, which has been used in the field of foreign language teaching research (Jang & Kim, 2014; Kim & Kim, 2009; Kim & Kim, 2012).

Studies in Korea are mostly positive. Kim (2014) showed significant correlations between SDLR and English performance for high school students. Cho and Ma (2015) also found a positive correlation between SDL and English proficiency in their investigation of one hundred forty-six university students. Park, Sung, and Joo (2018) found that there was a significant correlation between students’ attitudes toward the Internet and their self-directed English learning ability. On the other hand, Kim and Kim (2012) examined how Korean EFL learners’ self-directed language learning readiness changed over their public school years using an SDLR scale adapted from Guglielmino (1977). They showed that with the increase in English study time, Korean EFL learners’ self-directed language learning readiness

decreased significantly, and learners failed to develop SDL from their learning experience.

In other contexts, the relationship is less clear. Mahmoodi, Kalantari, and Ghaslani (2014) investigated 130 Iranian EFL learners from two language institutes, looking at the relationship between SDL, motivation, and English achievement. They found that there was a significant relationship between motivation and SDL but no significant relationship between EFL learners' SDL and English achievement. Their findings are inconsistent with the findings of the previously mentioned studies (Cheung, 1999; Cho & Ma, 2015; Kim, 2014; Park et al., 2018).

2.2 Motivation

Motivation gives the primary impetus to begin L2 learning and then becomes “the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process” (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 65). Studies have shown that language learners' motivation is regarded as one of the key factors that influence language learning (Dörnyei, 2005; Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Ortega, 2009; Sternberg, 2002). Early studies in language learning motivation were initiated by the seminal work of Gardner and Lambert in the Canadian context (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). Gardner's motivation model was comprised of instrumental and integrative motivational components. Integrative motivation refers to learning L2 for personal growth and cultural enrichment through contact with speakers of the target language, while instrumental motivation involves language learning for immediate or practical goals such as getting a job and passing exams. In some studies, integrative motivation was demonstrated to have a more vital role than instrumental motivation for learning success (Ellis, 1997; Gardner, 1985; Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Sadighi & Maghsudi, 2000). Other researchers found the critical role of instrumental motivation in language learning (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991; Park & Lee, 2013; Song, 2016).

In recent years, the suitability of Gardner's theory for the Asian context has been

questioned (Song, 2018), and academic debate on the concept of integrativeness/integrative motivation has intensified in the field of L2 motivation (Liu & Park, 2013). Given these issues, the L2 motivational self-system framework was constructed by Dörnyei (2009). This model consists of ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, and L2 learning experience (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009). The specific meanings of the three components are as follows: ideal L2 self represents the L2 learners' ideas of what they would like to become, including their hopes, ambitions, and desires; ought-to L2 self refers to "the attributes that one believes one ought to possess" (Dörnyei, 2005, p.105), i.e. their obligations and responsibilities; and L2 learning experience refers to the immediate learning experiences and environment, including the teacher, the curriculum, the peer group, and experience of success (Dörnyei, 2005). According to Dörnyei's model, if L2 learners want to communicate in L2 fluently in the future, the ideal L2 self would be a powerful driving force to learn the L2, as the learners want to narrow the gap between their actual and ideal selves. In contrast, ought-to L2 self involves what L2 learners ought to possess to conform someone else's expectations and to avoid probable negative consequences when they do not reach the expectations.

To date, Dörnyei's model (2009) has been broadly used to examine L2 language learning (Kim, 2009, 2010; Kim & Kim, 2012; Lamb, 2012; Liu & Park, 2013; Park & Lee, 2013; Taguchi et al., 2009). For example, Papi (2010) conducted a study on Iranian learners' motivation and its contribution to learners' intended learning effort. The study found that all of the variables in the L2 motivational self-system significantly contributed to learners' learning intentions. Lamb (2012) examined the motivation to learn English in 527 Indonesian junior high school pupils and discovered that a positive view of English learning experience was the strongest predictor of both motivated learning behavior and L2 proficiency. In the Korean EFL context, Kim & Kim's study (2012) reported that ideal L2 self had the greatest effect on motivated behaviour, including L2 learners' preparation and willingness to invest efforts in learning English. They also reported that ideal L2 self

and ought-to L2 self revealed the different motivational characteristics of Korean secondary school students.

2.3 SDL and Motivation

Since SDL has been widely discussed in EFL learning, its relationship with motivation, one of the most important influencing factors for L2 learning process, has also received much attention. Studies have found a positive correlation between SDL and motivation in EFL learners' English learning (Gan, 2009; Nenniger, 1999; Spratt et al., 2002). However, other researchers have different findings in terms of the relationship between SDL and motivation in EFL learning.

Garrison (1997) discussed the nature of SDL and proposed a theoretical SDL model which integrates self-management, self-monitoring, and motivational dimensions. The study pointed out that SDL is a necessary process to achieve educational outcomes and that during this process, motivation plays a very important role.

In a study investigating the significant motivational factors in SDL for 90 Korean EFL learners, Lee (2014) revealed that not all motivational factors were positively related to SDLR. Intrinsic motivation, instrumental motivation, and interest showed significant differences with EFL learners' SDLR. However, extrinsic motivation was not significantly related to SDLR. By conducting a linear regression analysis, the results showed that the participants' English proficiency was related to intrinsic motivation, interest, and SDLR. However, only instrumental motivation and interest contributed to English proficiency improvement. Likewise, Lee and Oh's (2011) findings showed that among several motivational factors, only interest was connected to Korean EFL learners' English proficiency improvement. These results were similar to those found in Bodkyn and Stevens (2015), who studied 485 Indian EFL learners to explore the relationships of SDL, intrinsic motivation, and English performance. They also found a significant positive effect of intrinsic motivation and SDL on EFL learners' English performance.

In China, Li (2015) disclosed a weak positive correlation between learner autonomy and motivation through an examination of the relationships between learner autonomy, motivation, and English achievement of 303 Chinese senior high school EFL learners. Different motivational components had different correlations with learner autonomy. For example, ideal L2 self, instrumentality of promotion (which measured the regulation of personal goals to become successful, such as attaining high proficiency in English in order to make more money or find a better job), and integrativeness had significant positive correlations with learner autonomy. In contrast, instrumentality of prevention (which measured the regulation of duties and obligations, such as studying English in order to pass an examination) had a significant negative correlation with learner autonomy. And furthermore, ought-to L2 self had no correlation with learner autonomy.

In Korea, Jung and Kim (2018) examined the relationships between SDLR, motivation, and willingness to communicate in English for 576 Korean college EFL learners. Their result showed significant positive correlations between SDLR and motivation; SDLR and willingness to communicate; as well as motivation and willingness to communicate. In addition, SDLR and motivation were both confirmed to be significant predictors of willingness to communicate.

Conversely, as mentioned above, Mahmoodi, Kalantari, and Ghaslani (2014) found there was a significant positive relationship between motivation and SDL, but for SDL and English achievement, there was no significant relationship.

2.4 Present study

To date, most previous studies on SDL, motivation, and English proficiency have either studied each variable independently or compared the relationship between two of the three. In addition, there has been insufficient research exploring the relationship between motivation, SDL, and L2 achievement, or how they predict EFL learners' English proficiency. In light of this, the purpose of this study is to

explore the relationships between SDL, motivation, and English proficiency, and provide some constructive opinions and references for improving L2 learning.

This study intends to seek answers to the following research questions:

- (1) Are there differences in participants' English proficiency and motivational components depending on different SDL levels?
- (2) Are there correlations among SDL, motivational components, and English proficiency?
- (3) What effects do SDL and motivation have on English proficiency?

III. Methods

3.1 Participants

A total of 234 Korean college students of different grades (102 freshmen, 5 sophomores, 22 juniors, and 24 seniors) and different majors (including English and non-English majors) participated in this study. All the participants were from one university located in the southwestern region of Korea. Their average age was twenty-one years old; 100 were female students, 134 were male students. They all volunteered to take part in the study. 191 of them started learning English in elementary school, and forty-five had experience in English-speaking countries, of which, 35 stayed for less than six months, the longest time is no more than two years, with a total of seven participants.

3.2 Instrument

The questionnaire used in the present study included three distinct sections (See Appendix): questions on background information, a questionnaire on self-directed language learning readiness, and a questionnaire on motivation. This questionnaire

was carried out using a 5-point Likert scale ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

The background section was composed of nine questions targeting the participants' gender, age, grade, major, and TOEIC scores; when they began to learn English; and their experience of studying or living abroad. To gauge participants' English proficiency, they were asked to report their most recent TOEIC scores.

To measure how well Korean EFL learners' self-directed English learning readiness, the present study used 7 items (Cronbach's $\alpha=.754$) with the distinctive description of typical SDLR characteristics from Kim and Kim's (2009) study, which was originally based on Guglielmino's (1977) research.

The motivation questionnaire was slightly modified from previous studies (Kim & Kim, 2012; Subekti, 2018; Taguchi et al., 2009). It consisted of 18 items covering the following 5 components (The internal consistency was verified with reliability statistics, Cronbach's $\alpha=.848$):

(1) Ideal L2 self (4 items): concerning L2 learners' hopes, ambitions, and desires of what they would like to become.

(2) Ought-to L2 self (4 items): focusing on various duties, obligations, and responsibilities of the L2 learners to meet others' expectations.

(3) Integrativeness (2 items): concerning L2 learners' personal growth and cultural enrichment through learning the target language;

(4) Instrumentality (3 items): involving learning L2 for immediate or practical goals such as achieving high English proficiency to make more money or find a better job.

(5) Learning experience (5 items): referring to immediate learning experiences and environments, including teachers, learners' needs, class activities, the curriculum, and the experience of success.

3.3 Data Collection

With the help of college English teachers, the questionnaires were distributed in class to 234 participants from different majors in May 2019. Participants were told that the purpose of the survey was only for research and were asked to answer the questionnaires sincerely according to their English learning experience. As their TOEIC scores would be used to represent their English proficiency, they were told to write down their latest TOEIC scores. In order to facilitate answering, online and offline versions of the questionnaires were designed, and most of the participants chose to answer the questionnaires online using their smart-phones. To help them to understand each item, all items on the questionnaires were written in their L1 language, Korean. Participants took about 10 minutes to complete the questionnaires.

3.4 Data Analysis

The participants' background information was examined using descriptive statistics. Both ANOVA and MANOVA were used to investigate whether there was any significant difference in the participants' English proficiency and motivational components depending on different SDLR levels. Correlation and regression analysis were employed to see if there were any relationships among SDLR, motivational components, and English proficiency. All the statistical analyses were performed using the Statistical Package for Social Studies (SPSS) 25.0 for Windows.

IV. Results and Discussions

In this section, the results of relationships between SDLR, motivation and English proficiency of Korean EFL learners are presented and discussed, with a concentration on the research questions.

4.1 Differences in English proficiency and motivational components depending on different SDLR levels

The first research question was concerned with the differences in the participants' English proficiency and motivational components depending on different SDLR levels. In this study, TOEIC scores were used to measure the English proficiency of the participants. The TOEIC scores ranged from 230 to 990 with an average of 534. As seen in Table 1, 89 participants had scores less than 469, accounting for 38%; 113 had scores below 729, accounting for 48.3%; and 32 had scores above 730, accounting for 13.6%.

Table 1 Distribution of the participants' TOEIC Scores¹

TOEIC Score Range	Female	Male	<i>N</i>	Percent (%)
220-469	40	49	89	38.0
470-729	41	72	113	48.3
730-859	17	6	23	9.8
860-990	2	7	9	3.8
Total	100	134	234	100.0

Table 2 Distribution of the Participants in Different SDLR Levels

Level	<i>N</i>	Female	Male	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
LSG	135	59	76	3.181	.364
HSG	99	41	58	4.141	.368
Total	234	100	134	3.587	.599

Note: SDLR=Self-directed Learning Readiness, LSG=low-level of SDLR group, HSG=high-level of SDLR group

Table 2 illustrates the breakdown of participants' SDLR. The participants' average mean score of SDLR was 3.590. According to the SDLR scores, they were divided into 2 levels. Participants with average scores below 3.590 were regarded as the

¹ The divisions of TOEIC Score Range referred to the website: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/TOEIC>

low-level of SDLR group (hereafter LSG) and those with average scores higher than 3.590 were designated the high-level of SDLR group (hereafter HSG).

Descriptive statistics were conducted on the participants' English proficiency by different SDLR levels. As seen in Table 3, the mean TOEIC score of HSG was 581.4 (SD=159.9), while that of LSG was 498.7 (SD=157.6). This shows that the high SDLR group had higher English proficiency than the low SDLR group.

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics of English Proficiency at Different SDLR Levels

	Group	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Min	Max
TOEIC Score	LSG	135	498.667	157.578	230	990
	HSG	99	581.414	159.943	250	925
	Total	234	533.675	163.458	230	990

Note: SDLR=Self-directed Learning Readiness, LSG=low-level of SDLR group, HSG=high-level of SDLR group

Next, an ANOVA was used to see if there was a statistically significant difference in the participants' English proficiency depending on their different SDLR levels. Table 4 shows that there was a significant difference between participants' English proficiency and different SDLR levels ($F=15.551$, $sig.<.001$). This result indicated that there might be any more significant relationship between L2 learners' SDLR and their English proficiency.

Table 4 Group Comparison of English Proficiency (EP) at Different SDLR Levels

	Source	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
EP	Between Groups	391077.296	1	391077.296	15.551	.000
	Within Groups	5834312.020	232	25147.897		
	Total	6225389.316	233			

$p<.05$

Note: SDLR=Self-directed Learning Readiness, EP=English Proficiency

Table 5 Descriptive Statistics of Motivational Components by Different SDLR Levels

Subcategories	Group	N	M	SD	Min	Max
L2 Learning Experience	LSG	135	2.791	.658	1.00	4.60
	HSG	99	3.741	.719	1.80	5.00
	Total	234	3.193	.829	1.00	5.00
Ideal L2 Self	LSG	135	3.235	.859	1.00	5.00
	HSG	99	4.136	.749	1.50	5.00
	Total	234	3.616	.927	1.00	5.00
Ought-to L2 Self	LSG	135	2.815	.760	1.00	5.00
	HSG	99	2.785	.862	1.00	4.50
	Total	234	2.802	.803	1.00	5.00
Instrumentality	LSG	135	3.874	.757	1.00	5.00
	HSG	99	4.266	.610	2.33	5.00
	Total	234	4.040	.724	1.00	5.00
Integrativeness	LSG	135	3.096	.841	1.00	5.00
	HSG	99	3.722	1.055	1.00	5.00
	Total	234	3.361	.985	1.00	5.00
Motivation (Total)	LSG	135	3.109	.469	1.56	4.11
	HSG	99	3.702	.471	1.89	4.89
	Total	234	3.360	.553	1.56	4.89

Note: SDLR=Self-directed Learning Readiness, LSG=low-level of SDLR group, HSG=high-level of SDLR group

Descriptive statistics were employed on the participants' motivation at different SDLR levels. As can be seen in Table 5, the mean score of motivation in HSG (M=3.702) was greater than that of LSG (M=3.109). This indicates that L2 learners in the high SDLR group were more motivated and more eager to learn L2 than those of low SDLR group. Among all the motivational components, the mean score of instrumentality was the highest (M=4.040): 4.266 for HSG and 3.874 for LSG. This may reflect Korean society where higher English proficiency is required to enter university or get a good job. Ideal L2 self displayed the second highest mean score (M=3.616), 4.136 for HSG and 3.235 for LSG. Then integrativeness showed the overall mean score, 3.361, 3.722 for HSG and 3.096 for LSG. L2 learning experience gained the mean score of 3.193: HSG is 3.741 and that of LSG was

2.791. The lowest mean score went to ought-to L2 self (M=2.802): the mean score of HSG was 2.785, and that of LSG was 2.815. Interestingly, the LSG group showed a slightly higher mean score than the HSG group.

Ought-to L2 self includes items like “I study English because parents, friends, and other respected people think that studying English is important.” Accordingly, the lowest mean score of ought-to L2 self means that most participants responded to the items with “I strongly disagree” or “I disagree”. It could be inferred that most L2 learners disapproved of the idea that they should learn English to satisfy the expectations of people they respect.

In order to discover whether there were significant differences in the motivational components between the two SDLR levels, a MANOVA was also employed. As visible in Table 6 and 7, the findings show that there were significant differences between the motivational components and the two SDLR levels.

Table 6. MANOVA Results of Motivation by Different SDLR Levels

		Value	F	Hypothesis <i>df</i>	Error <i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Intercept	Wilks' Lambda	.017	2654.737 ^b	5.000	228.000	.000
SDLR	Wilks' Lambda	.609	29.333 ^b	5.000	228.000	.000

a. Design: + SDLR

b. Exact statistic

Note: SDLR=Self-directed Learning Readiness

Table 7 shows a group comparison of the motivational components by the two SDLR levels. In general, there were significant differences between SDLR groups across motivation (F=90.894, sig.<.001). There were also significant differences between SDLR groups in L2 learning experience (F=110.138, sig.<.001), ideal L2 self (F=69.933, sig. <.001), instrumentality (F=17.964, sig. <.001), and integrativeness (F=25.466, sig.<.001), but not for ought-to L2 self (F=.077, sig=.782). This shows that there was not any statistically significant difference between the two SDLR groups with regard to ought-to L2 self. It can be drawn

from the result that expectations from other people, which were not their own hopes and dreams, did not seem to have any relation with their SDLR. This may imply that ought-to L2 self was not internalized and meaningfully recognized by Korean EFL college learners (Park & Lee, 2013), unlike the Korean secondary students of Kim and Kim (2012) where ought-to L2 self played a significant role in explaining their motivational behaviors.

Table 7 Group Comparison of Motivation by Different SDLR levels

	Source	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
LLE	Between Groups	51.580	1	51.580	110.138	.000
	Within Groups	108.650	232	.468		
	Total	160.229	233			
IS	Between Groups	46.385	1	46.385	69.933	.000
	Within Groups	153.879	232	.663		
	Total	200.264	233			
OS	Between Groups	0.050	1	.050	.077	.782
	Within Groups	150.122	232	.647		
	Total	150.171	233			
INS	Between Groups	8.773	1	8.773	17.964	.000
	Within Groups	113.299	232	.488		
	Total	122.072	233			
INTE	Between Groups	22.377	1	22.377	25.466	.000
	Within Groups	203.859	232	.879		
	Total	226.236	233			
MOT (Total)	Between Groups	20.054	1	20.054	90.894	.000
	Within Groups	51.188	232	.221		
	Total	71.242	233			

$p < .05$

Note: SDLR=Self-directed Learning Readiness, LLE=L2 Learning Experience, IS=Ideal L2 Self, OS=Ought-to L2 Self, INS=Instrumentality, INTE=Integrativeness, MOT=Motivation.

4.2 Relationship between SDLR and Motivational components

The second research question was about the relationships between SDLR and motivation. First, the Pearson correlation was performed to see if there were any

correlations between SDLR and each motivational component. Table 8 shows the results. The findings revealed that SDLR was significantly and positively correlated with overall motivation ($r=.641$, $sig.<.001$), and among all the motivational components, L2 learning experience was the most strongly correlated to SDLR ($r=.646$, $sig.<.001$), followed by ideal L2 self ($r=.608$, $sig.<.001$), integrativeness ($r=.433$, $sig.<.001$), and instrumentality ($r=.287$, $sig.<.001$). But for ought-to L2 self ($r=-.012$, $sig=.860$), the result showed there was no significant correlation with SDLR.

Table 8 Correlations between SDLR and Motivational Components

		MOT (Total)	LLE	IS	OS	INS	INTE
SDLR	Pearson Correlation	.641**	.646**	.608**	-.012	.287**	.433**
	<i>Sig.</i> (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.860	.000	.000

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Note: SDLR=Self-directed Learning Readiness, MOT=Motivation, LLE=L2 Learning Experience, IS=Ideal L2 Self, OS=Ought-to L2 Self, INS=Instrumentality, INTE=Integrativeness.

To further examine the relationships between motivational components and SDLR, a multiple regression was performed with SDLR as a dependent variable and L2 learning experience, ideal L2 self, instrumentality, integrativeness as independent variables. Ought-to L2 self was removed from the model because it did not show any significant correlation with SDLR. The results of coefficients of the motivational components for SDLR shows that the adjusted R square was 0.532, with an F value of 67.105 ($df=233$, $sig.<.001$), which means that the motivational components accounted for 53.2% of the total variance in the participants' SDLR. As shown in Table 9, L2 learning experience ($t=8.589$, $B\text{-value}=0.445$, $sig.<.001$) and ideal L2 self ($t=5.980$, $B\text{-value}=0.345$, $sig.<.001$) had significant predictive effects for SDLR, while instrumentality and integrativeness did not have significant predictive effects on SDLR in the model.

Table 9 The Effects of Motivational Components on SDLR

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	1.457	.171		8.513	.000		
LLE	.322	.037	.445	8.589	.000	.747	1.338
IS	.223	.037	.345	5.980	.000	.605	1.653
INS	.041	.040	.050	1.028	.305	.864	1.157
INTE	.039	.033	.064	1.172	.242	.672	1.487

a. Dependent Variable: SDLR

Note: LLE=L2 Learning Experience, IS=Ideal L2 Self, INS=Instrumentality, INTE=Integrativeness.

From the results, it can be inferred that L2 learning experience and ideal L2 self are useful motivational components that account for L2 learners' different SDLR. As aforementioned, learning experience refers to immediate learning experiences and environments including teachers, learners' needs, class activities, the curricula, and the experience of success; ideal L2 self concerns L2 learners' hopes, ambitions, and desires of what they would like to become. Therefore, the results suggest that a relaxed and supportive English learning environment which encourages L2 learners to shape their ideal hopes may assist L2 learners to have a good learning experience and increase self-confidence in their visions, thus enhancing their SDLR.

4.3 Relationships between SDLR, motivation and English proficiency

As for the third research question, the Pearson correlation was computed to statistically investigate the relationships between SDLR, motivation, and English proficiency. The results in Table 10 show that English proficiency was significantly and positively correlated with SDLR ($r=.311$, $\text{sig} < .001$) and motivation ($r=.229$, $\text{sig} < .001$).

Table 10 Correlations between SDLR, Motivation, and English Proficiency (EP)

	LLE	IS	OS	INS	INTE	Motivation (Total)	SDLR
Pearson Correlation	.309**	.203**	-.049	.039	.160*	.229**	.311**
EP Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.002	.453	.556	.014	.000	.000
N	234	234	234	234	234	234	234

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Note: LLE=L2 Learning Experience, IS=Ideal L2 Self, OS=Ought-to L2 Self, INS=Instrumentality, INTE=Integrativeness, SDLR=Self-directed Learning Readiness.

To examine the predictive effect of SDLR and motivational components on participants’ English proficiency, a sequential regression was performed with English proficiency as a dependent variable and SDLR, L2 learning experience, ideal L2 self, and integrativeness as independent variables. Ought-to L2 self and instrumentality were removed from the model because their correlation with English proficiency was insignificant.

As shown in Table 11, model 2 revealed that approximately 12% of the variance was explained by two variables: SDLR and L2 learning experience. Regarding the unique contribution of each variable to English proficiency, model 1 indicates that SDLR alone could account for 10% of the participants’ English proficiency, and model 2 showed a 2% increase with the added explanatory power of L2 learning experience. Ideal L2 self and integrativeness in models 3 and 4 showed no additional explanatory power for the participants’ English proficiency though they had strong correlations with SDLR in Table 8. The sequential regression analysis affirmed SDLR and L2 learning experience as predictors of Korean EFL learners’ English proficiency.

Table 11 Model Summary^e

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.311 ^a	.097	.093	155.665	.097	24.913	1	232	.000

2	.342 ^b	.117	.109	154.264	.020	5.233	1	231	.023
3	.342 ^c	.117	.105	154.598	.000	.002	1	230	.967
4	.342 ^d	.117	.102	154.927	.000	.025	1	229	.875

a. Predictors: (Constant), SDLR

b. Predictors: (Constant), SDLR, L2 Learning Experience

c. Predictors: (Constant), SDLR, L2 Learning Experience, Ideal L2 Self

d. Predictors: (Constant), SDLR, L2 Learning Experience, Ideal L2 Self, Integrativeness

e. Dependent Variable: English Proficiency

The findings of the collinearity statistics are disclosed in Table 12. The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) was set between 1 to 2.162, and the tolerance ranged from .462 to 1, showing the absence of multicollinearity in the regression models.

Though L2 learners' English proficiency may be affected by a variety of factors, the present study found SDLR and L2 learning experience to be predictors of Korean EFL learners' English proficiency. This implies that L2 learner's SDLR and L2 learning experience contribute to improving their English proficiency. Therefore, it may be assumed that low SDLR learners should be recommended to enhance their SDLR to get potential benefits in English proficiency. In the same vein, it can also be inferred that learners in a good learning atmosphere would have a good learning experience, which could be also helpful for improving their English proficiency.

Table 12 The Effects of SDLR and Motivational Components on English Proficiency

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta				Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	228.941	61.896		3.699	0.000		
	SDLR	84.948	17.019	0.311	4.991	0.000	1	1
2	(Constant)	229.507	61.339		3.742	0.000		
	SDLR	52.271	22.103	0.192	2.365	0.019	0.582	1.717
	LLE	36.533	15.971	0.185	2.288	0.023	0.582	1.717
3	(Constant)	229.645	61.565		3.730	0.000		
	SDLR	52.724	24.756	0.193	2.130	0.034	0.466	2.145
	LLE	36.626	16.166	0.186	2.266	0.024	0.571	1.752
	IS	-0.57	13.903	-0.003	-0.041	0.967	0.617	1.62
4	(Constant)	228.278	62.306		3.664	0.000		
	SDLR	52.376	24.907	0.192	2.103	0.037	0.462	2.162

LLE	36.39	16.27	0.185	2.237	0.026	0.566	1.767
IS	-1.454	15.029	-0.008	-0.097	0.923	0.531	1.885
INTE	1.955	12.448	0.012	0.157	0.875	0.685	1.46

Dependent Variable: TOEIC Score

Note: SDLR=Self-directed Learning Readiness, LLE=L2 Learning Experience, IS=Ideal L2 Self, INTE=Integrativeness.

V. Conclusions and Implications

The present study sought to examine the relationships between SDLR, motivation, and English proficiency. By investigating differences in the English proficiency of the two SDLR groups (high and low levels), the study found that participants with high SDLR scores tended to perform better in TOEIC tests; it also indicated that there was a significant difference in motivation between the two SDLR groups. Except for ought-to L2 self, all the other motivational components had a positive significant correlation with SDLR, and L2 learning experience and ideal L2 self were the most strongly connected with SDLR. Three variables of SDLR, motivation, and English proficiency were found to be significantly correlated overall, wherein SDLR had a closer correlation with English proficiency. Finally, the results of regression analysis confirmed SDLR and L2 learning experience to be predictors of Korean EFL learners' English proficiency.

These findings of the relationship between SDLR, motivation, and English proficiency provide English teachers with some insights for classroom teaching. For one thing, L2 learning experience and ideal L2 self were the most strongly connected with SDLR. Moreover, SDLR and L2 learning experience were affirmed to be equally significant predictors of Korean EFL learners' English proficiency. Accordingly, it can be recommended that the English teachers should carry out the classes in which L2 learners have good learning experiences and shape their ideal L2 self to promote their SDLR, thus finally leading to enhance their English proficiency.

Considering the educational environment of Korean EFL learners, this study suggests that English teachers should create a relaxed, and supportive classroom atmosphere with curricula reflecting learners' needs so that learners could gain a positive learning experience to enhance their SDLR. As Barnes and Lock (2010) suggests, teachers should take time at the beginning of each new semester to know and understand students individually, especially their learning styles and needs. Based on mutual understanding and trust, teachers can facilitate students to formulate their personal learning goals, which is a great way to engage students in their classrooms and lead them to be more confident in self-directed English learning. As Pizzolato (2006) writes, "what students want to become and what students actually become may be mediated by what students feel they are able to become" (p. 59). Consequently, L2 learners' positive learning experiences and confident ideal L2 self can actively help promote their SDLR.

The present findings also asserted that SDLR had an important impact on Korean EFL learners' English proficiency. Accordingly, it is suggested that teachers should pay more attention to foster learners' self-directed English learning awareness and help them design their own self-directed English learning programs. In conducting these programs, teachers are advised to play a supervisory role and offer the learners some feedback and learning guidance in due course. As mentioned above, teachers can first build a good relationship with the learners and help them clarify the objectives of their self-directed English learning and design their own self-directed English learning program. Secondly, teachers should focus on assessing learners' self-directed English learning progress and offer feedback. Finally, teachers could give some advice to learners' future self-directed English learning. As a good example, Chan (2015) showed how to assist the learners in drafting an SDL contract, supervise the implementation of the contract, and give feedback. Likewise, English learning contract worksheets could be an effective way to improve English learners' SDL and English proficiency (Cho, 2015). In addition, conducting a journal writing which records learners' learning behaviours could be a useful way for

fostering learners' SDL awareness (Yi, 2018).

This study also has a few limitations. First, the questionnaire with Likert scales was distributed both online and offline. Although the online distribution and the Likert scale were convenient for data collection, online self-reported answers might not adequately reflect learners' actual learning behaviours and situations. Thus, conducting observations and interviews to investigate EFL learners' SDLR and motivation might be recommended for future studies. Secondly, the findings of this study should be generalized with caution as the participants were studied within the context of one Korean university from a medium-sized city. In addition, some participants reported their mock TOEIC scores because they had not taken the regular TOEIC test. Although these scores were not incredible, there might still have had effects on the results to some extent. Future research with a larger sample size from more representative regions needs to be conducted with more reliable proficiency data. Also, it is better to observe the long-term effects of SDLR and motivation on participants' English proficiency, not just temporary influence. Therefore, a longitudinal study is suggested to track and validate the relationships between Korean EFL learners' SDLR, motivation, and English proficiency.

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Appendix

영어 학습 설문지						
이 설문 조사는 대학생들의 영어 학습 상황을 조사하기 위한 것입니다. 귀하가 제공하는 정보는 연구의외에 그 어떤 목적으로도 사용되지 않습니다. 수집된 모든 데이터는 엄격하게 비밀로 처리 됩니다. 설문에 참여해주셔서 감사드립니다.						
1. 성별: 여/남 2. 나이: _____ 3. 학년: ① ② ③ ④ 4. 학교: _____, 전공: _____.						
5. 최근 토익 점수: ① 정규 토익 _____, listening _____, reading _____.						
② 모의 토익 _____, listening _____, reading _____.						
★ 다음 질문을 읽고 알맞은 번호에 동그라미 하세요.						
6. 영어를 사용하는 국가에 지내본 경험이 있습니까? ① 있다 ② 없다						
7. 영어사용국가에 머무른 기간은 어느 정도입니까? ① 6개월 미만 ② 6개월-1년 미만 ③ 1-2년 ④ 2-3년 ⑤ 3년 이상						
8. 언제 처음 영어공부를 시작하었습니까? ① 유치원 이전 ② 유치원 때 ③ 초등학교 1-2학년 ④ 초등학교 3-4학년						
9. 영어 공부는 여러분에게 있어 어떤 느낌인가요? ① 호기심 혹은 즐거움 ② 부담 혹은 스트레스 ③ 아무 느낌 없음						
★ 다음 질문을 주의 깊게 읽고 자신의 상황에 가장 적합한 5가지 옵션 중 하나를 선택하십시오. 다섯 가지 옵션은 다음과 같다: 아주 그렇다, 그런 편이다, 중간이다, 그렇지 않은 편이다, 전혀 그렇지 않다.						
문항	설문내용	아주 그렇다	그런 편이다	중간 이다	그렇지 않 은 편이다	전혀 그렇 지 않다
10	영어공부는 평생 필요한 것이다.	5	4	3	2	1
11	나는 다른 친구들보다 혼자 힘으로 더 잘 영어를 배울 수 있다.	5	4	3	2	1
12	나는 영어공부를 할 때 무슨 내용을 학습할 것인지, 어떠한 방식으로 할 것인지를 결정하는 것을 좋아한다.	5	4	3	2	1
13	내 영어실력은 모두 내 책임이다.	5	4	3	2	1
14	영어를 공부할 때 내가 그것을 잘 이해하고 있는지 아닌지를 구분할 수 있다.	5	4	3	2	1
15	나는 앞으로 성공한 사람이 되기 위해 영어를 더 많이 배우고 싶다.	1	2	3	4	5
16	나는 학교(학원)에서나 혼자서나 영어공부가 잘 된다.	5	4	3	2	1
17	나는 영어를 잘 말할 수 있는 사람이 될 것이라고 상상한다.	5	4	3	2	1
18	미래에 꿈꾸는 직업을 생각할 때마다, 내가 영어를 사용하고 있는 모습을 떠올린다.	5	4	3	2	1
19	나의 꿈이 현실로 되면 미래에 나는 영어를 유창하게 할 수 있을 것이다.	5	4	3	2	1
20	나는 외국인과 영어로 이야기하는 내 모습을 떠올릴 수 있다.	5	4	3	2	1
21	나는 친한 친구들이 영어가 중요하다고 하기 때문에 영어를 공부한다.	5	4	3	2	1
22	우리 부모님은 내가 훌륭한 사람이 되기 위해서 영어 공부를 해야 한다고 말씀하신다.	5	4	3	2	1

23	내가 존경하는 분들이 영어는 꼭 배워야 하는 것이라고 하기 때문에 영어 공부는 중요하다.	5	4	3	2	1
24	내가 영어를 잘 하지 못하면 다른 사람이 실망할 것이다.	5	4	3	2	1
25	영어권 문화를 배우기 위해서 영어학습은 나에게 중요하다.	5	4	3	2	1
26	영어권 원어민처럼 되고 싶어서 (행동, 사고방식, 생활 스타일 등), 나에게 영어를 배우는 것은 중요하다.	5	4	3	2	1
27	영어공부는 인센가 좋은 직장을 얻는 데 유용하기에 나에게 중요하다.	5	4	3	2	1
28	영어를 잘 하면 돈을 많이 벌 수 있으니까 영어공부는 중요하다.	5	4	3	2	1
29	특별한 목표를 이루기 위하여 영어공부가 중요하다고 생각한다.(예, 좋은 대학교, 또는 대학원, 회사 입사)	5	4	3	2	1
30	나는 영어 수업 분위기를 좋아한다.	5	4	3	2	1
31	나는 영어수업에 많은 기대를 하고 있다.	5	4	3	2	1
32	나는 영어 배우는 것을 정말 좋아한다.	5	4	3	2	1
33	나는 영어수업 중의 활동을 좋아한다.	5	4	3	2	1
34	영어수업에서 사용하는 교재는 나의 필요에 잘 맞다.	5	4	3	2	1

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