Reading in a Foreign Language April 2020, Volume 32, No. 1
ISSN 1539-0578 pp. 28–48

Goal Setting and Learners' Motivation for Extensive Reading: Forming a Virtuous Cycle

Yuka Mikami
Nagoya University
Japan

Abstract

This study applied a qualitative approach and investigated the processes of motivational change through goal setting in extensive reading (ER). The one-year ER program integrating goal setting was introduced in a Japanese university. Interviews were conducted with four selected participants from among 23 students. The results revealed different patterns in students' motivational change associated with goal setting. When students used goal setting effectively, they felt a sense of achievement, enhanced their intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy, and formed a virtuous cycle toward new goals. On the other hand, when students were unable to use goal setting effectively, they repeatedly failed to achieve goals and seemed less motivated to read. This paper discusses ways to set appropriate goals for increasing reading motivation.

Keywords: goal setting, extensive reading, motivation, self-efficacy, sense of achievement, virtuous cycle, qualitative case study

Extensive reading (ER) has gained popularity among second language (L2) teachers and researchers. Grabe (2009) and Yamashita (2015) discussed the benefits of ER on the cognitive and affective domains. Yamashita (2015) also stated that teachers and researchers have been interested in the role of affect in ER because pleasure, an essential feature of ER, is related to readers' emotions and feelings. Therefore, researchers have attempted to examine readers' motivation using quantitative (e.g., Mori, 2004; Takase, 2007) and qualitative (e.g., Judge, 2011; Nishino, 2007) approaches. According to Day and Bamford (1998), successful ER experiences bring great pleasure to learners, develop positive attitudes toward reading, and increase motivation for reading. Positive book-reading experiences stimulate subsequent experiences and lead to motivational enhancement. Moreover, Nuttall (2005) suggested that speed, enjoyment, comprehension, and reading quantity are closely related to each other and comprise the virtuous circle of a good reader. If readers enjoy ER, it is possible that they enter the virtuous circle in which they can read more and faster, understand better, and enjoy reading.

Recent studies on ER (e.g., McLean & Poulshock, 2018; Suk, 2017) have implied that setting a reading goal facilitated more reading. According to Locke and Latham's (1990, 2002) goal-setting theory, setting appropriate goals can enhance students' motivation. On the other hand, the

theory suggests that setting goals that are too difficult may weaken their motivation. As Day and Bamford (1998) stated, some students gain positive experiences through ER and increase their motivation. However, other students may have negative experiences that weaken their motivation. Studies on ER motivation (e.g., de Burgh-Hirabe & Feryok, 2013; Ro, 2013) suggest that students' motivation changes dynamically in their interactions with various influential factors including enjoyment, perceived progress, and self-regulation. Exploring motivational change seems crucial for a deeper understanding of students' reading motivation. This study focuses on students' motivational changes associated with goal setting and applies a qualitative case study approach to examine how goal setting affects their motivations.

Goal-Setting Theory and ER

Locke and Latham (2002) defined a goal as "the object or aim of an action, for example, to attain a specific standard of proficiency, usually within a specified time limit" (p. 705). According to the goal-setting theory, people who are highly committed to specific, difficult, and attainable goals can perform better on goal-relevant activities. This is because people with specific, challenging, and attainable goals tend to exert greater effort and persistence than those with vague or easy goals. When people are highly committed to their goals, they enthusiastically pursue and attain them. This theory indicates that staying committed to specific, difficult, and attainable goals is crucial for enhancing motivation and performance.

Goal setting can activate self-regulation (Locke & Latham, 1994, 2002; Zimmerman, 2008). The goal-setting theory acknowledges that goal specificity and difficulty influence self-evaluation. Specific goals can provide standards for evaluating personal accomplishment. When people achieve specific goals, they evaluate their performance positively. On the other hand, when goals are too difficult, people cannot attain them and evaluate their performance negatively, which may weaken self-efficacy. The theory suggests that setting specific, difficult, and attainable goals is likely to increase individual motivation and self-efficacy. Similarly, a few studies (Bandura & Schunk, 1981; Latham & Seijts, 1999; Morgan, 1985) identified the effects of goal setting on intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy. Bandura and Schunk (1981) showed that children who set specific proximal goals in arithmetic activities and monitored their progress developed intrinsic interest and perceived self-efficacy. Latham and Seijts (1999) showed that when individuals set both proximal and distal goals in a business setting, they increased their perceived self-efficacy. Morgan (1985) found that college students who set and monitored specific proximal goals in an educational psychology course increased their intrinsic interest. Establishing specific proximal goals and committing to them seem to affect students' intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy.

Mikami (2012) examined the effects of goal setting on students' motivation in ER, and demonstrated that students' intrinsic motivation increased by setting specific, challenging, and attainable ER goals. In addition, Mikami (2017) integrated goal setting into ER and investigated the relationships between three important goal-setting attributes (specificity, difficulty, and commitment) and two motivational variables (intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy) through structural equation modeling, which is a statistical methodology for testing hypothesized models (Byrne, 2010). She found that goal commitment directly influenced intrinsic motivation and self-

efficacy, indicating that learners who were highly committed to their goals were more intrinsically motivated and had high self-efficacy.

McLean and Poulshock (2018) showed that students who had weekly word targets increased reading self-efficacy and reading amounts compared to those who were required to read one book per week. They mentioned that students with weekly word targets enjoyed reading longer books, increased their reading amounts, and felt more confident. The students with weekly word targets tended to read longer books to reach the 2,500 word target, and read 2,852 words a week on average during the treatment period, indicating that they were committed to the specific, difficult, and attainable goal. It seems reasonable to assume that the weekly word target was more specific and difficult for students than aiming to read one book per week. Although this study was not based on the goal-setting theory, the finding also suggests that setting and achieving specific and difficult goals during ER may enhance students' self-efficacy and performance.

Day and Bamford (2002) suggested ten principles for teaching ER, and the principle, "learners read as much as possible," has been considered important for successful ER programs (Day, 2015). Day (2015) claimed that the "learners read as much as possible" principle was most frequently used in the 44 ER programs he investigated. According to the goal-setting theory, aiming to read as much as possible is considered a vague goal like "do your best." When learners aim to read as much as possible, the standards are not specific enough and can vary individually. Some learners think they should try to read a large amount, while others assume a smaller amount is sufficient. Learners may not always do their best because the goal to read as much as possible is unclear. Based on the goal-setting theory, aiming to read as much as possible does not seem to motivate learners to read prolifically. If students set more appropriate ER goals, they would benefit better from goal setting.

The relationships between goal setting and motivation have been examined based on the goal-setting theory and the results of quantitative studies, such as McLean and Poulshock (2018) and Mikami (2017). However, a qualitative approach may be useful in understanding how students set goals and how it influences students' reading motivation. For example, Travers, Morisano, and Locke (2015) employed a qualitative approach to thoroughly explore the goal-setting processes. The students attending the goal-setting program realized that they had increased their self-efficacy and were motivated to challenge themselves with higher goals. They helped each other achieve their goals and shared their knowledge of goal setting with others. Qualitative data may reveal each student's goal-setting process and its factors. This study qualitatively examines goal-setting effects on learners' motivation, considering the goal-setting processes.

Motivational Change in ER

Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) stated that L2 researchers have paid attention to the dynamics of L2 motivational change only for the preceding decade or so because student motivation does not remain stable in a real classroom setting and changes over time. Dörnyei and Ottó (1998) presented a process model of L2 motivation, which organized the motivational influences of L2 learning along with a sequence of actions. Ushioda (2001) explored motivational change in L2

learners through interviews and suggested that qualitative research approaches were effective in representing the dynamic nature of motivation. These studies attempted to focus on the process or temporal dimension of L2 motivation. L2 motivation research has recently adopted a complex dynamic systems perspective (Dörnyei, Maclntyre, & Henry, 2015). Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) mentioned that "in dynamic systems the ongoing interferences between the multiple system components' developmental trajectories make the system's behavior highly complex and unpredictable" (p. 89). These systems thus conceptualize L2 motivation as complex and dynamic. For example, Nitta and Baba (2015) investigated the interactions among ideal L2 self, L2 writing, and self-regulation from a complex dynamic systems perspective, and revealed that the ideal L2 self evolved with L2 writing and self-regulation development. L2 motivation may change dynamically in its interactions with various elements related to L2 learning. It is crucial for researchers and practitioners to understand the complex and dynamic nature of motivation.

As L2 motivation research has investigated learners' motivation from temporal perspectives, several ER studies have explored the dynamics of motivational change in ER and suggested major factors influencing motivation. Nishino (2007) introduced two Japanese middle school students to ER and investigated their motivational change over two and a half years. They enjoyed reading graded readers and felt a sense of achievement, resulting in motivational enhancement. She mentioned that reading graded readers seemed challenging in the beginning and the sense of achievement from finishing a book or progressing to the next stage of graded readers may increase their perceived competence and intrinsic motivation. Ro (2013) investigated the motivation and anxiety of an unmotivated adult reader who participated in 24 ER sessions for eight weeks. He determined that feeling comfortable and enjoying the contents and the language itself in ER were important factors for anxiety reduction and motivational enhancement. He found that another factor for increasing motivation was the satisfaction from finishing English books, which seemed to have led the participant to prefer L2 reading. Consequently, enjoying L2 reading through ER and attaining a sense of achievement or satisfaction are crucial factors for enhancing learners' ER motivation.

de Burgh-Hirabe and Feryok (2013) explored the dynamic and complex nature of motivation for ER from a complex dynamic systems perspective. They presented a model of motivation for ER, which comprised a main phase cycle and a subphase cycle. The former concerns the ER project, and the latter concerns ER book-reading experiences. They examined the motivational change among nine Japanese as a foreign language learners who voluntarily participated in the ER project outside of class for five to seven months. They asserted that motivation for ER changed not only as the project progressed, but also with interference from every ER book-reading experience. As a result, there were three different patterns of motivation among these participants. The students whose motivation increased seemed to derive satisfaction from reading challenging books or progressing to the next graded readers level. They thus claimed that the students' motivation was maintained or reinforced through each ER book-reading experience. The students whose motivation decreased seemed to perceive pleasure and progress in the beginning, but found less pleasure in the next level of graded readers, needed to spend more time studying for national exams, and eventually stopped reading. Students whose motivation remained relatively stable did not seem to perceive progress due to small amounts of reading during the project. Although everyone had an initial interest in ER because they voluntarily

participated in the project, their motivation fluctuated over time in interactions with different influences.

Feeling pleasure and a sense of accomplishment in ER can motivate students to continue reading (de Burgh-Hirabe & Feryok, 2013; Nishino, 2007; Ro, 2013). Rodrigo, Greenberg, and Segal (2014) suggested that the ER program participants had developed a positive reading attitude, motivation to read, and a reading habit, which were affected by pleasure and accomplishment. However, as de Burgh-Hirabe and Feryok (2013) indicated, some students may fail to gain pleasure and success from their reading experiences because they cannot find suitable or interesting books on their own. Their negative experiences may weaken their motivation to read more. Students' motivation may vary dynamically over time as reading experiences change positively or negatively with various factors, such as reading materials, reading amounts, and perceived progress. Even though students set goals during ER, they may set goals that are too difficult and weaken their self-efficacy and motivation. Thus, it is important to consider students' motivational change throughout the ER program. This qualitative case study explores different patterns of students' motivational change associated with goal setting in the one-year ER program.

Research Questions

The following research questions were posed in this study:

1. How did the participants set their goals in ER?
2. How did the participants use their goals in ER, and how did goal setting influence their motivation?

Method

Research Setting

The research was conducted at a private university in central Japan. In each semester, students took two 90-minute English classes per week: an intensive reading class and a grammar class. I introduced an ER program during the grammar class for two semesters. The ER program consisted of 22 twenty-minute sessions: 12 sessions during the first semester from April to July 2014 and 10 sessions during the second semester from October to December 2014.

This class consisted of 23 first-year undergraduates. They were Economics majors and took the class depending on the results of a placement test conducted in April. Their English proficiency levels seemed to range from beginner to high-beginner. The students in this class had never experienced ER before and were novice readers of English.

ER Program

Before the ER program began, I explained ER and goal setting. The students were informed that they would read easy books in English for pleasure and general understanding. They were also instructed to set their own reading goals. During the ER program, students did not read outside

the classroom because there were very few graded readers available in the university library. Since students were novice readers of English and needed help selecting English books and engaging in ER, the ER program was conducted in the classroom only.

The students selected reading materials independently and read at their own pace. About 170 books, including leveled (e.g., Oxford Reading Tree, Step into Reading) and graded (e.g., Penguin Readers Easystarts and Level 1, Oxford Bookworms Library Starters) readers were provided for the class. Further, 30 graded readers (e.g., Oxford Bookworms Library Stage 1) were added in the second semester as some students preferred tougher books at the end of the previous semester. Students referred to the Yomiyasusa Levels (YL) and the word count while choosing books. The YL was a 100-point scale, from 0.0 (the easiest) to 9.9 (the most difficult), which was set by Japanese teachers and experienced readers (Furukawa & Kanda, 2010). Throughout the program, I helped the students choose books and responded to their questions on ER. Sometimes, I introduced the recommended books to the class.

The students were required to complete ER record sheets and self-evaluation sheets (Appendix A). Before they began reading, the students set the number of words that they aimed to read during each session. Although the reading speed is related to the goals, the students' reading speeds were not measured in this study. They were required to think about attainable goals for themselves based on the amount of reading they accomplished during each session. After each session, the students estimated the total number of words they had finished reading and briefly recorded their attainments, progress, and/or obstacles on their self-evaluation sheets. The word count was written on the front side of each book, which enabled them to sum up the total number of words read. When students were unable to finish reading the entire book in one session, they estimated the approximate number of words read from the pages they had finished reading. In the second semester, the students set their own goals for each half of the semester. They were instructed to set the number of words or level of books, or both, for themselves to self-evaluate their performance based on these goals. I demonstrated how to complete ER record sheets and self-evaluation sheets. However, I did not make any changes to students' goals. I also collected and checked both sheets after each session. These sheets were considered a part of the students' grades.

Participants

Students were divided into two groups according to their achievement rates at the end of the first semester. The achievement rate refers to the extent to which each student achieved the goals they had set for themselves. For example, an achievement rate of 83 % indicates that a student achieved their goals 10 out of 12 times. The median of the achievement rates in the class was 58 %. Students with achievement rates over 58 % were categorized as having high achievement rates, while those below 58 % had low achievement rates. Students with high achievement rates appeared to have different characteristics from those with low achievement rates. To examine these characteristics, two students were selected from each group for this study. These students were chosen for individual cases as they agreed to participate in the interviews and were able to arrange some time outside of classes for the interviews. Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) suggested that "multiple cases offer the researcher an even deeper understanding of the processes and outcomes of cases" (p. 30). For example, Nishino (2007) examined two comparable cases

over a long period. The current study collected data from comparable and contrasting cases so that the findings are more robust. Table 1 shows the genders and achievement rates of the interview participants.

Table 1. *Participants in the study*

Name	Gender	Achievement rate (%)
Akira	Male	83
Miki	Female	83
Kenji	Male	25
Sakura	Female	42

Note. Students' names are pseudonyms.

During the 22 sessions, Akira and Miki read 43,217 words and 39,722 words, respectively, while Kenji and Sakura read 17,091 words and 24,197 words, respectively. This suggested that students with high achievement rates tended to read more words than those with low achievement rates. Therefore, this study compared these students and explored their different characteristics.

Data Collection

Data were collected primarily through semi-structured interviews (Merriam, 1998). A list of interview questions was arranged in advance (Appendix B). Each participant was interviewed twice: once in July 2014 after the 12 sessions of the first semester, and once in January 2015 after the 10 sessions of the second semester. Each interview lasted for about 20 to 30 minutes. In the interviews, they were asked about their reading experiences during each semester. ER record sheets and self-evaluation sheets were used to remind students of their thoughts and feelings. The interviews were recorded and transcribed later. The description in the self-evaluation sheets of the four participants was used as additional data to understand what they thought during the sessions.

Analysis

Data were analyzed according to Miles et al. (2014). They indicated that analysis comprised three streams: (1) data condensation, (2) data display, and (3) conclusion drawing and verification. The first stream of analysis was data condensation, which was "the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and/or transforming the data" (Miles et al., 2014, p. 12). Coding is considered a data condensation task. I coded the same data set with another college English teacher with a PhD. If we disagreed, we discussed and reconciled the differences. The interview transcript was carefully read, and codes were assigned to the data chunks related to the research questions.

Then, a list of codes related to each research question was made. Table 2 presents an excerpt from the list of codes related to the types of goals pertaining to research question 1. The

definitions show the meanings that the codes suggest. The definitions were improved and fine-tuned as the analysis proceeded.

Table 2. *An excerpt from the list of codes related to the types of goals*

Codes	Definitions	Examples
Challenging goals	Setting difficult but attainable goals.	I set a goal close to the maximum.
Low goals	Setting low goals at the beginning of the ER program or after the summer vacation.	At first, I set lower goals because I tried to understand the book perfectly. Smaller numbers of words were set to spend plenty of time reading.
Minimum standards	Setting minimum standards that learners want to maintain.	Because I got sleepy or careless, I wanted to maintain the minimum standard.

The initial codes were then classified, and pattern codes were assigned. Miles et al. (2014) noted that "pattern codes are explanatory or inferential codes, ones that identify an emergent theme, configuration, or explanation" (p. 86). Some types of goals were grouped into pattern codes. For example, *low goals* and *minimum standards* were categorized into the pattern code of *modest goals* because they meant maintaining the learners' current performance rather than enhancing it.

The second stream of analysis was data display. I constructed narrative descriptions for each case study using the codes created through data condensation. Thereafter, the college English teacher and I confirmed the descriptions, compared them, and examined the processes of motivational change through goal setting. Moreover, we reviewed the case studies individually several times to display the condensed data.

The third stream of analysis was conclusion drawing and verification. We drew conclusions based on the data display. Over time, the findings were reconfirmed and refined. Miles et al. (2014) suggested that "the three types of analysis activity and the activity of data collection itself form an interactive, cyclical process" (p. 14). Therefore, we followed the three streams, while repeatedly reflecting on and revising the initial codes and developing pattern codes to clarify their meanings.

Results and Discussion

Research Question 1: How did the participants set their goals in ER?

Eight codes were created from the data: challenging goals, step-by-step goals, goals based on what learners want to read, intuitive goals, low goals, minimum standards, long-term goals, and hard-to-reach goals. Table 3 presents definitions and examples of each code. These codes were assembled into five pattern codes: challenging goals, seemingly attainable goals, modest goals,

long-term goals, and hard-to-reach goals. Some codes were not grouped with others because no emergent theme was identified among them.

Table 3. *Types of goals*

Pattern codes/ Codes	Definitions	Examples
Challenging goals		
Challenging goals	Setting difficult but attainable goals.	I set a goal close to the maximum.
Seemingly attainable goals		
Step-by-step goals	Gradually raising goals.	When I got used to reading, I gradually raised the goals.
Goals based on what learners want to read	Setting goals based on the word count or the number of books learners want to read.	Since I tried reading this book, I set a goal like this.
Intuitive goals	Setting goals without much consideration.	I didn't think much. I slightly raised or lowered the goal according to my mood.
Modest goals		
Low goals	Setting low goals at the beginning of the ER program or after the summer vacation.	At first, I set lower goals because I tried to understand the book perfectly. Smaller numbers of words were set to spend plenty of time reading.
Minimum standards	Setting minimum standards that learners want to maintain.	Because I got sleepy or careless, I wanted to maintain the minimum standard.
Long-term goals		
Long-term goals	Setting goals over a long period	Reading the YL2.0 book was a goal which I had been thinking of since the first semester.
Hard-to-reach goals		
Hard-to-reach goals	Setting goals that are too high for learners to attain.	At first, I strove to achieve 1,500 words, but it was too difficult for me.

Next, I present the case studies of the four participants based on interview data and the descriptions in their self-evaluation sheets. In each case study, the codes and related terms are

italicized for emphasis. Additionally, I compare the four case studies and discuss the first research question.

Akira. When Akira got used to ER in the first semester, he set *challenging but attainable goals*, such as 1,350, 1,500, and 1,600 words. He was reading the YL 1.0 books, but chose a tougher book if he thought he could read it. For example, he was able to read 1,928 words of the YL 1.0 book and understand the content well in the ninth session. Thus, he challenged himself to read the YL 1.2 book in the following session.

Just after the second semester began, he set *a low goal* (2,000 words) because he thought he might read less after the summer vacation. He began reading the YL 1.2 book and continued at the same level for three weeks. After that, he wrote, "I was able to reach the goals, so I will challenge myself to read the YL 1.4 book at the next session" on the self-evaluation sheet. He got used to reading the YL 1.2 books and thus seemed sure of reading the next-level books. He read the YL 1.4 books for four weeks from the fifth session. At the same time, he gradually raised his goals, starting from 2,200, moving to 2,400, and finally stopping at 2,600 words. He set *step-by-step goals* and reached 2,600 words in the eighth session. Thus, he thought he was able to challenge himself to read the next-level books and actually read the YL 2.0 book in the last two sessions. In the interview, he said, "Reading the YL 2.0 book was a goal which I had been thinking of since the first semester." This implies reading the YL 2.0 book was *a long-term goal* for him.

Miki. In the first semester, Miki raised her goals gradually, starting from 1,000, moving to 1,200, and finally stopping at 1,300 words, and achieved them. After that, she continued setting *step-by-step goals* and made sure she achieved them. She repeatedly confirmed that she had achieved her goals by setting them slightly higher each time. She said, "Now (at the end of the first semester) I think I could have set higher goals than I had done." After she repeatedly attained goals, she seemed confident about reading more.

In the second semester, she found her favorite series of books (Penguin Readers) and read two in one session. At the same time, she set *step-by-step goals* and gradually raised them, starting from 1,500, moving to 1,700, and finally stopping at 2,000 words. She raised the level of the book from YL 0.8 to YL 1.0. In the fifth session, she set 2,000 words as a goal and read 2,442 words. After this experience, she thought she could read more than 2,000 words from the YL 1.0 books. Thus, the goal of 2,000 words became her *minimum standard*, and she set 2,000 words ever since. Although she was able to meet this goal every week, she did not challenge herself with a new goal. In the interview, she mentioned the YL 1.2 and YL 1.4 books, saying, "There were few pictures in the books. In case I am unable to understand the content, I would have no help. I think I should challenge myself to read them a little later." She thought these levels were too difficult for her and remained at the same level.

Kenji. At the beginning of the first semester, Kenji set *an intuitive goal* (700 words). He was unable to reach the goal for five weeks. In the sixth session, he finally achieved 700 words, and then gradually raised his goals to 810 and 900 words. He was able to achieve his goals step-by-step for a little while. However, when he did not finish a book, he set *an intuitive goal* again in the following session. In the tenth session, he set 1,000 words as a goal and started reading a book of 1,200 words, but finished only 600. He set 600 words as a goal in the eleventh session to

finish reading the same book. When asked why he did not start reading another book, he said, "I just wanted to finish the whole book. I gave up trying another book because I had to translate at a very fast pace."

In the second semester, reading the YL 0.9 books, he set *step-by-step goals*, such as 780, 890, and 1,000 words and achieved them. From the fourth to the six sessions, he set 1,000 words as a goal, gradually raised the words read, and eventually read 1,158 words. After that, he chose the same-level book of 1,400 words and raised his goal to 1,400 accordingly. However, he did not achieve the goal after the seventh session. This goal is considered *hard to reach* when compared to the earlier ones, thus leading to his failure.

Sakura. At the beginning of the first semester, Sakura set *a low goal* (500 words) to understand the book well and gradually raised goals, starting from 600, moving to 800, and finally stopping at 1,000 words. She was able to achieve *the step-by-step goals*. However, in the sixth session, she set 1,100 words as a goal and read 1,062 words. After that, she again raised the goal to 1,200 words, but she just read 1,098 words. Then, she lowered the goal to 1,000 words in the following session. She said in the interview, "I didn't think much. I slightly raised or lowered a goal according to my mood." She seemed to set *intuitive goals*, choosing 1,000, 1,100, or 1,200 words without much consideration.

In the second semester, she raised her goal to 1,500 words, but was unable to achieve it for eight weeks. This goal seemed *hard to reach*. She raised the level of the book from YL 0.8 to YL 1.0. When asked why she continued setting 1,500 words as her goal, she said, "If I lower a goal, I may lose motivation. This is my character. When I always set a high goal, I can aim at achieving it." She tried to increase her reading motivation by setting a very high goal. However, the words she actually read at each session fluctuated greatly (Session 4: 1,205 words; Session 5: 723 words; Session 6: 1,400 words; and Session 7: 1,183 words), which shows that her reading motivation seemed unstable. At the end of the second semester, she felt that she had not strived for the goal, as she said, "I should have aimed at reaching the goal early."

Summary. Students with high achievement rates (Akira, Miki) had different characteristics from those with low achievement rates (Kenji, Sakura). Akira and Miki set challenging goals or step-by-step goals, and constantly attained them. They also set low goals or minimum standards, depending on the situation. Kenji and Sakura set step-by-step goals and attained them just as Akira and Miki did. However, when they did not reach their goals, they set intuitive ones without much consideration. They set hard-to-reach goals and tried to attain them, but had a difficult time achieving them and consequently lowered their achievement rates. Therefore, they did not seem to adjust their goals to the situation.

Research Question 2: How did the participants use their goals in ER, and how did goal setting influence their motivation?

A total of 11 codes were created from the data for the use and effects of goal setting: source of a new goal, pacemaker, rough guide, opportunity to reflect, standard of evaluation, raising motivation, a sense of achievement, realization of growth, a sign of progress, discomfort from failing to attain goals, and lowering of motivation after goal achievement. Definitions and

examples of each code are presented in Appendix C. These codes were assembled into three pattern codes: use of goals, effects of goal setting, and negative effects of goal setting.

Next, I present the four participants' case studies and compare them in the Summary. In each case study, the codes and related terms are italicized for emphasis.

Akira. Akira seemed to aim for a higher goal after confirming that he had achieved a goal. For instance, he wrote, "I am happy to reach my goal today, so I will aim for 2,800 words in the next session" on the self-evaluation sheet. He also said in the July interview, "I thought I would read more next time." Therefore, he decided to read more and pursue a new goal in the next session. This implies that he used his set goals as *a source for setting a new goal*.

He also *realized his own growth* by not only reaching his set goals, but also reading much more than the goals he had set. He said, "I felt great because I caught up during the late sessions. I set the maximum goal but read more than I had expected." In the second semester, he was able to read more than he had expected, which enabled him to realize his own development and derive considerable pleasure from his accomplishment.

Miki. Miki seemed to plan the allocation of time based on her goals. She said in the July interview, "I pushed myself. I thought I should read one-and-a-half books to reach the goal within the time limit. I was able to adjust my pace." She thought reading just one book was insufficient for her to achieve her goal and read in a planned manner in order to read another book as well. She used her goals as *a pacemaker*.

She was committed to reaching her goals and actually attained them in the first semester. Therefore, she seemed to gain confidence in ER at the end of this semester. Through these experiences, she set moderately difficult goals in the second semester and seemed motivated to read more. She wrote "I was very happy to reach my goal" several times on her self-evaluation sheet. Throughout both semesters, she experienced successful goal attainment numerous times and was able to read with *a sense of achievement*.

Kenji. Kenji said in the July interview, "I do not know how I would read without goals." He seemed to consider how much he would read in one session by setting a goal. However, even when he was unable to attain his set goal, he continued pursuing it. He did not modify his original goal and worked towards it until he achieved it. It took him some time to achieve the goal as he was less committed to achieving it. Therefore, he seemed to use his goals as *a rough guide* and reduced his chances of goal attainment.

He said in the July interview, "I can increase a sense of achievement by attaining goals." Thus, he seemed to feel *a sense of achievement* when he attained a goal. In the second semester, he also *sensed his progress* by getting closer to the goal, which was higher than his first semester goal. He said, "I enhanced my sense of achievement in the second semester. Although I set a higher goal, I was able to get closer to my set goal." Although he was unable to achieve his goal, he realized the increase in the number of words he read and identified his progress. On the other hand, he seemed to feel *a sense of discomfort* when he failed to attain a goal. When he was able

to achieve a goal by reading one book, he did not begin reading another. Thus, he seemed to have *lower motivation to read immediately after achieving a goal*.

Sakura. Sakura achieved her goals successfully in the beginning of ER. However, even after failing to attain a goal, she continued raising her goal without much consideration. She seemed to raise a goal in the next session without ascertaining whether she had attained her set goal. She was likely to set intuitive goals and use them as *a rough guide*. She was unable to reach goals and seemed less committed to achieving them.

At the beginning of the first semester, she was committed to achieving goals, attained goals successfully, and felt *a sense of achievement*. However, in the second semester, she seemed slow in striving for the set goal and could hardly achieve it. She was less committed to achieving the goal and was unable to experience successful goal attainment. Therefore, she seemed less motivated to read more. She wrote on the self-evaluation sheet, "I read too slowly and spent much time finishing a book." She was less likely to engage in achieving a goal and feel *a sense of achievement* by goal attainment.

Summary. In this study, one student with a high achievement rate (Akira) used goals as the source of new goals and was more likely to have achieved his goals. He also realized his own growth by exceeding his goals. The other student with a high achievement rate (Miki) used her goals as a pacemaker and was committed to deliberate goal setting. In addition, she repeatedly experienced successful goal attainment. These results suggest that they were committed to achieving their goals through the effective use of goal setting and continuously felt a sense of achievement from goal attainment. Thus, Akira and Miki seemed to gain pleasure from and confidence in ER and enthusiastically continued reading.

On the other hand, students with low achievement rates (Kenji and Sakura) used goals as a rough guide and were less committed to achieving them. As a result, they were unable to feel a sense of achievement through goal attainment and gain the confidence to read more. They managed to feel a sense of achievement only when they successfully achieved their set goals. It seemed difficult for them to continuously gain pleasure and confidence. However, adjusting their goals and staying committed to achieving them would have enabled them to reap the benefits of goal setting.

Moreover, Kenji felt discomfort from failing to attain his goals. This is in contrast to the sense of achievement from goal attainment. Thus, if learners continue to experience negative emotions, they might weaken the motivation to read. Once Kenji achieved a goal successfully, he did not seem to read further. He seemed to lower his motivation to read more because it was sufficient for him to only achieve his goal. There is, thus, a risk of lowering motivation to read more after goal achievement.

The Processes of Motivational Change Through Goal Setting

Based on this qualitative data analysis, the processes of motivational change through goal setting are presented in Figure 1. When students effectively used goal setting, they set challenging but

attainable goals or step-by-step goals and were highly committed to achieving them. Moreover, they felt a sense of achievement and realized their growth through goal achievement. Therefore, a sense of achievement and realization of growth may lead to the enhancement of students' intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy, which may stimulate them to challenge themselves with new goals and read more for goal attainment. This virtuous cycle was observed only in students who effectively used goal setting in the present study's ER program.

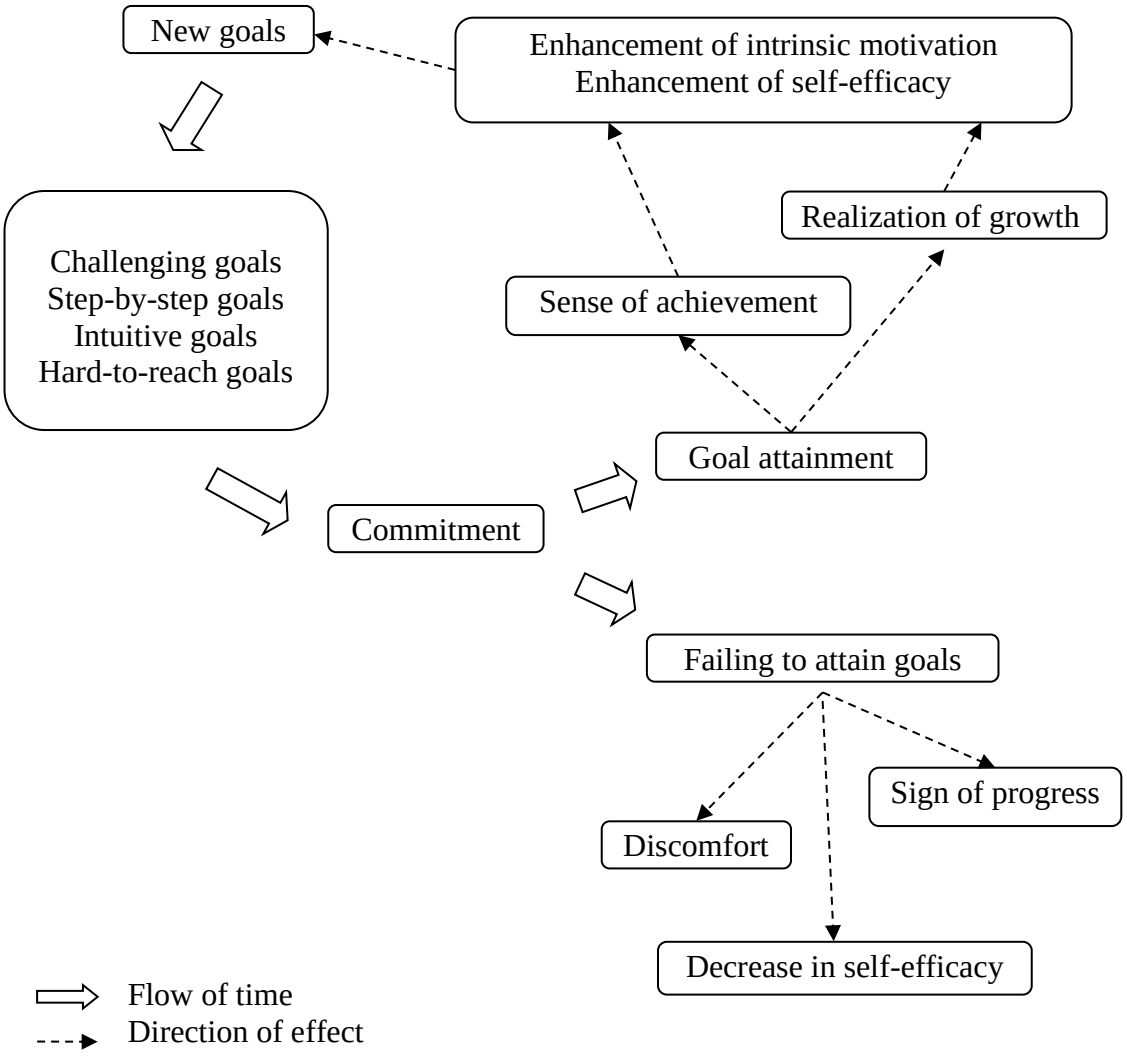


Figure 1. Processes of motivational change through goal setting.

Day and Bamford (1998) mentioned that initial successful experiences in ER enhance learners' pleasure and motivation to read more in subsequent experiences. Some qualitative ER studies (de Burgh-Hirabe & Feryok, 2013; Nishino, 2007; Ro, 2013) have suggested that feeling pleasure

and a sense of achievement following ER experiences is vital for stimulating students to continue reading. Moreover, Mikami (2017) collected quantitative data by questionnaires and investigated the relationships between goal setting and motivation for ER through structural equation modeling. The results showed that goal commitment directly influenced intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy. In addition, the qualitative data of this study allowed for the discovery of how commitment to goals led to enhanced intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy. That is, goal attainment played a vital role in enhancing intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy. It can be said that the results of both studies support each other. Therefore, successful goal attainment may result in forming the virtuous cycle of student motivation and promoting greater student engagement in reading.

On the contrary, as shown in Figure 1, when students were unable to effectively use goal setting, they set intuitive or hard-to-reach goals, were less committed to attaining them, and repeatedly failed to achieve them. As a result, they had fewer opportunities to feel a sense of achievement by evaluating their own performance and tended to feel uncomfortable. Thus, the results suggest that they may experience negative emotions and eventually weaken their self-efficacy and motivation to read. Although they were unable to attain their goals, they may be able to evaluate their own performance and realize their progress, which may not result in decreased self-efficacy.

Students' motivation may change positively or negatively in their interactions with successful experiences of goal attainment or negative emotions from failing to achieve goals. According to Zimmerman (1998), skillful self-regulated learners are likely to set specific and proximal goals that provide standards for evaluating their progress until distal goals are achieved. These learners can use goal setting effectively and generate a positive influence on their motivation, which may form a virtuous cycle toward new goals.

Implications

Day and Bamford (2002) presented ten principles for teaching ER, according to which learners aim to read as much as possible in ER. Regardless, the findings of this study suggest that aiming to attain a specific goal motivates learners to read. For example, short-term and step-by-step goals can result in successful experiences and increased motivation. However, long-term goals alone may not be sufficient to motivate students to read extensively, as they take considerable time to achieve. The point is to provide students with specific goals, such as word count or number of books. The difficulty levels of the goals should also be considered. If students gradually raise the difficulty level of their goals and are highly committed to achieving them, they may repeatedly gain a sense of achievement through goal attainment. This does not imply contradicting the principles of ER—pleasurable and understandable reading—because raising the difficulty of goals entails increasing the amount of reading. In other words, this does not prevent students from enjoying understandable books. However, there may be a risk of students not reading further after achieving their short-term goals. In using short-term goals, teachers should pay attention to the lowering of motivation immediately after goal achievement.

Although goal setting had positive effects on students' motivation during the ER program, not all the students were able to use it effectively. It is necessary to integrate goal setting into the ER

program and give learners the opportunity to learn how to use goal setting effectively. Then, learners will be able to make their own goals more specific, adjust goal difficulty, and gain a sense of achievement from goal attainment. Teachers need to check if learners use goal setting effectively and to guide them to adjust their goals. If teachers make learners set a goal of reading as much as possible, following one of the ten principles suggested by Day and Bamford (2002), it will be difficult for teachers to help learners use goal setting effectively. It is essential that learners remain committed to achieving goals, feel a sense of achievement, and form the virtuous cycle toward new goals. Teachers should help learners not only set appropriate goals but also form the virtuous cycle toward new goals throughout the ER program.

Limitations

There are several limitations in this study. First, only four out of 23 students were interviewed for this study. Other participants with different characteristics may show different patterns of motivational change. For example, students with medium achievement rates could be examined. Second, in this study, teachers did not guide the students to adjust set goals and form the virtuous cycle toward new goals. It would be valuable to explore how teachers can help learners set appropriate goals and form the virtuous cycle. For example, teachers may help learners to determine their individual reading rates and levels to enable them to set attainable goals for themselves. Third, the ER program in this study was conducted only during the class time, which made it possible to observe students' reading and monitor their goal setting during class. However, it may be valuable for students to read inside and outside the classroom. Future research should explore students' reading and goal setting outside the classroom. By encouraging extensive reading inside and outside the classroom, ER programs can facilitate students' autonomous reading and allow them to be independent readers even after their completion. Finally, future research should explore how novice readers can read much larger amounts of text using goal setting. Akira was the participant who read the most, reaching 43,217 words. Although not long enough for students to have many of the benefits that an ER program can offer, the ER program in this study could provide students with a good start to ER.

Conclusion

Despite these limitations, this study suggests that goal setting can exert a powerful influence on students' motivation for ER. Setting appropriate goals may be crucial in increasing students' motivation and reading amounts. The virtuous cycle through the effective use of goal setting may be a key factor in ensuring the success of ER programs.

Acknowledgments

This article is derived from my PhD dissertation. I wish to express my gratitude to my dissertation committee members: Professors Toru Kinoshita, Junko Yamashita, and Takao Kinugawa. I would also like to thank the anonymous reviewers and Professor Akihiro Mikami for their valuable comments.

References

Bandura, A., & Schunk, D. H. (1981). Cultivating competence, self-efficacy, and intrinsic interest through proximal self-motivation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *41*, 586–598. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.41.3.586

Byrne, B. M. (2010). *Structural equation modeling with AMOS: Basic concepts, applications, and programming* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge.

Day, R. R. (2015). Extending extensive reading. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, *27*, 294–301.

Day, R. R., & Bamford, J. (1998). *Extensive reading in the second language classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Day, R. R., & Bamford, J. (2002). Top ten principles for teaching extensive reading. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, *14*, 136–141.

de Burgh-Hirabe, R., & Feryok, A. (2013). A model of motivation for extensive reading in Japanese as a foreign language. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, *25*, 72–93.

Dörnyei, Z., MacIntyre, P. D., & Henry, A. (Eds.). (2015). *Motivational dynamics in language learning*. Bristol, England: Multilingual Matters.

Dörnyei, Z., & Ottó, I. (1998). Motivation in action: A process model of L2 motivation. *Working Papers in Applied Linguistics*, *4*, 43–69.

Dörnyei, Z., & Ushioda, E. (2011). *Teaching and researching motivation* (2nd ed.). Harlow, England: Pearson Education.

Furukawa, A., & Kanda, M. (Eds.). (2010). *The complete book guide for extensive reading* (3rd ed.). Tokyo: Cosmopier.

Grabe, W. (2009). *Reading in a second language: Moving from theory to practice.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Judge, P. B. (2011). Driven to read: Enthusiastic readers in a Japanese high school's extensive reading program. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, *23*, 161–186.

Latham, G. P., & Sejits, G. H. (1999). The effects of proximal and distal goals on performance on a moderately complex task. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *20*, 421–429. doi:10.1002/(SICI)1099-1379(199907)20:4<421::AID-JOB896>3.0.CO;2-#

Locke, E. A., & Latham, G. P. (1990). *A theory of goal setting and task performance.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Locke, E. A., & Latham, G. P. (1994). Goal setting theory. In H. F. O'Neil, Jr. & M. Drillings (Eds.), *Motivation: Theory and research* (pp. 13–29). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Locke, E. A., & Latham, G. P. (2002). Building a practically useful theory of goal setting and task motivation: A 35-year odyssey. *American Psychologist*, *57*, 705–717. doi:10.1037//0003-066X.57.9.705

McLean, S., & Poulshock, J. (2018). Increasing reading self-efficacy and reading amount in EFL learners with word-targets. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, *30*, 76–91.

Merriam, S. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Mikami, Y. (2012). Effects of goal setting and self-monitoring instruction on EFL learners' goals and motivation. *Annual Review of English Language Education in Japan*, *23*, 33–44.

Mikami, Y. (2017). Relationships between goal setting, intrinsic motivation, and self-efficacy in extensive reading. *JACET Journal*, *61*, 41–56.

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Morgan, M. (1985). Self-monitoring of attained subgoals in private study. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 77,* 623–630. doi:10.1037/0022-0663.77.6.623

Mori, S. (2004). Significant motivational predictors of the amount of reading by EFL learners in Japan. *Regional Language Centre Journal*, *35*, 63–81. doi:10.1177/003368820403500106

Nishino, T. (2007). Beginning to read extensively: A case study with Mako and Fumi. *Reading in a Foreign Language, 19*, 76–105.

Nitta, R., & Baba, K. (2015). Self-regulation in the evolution of the ideal L2 self: A complex dynamic systems approach to the L2 motivational self system. In Z. Dörnyei, P. D. MacIntyre, & A. Henry (Eds.), *Motivational dynamics in language learning* (pp. 367–396). Bristol, England: Multilingual Matters.

Nuttall, C. (2005). *Teaching reading skills in a foreign language* (3rd ed.). Oxford: Macmillan Education.

Ro, E. (2013). A case study of extensive reading with an unmotivated L2 reader. *Reading in a Foreign Language, 25*, 213–233.

Rodrigo, V., Greenberg, D., & Segal, D. (2014). Changes in reading habits by low literate adults through extensive reading. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, *26*, 73–91.

Suk, N. (2017). The effects of extensive reading on reading comprehension, reading rate, and vocabulary acquisition. *Reading Research Quarterly*, *52*, 73–89. doi:10.1002/rrq.152

Takase, A. (2007). Japanese high school students' motivation for extensive L2 reading. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, *19*, 1–18.

Travers, C. J., Morisano, D., & Locke, E. A. (2015). Self-reflection, growth goals, and academic outcomes: A qualitative study. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, *85*, 224–241. doi:10.1111/bjep.12059

Ushioda, E. (2001). Language learning at university: Exploring the role of motivational thinking. In Z. Dörnyei and R. W. Schmidt (Eds.), *Motivation and second language acquisition* (pp. 93–125). Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press.

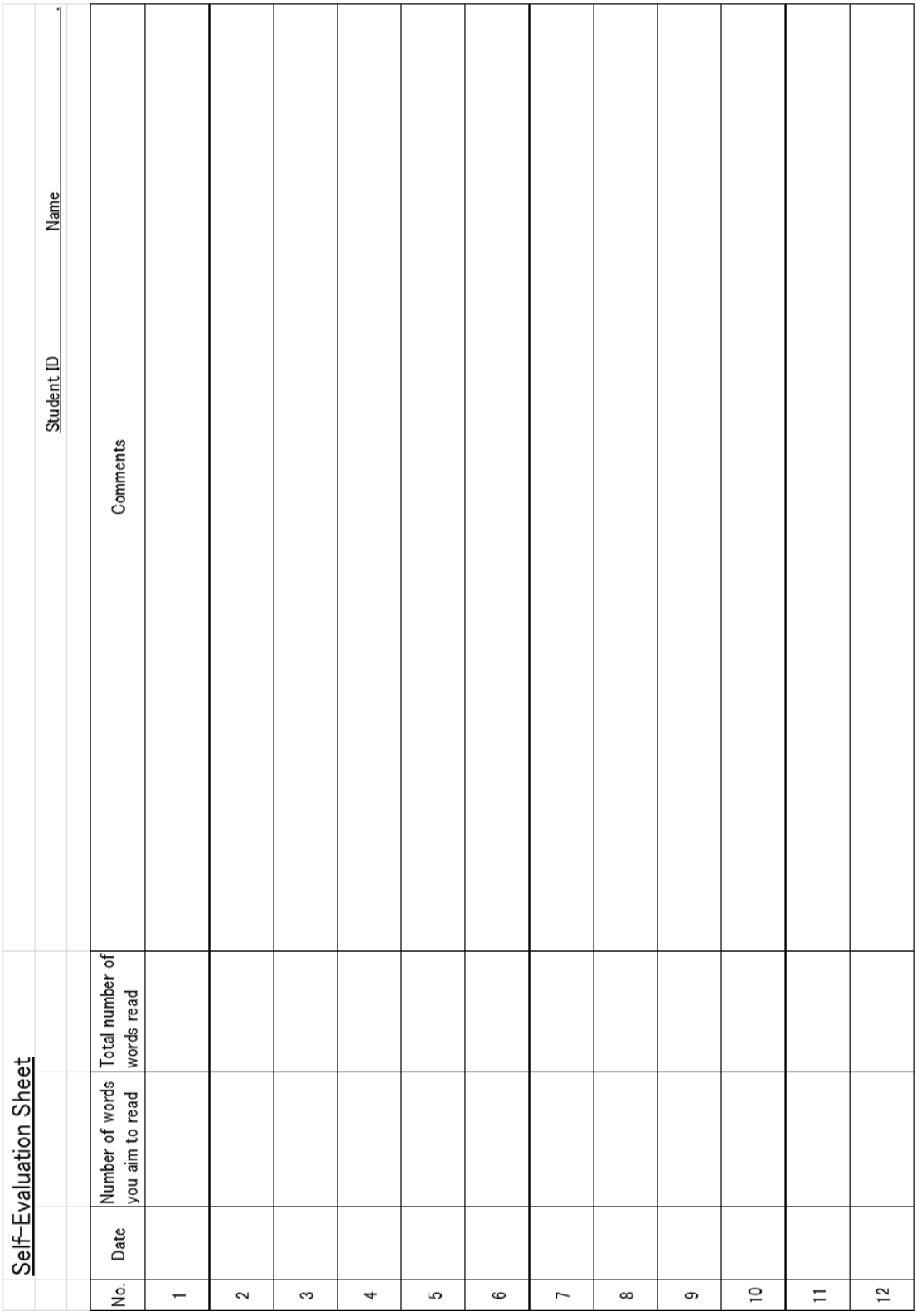
Yamashita, J. (2015). In search of the nature of extensive reading in L2: Cognitive, affective, and pedagogical perspectives. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, *27*, 168–181.

Zimmerman, B. J. (1998). Developing self-fulfilling cycles of academic regulation: An analysis of exemplary instructional models. In D. H. Schunk & B. J. Zimmerman (Eds.), *Self-regulated learning: From teaching to self-reflective practice* (pp. 1–19). New York: Guilford Press.

Zimmerman, B. J. (2008). Goal setting: A key proactive source of academic self-regulation. In D. H. Schunk & B. J. Zimmerman (Eds.), *Motivation and self-regulated learning: Theory, research, and applications* (pp. 267–295). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Appendix A

Self-Evaluation Sheet



Self-Evaluation Sheet

Student ID Name

No.	Date	Number of words you aim to read	Total number of words read	Comments
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				

Appendix B

Questions Asked in the Interviews

1. How were you engaged in ER?
2. As ER progressed, did your engagement with ER change?
3. How did you set your goal for each ER session?
4. How did you set your goal for the first and last halves of the semester respectively? (Only in the second interview)
5. Were you able to attain your goal? Why do you think so?
6. Were you able to increase the number of the words read? Why do you think so?
7. What are positive (or negative) things you experienced with goal setting?

Appendix C

Use and Effects of Goal Setting

Pattern codes/ Codes	Definitions	Examples
Use of goals		
Source of a new goal	Using goals as a source of a new goal through goal attainment.	I am happy to reach my goal today, so I will aim for 2,800 words in the next session.
Pacemaker	Picking up one's pace and reading in a planned manner to achieve the set goals.	I pushed myself. I thought I should read one-and-a-half books to reach the goal within the time limit. I was able to adjust my pace.
Rough guide	Using goals as a rough guide without much consideration.	This is a rough guide for reading within 20 minutes, so I slightly raised or lowered it.
Opportunity to reflect	Reflecting on one's own learning behavior based on goals.	Because I had not reached the goal until the final session, I should have aimed at attaining it early.
Standard of evaluation	Using goals as standards for evaluating one's own learning behavior.	I was happy when I read more than my set goals, but was disappointed when I failed to attain the goals.

Effects of goal setting		
Raising motivation	Raising motivation by setting goals.	I will make greater efforts than without setting goals.
Sense of achievement	Feeling happy to achieve goals.	I can increase a sense of achievement by attaining goals.
Realization of growth	Realizing one's own development by achieving goals.	I felt great because I caught up during the late sessions. I set the maximum goal but read more than I had expected.
Sign of progress	Feeling progress by getting closer to goals.	I enhanced my sense of achievement in the second semester. Although I set a higher goal, I was able to get closer to my set goal.
Negative effects of goal setting		
Discomfort from failing to attain goals	Feeling a sense of discomfort in failing to attain goals.	I felt discomfort after failing to attain my goals.
Lowering of motivation after goal achievement	Lowering motivation to read immediately after goal achievement.	I just wanted to finish the whole book. I gave up trying another book because I had to translate at a very fast pace.

About the Author

Yuka Mikami holds a PhD from Nagoya University, Japan. She currently teaches English language courses at Nagoya University, Osaka University of Commerce, and Osaka University of Economics. Her research interests include extensive reading, L2 motivation, autonomy, and self-regulation. Email: mikami.yuka@a.mbox.nagoya-u.ac.jp