Introduction

Genda (2006) summarized the consequences for many Japanese since the economic bubble burst in 1991, that is, many Japanese have been “deprived of any faith in the future . . . Most Japanese are confused as to what goals to set for themselves and how to go about achieving them” (Preface, p. x). Moreover, Japanese university students now face struggles as they enter the job hunting process (Burgess, 2011; Honda, 2011). However, in two recent studies, Japanese learners were found to have disparate English-language learning goal orientations, summarized into four broad categories related to career, personal life, study, and general. More advanced English-language learners described more clearly English-language career, personal, and study goals; and less advanced learners often described English-language learning goals only vaguely or generally (Richard, Uehara & Spence-Perkins, 2011; Uehara & Richard, 2011). In a third investigation (Richard, Uehara, Min, & Chung, 2012), three orientations identified in participant written responses were career, contact with English and study; and these were labeled as higher-order goal orientations because these were interpreted as ultimate goals. Three other orientations identified were skills, tests, and global awareness; and these were labeled as lower-order goal orientations, because these were interpreted

*Suwako Uehara: Kanagawa University
as stepping stones to reach the higher-order goals. Despite having these goal orientations, participants were found to be inconsistent in their efforts with many participants not actively engaged in extra-curricular English study, and weak skill areas were rarely, if ever studied. Dörnyei (2009) argued that for learners to achieve their goals, learners need to richly describe their imagined future selves, and effortfully progress forward towards their imagined goals. The aim of this study is to investigate how English-language majors imagine their future involving English, and the efforts these learners perform to orient to their goals.

**The L2 Motivational Self System**

Until the 1990s, the dominant model of L2 motivational research was the socio-educational model (Gardner, 1985) and its macro-perspective view, which stressed, in particular, integrativeness—the level of desire of an individual to join the culture of the L2. Two inherent problems with this model were that it failed to account for (a) a micro-perspective view of self, and (b) the rise of a global world English.

Imagined future self has been an important area of research in general psychology for several decades now. In this area, effective goal setting involves juxtaposing a wished-for future state with the present reality that stands in the way (Oettingen & Gollwitzer, 2009). This is, in effect, a problem solving solution—mentally contrasting a future end-state with a present reality (Oettingen & Gollwitzer, 2009). Dörnyei’s (2009) L2 Motivational Self System model is construed from a micro-perspective, the self is core; and it has been suggested that English, and possibly other world languages, have different motivational structures from non-world languages (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2002). Dörnyei’s Self System is also based on psychological theories of possible selves (Carver, Reynolds, & Scheier, 1994; Markus & Nurius, 1986) and future self guides (Higgins, Klein, & Strauman, 1985) that had, until recently re-
mained outside of SLA. A key aspect of distal goal orienteering is imagination. Learners need to vision their future second-language self-guides (Dörnyei, 2009). In short, Dörnyei provides a six-point framework for the establishment of future self-guides. These are: imagining the future self, enhancing that vision, being realistic, maintaining a connection to the future self, planning to reach the future self, and understanding the consequence(s) of failure. Much of our current understanding of the L2 Motivational Self System has been through large-scale quantitative investigations using psychometric scales and advanced statistics in a variety of individual cultural settings such as Chile (Kormos, Kiddle, & Csizér, 2011), Iran (Papi, 2009), Japan (Ryan, 2009) and also in China, Iran, and Japan, a cross-cultural setting (Taguchi, Magid, & Papi, 2009). To summarize, the dominant model of motivation in SLA today is Dörnyei’s L2 Motivational Self System, with the self, and future selves at its core. Much of the theory for this model has come from outside SLA in general psychology, and the model has been tested in several large-scale quantitative studies.

**Global awareness**

A number of academics working in L2 motivational research studies have highlighted the desire for many second language learners of English, both inside and outside Japan, to integrate with a global community of native and non-native speakers of English who use primarily English as a means for communication (Irie, 2003; Lamb, 2004; McClelland, 2000; Yashima, 2000). This is in opposition to the traditional Gardnerian view of integration into a specific L2 community. Yashima (2002) and Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide, and Shimizu (2004) argued that global awareness, labelled *international posture*, includes interest in foreign affairs, a desire to work or study abroad, and a willingness to interact with people from different cultural backgrounds. International posture “tries to capture a tendency to relate oneself to the inter-
national community rather than any specific L2 group” (Yashima, 2009, p. 145). Dörnyei (2005) adapted international posture as a key component in his L2 Motivational Self System. In a recent study (Richard et al., 2012) investigating the written responses of L2-English goal orientations, 10% of participants in both Japan and Korea were found to endorse a global orientation and as an example, one participant wrote:

There are more people speaking English and if we are to go forward towards an international, hence a global society, we need to at least have communication skills (in English), so I want to be able to use the public language flexibly, and this is the skill I want the most. (Japanese male, 2nd-year university student)

Richard (2012) offers one interpretation for the spread of this global awareness from the perspective of the learner: “a manifestation of actively participating in both offline and online multicultural social networks, close at hand, and around the world, both synchronously and asynchronously that enable participants to openly, actively, and positively share their ideas with others” (p. 11). To review, a global orientation or international posture now plays an important role in L2 motivational theory, and English is seen as a means for communicating ideas and sharing culture with other members of the global community.

**Self-regulated learning and study strategies**

Self-regulation of learning is a process whereby learners set goals, monitor and control behavior aligned with those goals; and this process has been found to have a positive effect on academic mastery (Oettingen, Höning, & Gollwitzer, 2000; Ramdass & Zimmerman, 2011; Zimmerman, 2000). Learners have to effortfully focus on their goal (Miller & Brickman, 2004). Furthermore, if learners decide they are capable of completing a task, which they believe will lead to successful goal attainment, they will choose this task
Effective goal setting involves juxtaposing a wished-for future state with the present reality (Oettingen & Gollwitzer, 2009). Thus, to set goals, learners need to call on a series of mental representations, or beliefs that they have, in regards to how and why learn, and to complete tasks which lead to the desired end-goal.

Homework and self-study are necessary components of learning (Ramdass & Zimmerman, 2011). Learners need to engage in a variety of self-regulatory processes with regards to homework and self-study, and these include effectively planning, managing time, and working in a location free from distractions (Ramdass & Zimmerman, 2011). Learners who activate self-regulated learning and study strategies are more motivated and reach higher levels of achievement (Bembenutty, 2009). Time on task for homework is related to academic achievement, and homework benefits most learners in higher grades (Cooper, Robinson, & Patall, 2006); however, time on task alone is insufficient. Deeper, more meaningful cognitive engagement and quality of time on task is more significant than shallow processing (Greene & Miller, 1996; Plant, Ericsson, Hill, & Asberg, 2005; Zimmerman & Kitsantas, 2005). Learners with mastery goals, who believe in their ability to attain those goals, and who perceive the utility of the course load are more likely to engage in study strategies that lead to higher levels of achievement (Bembenutty, 2009; Greene, et al., 2004; Simons, Dewitte & Lens, 2004); and conversely, study strategies play a key role in the attainment of academic success (Fenollar, Román, & Cuestas, 2007). Finally, highly successful learners are more likely to report having better self-study strategies, including better management of their workspace, time, and their ability to handle distraction (Bembenutty, 2009; Ramdass & Zimmerman, 2011; Xu, 2009). However, it is likely that learners need training in developing self-study and self-regulatory learning.
techniques (Winne & Nesbit, 2009). In Richard et al. (2012), both Japanese and Korean participants were found to be inconsistent in their L2 extracurricular study habits, and often but irregularly completed tasks in skill areas which they perceived to be easier, while more difficult skill areas were studied less often or not at all. In summary, self-regulated learning and study strategies play an important role in end-goal attainment; however, L2 learners in Japan may be lacking in their extracurricular self-regulatory study strategies.

This study attempts to address two research questions related to English-language goal orientation and study habits from an analysis of the participants L2 essay responses. First, how do the participants imagine their future L2-English selves; and is an awareness of English as a global language a part of their future selves? Second, what factual efforts and ideal methods do participants indicate for goal attainment, and are there differences in efforts and methods according to different goal orientations, goal specificity or goal prioritization?

Method
Subjects
A total of 53 (31 women, 22 men) English department majors, enrolled in four different writing classes taught by one of the researchers, at a large private university in the Kanto region of Japan participated in this study. See Table 1. This department has an above average hensachi (T score = 54), approximately 0.5 SD above the norm. The participants were from years 2 through 4; however, a large majority of both males (81.82%) and females (77.42%) were third-year students. All participants were Japanese nationals who experienced 12 years of education in Japan, with the exception of one 3rd-year male student who lived in the Philippines with his Filipino mother until grade 8, and one 4th-year female Korean exchange student who was in her fifth year of studies in Japan.
Materials and Procedure

Learners had one week to complete a 150-word writing assignment for homework. The assignment was composed of two questions: (a) how do you imagine English will play a role in your future?; and (b) what efforts do you do each day to reach your goal of using English in the future? The assignment was written in English, and learners were free to consult dictionaries and grammar books for language usage. This assignment, although voluntary, was completed in lieu of one less writing activity on the final writing examination. The participants were informed in advance that if they completed this assignment, their responses would be used anonymously in a research project related to English language acquisition. Approximately 50% of the students enrolled in the four writing classes opted for this writing assignment. The returned papers were randomly given a three-digit code, beginning with #101 and ending with #153. In this paper, individual student writings are referred to with this number in lieu of names, and a code indicating the year at school, gender (where F = female and M = male), and the three-digit number described above is used to reference any quotations from participants herein. For example, “3rd-year M, #123” refers to participant number 23 who is a male learner in his third year.

Data analysis followed an inductive approach, and major themes and patterns were found to emerge from the data. First the participants’ responses were examined and analyzed by two trained coders into three goal types: ca-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Second-year</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third-year</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth-year</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1  Participants by Gender and School Year
reer, contact and study based on the higher-order goal orientations found in Richard et al. (2012). Each of the three goal types was then coded (1) less-specific or (2) more-specific, according to the level of description. To be considered (2) more-specific, a participant would, for example, have described a specific career or location to pinpoint their goal. Therefore, “working in a travel agency” was coded (1) less-specific, whereas, “building my own music promotion company and taking part in overseas planning” was coded (2) more-specific. Subsequently, the goals were categorized by priority—English as a means to succeed, or English environmental desire, with the former meaning that English is the tool to reach their goal, while the latter is that the learner desires to be in an English-language environment. In order to improve theoretical validity, once coding was completed, the researchers cross-checked the coding results to verify the codes in the data. No major differences in coding were found; however, a fourth major theme was found to have emerged from the data—global awareness—and thus, the data were checked anew to account for this new theme. See Table 2 for examples of learner goal coding.

Each student’s writing sample was additionally coded (1) if the learner mentioned an awareness of English as a global language, and (0) if the learner did not. For example, a 2nd year F, (#101) wrote “English is common language throughout the world. Most of us use English to work, communicate with people around the world and so on.” This seems to indicate the learner’s awareness of English as a global language. The total number of learners who mentioned this level of awareness was counted.

Further categorization was conducted to determine factual efforts and ideal methods. We refer to factual efforts as actions that learners are performing; whereas, ideal methods are future or conditional actions. The learners’ efforts and methods were coded for specificity: (1) for less specific; or (2) for more
specific. As an example, codes for goals, priority and self-study methods (ideal) have been inserted in one learner’s output for the following response and summarized in Table 3.

I need to start to do several things to improve my English, because I hope to travel around the world with English in the future [contact (1), English as a means]. First, what I should do is enrich my vocabulary through reading literature [ideal; vocabulary, reading (1)]. In literatures, there are a lot of words, phrase and conversation phrase...so I need to read literatures in extra time [ideal; reading (1)]. Second, I need to listen to English every day as possible [ideal; listen (1)]. I’ll listen to English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal type</th>
<th>Specificity (1) or (2)</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>EaaM</td>
<td>My dream is to work in travel agency... But I want to work in travel agency [sic] (2nd-year F, #111).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td></td>
<td>I'd like to use English in my job. I have two choices for the future. One choice is to be a professor in a university. I've wanted to be a professor since I first studied linguistics (3rd-year M, #123).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>It is my finally goal to visit many country around the world [sic] (3rd-year M, #121).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td></td>
<td>I want to travel to many countries, for example America, Canada, Australia, England, Italy, France, Korea and so on. (3rd-year F, #152).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>I would go to abroad for studying English [sic] (3rd-year M, #116).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td></td>
<td>My goal is to understand American literature. (3rd-year F, #116).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>EaaM</td>
<td>Speaking English fluently will play a big role in my future to achieve my dream [sic] (2nd-year F, #108).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>EED</td>
<td>Although there are a lot of things which I want to try, for the sake of my goal using English, I will become in a dearedevil manner [sic] (2nd-year M, #109).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. EaaM = English as a means; EED = English environmental desire. a (1) refers to less-specific. b (2) refers to more-specific.*
while going to college and try to watch movies or dramas in English without subtitles, [ideal; listening (1)] and I’ll dictate them if I have any time to spare [ideal; speaking (1)]. Lastly it is necessary to speak English positively [ideal; speaking (1)]. To travel, I’ll make those efforts [sic].

(3rd-year M, #106)

**Results and Discussion: Research Question One**

How do the participants imagine their future L2-English selves; and is an awareness of English as a global language a part of their future selves?

Learners wrote a total of 66 goals, and these were divided into three categories: career, contact and study. Nearly two-thirds (63.64%) of all goals described were career-related, 31.82% were contact-related, and three other goals (4.55%) were categorized as study. More than half of the goals, 39 (59.09%), were less-specific descriptions; the remaining 27 goals (40.91%) were described in more detail, and were therefore coded more-specific. Of the 53 participants, 12 (22.64%) described more than one goal, including one learner who described three. English as a means (EaaM) to reach a goal, career, contact or study, was described in the vast majority, 48 (72.73%) of the 66 goals. However, the desire to be in an environment where learners can live, work, or be surrounded by English (EED), was described in more than one quarter of the goals (27.27%).
Career

Of the 42 career goal orientations, 22 described more-specific and 20 described less-specific career goals. Examples of more-specific career goals are: own their music production company (3rd-year F, #131), be a linguistics professor (3rd-year M #123), or become a flight attendant (3rd-year F, #102). Examples of less-specific career goals are working overseas (3rd-year F, #124) or simply having a job where English may be used if even a little (3rd-year M, #119). Most career goals were related to the service industry, education or office work.

Career goals were also categorized by priority. Most learners, 28 (66.67%) recognize that English is a means to finding a job. Some examples were: “If I speak English fluently, it will help my job and my job hunting” (3rd-year M, #119); or “English is the passport to make a dream come true” (3rd-year M, #114). Many students also refer to the situation wherein English is necessary to work for a Japanese company such as: “Recently, English is needed at most of the jobs . . . there are the companies that people who work there have to get good marks of TOEIC . . . my English skill is low, so I have to raise my English skill” [sic] (3rd-year M, #126). Furthermore, many learners are keenly aware of the difficult economic times that Japan is currently facing, such as: “students are hard to get their job because of depression . . . companies think there are no prospect in Japan . . . They need the students that can use English well and staffs that companies don’t need to teach English” [sic] (3rd-year M, #120). Finally, some students encapsulate the malaise related to the current job hunting situation in their goal descriptions:

Japanese economy has been suffering from the population problem. The number of birth rate is decreasing dramatically. This is exactly why Japanese economy gets down . . . So it is hard and high competitive to get a good job. So I study English hard, because it is better to have it. I will get
a TOEIC score at least 900 points by the end of this year. I am sure I can make it . . . However I have been studying English for a long time, I cannot master it yet. Sometimes it is so stressful for me but I can keep doing it as long as I like studying it [sic]. (4th-year F, #103)

For 14 learners (33.33%), EED, in Japan or overseas, is prioritized over EaaM. This could be because English is stimulating, they desire to be in an English environment, or they enjoy English. As a clear example:

At every moment I think about what I will do in my future, there was always English. This is because I simply like English and I feel comfortable to be concerned with it. I am now thinking about my job, and my hope is to use English in some kind of way as I work. (3rd-year F, #117)

Interestingly, of these 14 learners with EED, ten (71%) were male yet males comprised only 42% of the participants in this study.

**Contact**

A total of 21 participants described future English contact goals. Of these, four (19.05%) were more-specific and 17 (80.95%) less-specific. This is in contrast to career goals of which a majority was described more specifically. An example of a more-specific contact goal was, living in Britain or the US, getting married to a foreigner in one of these countries and having children (3rd-year F, #131). On the other hand, an example of a less-specific contact goal was “want to easy to communicate with people around the world in the near future” [sic] (3rd-year F, #101). Most contact goals relate to traveling or living overseas, communicating with foreigners, and or learning culture. Only one learner (3rd-year F, #145) described a goal related to watching movies, and two (3rd-year F, #131, 3rd-year F, #124) described a goal related to having children.

Contact goals \( n = 18 \) were also categorized by priority. Most learners, 18 (85.71%) recognized that English is a means to reaching their contact goals.
For example, I need to start to do several things to improve my English, because I hope to travel around the world with English in the future (3rd-year M, #106). For three learners (14.29%), the experience of being in an English environment is prioritized over the contact goal. For example, “I want to use English in daily life in my future, therefore my goal is to live in foreign countries which use English mainly there” [sic] (3rd-year M, #118).

**Study**

Of the three learners who are study goal oriented, one described a more-specific and two described a less-specific study goal. The one more-specific study goal was “to understand American literature...and to write a graduation thesis which subject is slavery” [sic] (3rd-year F, #148) and an example of a less-specific study goal was to go abroad to study in an unspecified location (3rd-year M, #115). Study goals \(n = 3\) were also categorized by priority. Two learners prioritized English as the means to reach the study goal. As an example, in order to reach her goal, one participant wrote “read the thick book about slavery written in English every day” (3rd-year F, #148). For one learner (3rd-year M, #116), English environmental desire, i.e. studying in an English-language milieu, is the goal.

**Global**

The 150-word writing assignment did not require a response related to English as a global language; however, 19 participants (35.85%) specifically referred to the role that English plays globally. They described English as an official or common language in the workplace and study environment; and also as a tool for sharing culture and ideas with both native and other non-native English speakers. For these participants, English is a necessity or a means for communication in business, politics, or conferences. In addition, it is used in social circles, such as between colleagues, friends, and even family members.
Now, English is spoken all over the world, and it is essential for people to be able to use in the international community. English is the global language, so many people study. For example, many foreign people recently come to Japan and work with Japanese. Some companies in Japan decided to use English as official language at the company. Thus, English is very important tool for workers. Many people are required to be able to use English more and more in the international society. (3rd-year M, #114)

As another example, one participant who recently went to America for a homestay had a roommate who had come from Brazil. This participant wrote that English was the tool for successful communication between the American host family, the Brazilian roommate, and herself (3rd-year F, #145).

**Discussion: Research Question One**

Imagining, then realizing a future using English is a long, laborious process. In this study, we found that nearly one in five learners had multiple English-language related goals. Unfortunately, individuals only have so many resources available (Carver & Scheier, 2009). Furthermore, descriptions of learners’ future L2 selves need to be rich with specific details and need to be repeatedly engaged (Dörnyei, 2009). Learners who are successful at mentally contrasting their present state with their future selves are most successful (Oettingen & Gollwitzer, 2009). Thus, learners may need training in selecting and describing realizable goals, and in goal prioritization.

In this study, we also found three goal types (career, contact, and study) with the second through fourth year English Department majors. These were similar to results in previous investigations of learners’ L1 descriptions of their future L2 selves (Richard et al., 2012; Richard, et al., 2011; Uehara & Richard, 2011). It is hardly surprising that of the three goal types, a large majority (two-thirds) of the goals were focused on career; and of these career-
goals, most appeared to have an instrumental orientation, that is English was most often seen as a means to an end. Thus the most proximal goal, or highest in their hierarchy of goals, is being successful in job hunting. It may be that as the majority of learners in this study are third and fourth-year learners, they are keenly aware of the economic situation in Japan. Indeed, learners often mentioned the difficult employment situation in Japan, and how sometimes it is so stressful. Nevertheless, slightly less than half of all goals (48%) were found to be less specific. As a result, many learners, despite being near their future L2 selves, that is near graduation and entering their future career, have poorly defined goals. This runs parallel to Genda (2006) who argued that young Japanese lack direction in orienting to goal attainment. However, one-third of career goals, most of which were written by males, described an intrinsic motivation, that is, the participants desired to be in an English-language work environment. One question arises from this result. Do male learners who major in English at university have more intrinsic motivations, that is, a deeper emotional engagement with English, than their female peers?

A final common theme that arose from the participants’ texts was related to international communication using English (see also Arnett, 2002; Kormos, et al., 2011; and Richard, 2012). Many learners indicated they are keenly aware of the role that English plays globally.

**Results and Discussion: Research Question Two**

What factual efforts and ideal methods do participants indicate for goal attainment, and are there differences in efforts and methods according to different goal orientations, goal specificity or goal prioritization?

Of the 53 participants, 20 (37.74%) described only factual efforts they are doing to achieve their goals; 14 (26.41%) described only ideal methods they should, will or need to do to achieve their goals; 14 (26.41%) described both factual efforts and ideal methods; and five (9.43%) described neither. Thus, a
total of 34 learners (64.15%) described factual efforts they do to reach their goal(s) of using English in the future; and 28 (52.83%) described ideal methods.

Factual efforts and ideal methods to achieve goals included studying specific language skills, such as reading, writing, listening, speaking, or other skill areas, such as grammar or vocabulary, as well as English test qualifications (i.e. TOEIC), overseas study, and affective factors (i.e. should be more motivated). For factual efforts, listening \( (n=21) \), vocabulary study \( (n=9) \), and enrolling in overseas summer homestay programs \( (n=8) \) were the most frequent responses from learners who described factual efforts. Here are examples of individual responses of factual efforts: “I listen to foreign music or watch foreign news like BBC to improve my listening comprehension” (3rd-year M, #114); “Every day, I read a vocabulary book in the train when I’m going to school and coming back” (3rd-year M, #127); “I didn’t like to study English. But, I went to America to study English in February only one month. I went to University of California Irvine and I did homestay” (3rd-year F, #145). For ideal methods, speaking (17), study harder (10), vocabulary (9) and listening (9) were the most frequent responses from learners who described ideal methods. Here are examples of individual responses of ideal methods: “I’ll try to speak English more” (3rd-year M, #119); “I think It’s down to my effort whether sink or swim. I need to study hard more and more” \([sic]\) (3rd-year M, #150); “what I should do is to enrich my vocabulary through reading literatures . . . so I need to read literatures in extra time \([sic]\)” (3rd-year M, #106); “I have to listen to English every day. I have to get accustomed to English . . . If I would do these things, I could speak English in the future” (3rd-year F, #122).

Concerning the amount of factual efforts to achieve their goals, two participants described four efforts, nine participants described three efforts, seven
participants described two efforts, and finally 16 participants described only one effort. For ideal methods; one participant described five methods, three participants described four methods, six participants described three methods and also six participants described two methods, and finally 12 participants described only one method.

Three important differences between groups of students were found. First, differences in efforts and methods were found with learners who had different levels of career goal orientations. In fact, those learners who were less-specific in their career goal orientations appeared to be more idealistic in terms of their studying. Learners who were less-specific in their career goal orientations wrote, on average, 1.6 ideal methods, compared with learners who were more-specific in their career goal orientations who wrote 0.77 ideal methods. For example, one learner who was less-specific in her career orientation wrote:

I try to study grammar and listening. I’m going to go to the library to study this summer. I’m going to memorize many words. I’m going to listen to English and English songs. I’m going to solve sentences to acquire speed reading. I’m going to learn grammar. I will do my best [sic]. (3rd-year F, #126)

The participant’s response does not appear to reflect actions that are taking place, but rather the learner appears to be indulging in idealized methods of what will be accomplished in the coming vacation.

Second, differences were found in the number of factual efforts made by the learners who had different goal prioritization. Those learners who prioritize EED for their career wrote, on average, 1.8 factual efforts, compared with those who prioritize EaaM who, on average, wrote 1.2 factual efforts. As an example of a learner with EED whose goal is to be a successful team leader at his future company at one of their overseas branches wrote: “I take TOEIC
and TOEFL regularly, and learn English reading and listening from taking the tests. The score inspires me to study more. I always listen to ‘Speed-Learning’. I try to talk with some English speakers” (4th-year M, #132). This response indicates that this learner is actively engaged in his learning outside of the classroom to achieve his goal.

Third, with regard to students who are contact-oriented, differences were also found according to goal prioritization similar to EED for above; however, it must be noted that the number of participants was very low. There were 18 participants who prioritized the instrumental EaaM, but only three who prioritized EED. For those who prioritized the former, they claimed to make on average 0.94 factual efforts; while those who prioritized the latter, made 3.67 factual efforts on average. As an example of the latter, one learner, whose goal is to use English in his daily life in the future, wrote:

I should improve my vocabulary and listening comprehension . . . I will constantly strive to look up a word that I do not know in a dictionary and to listen English using podcasts like a 6 Minute English and CNN news update in traveling time . . . I take positive action on communication with foreign people. I do above and make a dream come true [sic].
(3rd-year M, #118)

Discussion: Research Question Two

To be successful at long-term goal attainment, one needs to expend large amounts of efforts (Bembenutty, 2009; Carver & Scheier, 2009; Ramdass & Zimmerman, 2011) through the process of regulating learning by setting goals, and monitoring and controlling behavior to meet those goals (Oettingen, et al., 2000; Ramdass & Zimmerman, 2011; Zimmerman, 2000). Homework and self-study are required for subject mastery (Ramdass & Zimmerman, 2011). In this study, more than 60% of learners described factual efforts they are doing to achieve their goals; however, what may be surprising is the
number of learners who describe either no or little factual effort they are making to achieve their goals. For example, of the 31 learners who describe a factual effort, 24 (77.42%) claim they are undertaking only one or two goal-oriented extra-curricular study actions outside the classroom. Furthermore, research has shown that learners opt for tasks they know they can complete (Greene, et al., 2004). Here, in this present study, these were listening, vocabulary, and overseas study; whereas tasks which may appear to be more challenging (i.e. speak English, study harder) were idealized but not acted upon. English majors study English mainly during the week at university, but may disconnect from extra study goals at home because their time is spent on completing school assignments, or non-academic activities.

Many EFL students are thought to be learning English to improve their chances of successful job hunting. In other words, English is a means to their future success. Indeed, in Taguchi, et al. (2009), the promotional aspect of instrumentality, that is learn English to be more successful, is the strongest predictor of future L2 self, and thus, instrumentality was labeled the new ideal L2 self; and this promotional instrumentality “possesses increased explanatory power in foreign language contexts” (p. 88). In agreement with this, in our study, two-thirds of the participants were EaaM for career. However, these participants engaged in few factual extra-curricular study efforts. Thus there may be a contradiction here; that is, participants are indicating that they want or need English for their future careers, yet are making few efforts to realize their wished-for future goals. Simons, et al. (2004) and others (see Bembenutty, 2009; Greene, et al., 2004) have argued that learners with mastery goals are more likely to engage in study strategies that lead to higher levels of goal achievement. Corresponding with these studies, in our study, learners with the intrinsic EED a desire to learn English to be surrounded by English in the future were found to be most actively engaged in extra-curricular study.
Conclusion

To conclude, this study has a number of important results. First, future English language goal orientations of English Department learners from one private university were identified, and learners were found to be primarily career-oriented, and of these, a small majority of learners were more specific in their descriptions of their future career. Second, approximately one-third of learners were contact-oriented, but learners with this orientation were predominantly less descriptive of their future goal orientations. Third, there seemed to be a disconnect between the efforts that learners make outside of the classroom and the efforts required to achieve their goals; that is, many learners were making few to no extracurricular study efforts. Fourth, it was found that differences in goal specificity and goal prioritization appear to play a role in the amount of efforts learners do to achieve their goals. On the one hand, participants who were less-specific in their career goal orientations described significantly more idealized methods. Thus, many learners have vague descriptions of their future careers and indulge in idealized efforts (see Oettingen & Gollwitzer, 2009). On the other hand, for both career and contact goal orientations, learners who prioritized English as a means to achieve their goals described making significantly fewer efforts than those who desire to be in an English environment. Learners who desire to be in an English environment may be mastery-oriented learners, and are thus more actively engaged in their own learning, such as by assessing the demands of assignments, planning strategies they will use, and monitoring progress (Covington, 2000).

As Genda (2006) has argued, many young Japanese lack direction in orienting and achieving their goals. Consistent with this, in our study a disconnect was found between learners’ goals and their efforts needed to achieve their goals. Hence, one implication from our study is that a goal orientation
and self-regulation framework ought to be created to enable learners to develop skills to clearly describe their future goal orientations and that enable learners to be trained in self-regulatory study habits to help learners achieve their goals. Building on this, Uehara (2012) described the rationale, outlined the design using current technology, and identified possible problems with a user-friendly, online self-regulatory and goal-setting framework.

Future research in this area should investigate learners’ goal orientations longitudinally, instead of cross-sectionally as was done in this study. It is possible that for some learners goals may shift upwards or downwards—goals previously ranked more important may become less important, and vice versa. Furthermore, the English-language goal orientations of learners in a variety of academic departments, not only English, and of a variety of English ability levels, should be investigated.

References


regulation. *Educational Psychology Review, 16*(1), 9–33.


**Keywords**
goals, self-regulation, English learning