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Exploring the Interventional Effect of Languaging Activities on L2 Motivation Among Chinese EFL Learners

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Abstract

Motivational languaging activities (MLAs) encourage learners to externalize their self-perceptions through oral or written forms and promote learners' cognitive development. However, limited research has investigated the impact of MLAs on learners' L2 motivation. To bridge this gap, the present study sought to unveil the effect of MLAs on Chinese tertiary English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' motivation. Participants were 156 Chinese tertiary EFL learners divided into four groups: Experimental Group 1 (EG1), EG2, EG3, and a Control Group (CG). The experimental groups performed the MLAs in spoken, written, and spoken plus written forms respectively, while the CG received no MLA intervention. Motivational dynamics were measured with an adapted questionnaire administered at the beginning and end of the intervention, and qualitative data were collected through group discussions and opinion writing. The results revealed various degrees of enhancement in L2 motivation across the three experimental groups, highlighting the effectiveness of spoken MLAs in significantly increasing the Ought-to L2 Self among the participants.

Keywords

Chinese Tertiary EFL Learners; Intervention; L2 Motivation; Motivational Languaging Activities

INTRODUCTION

Second language (L2) motivation has long been regarded as an essential variable for successful language learning (Dörnyei, 2014). The accumulated evidence suggests that motivation has a positive effect on foreign/second language learning (Almulla & Alamri, 2021). In response,

there has recently been a heightened interest in seeking motivation-promotion strategies and activities that can be implemented in language learning contexts (Liu et al., 2025). Existing research in this regard predominantly focuses on the motivational effect of possible selves, a critical concept which serves as the backbone for Dörnyei's (2005) L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS). Accordingly, creating a vision has often been utilized as a common motivational technique to generate learners' future ideal images of learning and using an L2 which relates to the ideal L2 self in the L2MSS (Shafiee & Alipour, 2023; Vlaeva & Dörnyei, 2021). These vision-related activities have been proven effective in promoting L2 learners' motivation through developing an ideal L2 self which results from the execution of the vision-related activities (Safdari, 2021; You et al., 2016). By contrast, ambivalent results are also reported that these vision-intervention efforts seem to have no effect on increasing learners' L2 motivation (Hiver & Al-Hoorie, 2020; Oettingen, 2012). In addition to the mixed findings, most of the vision-oriented intervention studies are found to fail in systematically crystallizing the concept of vision (Chang, 2024). Besides, another focus involves the motivational strategies applied by teachers in L2 class to intervene learners' L2 motivation (Beltman & Poulton, 2025; Karimi & Hosseini, 2018). Similar to the vision-based intervention studies (Hiver & Al-Hoorie, 2020; Safdari, 2021), there are mixed conclusions regarding the effectiveness of using motivational strategies as an intervention pedagogy. While the effectiveness of using motivational strategies as an intervention method has been acknowledged in some studies (Alrabai, 2014), it is also reported to be of little effect in other studies (Sugita & Takeuchi, 2010).

Given this context, more research is warranted in utilizing appropriate motivational activities to promote L2 motivation and there must be a concerted effort to explore L2 motivational interventions (Ye & Hu, 2025). Inspired by the socio-cultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978), the present study intends to adopt the motivational activities informed by languaging. As one of the important concepts in the socio-cultural theory, languaging is an act of meaning construction and negotiation (Swain, 2006). Through languaging, learners can communicate their perceptions of the meaning of L2 learning either in spoken or written forms (Niu & Li, 2017; Swain & Lapkin, 2011). The externalization of their thoughts could serve as a mediational tool for the learners to transform their ideas of learning the L2 into visual cultural products including the intended future self-images (Lantolf, 2011; Swain et al., 2013). Motivational languaging activities

(MLAs) have been recently experimented in some studies to examine their effectiveness in promoting L2 motivation (Kim & Kim, 2021, 2024). Small in number, these studies have generated certain evidence of the effectiveness of MLAs. However, considering the complexity of L2 motivation (Dörnyei, 2014), more empirical evidence is needed. Besides, these studies mainly explored the effectiveness of motivational interventions on learners at primary and secondary education levels (Kim & Kim, 2024; Ye & Hu, 2025). Whether the results yielded from studies on these learners are applicable to learners at tertiary education levels thus deserves further endeavor.

RESEARCH METHODS

Literature Review

Studies on L2 motivation

For more than half a century, scholars have studied second language (L2) motivation from multiple theoretical perspectives, including social psychology (Gardner & Lambert, 1959), the cognitive-situated period (Dörnyei, 1994), process orientation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011), and social dynamics (Chang, 2018; Dörnyei et al., 2016). The Second Language Motivational Self System (L2MSS) is one of the most influential representative theories to emerge from this work (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). This theory shifts the focus to the study of motivation through the lens of possible future self-guides within specific learning situations (Chang, 2018). L2MSS consists of ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self and L2 learning experience (Dörnyei, 2009). L2MSS views motivation as a complex dynamic system (Dörnyei et al., 2015).

Empirically, a significant body of research has focused on examining the structural characteristics of learners' L2MSS across diverse foreign language learning environments (Taguchi et al., 2009). For example, studies have shown that ideal L2 self and L2 learning experience act as mediators in the relationship between self-efficacy and English proficiency (Huo & Rui, 2020). Simultaneously, the L2MSS is influenced by contextual factors such as teaching modes and teacher behavior (Duan, 2020; Yang & Yu, 2017). Research also indicates that learning goals are significantly associated with ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self (Prasangani, 2015), while intrinsic interest is a key factor influencing ideal L2 self, and instrumental motivation considerably influences ought-to L2 self (Islam et al., 2013). These studies collectively delineate the structural characteristics of the L2MSS. Beyond structure, existing research has shown that

the ideal L2 self can promote learners' motivational behaviors and enhance their goal-setting tendencies (Islam et al., 2013; Papi & Teimouri, 2012). Ultimately, the literature has shown that enhancing the ideal L2 self is conducive to boosting L2 motivation, thereby providing a strong empirical rationale for L2 motivational interventions.

Intervention studies on L2 motivation

Research on L2 motivational intervention has garnered increasing attention in recent years (Duan, 2020; Kim & Kim, 2021, 2024; Wang & Dai, 2015). Scholars have mainly examined the effectiveness of interventions designed to enhance the ideal L2 self (e.g., Chan, 2014; Kim & Kim, 2021; Magid & Chan, 2012; Sato & Lara, 2019). For example, Magid (2014) designed motivational interventions for fifth-grade English learners in Singapore. Fukada et al. (2011) encouraged college students to create stories about a class reunion in 10 years. Their data were collected through questionnaires and follow-up interviews, finding the interventions were effective in promoting the students' ought-to L2 self. Magid & Chan (2012) conducted a motivational intervention with English learners in the UK and Hong Kong by having them list learning goals, make plans, describe their anxious self, and build an ideal self. Their findings indicated these activities effectively improved students' ideal L2 self. Mackay (2019) used a visual approach in an intervention with English learners in Spanish universities and reached a similar conclusion.

Chinese scholars have also explored interventions, often focusing on teaching modes and pedagogical innovations (e.g., Duan, 2020; Wang & Dai, 2015). For example, Wang and Dai (2015) used the L2MSS to intervene in students' L2 motivation in the classroom. They found that the students' ideal L2 self was significantly improved, but there was no significant change in their overall motivational state. Inspired by this work, Duan (2020) applied the production-oriented approach within a blended teaching mode to intervene in the motivation of non-English major college students. The study found that the intervention significantly improved students' ideal L2 self and increased their learning effort.

In summary, this analysis shows that motivational interventions can effectively enhance students' L2 self-guides, particularly the ideal L2 self. The reinforcement of the ideal L2 self is conducive to improving learners' motivation levels. However, the existing literature has primarily focused on primary and secondary school students, with a relative lack of investigation into tertiary-level learners. Furthermore, research on motivational

intervention in China is still in its infancy and has been not systematically explored, often lacking a strong theoretical foundation (Duan, 2020).

L2 Motivational studies from the languaging Lens

Languaging has been a prominent topic in applied linguistics research in the past two decades (Qin et al., 2021; Zeng, 2014). Deriving from socio-ocultural theory, it builds on the premise that language is a crucial tool for the development of higher cognitive functions (Vygotsky, 1978). Within this framework, language is viewed as both a symbolic mediator and a tool for thinking. The speaker constructs meaning through the act of languaging (e.g., speaking) (Swain & Lapkin, 2002), and this articulated output then becomes the object of subsequent inquiry. As a result, the content of languaging is reflected upon and internalized as a tool for self-regulation (Zeng, 2014).

Languaging is the process that learners use language to build meaning (Swain, 2006, 2010). Learners shape their knowledge and learning experience through oral or written languaging (Qin et al., 2021). This behavior reflects that the process of meaning negotiation can regulate the development of individual cognition (Lantolf, 2011; Vygotsky, 1978). Learners can promote the internalization of language knowledge through language externalization (Qin et al., 2021).

Languaging has since been developed into a theoretical framework for foreign language teaching research (Swain, 1985, 2006). Swain argues that languaging is not merely output but an act that mediates the development of learners' linguistic habits and the dynamic, continuous use of language to construct meaning (Swain, 2006). Languaging embodies the process of meaning negotiation. Learners shape knowledge and experience through language such as understanding problems, solving problems and constructing meaning to regulate individual cognitive development (Qin, et al. 2021; Swain et al., 2002). Learners externalize their ideas through meaning negotiation (Swain, 2006), and then transform them into visual cultural products, ultimately reaching a level where individuals can control and use language autonomously through oral and written languaging (Lantolf, 2011; Vygotsky, 1978).

In recent years, research on languaging has yielded substantial findings (e.g., Suzuki, 2012, 2016; Swain et al., 2009). These studies have often focused on the effectiveness of oral languaging (e.g., Knouzi et al., 2010; Swain et al., 2009). Research on written languaging has predominantly examined areas like written corrective feedback (e.g., Suzuki, 2012,

2016), translation (e.g., Ishikawa, 2015; Suzuki & Itagaki, 2009), and grammatical interpretation (e.g., Ishikawa & Suzuki, 2016). Significant progress has also been made in other areas, such as learning emotions (Jenson, 2014), listening skills acquisition (Lavasani et al., 2021), and second language writing (Fukuta et al., 2019). Compared to the body of international research, few studies have explored the application of languaging in foreign language teaching in China. Among the existing Chinese studies, scholars have primarily focused on introducing and commenting on the theory (Niu & Li, 2017; Zeng, 2014). A smaller number of studies have examined vocabulary learning (Niu & Fu, 2019), tense learning (Li, 2015), second language writing (Yang, 2016), and teacher emotion (Qin et al., 2019) from the perspective of languaging.

Critically, languaging is not only the manifestation of externalization but also the process of internalization. By explaining linguistic concepts to themselves or others (e.g., teachers or peers) through oral or written forms, learners facilitate the internalization of what they have learned (Qin et al., 2019, 2021). This review indicates that research on languaging in China is still in its early stages compared to the prolific output of international studies. Current research, both globally and in China, has mainly focused on languaging patterns and discrete language skill acquisition. Within the Chinese context, there is a particular lack of research exploring the relationship between languaging and learners' emotional characteristics, such as second language motivation.

Motivational languaging intervention and L2 motivational studies

Languaging, whether oral or written, helps learners clarify and refine vague L2 knowledge. This establishes a clear rationale for integrating second language motivation research with the functions of languaging (Kim & Kim, 2021). Encouraging L2 learners to reflect on and express their L2 self-concept through languaging has been shown to positively influence their emotional state and motivation levels. Existing research has shown that using learners' native language to externalize their future L2 learning imagery can enable learners to focus better on motivational languaging activities, thereby reactivating their L2 motivation and even enhancing their motivation level (Kim & Kim, 2021, 2024).

Motivational Languaging refers to the process through which learners externalize their language learning vision and self-concept via oral or written languaging (Kim & Kim, 2021, 2024). Studies have shown that learners can improve their personal motivation, especially their ideal L2 self,

through motivational languaging activities (Jun & Kim, 2015; Kim, 2019; Kim & Kim, 2021, 2024).

At present, there are few studies on the intervention of second language motivation from the perspective of languaging. A few key studies are of particular significance to this topic (Jun & Kim, 2015; Kim, 2019; Kim & Kim, 2021, 2024). Kim's (2019) study examined the effects of Korean learners' languaging activities in their mother tongue on their motivation to learn English. It found that independent writing activities such as diary writing and personal opinion writing could effectively improve learning motivation, especially the ideal L2 self. Jun & Kim (2015) found that three modes of languaging, including personal opinion writing, group discussion, and group discussion plus writing, could effectively promote the improvement of second language motivation. Kim & Kim (2021, 2024) also found that these three modes, with written languaging activities being particularly effective, enhanced the motivation of Korean elementary, junior high, and high school students.

In conclusion, the aforementioned studies provide a valuable methodological paradigm for conducting motivational languaging interventions. However, they are primarily focused on students at the basic education level, resulting in a significant lack of motivational intervention studies targeting tertiary-level students, especially non-English majors. Furthermore, motivation among non-English majors in China is often reported to be low (Li, 2021; Yin et al., 2019). Therefore, conducting an intervention study targeting this specific population is both necessary and warranted.

Research Questions

This study investigates changes in L2 motivation among Chinese non-English major students, primarily examining the following two research questions:

RQ1: To what extent can languaging activities enhance Chinese tertiary non-English major learners' L2 motivation?

RQ2: Which kind of languaging activities is most effective in improving Chinese tertiary non-English major learners' L2 motivation?

Participants

The participants for the present study involved altogether 156 non-English major students from a local university in central China (Table 1). The respondents were randomly selected from four intact classes and were assigned to Experiment Group 1 (EG1, N=36), (EG2, N=47), (EG3, N=39),

and Control Group (CG, N= 34). The whole population encompassed 38 females and 118 males. The average age of the participants was 18.15, with the oldest at 20 and the youngest at 17. Their average score on the English section of the National College Entrance Examination (NCEE) was 111.24 out of 150, with the lowest score of 75 and the highest of 135. Of the 156 participants, 96 of them were from city areas, 41 from urban areas and 19 from countryside.

Table 1. Demographic information of the participants

Category	Sub-category	EG1	EG2	EG3	CG	Over-all
Gender	Male	24	37	29	28	118
	Female	12	10	10	6	38
	Total	36	47	39	34	156
Age	Minimum	17	17	18	17	17
	Maximum	19	19	20	19	20
	Mean	18.14	18.06	18.44	17.94	18.15
	Standard deviation	0.487	0.438	0.598	0.547	0.518
NCEE Scores	Minimum	92	79	81	75	75
	Maximum	135	135	133	132	135
	Mean	111.56	112.47	111.18	109.76	111.24
	Standard deviation	11.259	10.842	14.140	12.910	12.29
Hometown	City	24	31	24	17	96
	Urban	9	11	11	10	41
	Rural	3	5	4	7	19

To confirm the homogeneity of the four groups of participants, Independent-samples T-test was performed on their English scores in the national college entrance examination (Table 2). It can be seen that there is no significant difference in English scores between EG1 and EG2 ($p = 0.710 > 0.05$), EG1 and EG3 ($p = 0.900 > 0.05$), EG1 and CG ($p = 0.538 > 0.05$), EG2 and EG3 ($p = 0.634 > 0.05$), EG2 and CG ($p = 0.310 > 0.05$), EG3 and CG ($p = 0.658 > 0.05$) respectively. This result indicates that the four groups are of similar English proficiency and are comparable to each other.

Table 2. English proficiency of the participants

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
EG1	36	111.56	11.259	-.374	81	.710
EG2	47	112.47	10.842	-.372		

EG1	36	111.56	11.259	.127	73	.900
EG3	39	111.18	14.140	.128		
EG1	36	111.56	11.259	.619	68	.538
CG	34	109.76	12.910	.617		
EG2	47	112.47	10.842	.478	84	.634
EG3	39	111.18	14.140	.467		
EG2	47	112.47	10.842	1.022	79	.310
CG	34	109.76	12.910	.994		
EG3	39	111.18	14.140	.444	71	.658
CG	34	109.76	12.910	.447		

Instruments and intervention materials

Second language learning motivation scale

The 13-item second language learning motivation scale employed in this study was adapted by drawing on sources from previous studies (Liu, 2013; Taguchi et al, 2009). Before finalizing the instrument, four participants who were excluded from the later major survey were invited to pilot the questionnaire to anticipate whether the items could genuinely reflect their actual situations, whether the participants would encounter difficulties in comprehending the items, and the potential length of time required for completing the survey. To further guarantee the validity of the questionnaire, two applied linguists with a doctorate were invited to check the instrument. The finalized instrument (Appendix 1) includes two sections: Part I aims to elicit demographic information of the participants regarding their gender, age, English scores in the National College Entrance Examination (NCEE), and hometown. Part II intends to measure the participants' L2 motivation from the following dimensions including *Ideal L2 Self* (Item 1, 2, 3, 4, 5), *Ought-to Self* (Item 6, 7, 8, 9), and *L2 Learning Experience* (Item 10, 11, 12, 13). The scale was scored on a five-point Likert scale from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5).

The reliability of the questionnaire was calculated by means of Cronbach Alpha before and after the intervention (Table 3). Before the intervention the Cronbach Alphas of the questionnaire at dimensional and overall levels ranged from 0.726 to 0.924. All these figures are over 0.700, indicating the questionnaire before the intervention had good reliability. After the intervention the Cronbach Alphas of the questionnaire at dimensional and overall levels ranged from 0.712 to 0.959. All these figures are over 0.700, indicating the questionnaire before the intervention had high reliability (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010).

Table 3. Reliability of the Questionnaire

Group	Ideal L2 Self (ILS)		Ought-to L2 Self (OLS)		L2 Learning Experience (LLE)		Overall Reliability (α)	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
EG1	0.891	0.906	0.761	0.712	0.767	0.882	0.874	0.926
EG2	0.924	0.866	0.736	0.767	0.827	0.891	0.890	0.908
EG3	0.726	0.893	0.738	0.716	0.877	0.811	0.900	0.902
CG	0.871	0.959	0.787	0.786	0.824	0.945	0.890	0.956

Opinion writing prompt

The opinion writing prompt utilized for the present study was adapted from Kim and Kim (2021, 2024) to understand the participants' motivation after the intervention. After piloting the initial prompt with four Chinese tertiary non-English major learners and consulting two applied linguists, the prompt was finalized. The final version featured three questions designed to elicit learners' reflections on their experience, motivation, and reasons for learning English after watching the intervention videos.

Group discussion prompt

The group discussion prompt was adapted from Kim and Kim (2021, 2024) to gather participants' reflections on their motivation after the intervention. This instrument underwent a similar piloting and expert validation process as the opinion writing prompt described above to ensure its validity and reliability. The finalized prompt included questions about the learners' understanding of English language learning, their interest, and their reasons for learning English after watching the videos.

Intervention Materials

The intervention materials for this study are speech videos of four Chinese celebrities. The topics of these videos are about the celebrities' personal growth or award-winning experiences. The first video is a speech of Jack Ma. He made the speech at the CeBIT in Hannover in 2015, in which he shared his dream of facilitating small and medium-sized enterprises and thus making contributions to the community. The second video is a speech delivered by a pop singer of Yuan Wang at the ECOSOC Youth Forum in 2018. Yuan Wang is a member of an idol band named TFBOYS. In the speech, he talked about the critical role of education in bolstering happiness and confidence. The speech provokes the public to think of the significance of education. The third video is a speech delivered by Yiming Su, China's first-

ever snowboarding Olympic gold medalist at the Beijing Winter Olympics in 2022. In the video he talked to *ChinaDaily* in English about his growth experience and how he came to be perseverant in overcoming the difficulties in his road to success. The fourth video is a speech made by Michelle Yeoh, "*the pride of Chinese people*", an Oscar winner and the first Asian female to win the Academy Award. In this video she shared her insight into being awarded the Oscar award and how her perseverance and hard work finally paid off.

Data Collection

This eight-week intervention collected both quantitative and qualitative data. The instructors of the participants were first approached to obtain their consent. After that, the participants were briefed on the objective of this intervention. They were also informed of the requirements for completing the activities. Meanwhile, they were guaranteed that their responses would pose no threat to their final English course scores and that their information would be kept confidential. These measures were taken to ensure the reliability of the data collected for the study (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010).

A questionnaire was administered pre- and post-intervention to measure the potential influence of the languaging activities on the participants' L2 motivation. 200 questionnaires were distributed, with 188 returned (a 94% return rate). After discarding 32 invalid responses due to errors or incompletion, 156 valid questionnaires remained for analysis.

After completing the pre-test questionnaire, the participants were assigned to complete languaging tasks every other week after watching the intervention videos. Specifically, EG1 was given 30 minutes to write a reflection of approximately 200 words in Chinese about the video, using the opinion writing prompt. EG2 was given 15 minutes for a group discussion in Chinese using the group discussion prompt. This was followed by the same opinion writing task assigned to EG1. EG3 was only engaged in the group discussion activity.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS 27. 0. To answer RQ1, paired samples t-tests were implemented to determine whether there were significant changes in L2 motivation among the participants after engaging in the languaging activities. Then, to address RQ2, the results yielded from

the paired-sample T-tests were synthesized to delve into the type of languaging activity that would most effectively enhance L2 motivation of the participants.

The qualitative data collected from group discussions and opinion writing activities were analyzed to provide support for the results obtained from the quantitative data in RQ2. Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was performed to elaborate on the participants' L2 motivation. Following Taguchi et al. (2009), responses were coded into the following themes: *Ideal L2 Self*, *Ought-to Self*, and *Second Language Learning Experience*, corresponding to the dimensions of the second language learning motivation scale. For example, the statement "*I have to pass the National College English Test Band 4 if I want to successfully obtain my bachelor's degree*" (Student 5, EG3, translated from Chinese) was coded as *Ought-to L2 Self*. To keep the consistency in coding the qualitative data the first and the second author collaboratively coded the transcripts, employing an inter-coder reliability check. The inter-coder reliability was 0.913, indicating strong consistency. Then, the frequency of the coded themes was counted for later analysis of the impact of different types of languaging activities on the participants' L2 motivation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Changes in L2 motivation among the participants after the intervention

To explore the extent to which the languaging activities are effective in strengthening L2 motivation among the participants, Paired-samples T-tests were conducted on the quantitative data.

Table 4. Paired-samples T-test on Experimental Group 1 (EG1)

Pair		Mean	N	SD	t	Sig.(2-tailed)
Pair 1	Pre-intervention of ILS	3.78	36	0.749	0.237	0.814
	Post-intervention of ILS	3.76	36	0.844		
Pair 2	Pre-intervention of OLS	3.31	36	0.779	-1.846	0.073
	Post-intervention of OLS	3.57	36	0.803		
Pair 3	Pre-intervention of LLE	3.56	36	0.601	-0.187	0.853
	Post-intervention of LLE	3.58	36	0.880		
Pair 4	Pre-intervention of L2MSS	3.44	36	0.488	-0.374	0.711
	Post-intervention of L2MSS	3.47	36	0.644		

Table 4 reports the results of Paired-samples T-test on Experimental Group 1 (EG1). It shows that the pre-intervention mean of L2MSS of EG1 is 3.44, and that of the post-intervention mean of EG1 is 3.47. There is a slight increase in L2MSS among EG1 after the intervention. Yet, this increase is not up to the significant level (P = 0.711 > 0.05), which implies that the MLA has no significant impact on the participants' overall level of L2MSS. At the dimensional level, there is no significant change in *ILS* (P = 0.814＞0.05), *OLS* (P = 0.073 > 0.05), and *LLE* (P = 0.853 > 0.05) among EG1.

Table 5. Paired-samples T-test on Experimental Group 2 (EG2)

Pair		Mean	N	SD	t	Sig.(2-tailed)
Pair 1	Pre-intervention of ILS	3.93	47	0.982	-0.913	0.366
	Post-intervention of ILS	4.09	47	0.720		
Pair 2	Pre-intervention of OLS	3.59	47	0.719	-0.253	0.801
	Post-intervention of OLS	3.62	47	0.776		
Pair 3	Pre-intervention of LLE	3.71	47	0.802	0.168	0.867
	Post-intervention of LLE	3.69	47	0.823		
Pair 4	Pre-intervention of L2MSS	3.66	47	0.603	-0.117	0.908
	Post-intervention of L2MSS	3.67	47	0.605		

Table 5 reports the results of Paired-samples T-test on Experimental Group 2 (EG2). It shows that the pre-intervention mean of L2MSS of EG2 is 3.66, and that of post-intervention mean of EG2 is 3.67. There is a slight increase in L2MSS among EG2 after the intervention. Yet, this increase is not up to the significant level (P = 0.908 > 0.05), which implies that the MLA has no significant impact on EG2's overall level of L2MSS. At the dimensional level, there is no significant change in *ILS* (P = 0.366 > 0.05), *OLS* (P = 0.801 > 0.05), and *LLE* (P = 0.867 > 0.05) among EG2.

Table 6. Paired-samples T-test on Experimental Group 3 (EG3)

Pair		Mean	N	SD	t	Sig.(2-tailed)
Pair 1	Pre-intervention of ILS	3.82	39	0.608	-1.326	0.193
	Post-intervention of ILS	3.95	39	0.755		
Pair 2	Pre-intervention of OLS	3.35	39	0.660	-3.682	0.001
	Post-intervention of OLS	3.72	39	0.828		
Pair 3	Pre-intervention of LLE	3.60	39	0.814	-1.274	0.210
	Post-intervention of LLE	3.74	39	0.653		
Pair 4	Pre-intervention of L2MSS	3.52	39	0.531	-2.006	0.052
	Post-intervention of L2MSS	3.68	39	0.557		

Table 6 reports the results of Paired-samples T-test on Experimental Group 3 (EG3). It shows that the pre-intervention mean of L2MSS of EG3 is 3.52, and that of the post-intervention mean of EG3 is 3.68. There is a slight increase in L2MSS among EG3 after the intervention. Yet, this increase is not up to the significant level (P = 0.052 > 0.05), which implies that the MLA has no significant impact on EG3's overall level of L2MSS. At the dimensional level, there is no significant change in *ILS* (P = 0.052 > 0.05), and *LLE* (P = 0.21 > 0.05) among EG3. However, the mean of *OLS* increases from 3.35 to 3.72 after the intervention. This increase is significant (P = 0.001 < 0.05), implying that the motivational languaging activity has significant effect on *OLS* among EG3.

Table 7. Paired-samples T-test on Control Group (CG)

Pair		Mean	N	SD	t	Sig.(2-tailed)
Pair 1	Pre-intervention of ILS	3.60	34	0.726	0.198	0.844
	Post-intervention of ILS	3.57	34	1.098		
Pair 2	Pre-intervention of OLS	3.32	34	0.789	-0.634	0.531
	Post-intervention of OLS	3.45	34	0.923		
Pair 3	Pre-intervention of LLE	3.70	34	0.668	-1.083	0.287
	Post-intervention of LLE	3.88	34	0.977		
Pair 4	Pre-intervention of L2MSS	3.48	34	0.505	-0.808	0.425
	Post-intervention of L2MSS	3.59	34	0.798		

Table 7 presents the results of Paired-samples T-test on Control Group (CG). It shows that the pre-intervention (Survey 1) mean of L2MSS of CG is 3.48, and that of post-intervention (Survey 2) mean of CG is 3.59. There is an increase in the overall L2 motivation among CG in Survey 2. However, this increase is not up to the significant level (P = 0.425 > 0.05), which implies that watching the videos alone but without the MLAs intervention could improve CG's overall level of L2MSS but it is not significant. At the dimensional level, there is no significant change in *ILS* (P = 0.844 > 0.05), *OLS* (P = 0.531 > 0.05), and *LLE* (P = 0.287 > 0.05) among CG.

Effect of different types of MLAs on L2 motivation

To answer Research Question 2 regarding the type of motivational languaging activities (MLAs) that could effectively improve the participants' L2 motivation, the changes in L2MSS among the participants yielded from the quantitative data were synthesized.

Effect of different types of MLAs on L2 motivation from quantitative data

The changes in L2 motivation among the four groups revealed in the quantitative data analysis are summarized in Table 8 and synthesized in Table 9.

Table 8. Changes in L2 motivation among the participants after the intervention

Category	Group	Mean		Change	t	Sig.(2-tailed)
		Pre-	Post-			
Ideal L2 Self	EG1	3.783	3.761	decrease	0.237	0.814
	EG2	3.932	4.089	increase	-0.913	0.366
	EG3	3.815	3.949	increase	-1.326	0.193
	CG	3.606	3.565	decrease	0.198	0.844
Ought-to L2 Self	EG1	3.3056	3.5694	increase	-1.846	0.073
	EG2	3.5851	3.6170	increase	-0.253	0.801
	EG3	3.3462	3.7179	increase	-3.682	0.001
	CG	3.3235	3.4485	increase	-0.634	0.531
L2 Learning Experience	EG1	3.5556	3.5833	increase	-0.187	0.853
	EG2	3.7128	3.6915	decrease	0.168	0.867
	EG3	3.5962	3.7436	increase	-1.274	0.210
	CG	3.6985	3.8750	increase	-1.083	0.287
L2MSS	EG1	3.4404	3.4719	increase	-0.374	0.711
	EG2	3.65552	3.66767	increase	-0.117	0.908
	EG3	3.52380	3.68253	increase	-2.006	0.052
	CG	3.48459	3.59383	increase	-0.808	0.425

Table 9. Effects of different types of MLAs on L2 motivation among the participants

Category	EG1	EG2	EG3	CG
Ideal L2 Self	decrease	increase	increase	decrease
Ought-to L2 Self	increase	increase	increase*	increase
L2 Learning Experience	increase	decrease	increase	increase
L2MSS	increase	increase	increase	increase

*=significant level

The results indicate varying effects of the different interventions on L2 motivation at both dimensional and overall levels (Table 8 and Table 9). Overall, all three experimental groups and the control group show an increase in their overall L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS) after the intervention. Specifically, EG1 shows a non-significant decrease in Ideal L2 Self but increases in Ought-to L2 Self and L2 Learning Experience. EG2 shows an increase in Ideal L2 Self and Ought-to L2 Self, but a decrease in L2 Learning Experience. None of these changes were statistically significant. EG3 shows increases across all three dimensions, with the increase in Ought-to L2 Self being statistically significant. CG shows a non-significant decrease in Ideal L2 Self, alongside increases in Ought-to L2 Self and L2 Learning Experience.

Effect of different types of MLAs on L2 motivation from qualitative data

To delve into the influence of different types of motivational languaging activities on L2 motivation among the participants, qualitative data were analyzed (Table 10) by following the thematic analysis approach of qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Table 10. Themes of L2 motivation analyzed from the qualitative data

Dimension	Theme	EG 1	EG 2	EG 3
Ideal L2 Self	Personal development	26	27	52
	To embrace the globalizing world in the future	16	17	32
	To communicate with foreigners in the future	16	16	26
	To contribute to national development	2	4	2
	Interest in the culture of other countries	15	16	31
	To study and travel abroad in the future	3	4	17
	Total	**78**	**84**	**160**
Ought-to L2 Self	To get high marks in exams like CET-4/6, to get certificate and degree	15	18	35
	To learn content subjects in English	12	26	27
	To learn advanced technologies from other countries	9	15	20

	To broaden knowledge scope and horizon	6	10	15
	Teacher influence	5	6	12
	Total	**47**	**75**	**109**
L2 Learning Experience	English learning enjoyment	24	27	35
	Success experience and sense of achievement	12	26	32
	Anxiety	10	18	19
	Total	**46**	**71**	**86**

As revealed in Table 10, the three experimental groups all displayed an orchestration of Ideal L2 Self, Ought-to L2 Self, and L2 Learning Experience in their responses. First, themes related to Ideal L2 Self were mentioned 78 times by EG1 and 84 times by EG2, while EG3 outnumbered both with 160 mentions. Among the six sub-themes, all three groups most frequently linked their English learning to personal development, embracing a globalized world, communicating with foreigners, and an interest in other cultures. Their primary motivation for learning English appeared to be personal development. This is echoed in the following remark: "*English is definitely important for my future development in such a globalizing world*" (Student 7, EG1, translated from Chinese; Note: the participants were numbered in each group as Student 1, 2, 3, …).

Second, regarding Ought-to L2 Self, EG3 expressed this dimension 109 times, substantially more than EG2 (75 times) and EG1 (47 times). The data indicates that the three groups learned English primarily to get high marks in exams like CET-4/6 to obtain certificates and degrees. The second most cited reason was to learn content subjects in English, followed by learning advanced technologies, broadening their horizons, and teacher influence. A quote from the qualitative data illustrates the prevalence of Ought-to L2 Self as follows: "*I have to pass the National College English Test Band 4 if I want to successfully obtain my bachelor's degree*" (Student 5, EG3, translated from Chinese).

Third, for L2 Learning Experience, EG3 reported the most mentions (86 times), followed by EG2 (71 times) and EG1 (46 times). All groups expressed positive experiences, such as enjoyment and a sense of achievement in English learning. For example, a student from EG3 had it as follows: "*I would feel happy when I get good marks from my presentations in class*" (Student 8, EG3, translated from Chinese). However, experiences of anxiety were also present across the groups: "*I would become anxious when I find I could not make myself understood in English in class*" (Student 3, EG2, translated from Chinese).

In conclusion, of the three experimental groups, EG3, which engaged in oral languaging, expressed motivational themes most frequently, followed by EG2, which participated in a combination of oral and written languaging, with EG1, the written languaging group, expressing these themes the least. This indicates that oral languaging activities exerted the strongest influence on eliciting motivational discourse, followed by the combined approach, with written languaging alone being the least effective. This qualitative result effectively complements the quantitative results reported above.

Discussion

Effect of MLAs on L2 motivation

The first research question explored the interventional effect of languaging activities on L2 motivation among Chinese tertiary EFL learners. The results showed that all three experimental groups displayed an increase in the overall level of L2MSS. This reveals that languaging activities, including their oral and written forms, can bolster the learners' L2 motivation. This result confirms the findings of previous studies showing that languaging activities can, to some degree, effectively strengthen the learners' L2 motivation (Chang, 2024; Kim & Kim, 2021, 2024). These findings might be explained as follows:

One explanation is that watching the selected videos of speeches by influential celebrities may have helped learners better understand the value of English learning, thus strengthening their motivation. As framed in the control-value theory, two elements, control and value, contribute considerably to learners' perceived affect in language learning (Pekrun & Perry, 2014). The former entails how learners perceive their ability to influence learning outcomes, while the latter pertains to how they understand the meaning of fulfilling learning activities. That is, perceived control concerns learners' self-confidence in their capability to manage learning activities and results, while subjective value refers to their evaluation of activity meaning and achievement (Pekrun, 2006). In this study, learners who watched the celebrities' speech videos may have been encouraged by the content, leading them to a better understanding of the value of learning English. This strengthened subjective value may then have uplifted their confidence, that is the perceived control, in learning English, thereby leveraging their motivation (Shao, 2025).

A second explanation is that the languaging activities offered learners a channel to articulate their emotions in response to the videos. According

to the broaden-and-build theory, positive emotions can broaden learners' cognitive and behavioral repertoires and build enduring personal resources (Fredrickson, 2001). In the context of L2 learning, these resources can facilitate social interactions, learning motivation, and language skills. Learners in this study acquired opportunities to develop positive emotions first through watching the videos and then by means of languaging activities in discussion and writing forms. These intrapersonal (e.g., writing) and interpersonal (e.g., discussion) interactions likely fostered positive emotions, enabling participants to develop a deeper perception of English learning and recall past enjoyment, pride, and feelings of success. The personal resources broadened by the languaging activities thus appear to have built approach-oriented behaviors, promoting the learners' engagement and bolstering their motivation (Song et al., 2025).

Effect of different types of MLAs on L2 motivation

RQ2 examined the effects of different forms of languaging activities on L2 motivation. The results indicated varying degrees of motivational dynamics among the learners, with oral languaging exerting the strongest influence, followed by a combination of oral and written activities, while purely written languaging showed the least impact. The superiority of oral languaging contrasts with the findings of Kim and Kim (2021, 2024), who reported written languaging to be most effective. This discrepancy may be explained by the unique cognitive and social affordances of oral interaction.

Oral languaging encompasses collaborative dialogue. The group discussions used in this study are a form of collaborative dialogue aimed at problem solving and knowledge construction (Watanabe & Swain, 2007). During these discussions, learners use language as a cognitive tool to regulate their thinking. This process of verbal mediation helps distribute cognitive load, facilitates deeper understanding, and promotes knowledge internalization (Qin & Niu, 2021). Consequently, participants experience enhanced comprehension and reinforced self-efficacy, which in turn strengthens their motivation to learn. Thus, the prominence of oral languaging can be attributed to both its cognitive-mediational function and its social-affective support.

The combination of oral and written languaging activities also demonstrated a certain positive effect. This appears to stem from the structured procedure which required learners to prepare outlines or drafts prior to group discussions. Cognitive strategies such as preliminary writing have

been shown to reduce cognitive load (Xia, 2014), enabling more active participation in subsequent oral interaction and opinion writing. Additionally, this integrated approach supports self-regulation in second language learning (Swain, 2006), helping learners better monitor and adjust their learning processes, thereby enhancing engagement and motivation.

In contrast, written languaging exerted only a limited effect on L2 motivation. Compared to oral interaction, written production requires greater linguistic proficiency and more deliberate cognitive effort (Vygotsky, 1986). Participants with lower language ability often found writing tasks challenging, which provoked anxiety rather than enhancing motivation. Moreover, whereas oral languaging involves real-time interaction that supports expressiveness and dialogical engagement (Suzuki, 2012), written languaging lacks immediacy and interpersonal dynamism (Zeng, 2014). The absence of sufficient communicative support and affective engagement made written languaging less effective in fostering motivation.

CONCLUSION

This study selected four classes of non-English major undergraduates as participants. Three classes were assigned to experimental conditions involving different languaging interventions, while one class served as a control group without any motivational intervention. The results indicated that: (1) Participants' L2 motivation was at a moderate to high level both before and after the intervention. (2) Different types of languaging activities had varying effects on L2 motivation, with oral languaging emerging as the most influential in promoting L2 motivation.

However, this study has certain limitations. Due to constraints such as fixed course schedules and standardized teaching materials, the intervention period was relatively short. Consequently, this study cannot determine the long-term effects of motivational interventions via languaging activities, especially whether requiring students to engage extensively in such activities over a longer duration might eventually lead to decreased motivation.

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Appendix Questionnaire on College Students' English Learning Motivation

Part 1: Personal Information

1. Gender：_____ [A) Male B) Female]
2. Age：_____
3. Gaokao (National College Entrance Examination) English Score: _____
4. Hometown: _____ [A) Rural area B) Town C) City]

Part 2: Survey Questions

Please indicate the extent to which each statement reflects your actual situation by marking (√) the corresponding number. The numbers represent the following levels of agreement：

Strongly Disagree=1	Disagree=2	Neutral=3	Agree=4	Strongly Agree=5

No.	Item	1	2	3	4	5
M1	I can imagine myself communicating in English like a native speaker in the future.					
M2	I can imagine myself using English to interact with foreign friends or colleagues in the future.					
M3	I can envision myself using English in my future work or studies.					
M4	I can imagine myself writing emails or letters fluently in English.					
M5	I can picture myself living abroad and communicating in English with local people.					
M6	I think learning English is important because people I respect encourage me to do so.					
M7	I learn English to gain recognition from classmates, friends, teachers, or family members.					
M8	Learning English is necessary because I do not want to receive low or failing grades in English exams.					
M9	Learning English is important because it helps me achieve significant personal goals (e.g., obtaining a degree or scholarship).					
M10	I enjoy the atmosphere in English classes.					
M11	I feel that time passes quickly when I am learning English.					
M12	I wish there were more English classes or opportunities to engage with English.					
M13	I find great enjoyment in learning English.					