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# RESEARCH PAPER

# Learners' Self-regulation and Autonomy in Learning English Language

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PAPER INFO	ABSTRACT
Received:	The study has been carried out to analyse impacts of L2
June 18, 2021	Motivation Self-System among undergraduate students of
Accepted:	MUET, SZABIST Campus Khairpur, Sindh. Learning English for
August 31, 2021	academic success, finding global spaces for work and
Online: September 06, 2021	developing global identity are the dire needs among university
Keywords:	graduates. Autonomous motivation is important to attain life-
English Language,	long skills. In this regard, L2 Motivation Self System has been
L2 Learning,	found important predictor in language learning. The study is
L2 Motivation Self	quantitative in nature. The sample is N=114, first-year
System	undergraduate students. For the quantification of the data, SPSS
*Corresponding	has been used. The findings reveal that respondents are self-
Author	motivated to learn English to get a global identity, determined to
	work hard by themselves to gain mastery of the target language
	skills. It is recommended that English language learning
zoonsheikh@gma	teaching should be focused on student-centred activities in
il.com	classes for learning the English language keeping in view the
	natural tendencies of learners.

#### Introduction

Human psychology and behaviour assessment remained a valued debate among social psychologists since the 1930s. Governments, business firms, brands marketing experts sought to analyse what people wanted and what are the reasons behind their wants and needs. Psychologists are trying to analyse how to manipulate their needs (Lamb et al., 2019). Motivation research for learning L2 has remained a hot debate in applied linguistics since the 1960s (Gardner, 2019). The recent drive of a great number of people towards learning multiple languages made it an important theme of L2 motivation research for language learning. Globalization, international markets, understanding world heritages, cultures and learning strategies for sustainable

growth from successful societies are the motivating drives to be multilingual (Group, 2016). Language learning trends, issues and motivating factors for the acquisition of new languages are the present debates of teachers and education provider stakeholders(Lashari et al., 2017). Learning the target language is a complex phenomenon. It has diverse dimensions which can influence the minds of learners and drive them in that direction to achieve that language. Gardner (2010) reported that the learners who are motivated to learn L2, have strong reasons for learning the language. The reasons to pursue a goal always develops motivation inside to complete it. These reasons might be intrinsic or extrinsic, in the same way, intrinsic motivation or extrinsic motivation develops among individuals for the target language. Dornyei (2019) believed that motivation is a source of energizing individuals for learning the language. Motivation is an important factor for pursuing goals in life, even the toughest tasks as well. Motivation develops the willingness inside an individual to generate strong reasons to pursue any tasks particularly they should be able to negotiate the understandable meaning and should meet the complex demands of the complex, varied, unpredictable socialized world and interdependent organizations. L2 motivation has a significant value in applied linguistics for learning L2 or L3 (Fukui & Yashima, 2021). Numerous journals are dedicated to this discipline in the current time. In a survey from 2004 to 2014, 70% of total research has been dedicated to L2 motivation (Al-Hoorie, 2018; Boo et al., 2015). This shows the significance of the emergence of L2 motivation research in language learning. L2 Motivation Self System (Dörnyei et al., 2006; Dörnyei, 2009) construct is based on empirical studies and remained an important construct (Cho, 2020; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021) to predict well the language learning.

The context of Sindh is different, where different languages are spoken, but these Pakistani languages are different grammatically, syntactically and morphologically(Mahboob & Ahmar, 2008) from the English language. In this case, a great amount of hard work and self-directed motivation is needed to learn the target language. L2 Motivation Self System construct is dynamic and valid in the Asian context (Lamb, 2012) to predict language learning. Markus and Nurius (1986) initiated a new debate in this context of possible selves which has added the innovative idea of "Self" in the context of motivation research which focuses on the potential behaviour, having in mind curtained incentives inside for performing certain behaviours, doing certain acts willingly for developing self-identity. Motivation has a greater impact on language learning as Simming, et al. (2015) argued that behind learning language there is greater contribution of motivation.

Motivation according to this conceptualization is a conscious struggle for achieving the potential for himself/herself (Gardner, 2010b; Markus & Nurius, 1986; Markus & Ruvolo, 1989, 1989; Oyserman & James, 2009). Dörnyei (2005, 2009) has also reconceptualized the L2 motivation paradigm with L2 Motivation Self-System, which comprises three main components, Ideal L2 Self, L2 Ought to Self and L2 Learning Experience. Dornyei (2005, 2009) went a step ahead and remodelled Gardner's (2001) integrative motivation concept and Possible Selves(Markus & Nurius, 1986) and Discrepancy Theory (Higgins, 1987). To develop a dynamic self-motivation construct

(Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005) validated by carrying out a longitudinal study on the sample of N=8593 in Hungary. It is found by the results of that longitudinal research that this model has more validation in terms of responses to predict well language learning (Boo et al., 2015) broader construct than the existing constructs in L2 motivation research. In this regard, the study has been designed by following the L2 Motivation Self-System (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009). According to Macintyre et al., (2009) and other studies (Csizer & Kalman, 2019; Lamb, 2012; Papi et al., 2019) reported that there is a huge research gap in various contexts to validate the study. There is a need to carry out empirical studies to validate the construct in the context of Pakistan, particularly Sindh because language learners are facing a lot of problems in learning the target language. This study will pave the way for future researchers to work on new constructs of the L2 Motivation Self-System proposed by Dornyei (2005, 2009). This study will help the teachers of universities of Pakistan particularly Sindh to work on the L2 Motivation Self-System of learners and to facilitate them in a better way to learn the target language.

With globalization and the rapid technological borderless competition, it is without a doubt that graduates' expectation of employability skills far differs from that of just mere technical skills (Fackler & Funabashi, 2018). Communicative Competence is the only objective of investment in higher education and training (Wagner, 2008) with which doors to economic and social development can be opened.

The emergence of globalization, digital transformation and stronger multistakeholders corporations across the world while cutting the traditional borders (Angela, 2018) between the nations brought the drive towards learning the multilanguages (Bhattacharyya, 2018). The classes, teachers and students are required to be multilingual and to be proficient in the language courses. The teachers are facing issues in language classes and are concerned about students motivating factors, interesting content, attractive pedagogies and a healthy environment to make learners skills for unpredictable future (Bhattacharyya, 2018; Marel, 2021) and future digitalbased services. Specific motivating factors which can help learners to be successful in the attainment of mastery in the target language in the local context should be researched well to help the teachers, learners and stakeholders who are determined to provide quality education. Motivation research got great significance in predicting the successful attainment of second or foreign language learning nowadays. Motivation research from cognitive perspectives have got more soundness and validation but still, there is a dire need to address L2 Motivation Self System model in other contexts to understand the autonomous nature of learners with their developed self-image and vision. Understanding the nature and psychology of language learners is an important domain in L2 research. In the Pakistani context, there are a few studies carried out to understand the psychology of language learners. This study will surely contribute more to this gap and will contribute more to the knowledge and theoretical perspectives. Hopefully, the results of the study will be sound enough to understand the psychology of language learners in this context.

#### Literature Review

Foreign and second language learning in research studies is influenced by language psychology particularly motivation research. Motivation plays a significant role in an in-depth study of learners' vision, future images and self-image (Dörnyei & Chan, 2013). Language functions cognitively and the mind controls emotions, reactions, context, suitability, determination, vision and imagination with the use of language (Ryan & Mercer, 2012). Not only this but motivation developed autonomously within an individual develops long-life learning goals particularly language learning (Dornyei, 2019). Motivation has wider scope in the achievement of lifelong goals particularly language learning.

Motivation research has wider scope in the global context and survey research results indicate its dominant position in L2 learning between 2005 to 2014 and it has been pointed out as an "unprecedented surge" (Boo et al., 2015; Csizér, 2019; Ushioda, 2017). L2 Motivation Self System has strong roots in Markus and Nurius (1986) innovation theme of self (Al-Hoorie & MacIntyre, 2020). Presently, motivation research and theories which were shared and cited in world top research journals focused on the cognitive aspects of language learning and Self-notion L2 Motivation Self System (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009) based on the three integral components including Ideal L2 Self, Ought to 12 Self and L2 Learning Experience (Csizér, 2020).

Motivation has been an important domain in language research over the last four decades.

Dörnyei, Csizér, and Németh (2006) carried out longitudinal survey research for 12 years on 13000 learners and their experiences regarding five major languages Russian, Italian, French, German, and English which led to the construction of the L2 motivation model. Dornyei (2005, 2009; Boo et al., 2015) express that "L2 Motivational Self System is currently the most commonly applied research paradigm in the field of L2 motivation" (p.456). The construct has been validated by numerical empirical studies in various contexts (Dörnyei, 2009; You et al., 2016) to predict well language learning with the help of the L2 Motivation Self System.

Dornyei and Al-Hoorie (2017) claimed that the L2 Motivation Self system is a more dynamic construct in motivation research to predict the wishes and needs of a language learner. The dynamic construct has been adopted from Self Discrepancy Theory (Higgins, 1987), Possible Self notion of (Markus & Nurius, 1986) and Social Psychological theory (Gardner, 1985).

"synthesis of Markus and Nurius's (1986) Possible Self theory with four strands in L2 motivation research—by Gardner (1985), Dörnyei, (2005); Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011), Noels (2001) and Ushioda, 2001) led to the presenting the notion of L2 Motivation Self System. L2 Motivation Self System is based on the three components: The Ideal L2 Self which is based on the Self-image that is idealized by L2 learners about their future image (Dörnyei, 2009). The "Ought to Self" refers to the qualities which defines one ought to have and to come up to the expectations of others

(Dörnyei, 2009). L2 Learning Experience refers to the learning environment in which learner experiences the curriculum, experience of achievements, interaction with peer group and influence of L2 teacher, content, and pedagogies (Dornyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017). It is a true representation of a desire within an individual to get mastery over L2, external social influence along with strong pressure to be fluent in the English language and exposure to the environment and a formal way to learn the language. Dornyei (2009b) states that "a cursory scan of the PSYCHINFO database, they conducted a survey which revealed more than 75,000 articles with 'self' in their titles and a very long list of self-related concepts used in the literature (e.g., self-esteem, self-concept, self-determination, etc.)" (p.10). Castro (2019) conducted a longitudinal study in which he "he concluded that language advising was one of the sites where positive language learning experiences took place, which led to the strengthening of the participant's ideal self both as a learner and a teacher" (p.6). It suggests that L2 Motivation Self System has great influence and considered as valid model in examining the psychology of language learners.

Lashari et al., (2017) conducted a study in the context of Sindh which reveals that without motivation learners can't be successful to learn the target language. Siming (2021) conducted the study in one of the public sector universities which revealed that there is a greater role of intrinsic motivation as well as extrinsic motivation factors for target language learning.

An important aspect of the Self-Motivation System is as defined by Neols (2003) and Ushodia (2003) is that it is the parallel combination of intrinsic motivation based on willingness developed inside the individual for the sake of fun, enjoyment, pleasure, and self-satisfaction. It is based on extrinsic motivation that refers to reward, avoiding a penalty, following certain acts impressed by somebody else as well as Integrative reasons with goals of the individual.

#### **Material and Methods**

### **Participants**

The study has been carried out to examine the role of L2 Motivation Self System in English language learning among the undergraduate learners of SZABIST Mehran University of Engineering Science and Technology Campus Khairpur, Sindh Pakistan. The sample of the study is the first-year undergraduate engineer students of this campus. The participants total of N=114 were part of the study. The male students' participation is 96 % and 4 % is female students. The sample of age was 73.7 % was 18 years old, 36.8% were 19 years old, 18.4% were 20 years old, 5.3 % were 21 years old and 2.8% were 22 years old. The priority was given to fresh undergraduate engineers just to analyse the motivating factors involved at the initial phase in learning the English language.

The sample was from Engineering university, in this regard, the details of discipline of 43% of the sample were from Electrical Engineering, 22.8% were from

Electronic Engineering, 24.6 % were from Petroleum and Gas Engineering and 9.6 % were from Software Engineering.

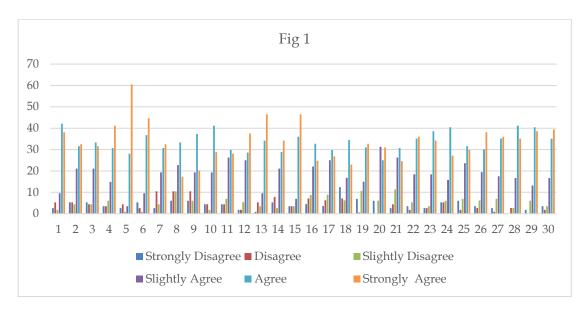
#### Measure

The study uses the Motivation questionnaire developed by Dornyei (Dörnyei, 2009; Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2009; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Taguchi et al., 2009) validated by numerical studies conducted in Asian context (Boo et al., 2015). The tool has been validated by (Papi, 2010). The items of the questionnaire are 76 in number representing motivation in learning the English language. The questionnaire was administered among students N=114 for the study by using the convenience sampling method. The willingness of the respondents was sought for participation in the study.

#### **Procedure**

The study uses convenience sampling for the study. The willingness of participants was sought for the data collection and no one was bothered to participate in the study. The participants were briefed about the purpose of the study. They have ensured the use of the data for the research purpose only and secrecy of the data was also ensured. The participants who were volunteers were requested to fill the questionnaire. The data was analysed by using SPSS (v.22).

#### **Results and Discussion**



# **Reasons for Learning English**

#### Criterion

The results of the study are aligned with Dornyei (2005, 2009) construct. The statistics of the study show very interesting results regarding the learners' Self-motivation towards learning the English language. The criterion measures refer to the

intended efforts of the learners towards learning the English language. Ideal L2 Self helps in predicting well the criterion measure in motivation (Dornyei, 2009).

Statement 3 show that respondents are excited to learn English with 32.5% strongly agree and 31.6% agree for learning the English language. In the statement, 4 respondents responded with percentile to participate in English courses if offered in university with 5th highest rank in statistics of the result. In response to this statement, 41.2% strongly agree and 30.7% agree. Statement 6 which is 4th in rank reveals that the majority of respondents with 44.7% strongly agree, 36.8% agree and 9.6% slightly agree with the statement that they are struggling hard to be proficient in the English language. This indicates their self-motivation to be proficient in future. In the South Asian context, Iranian and Japanese respondents have great criterion measurement as compared to Chinese students (Dornyei, 2009). The results indicate that undergraduate learners have positive and strong attitudes towards learning the English language.

#### **Ideal L2 Self**

Ideal L2 self is considered as oneself perceived image of future. According to Dornyei (2005)" L2-specific facet of one's ideal self" (p.106). The Ideal L2 Self is the image of oneself that one wishes to be like that or achieve that image. The results of the study are aligned with the construct (Dornyei, 2005, 2009) which helps to understand what image the learners have idealised to see themselves in future.

In response to the statement, 10 is with 28.1% strongly agree, 41.2% are agreed and 19.3% are slightly agreed which indicates that the majority of learners speak with foreigners.

Statement 13 is on 3rd rank with 46.5% strongly agree, 34.2% agree and 25.0% slightly agree responses show that learners strongly believe hard work in learning English that will develop language competency. Statement 15 is on 2<sup>nd</sup> rank with 46.5% strongly agree, 36% agree and 7% slightly agree that striving hard will help them in mastering English language writing skills. Statement 29 show that 38.6% strongly agree, 40.4% agree and 13.2% agree that whatever things will be done by them will require the English language to fulfil. Statement 20 indicates the learners agree that the English language will help them to learn about the culture and art of other people. They consider that in future they will be more aware of the culture and art of English people. The results are aligned with the (Dornyei, 2009) construct.

The respondents have a strong agreement about their future image that they consider themselves that their work hard in learning English will make them fluent in future to speak well. They think they will be good at writing skills in future and more fluent with the foreigners as well. They also consider that their future activities in their academic as well professional life will require English language, so they see their positive image regarding their fluency in the target language.

# L2 Motivation Self System

Statement 30 also show that if they don't know English, they will be considered as weak students with 39.5% strongly agree, 35.1% agree and 16.7% slightly agrees.

Statement 13 indicates that 46.5% are strongly agreed, 36% agree and 10% slightly agree that struggling hard will make them able to learn the English language.

# Ought to L2 self

# Instrumentality / Learning English for Job/Earning Money

Ought to L2 self is the attribute of an individual which one considers that one should possess skills and competencies to avoid negative outcomes, negative image and to fulfil the responsibilities as per desired goals (Dornyei, 2005). The results are aligned with Dornyei (2005, 2009) principles of Ought to L2 Self. In response to statement 5 which is on ranks, 1 with the highest scores 60.5% strongly agree 28.1% agree and there is less disagreement with 4.4 disagree and 2.6% strongly disagree with the view that they consider English language should be learnt to get a good job.

Statement 6 is with 44.7% strong agreements; 36.8% agreements show that learners should work hard so that they should be proficient in the English language.

Statement 14 show that most of the respondents believe that English will help them in getting good results with 34.2% strongly agree, 28.9% agree and 21.1% slightly agree with 5.3% strongly disagree and 7.9% disagree which show that a few respondents don't believe like that.

The responses show that respondents believe that they should work for a better job in future, for better grades and promotions in their academic as well as professional careers.

# **Learning English for Self-Promotion**

Self-promotion or instrumentality is part of the ought to L2 self by Dornyei (2005, 2009). The learners consider that the English language is the only source of their future progress and promotion.

The results are aligned with ought to L2 Self component of one should have in future. In response to the statement, 12 the statistics show that 37.5% strongly agree and 28.6% agree and 25% slightly agree that for their future promotions the English language is important with a smaller number of disagreements. Statement 24 indicates the majority of learners agree to the view that for their further studies they must study the English language. Statement 28 shows that to work globally they must learn the English language.

Statistics of statement 28 show that 35.1% strongly agree 41.2% agree and 16.7% slightly agree that the English language will help them to work globally.

Statement 24 show that majority of the respondents consider that for further studies they must learn the English language.

# **Parental Support**

The results of the study are aligned with Dornyei (2005, 2009) regarding parental support for learning the English language. Statement 2 show that 32.5% strongly agree and 31.6% agree that parents support them for learning the English language. The responses show that parents support the majority of learners regarding their interest and language mastery development.

# L2 Learning Experience

In response to statement 9 show that more than 37.3% of respondents agree and 20% strongly agree with the statement that they like learning the environment of English class but there is also disagreement as well, with 11% disagreement 6% strong disagreement and 6% slightly disagreement which also indicates that a good number of respondents don't like the atmosphere of their English class.

Statement 19 statistics show that the majority of respondents agree with learning English classes environment impacts on their learning the English language with 32.7% strongly agree, 30.7% agree and 15% slightly agreement. Statement 27 statistics show that the majority of respondents enjoy themselves learning the English language.

#### Discussion

The study has been carried out to analyse the L2 Motivation Self System for learning the English language among fresh engineer undergraduate students of MUET SZABIST Khairpur. The results show that there is a positive and significant impact of the L2 Motivation Self System on language learning. The study has revealed significant findings. In public engineering, medical and general universities of Pakistan require English as a compulsory course for the period of the first two years of undergraduate programs.

Learners are self-motivated to learn the English language. They think that English language competency will help them to get a good job in future. The results are in line with Ought to L2 Self Instrumental motivation (Dornyei, 2005, 2009) which defines the learners attribute to perform the task to avoid negative image and to get a job or earn money. The results indicate that learners have a positive attitude for learning the English language and have attributed it to Ideal L2 Self. The results are aligned with criterion results of the study (Cho, 2020; Dörnyei, 2009; Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2009; Muir et al., 2021) which ensure the positive impact of Ideal L2 Self in the language learning context. The results are also aligned with (Kramsch, 2013) who express that "language learning commitment' and is based on a learner's intentional choice and desire" (p. 195). They are intended and committed to learning the language

because they want to have a job, self-projection, or self-promotion in future. The learners are actively engaged in learning the English language. Their active participation, active engagement and hard work assure the attainment of the skills in future. The results are aligned with Dornyei (2019) results, who found L2 attainment is not possible without extended practice time and meaningful participation. Target engagement is important to achieve something good with motivation. Target engagement symbolizes a good learning experience.

The results indicate that there is a positive and significant effect of ought to l2 self as the learners feel that they should learn the language. Most respondents agree that they should work hard and should be fluent. They feel that they have the responsibility to hard work to graduate and to get a job or earn money. The results are consistent with (Boo et al., 2015; Dörnyei, 2009; Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2009; Islam et al., 2013) which define the significant impacts of Ought to L2 Self on learners.

The learners want to work globally and to develop an identity. They are motivated to be known for their work and contacts. The results are aligned with Darvin and Norton (2017) which define learning a language investment as referred to investment in own identity.

Leaners have strong attributes of the Ideal L2 Self in terms of learning the English language. They think that working hard on language skills development will help them in future to make them competent speakers. They imagine themselves as the fluent speaker of the future. The results are aligned with present-future selfdiscrepancy Hessel (2015). Ideal L2 Self has positive and significant impacts on the intention to attain something in future (Hessel, 2015). The learners are motivated to know more about the learners of others. The results are aligned with (Kramsch, 2013; Muir et al., 2021). As Kramsch (2013) express that that learners in majority around the world are interested in learning the language because it will help them to know more about others culture and lifestyles which one wants to aspire. The learners consider learning experience, their participation, content, and pedagogies are contributing well to their language learning but some disagreements show dissatisfaction with the learning environment. The results of the study also show that some students are not satisfied with the learning environment of the English language classes. They don't consider it satisfactory which leads to dissatisfaction with teachers' pedagogies. The finding is aligned with (Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007; Csizér, 2019; Dörnyei, 2019) which express that teachers should keep the motivation to engage learners and should focus on natural tendencies of the learners.

#### Conclusion

The study has been carried out to investigate L2 Motivation Self System impacts on learning the English language among the Engineer undergraduate students of SZABIST Mehran University of Engineering Technology Khairpur. The sample of the study was N=114 undergraduate engineer students and the sampling type was convenience sampling. The data were analysed by SPSS (v.22) for descriptive analysis and Microsoft Excel for graphical data representation. The study has revealed

positive impacts of self-learning on the English language by learners. It was interesting to find out that there were various factors responsible among learners for self-learning the English language.

The findings reveal that students are self-motivated and they have attributes of Ideal L2 Self to learn the English language for their better image in future regarding proficiency in the target language to pass exams, to score better and to get jobs. They are motivated to work hard to actively engage themselves and develop an identity and be respectful among their social circles.

They are motivated to travel to different countries and work with international companies, international firms. They intend to develop an identity and contribute globally. Students have strong support from their parents for learning the target language. They have a positive attitude toward the English language, magazines, books, articles, culture, art and English people. The findings also reveal that learners should be given an ideal environment for learning the English language. Teaching and learning should be carried out keeping in view their natural tendencies. The study has significant impacts because it focuses on the self-directed motivation of undergraduate engineers in learning the English language. It will help the teachers for adopting innovative methods in English language classes for teaching in a better way.

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