

A teacher's moral role in mobilizing students' motivation beyond L2 vision

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This paper concerns an exploratory practice (EP) project in a Japanese junior college EFL classroom. Central to it is an EFL course specifically designed to enhance language learners' future visions of themselves as L2 users in intercultural encounters (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014). Findings show that this vision-based EFL course was effective in general, but had a far-reaching impact on one language learner, Aya, extending to "other domains which the learner perceive[d] as connected" (Mercer, 2011, p. 168). By examining empirical data (written narratives, semi-structured interviews, field notes, audio- and video-recordings, and a course evaluation) concerning Aya, this paper discusses the role that the teacher played in mobilising her future vision through this course. The main objective of the discussion is to extend our understanding of the impact and responsibility of the language teacher in the classroom.

Keywords: exploratory practice, intervention, L2 vision, motivation

1 Introduction

Language teachers play multiple roles: supporting L2 development, advising language learning, facilitating intercultural awareness, understanding learner aspirations across multiple domains to improve guidance, being linguistic and educational role models, etc. Psychological research suggests teachers "take a holistic view of the learner, in order to gain an insight into a learner's self-beliefs in other domains which the learner perceives as connected" (Mercer, 2011, p. 168).

This is a study of Aya (pseudonym), a first-year student who participated in a 15-week English course at a junior college in northern Japan. The course aimed at enhancing students' L2 vision of themselves in intercultural settings. The theoretical background behind the course design stems from L2 motivational research, particularly the L2 motivational self-system framework (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009), and intercultural education research (Byram, 2008). This course incorporated a vision-based approach (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014) with documented effects on learners' classroom experience, which several researchers have studied (e.g. Magid & Chan, 2012). The overall results of the study show that this course was effective in meeting the aim mentioned above. In this paper, however, focusing on Aya, I will provide contextualized examples to highlight

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how this vision-based English course had a far-reaching impact on Aya, which made me reconsider the moral aspect of being a language teacher.

2 Context of study – The Great East Japan Earthquake

I have been teaching English for about 20 years in Japan, and I also taught Japanese in Australia for several years. Having been both a foreign language learner and a teacher, I have always been fascinated by the interrelationship between language and culture, and have always incorporated some cultural elements in my language teaching. Moran (2001) observes that "...language and culture are clearly fused; one reflects the other" (p. 35), and many language teachers understand that when we teach a foreign language, we are teaching culture embedded in the language at the same time. As language is "one of the dominant threads in all cultures" (Hall, 1981, p. 36), and "is a window to the culture" (Moran, 2001, p. 6), understanding the influence of culture on how people communicate is critical in this global age. Recently, promoting intercultural understanding and competence has been considered more and more important in Japan, and thus it has been stated in the Japanese government's educational policy. In 2003, the national plan to 'cultivate Japanese who can use English' was announced by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT, 2003). 'Globalization', 'cultural diversity' and 'international understanding' have been buzzwords for the past couple of decades in Japan, where English is regarded as a key to reach out to the rest of the world. While there is a need to 'cultivate Japanese who can use English' in the global world, many language teachers in the public school system experience a dilemma because they also sense their responsibility in having to teach English to students for passing university entrance exams (Sakui, 2004). At the same time, to many Japanese learners, English is a mandatory school subject that they do not need to use for daily interactions. Therefore, it is difficult for them to visualise themselves as potential L2 users in intercultural settings. This is why I created the vision-based course in this study in order to enhance the students' L2 visions.

Then, I experienced something life-changing, and my intention to teach the vision-based course got stronger, and actually became a desire to do something meaningful for my students. I live in the north-eastern part of the main island of Japan, which was badly affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011 (see Figure 1). About 15,890 people were killed and 2,550 are still missing. More than 400,000 houses were destroyed by the quakes or were washed away by the tsunami (National Police Agency of Japan, 2017). The disaster caused indescribable damages and sufferings to the people who lived in the affected areas. It is beyond the scope of this paper to give details of this catastrophe (see Thompson, 2012, for an example of an ethnographic report on the local people's perspective of the disaster). However, experiencing the aftermath of the earthquake made me think deeply about what I wanted to do to help my students hold on to hope, faith, and visions of themselves for the future. I did not want to teach English just for exams or other technical purposes. Some of my students who were from the coast had suffered terrible experiences: their houses had been washed away by the tsunami and they had lost families and friends. In addition, damage caused by the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear

power plant was enormous. I heard many stories of students giving up their study at school or studying abroad to help families and communities recover from the disaster. I thought the vision-based course would help them gain intercultural understanding without actually going overseas, and also hold on to their visions as L2 users. This was the motivation behind my desire to start the study project.



Figure 1. Otsuchi Town (10 days after the earthquake and tsunami).
Source: Asahi Shimbun Digital (Photo by Takahiro Kawamura, 2011)

3 Vision and L2 motivation

The English course in this study was created based on the recent theoretical approach to L2 motivation, centred around research in personality psychology on “possible selves” (Markus & Nurius, 1986). The three types of possible selves which Markus and Nurius (1986) propose are: 1) ideal selves that we would very much like to become, 2) selves that we could become, and 3) selves that we are afraid of becoming. The ideal selves and ought selves in Higgins’ (1987) theory act as future self-guides that regulate one’s behaviour, and this has significant educational implications. In the words of Higgins (1987), the ideal self is the “representation of the attributes that someone would ideally like to possess (i.e. a representation of hopes, aspirations or wishes)” (p. 320) and the ought self is “representation of the attributes that someone believes you should or ought to possess (i.e. a representation of someone’s sense of your duty, obligations or responsibilities)” (p. 321). As Markus and Nurius (1986) state, “[p]ossible selves are represented in the same way as the here-and-now self (imaginal, semantic) and can be viewed as cognitive bridges between the present and future, specifying how individuals may change from how they are now to what they will become” (p. 961), having a strong image about one’s future self will motivate her/him to take an action to actualise the image, and reach the ideal self or ought self. Dörnyei and Chan (2013) confirm this idea by stating that “... learners with a vivid and detailed ideal self-image that has a substantial L2 component are more likely to be motivated to take action in pursuing language studies than their peers who have not articulated a desired future goal-state for

themselves” (p. 440). To Dörnyei and Kubanyiova (2014), the point that possible selves involve images and senses was important in conceptualising ‘vision’ in L2 motivational research, and they state that “possible selves can be seen as the ‘vision’ of what might be” (p. 12). They also regard vision as “one of the highest-order motivational forces, one that is particularly fitting to explain the long-term, and often lifelong, process of mastering a second language” (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014, p. 4). Using mental imagery has been used successfully especially in sport psychology (Hall, Mack, Paivio, & Hausenblas, 1998), 1998). It also has significant implications to foreign language education, as imagery is also an important concept in desired possible selves in modern theories on language learning motivation (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014). Some recent intervention studies that have highlighted the use of images and imagination include Fukada et al. (2011), Magid and Chan (2012), and Sampson (2012).

4 The study

This article draws on a wider study investigating the impact of incorporating intercultural elements in an English language course to enhance Japanese college students’ second language (L2) vision.

4.1 Methodology

The research design of this study did not derive from particular philosophical beliefs about research paradigms. This longitudinal classroom-based study can be framed as exploratory practice (EP), which is defined by Hanks (2015) as “a form of practitioner research in language education which aims to integrate research, learning and teaching” (p. 2). EP was developed in the early 1990s in the search for a new form of classroom-based research (Hanks, 2015) beyond scientific research (SR) and action research (AR) (Allwright & Hanks, 2009). Whereas SR aims at discovering general rules for efficient classroom practice, the purpose of EP is to deepen understanding of classroom practice. EP is also different from AR, which aims at problem solving. EP prioritises understanding ‘quality of life’ in the language classroom, and it will “provide a good foundation for helping teachers and learners make their time together both pleasant and productive” (Allwright, 2003, p. 114). This study helped me reconsider the impact of a language teacher and deepen my understanding about the reflexivity aspect of ‘teaching’, i.e. you ‘learn’ when you ‘teach’. This is the rationale for framing this study as EP.

In carrying out this project, I was aware of my role both as a teacher and a researcher, especially in terms of students’ welfare, and followed standard institutional procedures ensuring that I safeguarded participants’ consent, right to withdraw, anonymity, etc.

4.1.1 The classroom context

The students in the English course were first-year Japanese college students (age 18–19) in northern Japan who majored in international cultural studies (80% female). The majority of students had good basic grammatical knowledge of English and were able to express their thoughts and ideas in English on

prepared topics such as their self-introduction, international experiences, and language learning history. The level of their English would probably be between A2 and B1 in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Most of them had interest in foreign culture and languages, but had limited experience travelling and living overseas. Many tertiary institutions in Japan including mine have study-abroad programmes in which students participate. However, I thought some students might not have a chance to do so despite their aspirations as it was still the time period when people were trying to recover from the damages caused by the earthquake. This is why I created the vision-based English course.

4.1.2 The English course

The vision-based English course in this study was taught by me for one semester, from April to August 2014. There were 15 classes in one semester and each class was 90 minutes long. The course was mandatory and there were 25 students in class. The course was prepared following suggestions by Dörnyei and Kubanyiova (2014). For example:

Start with considerations of the students' present state... (p. 38)
Occupational concerns tend to be more prominent for young adults. (p. 38)
'Visionary' intervention cannot begin without first understanding the students' current identity concerns. (p. 39)

To give an example, at the beginning of the course, I had the students reflect on their language learning and intercultural experiences. Reflecting on one's language learning history will help him/her understand where he/she is as a result of the past and also will help him/her imagine how he/she would like to be (Murphey, 1999). Role-plays were also an important activity in this course. Hadfield and Dörnyei (2013) say mimes, dramas and role-plays allow students "to enter into the imaginative world of a vision and give their ideal self a voice" (p. 17). I have often used role-plays in my classes and it has been effective in facilitating students' linguistic competence and motivation. Other class activities included giving presentations on intercultural experiences, discussing future visions as L2 users, and so on. What was important in teaching this course was creating a collaborative learning environment. I was hoping students would learn from their classmates, who were their near peer role models (Murphey & Arao, 2001). Exposure to role models was one of the facets Dörnyei and Kubanyiova (2014) present as important for generating language learning vision.

4.1.3 The research participant

The focal participant in this paper, Aya, was one of the eight students I interviewed to understand the impact of the course. More details about her are given in the next section.

4.2 Data collection and analysis procedures

The data in this study came from the following sources: written narratives (some with photos) which were also class materials, my field notes and audio- and

video-recordings of the classes, a course evaluation given at the end of the course, and semi-structured interviews which were conducted after the course in early August, 2014. I conducted Aya's interview in Japanese to avoid any misunderstanding that may be caused by using a foreign language. The interview with Aya was about 60 minutes long. I audio-recorded and transcribed the entire interview with her permission and translated selected segments into English for the discussion and analysis for this paper. The questions I asked in the interview included: what kind of L2 learning and intercultural experience she had in the past, how she saw herself in the future, and what she remembered from the course. Although all the interviewees in the original study gave me some food for thought, my interactions with Aya gave me the deepest insight, not only in regard to understanding vision development, but also the power of interview, and most importantly, the moral role of the teacher. In addition, there were some occasions when Aya made a strong impression with her behaviour and attitude in class, which made me want to interview her. That is why I decided to make a case about her in this paper and give a detailed descriptive analysis of her particular example.

In analysing and interpreting the data presented in this paper, I first looked through my field notes recorded as critical incidents concerning Aya, and I asked myself why they were so "critical" to me. I then tried to seek answers and looked through all the data that came from Aya's written narratives, interview transcription, and her course evaluation. The narratives were written as part of two different class assignments in which students were asked to describe their L2 learning and intercultural experiences. Basically, I wanted to understand how her L2 self had developed as a result of her intercultural and L2 learning experience, and if the course affected her future vision. As a result, I ended up with a series of vignettes on Aya, which are presented in the next section.

5 Findings

I will start the discussion by presenting Aya's general background and past language learning experience, and how they shaped her engagement with my course (5.1). I then will describe a critical incident which shows Aya's intriguing efforts to test out her future L2 self by modelling the teacher's classroom behaviour (5.2). This will then give me a basis for a more in-depth discussion of the moral role of the L2 teacher not only in enabling Aya to 'find' her own future L2 vision, but also in facilitating her reflection on her life more generally (5.3).

5.1 *Understanding Aya as a whole person*

The purpose of this section is guided by a response to the empirical data which clearly points to the importance of understanding Aya (or indeed any L2 learner) as a 'whole person' first. It echoes Ushioda's (2009) argument that in order to appreciate students' motivation for L2 learning, "we need to understand second language learners as people, and as people who are necessarily located in particular cultural and historical contexts" (p. 216). This is because being a language learner is "just one aspect of their identity" (Ushioda, 2009, p. 216), and others may be crucial in appreciating what and how language learners engage with language in the classroom and beyond. Mercer (2011) observes:

...learners often refer to other domains, which they perceive as being relevant and related, maybe in unexpected ways, when describing themselves as EFL learners. Thus, in terms of understanding how a learner may view themselves in a specific FL [foreign language] domain, a teacher may need to take a holistic view of the learner, in order to gain an insight into a learner's self-beliefs in other domains which the learner perceives as connected (p. 168).

These perspectives are useful in presenting the case of Aya in this paper which aims at stressing the moral role of L2 teachers on students' L2 visions as well as giving more guidance on a more holistic level.

5.1.1 Aya's background and her intercultural experience

Aya is from Miyako in Iwate Prefecture, a major disaster area in the Great East Japan Earthquake which occurred on March 11, 2011. We never talked about the disaster when the interview was conducted soon after the course had ended in August 2014 for it was still a highly sensitive issue. After the earthquake, all the teachers at my institution were instructed to give extra support to students who came from disaster stricken areas. We had a brief training in how to deal with students who had traumatic experiences, and were instructed to suggest that they should go to professional psychologists if they wanted to talk about their experiences related to the earthquake. We were specifically advised not to initiate the conversation about the disaster. Therefore, I did not ask any specific questions about her experience with the disaster though I was ready to listen to whatever she wanted to tell me in case she brought up the issue, and refer her to a professional psychologist.

During the interview, she told me about the time she went to China on a government funded project when she was in the second year in high school, and she was there for 10 days during summer holidays. There was a particular episode that Aya recalled with great admiration for a group of Chinese students that she had talked to. As I will show later, this must have impressed her greatly because she talked about it to the class when I asked the students to work in groups and share their significant international experience with their group members.

5.1.2 Aya's past English teachers' influence on her extrinsic motivation

As Aya was such an enthusiastic and motivated student, I was curious to know what kind of L2 learning experience, particularly teachers, she had. More and more research shows that L2 teachers play a key role in L2 learners' motivation (Dörnyei, 1994; Tanaka, 2005).

At the beginning of the interview, when I asked her whether she liked English, she started talking about her English teacher in high school, who had pushed her hard but acknowledged her efforts. This is illustrated in the following extract in which Aya is talking about the impact of the so-called "retelling practice" at her high school. This task is often used in English teaching and is considered effective by many English teachers in Japan in vocabulary building and enhancing integrated linguistic skills. It is a task in which students reproduce orally what they have read or heard using some key words or sometimes completely in their own words.

Extract 1. Strict but attentive – Aya’s English teacher in high school

- A: We had to choose key words by ourselves, and then, we had to develop it with our own words, (snip) it was painful.
 T: Yes.
 A: But, after graduating from high school, I came to university.
 T: Yes.
 A: Like when we have composition lessons, although I use simple words, I can use them. (snip) I think it was useful. (snip) Yes, she [her teacher in high school] was so enthusiastic, (snip) and she really looked after us.
 T: (snip) Ah I see. Sounds like she had a big influence on you.
 A: She was strict.
 T: She was? (laughing)
 A: Yes (laughing). But among those people, we were trying, and she took good care of those who were trying hard.

(In all interview extracts, A stands for Aya and T for teacher. See Appendix 1 for transcription notation conventions.)

Aya acknowledges that some *painful* L2 practice can help both improve her linguistic skills and gain the teacher’s recognition. In contrast, she told me about another teacher who did not pay much attention to her, and thus did not help her motivation. She commented, “She did not pay much attention to me, so I just did the minimum”.

These comments indicate that up to high school, her motivation to improve her English skills was not primarily a significant L2-related personal goal. Instead, she was extrinsically motivated in that her hard work was a way to get recognition from the teacher, and thus it led to withdrawal of her learning efforts as soon as the recognition became unavailable from a different teacher.

5.1.3 Fully engaged in class – Drawing on the past to be here and now

I remember Aya as always enthusiastic and actively engaged in the class. For example, in role-play activities, she always tried to play the roles of characters fully and tried to express the emotions of characters as if she was like a real actress.

As shown in the following extract, it became clear during the interview that her proactive engagement in the course was due to the language learning belief that was strongly influenced by her past English teacher, the same teacher in Extract 1, who was strict but attentive.

Extract 2. Aya acting on her belief about effective language learning

- T: You always looked like you were having so much fun. I mean that’s the impression I have about you.
 A: (laughing) Yes.
 T: Is that because you like English?
 A: Yes. I like English and my English teacher in high school (snip) what should I say, she taught us having fun was the best way to learn (snip). She said “Just smile and talk”, she used to say that, “And you will learn”, she used to say.
 T: Wow.
 A: So, since then, I just talk in English classes.
 T: I see.
 A: That’s what I try to do, and maybe that is what you saw.

As can be inferred from the above extract, her English teacher in high school seemed to have influenced Aya's belief about language learning; *having fun* was important. She came to my classroom with that belief. The following extract also shows how she was trying to put her ideas into action. This remark was made right after I commented positively on how well she had got into her roles in skits sometimes. Her reply below reveals her belief in language learning and her acting up to it. In the next extract, she is talking about how she tried to make her partner laugh, and tried to *have fun* with her partner while working on a class task, a role play.

Extract 3. Aya acting up to her belief to make a new friend

A: Well, as we practised together and I really got into it, and my partner was laughing. And I thought, "This is good" (snip). First we were not close (snip), but when we were paired up, and as we practised, she was laughing. And I thought, "Wow, she is laughing". We have become closer and we talk often now. That was a good experience.

Based on her belief that laughing and having fun was important for learning (Extract 2), she was trying to make her partner laugh by getting into the character in the role play. It worked and it was *a good experience* for her. Although it was not about improving her linguistic skills, it was a significant experience for her.

It seems like Aya was trying to complete two different tasks simultaneously in the situation: gaining linguistic skills by learning the phrases in the skit and trying to establish a relationship with her partner by making her laugh. The latter goes well beyond the concept of language learning motivation and L2 self and yet seems essential to its success. She followed her belief influenced by the past language teacher she looked up to, acted on it, and succeeded in gaining a new friend through the use of L2. To her, this was more significant than gaining particular L2 skills.

5.2 Reaching out for a vision

5.2.1 Testing a new vision through modelling

In this section, I will elaborate how Aya began to explore her new vision, which was linked to her past experience, through modelling the teacher's language use. To start with, I will give an example of Aya's attempt in modelling the teacher, which was identified in one of the homework materials. She described her experience in China as shown below (see Figure 2). Bold indicates the similarities.

These pictures were taken in August 2012 in China. A photo **in the top right**, I took the picture with my friends at the Great Wall. There were many foreign tourists, so I made friends with some Koreans at the Great Wall. **In the same picture, you can see me** wearing a cap. This cap given to us because the sunshine in China was very strong. The polo shirt in the picture was also given to us so that we will not lose other members of the group. I have these things as souvenirs even now. China's weather was very hot but I spent nice days in China.

Figure 2. Aya's assignment.

The text she wrote is very similar to the one I gave in the example worksheet, which is shown in Figure 3 below.

These pictures were taken in December 2010 in Australia. **In the top right picture**, you see me holding a champagne glass. You know it is summer in Australia in December. The sun sets at about 10 pm at night, so people enjoy swimming until 9 pm! When I left Iwate on December 21, it was minus 3 degrees. It was 37 degrees in Australia! **In the same picture, you also see** my friends Andrew and Sarah. They travel around the world and make CDs with nature sounds.

Figure 3. Model description.

Aya used the same phrases and similar syntax in her writing. For example, phrases such as: *These pictures were taken in*, *In the top right picture*, *In the same picture, you also see...* are exactly the same. The way she notes about the weather in China is also very similar to the way I did about Australian weather, and the same is true for her describing the people she met in China. Of course, students, especially those whose level is less advanced do naturally, and this was fully expected given the sample was produced for the exact purpose of modelling the language use. However, she was the only student in class who followed the model description so faithfully. Furthermore, as the next example shows, Aya's readiness to model the linguistic behaviour from the sources that she valued has wider significance for Aya's L2 vision development.

There was a critical incident that my field notes show as particularly significant, and it illustrates Aya's strong identification with the teacher as her role model. Modelling was obvious not only in written style, but also in the spoken style. This incident occurred in June 2014 and involved Aya imitating the teacher as a way to try out her possible L2 self.

The topic for the lesson was "Talking about your international experience as an English user". I had the students work in groups of four, and asked them to talk about their international experience. When students were working in groups, I noticed Aya and another student, who were in the same group. They were talking in English for the whole time and looking really engaged, using lots of gestures and facial expressions. They stood out because typically, most students resort to using Japanese when they need to explain something complicated, but they were using only English. In addition, their theatrical use of body language was also different from other students in class, who would express themselves in a much more reticent manner. After everyone in the group spoke, I asked the students to choose the most interesting story from the group to share with the whole class. Aya was chosen as her group representative. When it was her turn, she talked about her experience in China.

Extract 4. Aya imitating teacher talk

- A: I went to China when I was senior high school student. Ah, this trip was, free, free.
 T: Oh:
 A: Yeah! (She laughs) So I talked to many Chinese in English. So Chinese talk English very well, so (class laughs) I was very surprised, huh... (Class laughs) I played a traditional instrument of Chinese. For example...hmmm (humming), yeah! (Class laughs) Yeah, I don't... I. I didn't remember name of Chinese... because I couldn't read their names. So... very difficult...
 T: OK,
 A: Yeah!
 T: Thank you! (Class applauds)

During her presentation, she said *so* four times. When she said it the third time, the class laughed. It was probably because the class thought she was trying to sound like me as I often use *so* in class. In addition, how she said *yeah!* with an animated tone might have resembled my style of talking. Typically, many Japanese students whose linguistic level is not advanced would not use discourse markers such as *so* and *ok* as they are often not explicitly taught in L2 classrooms. In the above speech, Aya said *yeah* and *so* multiple times. My tentative conclusion is that she observed the use of those discourse markers in my talking style and proactively tried to use them in the public speech. To support my assumption, I will provide a transcription of the instruction I gave to the class approximately four minutes before Aya stood in front of the class. Discourse markers are underlined in the extract.

Extract 5. Discourse markers in teacher's talk

T: OK! Ah, everybody, stop. Yes! OK, can you please choose, the *most* interesting story from your group. OK? Whose story was most interesting. So choose *one* story. I, I, I know everybody has, has great stories. But just choose one person.. whose story was *very* interesting and share with the whole class. OK? So choose one person.

In this short instruction, discourse markers are identified seven times. Not only the frequent use of discourse markers, but how some words are stressed was also the pattern Aya imitated in the public speech (*so*), and that was when the class laughed.

Aya made a strong impression with this incident because she was different from the other students who spoke in front of the class. Aya was much more expressive in her speech than the other students, who just read out the texts they wrote on the worksheet. Although she did not tell me during the interview that she was imitating me on this particular occasion, the tone she used to say certain words (*so*) and the use of discourse markers suggest intriguing similarities in my speech style and hers. In fact, I had a few colleagues of mine listen to the audio data of the above transcripts as they are familiar with the way I talk. They all laughed and said Aya's speech resembles the way I talk. The plausibility of this interpretation is further corroborated by Aya's own comment in the course evaluation form, which was given at the end of the course, and before the interview (see Figure 4).

Shadowing your English was most useful because by copying you, I understood the accents and intonation. We don't do these kinds of things, so it was a very precious opportunity. It looks like you are having so much fun and it makes us happy. I feel like I was always smiling in your classes. I wanted to hear more about your experiences and learning strategies.

Figure 4. Aya's comment in the course evaluation form.

Expressions such as *by copying you* and *I wanted to hear more about your experiences and learning strategies* show that she sees me as a language learning role model. Also, her comment *It looks like you are having so much fun and it makes us happy* and *I was always smiling in your classes* are also related to her language learning history and beliefs gained from the experience of her past

language teacher in Extract 1 and 2, who told her having fun was the best way to learn.

To reiterate what has been discussed so far, Aya believed having fun was an important aspect in language learning as advised by her teacher in high school. Thus, it seems right to presume that by seeing the teacher having fun in class, her belief was affirmed. Interestingly, the desire to model the teacher is not only linked with re-affirming her past experiences but also with new L2 vision. It can be inferred that to her, I was someone who encompassed her past and actualised her L2 vision. As Aya said in the course evaluation comment, it looked like I was having fun teaching classes and speaking in English, which was congruent with the belief she formed under the influence of her past English teacher. Aya was able to re-interpret her past experiences as a fertile ground for her own possible vision through me. In other words, it seems that I functioned as a mirror for Aya's own L2 vision and therefore she participated enthusiastically in L2 practices that enabled her to live up to her L2 vision.

Although there might be other reasons why a student imitates a teacher, my observation of her in class tells me that Aya imitating the teacher was her way of trying out her new L2 self. Because the teacher enabled her to see that possibility in practice (i.e. the teacher embodied a vision which was linked with Aya's past experience that she found appealing), she was beginning to explore this vision through modelling the teacher's behaviour – a gateway to her own vision.

5.2.2 From imitation to aspiration

When Aya agreed to participate in the interview in August 2014, she also asked me if she could get advice on her career saying "I am also looking forward to talking to you in the interview. As a matter of fact, I would like to get your advice on something (about my career and future). Would that be OK?" Her desire to get advice from me beyond L2 learning is manifested in this e-mail message.

During the interview, I asked her about her experience in China because I thought it had some influence on her language learning motivation. When I commented on the strong impression she made when she spoke about it in front of the whole class, she made statements such as "Oh, I went there, but I just had a good time", "I don't know if I should have gone there with a clear goal in my head", and it seemed to bother her. She went on making comments such as: "I don't have any goals or aims or future dreams, this is not the way it should be", "I want to improve my English, but for what?", "My parents say maybe I should get a job", "Many of my friends have decided to do this and that, and I feel a bit left out". It appeared to me that she was feeling lost and dissatisfied with her ought-to-self because her concern about her future was expressed not only because she did not have a clear goal although she thought she should, but also in relation to her parents' expectations and her friends' orientation.

When she started expressing her agitation like this, I started to feel that her desire of wanting to have a bigger vision in life might be partly the consequence of the intervention course, in which I strongly encouraged the students to have clear visions of themselves. I thought the course might have awakened Aya's desire to do something with her life, and she may have been beginning to feel that just having fun and practising English conversation skits did not serve her need to find a larger goal in her life. This intervention course, which had more

explicit emphasis on 'vision', may have been what encouraged her to reflect more carefully on her own desires as opposed to the 'expected' desires, and perhaps highlighted a gap in her thinking.

Initially, my purpose of talking to her was to collect data for my study, but then, I felt I needed to do something about it rather than just collecting data from her. Then, I decided to engage in the dialogue with her, listening to her carefully, trying to show understanding and support for her concerns. Aya's interview with me possibly functioned as a preparation ground for what is discussed in the next section, where I shift the focus of this discussion of findings from Aya to the teacher, in this case, myself. In the next section, I will offer my proposition which has to do with the moral role of a teacher in helping students' beyond language learning. I will show an example of teacher intervention outside a language classroom, and propose that, in line with recent debates in applied linguistics, it may be profitable to conceive of the moral role of a teacher (Kubanyiova & Crookes, 2016).

5.3 Dialogic co-construction of Aya's vision

I initially prepared this course to promote students' L2 visions, hoping to cultivate their skills to communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds, more specifically with people from different countries. I thought about doing it because the students would gain some intercultural awareness without spending time overseas, which would have been difficult if not impossible for many of them due to the financial and psychological damages caused by the earthquake.

However in due course, and mainly through my exploration of Aya's data, I realised this course had potential for a much bigger effect. It provoked Aya's aspiration for finding a vision beyond L2 self and my desire to be involved in the process. I came to understand that my role as a language teacher, as well as the moral call to enter into a much deeper relationship with students, involved more than typical techniques for vision building may assume. In this section, I will describe how Aya and I collaborated on the co-construction of Aya's vision through our dialogues. Although I did not intend to do so prior to the interview, some factors interplayed in creating the situation, and one big factor was my desire to do something to make a difference in Aya's life as she was striving to find a direction in her life and asking for help during the interview.

5.3.1 Intervention outside the classroom

In this section, I will discuss more interview data to show examples of teacher intervention outside the classroom to help with what students need. My primary job was to teach assigned English classes at my college. However, I have always believed a teacher has a more holistic role to help a student grow as a human being. This professional philosophy of mine was strengthened even more because of the extreme situation brought by the earthquake, and forced me to make sense of my own professional life, "which are moral practices carried out under often challenging circumstances" (Crookes, 2015, p. 486).

A friend of mine who is a medical doctor once told me, "Once a doctor, always a doctor, wherever I am and whenever it is. Even if I am on holidays on a tropical island and lying on a beach, but I see someone who has got injured or

appears to be in pain, I will immediately try to help him/her". Another friend of mine who is a Christian reverend told me something similar: "Whether inside or outside of the church, I will try to listen to someone who is in need of compassion and sympathy". How I feel about teaching is similar to those friends. My job as a teacher is not limited to the classroom practice. My knowledge and beliefs "include one's own experiences as a student, one's personal values, and broader life experiences and reflections" (Crookes, 2015, p. 486).

My initial purpose with the interview was obviously to gather data for this study. However, during the interview with Aya, I started to feel that I had to play a different role. I had to listen to her concerns, frustrations, and aspirations. I realised that I was in a position of being involved in her deeper inner world that Aya decided to expose. At that moment, I reacted intuitively and tried to listen to her carefully and give her what she was wanting from me.

Here are examples of my trying to reshape her vision by giving her tangible and practical advice towards the end of the interview.

Extract 6. Start with smaller goals

- A: I don't have any goals or aims or future dreams..., this is not the way it should be.
 T: I don't think you need to have a great purpose or a big goal... Something you can achieve if you work a little bit harder, that is fine. There is nothing wrong with that.

Extract 7. Be prepared for a critical moment

- A: I want to improve my English, but... for what?
 T: You never know when you are going to need it... So it is important to prepare yourself so that you can use it when you have to... You don't start going on a diet when summer comes, right?

Also, I told her there was no need to speak grammatically perfect English when she showed concerns using English to write to her pen pals, and gave her some possible situations she could be using English in when she told me "I cannot visualise any situation in which I could be using English to communicate".

Although I often give similar advice in class, when it is given in a more personal setting like this, I am focussing on just Aya and I believe it has a different effect and the message becomes more powerful. The interview served as a context for a different kind of teacher facilitation in addition to the classroom.

5.3.2 Dialogic power of interview for vision building – A two-way street

"Truth is not born nor is it to be found inside the head of an individual person, it is born between people collectively searching for truth, in the process of their dialogic interaction" (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 110).

As I started analysing the interview data and synthesising them with other kinds of data, I realised what I learned through the interaction with Aya inside and outside the classroom was profound. I believe the interview was a great learning process for me and probably for Aya, too. In the interview, we were trying to make sense of her past and work towards the future. It was a story making process as Le Hunte and Golembiewski (2014) say "it is through

narrative that we learn about ourselves and prepare ourselves for the future in an evolutionary sense” (p. 75).

I feel grateful for Aya, who trusted me enough to expose her vulnerability. It was an unforgettable experience to me as Sakurai and Kobayashi (2005) think the moment when a ‘conversation’ in the interview is turned into a ‘dialogue’; it gives catharsis to the interviewee and a kind of ecstasy to the interviewer who has gone deep into the interviewee’s life experience.

Aya talked openly about her issues and thus helped us work collaboratively to explore her possible selves. As I saw that she needed practical advice and guidance for making decisions for her future and that vision construction is a relational activity, I felt the need to engage more deeply with that process and wanted to enter into a deeper relationship to support her in a meaningful dialogue. My previous training and experience as a counsellor was useful in enabling this dialogue to turn into something I will remember as my critical moment. Most importantly, the impetus I felt to get deeper into Aya’s life was the primary factor for this facilitation and engaging in a dialogue with her outside the classroom. I was not thinking so much about being a good teacher or someone knowledgeable, but rather being there for her as an individual working with another individual, caring about Aya.

6 Conclusion

My first conclusion is that we need to take a theoretically and empirically fuller account of learners as individuals, building on Mercer’s (2011) account of language learner psychology. It was through Aya’s data that I began to realise that it was not possible to apply exclusive constructs from traditional L2 motivational research but that I needed to ask deeper questions and revisit my own purposes for conducting both my classes and research in particular ways.

Secondly, empirical evidence suggests the need for language teachers as “moral agents” (Kubanyiova & Crookes, 2016). This means that teachers’ genuine efforts to help students engage with future visions in the L2 classroom may open channels for students’ deeper reflection on their lives more broadly. While teachers’ capacity to respond to scenarios meaningfully may be assisted through well-designed L2 vision tasks and materials, the moral nature of this responsiveness has consequences for the moral dimension of teacher development (Kubanyiova, 2014) and therefore for a changing focus in research on language teachers.

Perhaps to Aya, I was initially a teacher who was a linguistic role model. The intervention course components I prepared for the purpose of cultivating students’ L2 vision facilitated her reflection on her past experience and aspiration for finding her possible self. However, it is not so much about what skills, personal characteristics, or strategies teachers must possess, but rather about their ‘desire to enter into that relationship’ - i.e. desire to really know the students for who they are with their own backgrounds, histories and multiple identity roles beyond being just ‘learners’, let alone L2 learners. This is in line with the “job crafting” idea by Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001). In their words, job crafting is “the physical and cognitive changes individuals make in the task or relational boundaries of their work” (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001, p. 179). According to Berg, Dutton and Wrzesniewski (2008), “[t]he primary outcomes of

job crafting are altered perceptions of the meaning of work and one's identity at work" (p. 3).

Interviewing Aya made me think much about the moral role of a teacher and in what way I can both make a difference in students' lives and create a greater "chance of meaningful development that would have significant consequences for language students' classroom" (Kubanyiova & Crookes, 2016, p. 19). Certainly, providing the students with L2 education was in my job description. However, working consciously and deliberately on the development of students' future visions helped me realise that I wanted and needed more than this. I desired to make a contribution through my job and give hope and faith to my students for the future. The teacher's own development is critical, as some researchers have pointed out that language teachers' identity development is more important than the acquisition of teacher knowledge (e.g. Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Kubanyiova, 2012).

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Transcription conventions

.	falling intonation (as at the end of declarative sentence)
?	rising intonation (as at the end of interrogative sentence)
,	continuing intonation
!	animated tone
...	noticeable pause
:	lengthened sound
<i>Italics</i>	emphatic stress
(gestures etc.)	

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