

# The L2 Motivational Self System among Nepalese College Level Learners of English

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## Abstract:

*The main purpose of the study is to validate Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System (2005; 2009) among Nepalese college level learners in a rural district of Nepal named Solukhumbu. In particular, the study aims to find out which among the three dimensions (Ideal L2 self; the- Ought to L2 self; L2 learning experience) of Dörnyei's L2 motivational self-system impact the learners motivation in learning second language. The study employed 50 survey questions along with six background questions to the data. Correlation analysis of the data provides considerable empirical support for the validity of the L2 motivational self- system and its relevance in Nepalese context, with Ideal L2 self as the strongest predictor among the three dimensions of Dörnyei's L2 motivational self-system along with some relation to L2 learning experience while comparing Ought to L2 self. However, Instrumentality prevention came to be the strongest contributor to the criterion measure, whereas instrumentality promotion contributes more to the ideal L2 self, highlighting the need to understand the association of English targeting future goals to become successful and to find better job.*

**Keywords:** L2 motivational self-system, Ideal L2 self, the-Ought-to L2 self, L2 learning experience, instrumentality, cultural interest

Dörnyei (2001) explains that motivation provides a force for an individual to start learning an L2 and the ability to sustain the L2 throughout their learning process. The learning of English in Nepal displays a motivation deficit in rural areas because English in Nepal is readily used as an L2 or foreign language in larger cities in order to conduct business, thus commerce and personal wealth provides an extrinsic motivation for people to learn and use it. However, in the country side and in remote areas such as Solukhumbu, English is not as prevalent and may not be perceived as immediately relevant to the students' perception of their future success (Sijali, 2016).

Although the L1 English speaking population is low, the majority of people learn English as a foreign or second language in school due to its use in media, education, diplomacy, business and tourism (Giri, 2009). English has been more focused on since it has been elevated by the government to a role of importance in the 1990 when officially adopted as a subject taught in the elementary public school curriculum. This is true for countries like China, Russia, and Brazil (Kachru, 1982), which then creates versions of English that change country to country, making the English a culturally-based language. With the growing formation of different varieties of English in the world, Nepal has also developed its own variety of English, often referred to as

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Nepalese English, Nepali English, or Nepanglish. This results in the English spoken in Nepal being different from other south Asian varieties, because Nepalese speakers do not learn English primarily to communicate in a south Asian context where Hindi language become a language of trade and communication, but to communicate with distant countries like the USA, UK, Australia, and Canada (Kachru, 2005). Thus, Nepal falls in the ‘expanding circle’ of Kachru’s (2005) three Circles of English. Expanding circle countries are considered those with no longstanding historical or governmental role, but who adopt English as a foreign language for trade, commerce and international communication.

Despite English being used widely in the nation, the proficiency level of English in rural areas, like Solukhumbu, is very low, resulting in competency levels in English that are very low because of the lack of direct exposure or use in this region (Mathema & Bista (2006); Bista (2011). This lack of exposure to English through formal education and through rural isolation may lead to a lack of motivation to learn English, thus resulting in lower competencies (Harlig-Boliv & Dörnyei, 1998), affecting the diplomacy, business, and tourism of Nepal (Giri, 2009).

Motivational research on L2 language acquisition was first conducted within a broader research framework of social psychology. Gardner and Lambert (1972) first examined second language learners and motivation as a mediating factor between different ethnolinguistic communities in a multicultural setting in Canada. Their work illustrated the relationship between motivation and orientation or “goal” proposing two motivational terms “Integrative Orientation” and “Instrumental orientation”. Integrative Orientation is the positive disposition of an individual to learn a language, the culture, and the community. Instrumental Orientation refers to the practical reasons an individual decides to learn a language. Thus, instrumentally motivated learners might be motivated to learn a second language as a required part of the studies or as an incentive to get higher paid jobs. Gardner and Lambert further argue that the degree to which each of these types of motivation occurs in learner will impact and affect the outcome of learning.

The influential works of Canadian social psychologists, Robert Gardner and his associates (Gardner and Lambert, 1972; Gardner, 1985) have been very popular among the researchers in researching L2 motivation research. The concept of integrity has been highly acknowledged by the researchers. For instance, Cook (2000) believes that the integrative and instrumental motivation steered by Gardner and Lambert is helpful and an effective factor for second language learning. Gardner (1985) and Ellis (1994) additionally introduce Gardner’s socio- educational theory which proposed two types of motivation; integrative motivation and instrumented motivation.

Despite the importance attached to the construct of integrity, many criticisms soon came from different fronts, having their origin in a period that Dörnyei (2003a) calls the ‘cognitive situated’ phase in L2 motivation research. Inaptness to the educational contexts (e.g, Crooks and Schmidt, 1991), failure to integrate the cognitive theories of learning motivation (e.g., Dörnyei, 1994; Oxford and Shearin, 1994), illegibility of the

current age of globalization (e.g., Dörnyei and Csizer, 2002; Lamb, 2004; McClelland, 2000), and the inability to capture the complexity of the new conceptualization of social identity (e.g., Mc Namara, 1997; Norton, 1995) were the main drawbacks that led to the strong criticism of Gardner's theory of L2 motivation.

Although the contradictory findings concerning integrativeness have been contested for years, (Gardner, 1985), L2 motivational research seems to be experiencing a promising restructuring with the entry of an entirely new and comprehensive theoretical framework labeled 'the L2 motivational self-system' (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009).

### **L2 Motivational Self-System:**

The L2 motivational self-system (L2MSS) proposed by Dörnyei (2005) and Dörnyei and Ushioda (2009) builds on the socio-educational model (Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Gardner, 1985) and conceptualizes L2 motivation not as language learners' identification with others (as suggested in integrative motivation) but as language learners' identification with their future selves. Dörnyei's L2MSS theory emerged from studies (c.f. Dörnyei, Csizer, & Nemeth, 2006) that involved collecting data regarding L2 motivation from over 13,000 Hungarian school students in several longitudinal waves. Dörnyei challenged the role of the integrative variable on the basis of his study with regard to learners' motivation (MacIntyre, MacKinnon, & Clément, 2009), claiming that in foreign language (FL) contexts that is, in situations in which the L2 is not being acquired within the target language (TL) community and learners have no (direct) contact with the TL speakers, the TL group lacks salience for the L2 learners, a fact that substantially diminishes the role of the integrative motive.

The L2 self-system includes three major paradigms: 1) the Ideal L2 self, which is "the L2 specific facet of one's ideal self". 2) the Ought-to L2 self, the language-related attributes that "one believes one ought to possess in order to meet the expectations of others and avoid possible negative outcomes", and 3) the L2 learning experience, which are "situation-specific motives related to the immediate language learning environment and experience" (Dörnyei & Ushioda. 2009. p. 29).

### **The Ideal L2 Self:**

According to Dörnyei (2005), the ideal L2 self is "the L2-specific aspect of one's ideal self" (p.106). It represents an ideal image of L2 user one aspires to be in the future. If one wants to be a fluent L2 user who interacts with international friends, for example, the imaginary picture of one's self as a fluent L2 user might act as a powerful motivator to reduce the discrepancy between the actual self and this ideal image. Studies by Taguchi et al. (2009) and Ryan (2009) showed that this dimension of the L2 motivational self-system not only significantly correlates with integrity but also explains more variance in the learner's intended effort. This construct is found to be the strongest components of the L2 motivational self-system in many recent studies (Csizer & Kormos (2009); Islam et al. (2013); and Papi (2010) concluded that the learner's motivational behavior was best explained by the ideal L2 self-variable.

## **The Ought-to L2 Self:**

The ought-to L2 self is the L2-specific aspect of one's ought-to self. This less internalized aspect of the L2 self refers to the attributes that one believes one ought to possess as a result of perceived duties, obligations, or responsibilities (Dörnyei, 2005). For instance, if a person wants to learn an L2 in order to live up to the expectation of his/her boss or teacher, the ought-to L2 self can act as the main motivator for L2 learning. In the aforementioned comparative study conducted by Taguchi et.al. (2009) in Japan, China, and Iran, it was found that in all three countries, family influences and the prevention-focused aspects of instrumentality (e.g. learning the language to avoid failing an exam) impacted upon this variable, but its overall effect on learners' motivated behavior was considerably less than that of the ideal L2 self. In a study conducted in Hungary, Csizér and Kormos (2009) found a positive relationship between parental encouragement and ought-to L2 self. The ought-to L2 self is also believed to be a close match to the extrinsic constituents in Noels (2003) and Ushioda's (2001) taxonomies (c.f. Dörnyei, 2005, 2009).

However, Lamb (2012) reports that his study failed to identify clear Ought –to self among Indonesian students, a finding much like previous studies by Csizer and Lukas (2010), and Kormos and Csizer (2008), which he argues, might be because of the shortcomings in the methods of elicitation.

## **The L2 Learning Experience:**

The third dimension of the L2 motivational self-system is the L2 learning experience which is concerned with the ongoing process of shaping day by day motivation during the course of language learning (Ushioda, 2011). It, as Dörnyei (2009) argues, "Concerns situated, executive motive related to the immediate learning environment and experience" (p.29). This dimension is significant as it results from the interaction between prior experiences and the present L2 learning environment (Macintyre, Mackinnon & Clement, 2009). The L2 learning experience is concerned with learners' attitudes toward second language learning and can be affected by situation-specific incentives related to the immediate learning environment and experience. In the studies mentioned above (Csizér and Kormos, 2009; Taguchi et al., 2009), this dimension of the L2 motivational self-system showed the strongest impact on motivated behavior.

To develop a deeper understanding of motivational factors in L2 acquisition, this study review chose to examine the theoretical framework of L2MSS, proposed by Dörnyei (2005) and Dörnyei and Ushioda (2009). Three main dimensions of L2MSS were examined as a foundation for the following study where the sample participants of this study were non-native speaker of English in the Solukhumbu District.

The participants studied at different public and private institutions throughout Solukhumbu District. The total number of participants comprises 120 people, 78 were male and 42 were female. The age range of the participants were 68 between 18-20,

20 between 21-23, 17 between 24-26, and 13 between 27-30 years of age. All of these students had studied English from first grade as a compulsory subject. The formal English instruction they received was 3.5 to 4 hours every week out of 220 days of the school year. Though the participants were not asked to report their English proficiency level or given a standardized test to measure their level of English, all passed the 10<sup>th</sup> grade final English examination. Out of 120 participants, 58 of the participant's parents were illiterate, 44 held a high school degree, 13 with undergraduate, and 5 of them held master's graduate. The education level of the participants was categorized as high school, bachelor degree, and master's degree, with 93 participants having earned a high school degree, 22 with a bachelor degree, and five with a master's degree.

The research was conducted at a high school and college located in the rural district of Nepal named as Solukhumbu. Solukhumbu lies on the northern part of Nepal bordering China. Some of the main areas in the district are Lukla, Namche, Phaplu, Salleri, etc. The data was collected in the education institute located in Phaplu and Salleri. Phaplu is 76 miles away from the Kathmandu international airport, Nepal. The data were collected in Institutions as follows:

1. Jana Jagriti Higher Secondary School, Salleri
2. Mountain Higher Secondary School, Salleri
3. White hills higher secondary school, Salleri
4. Solukhumbu Multiple Campus, Salleri
5. Phaplu Community Higher Secondary School, Phaplu

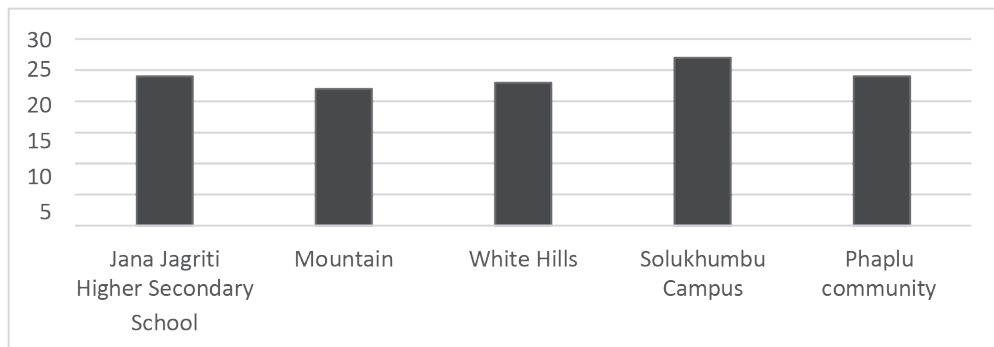


Figure 1: Distribution of Survey

Out of 120 surveys, 24 were collected from Jana Jagriti Higher Secondary School, 22 were collected from Mountain Higher Secondary school, 23 were collected from white hills Higher Secondary School, 24 were collected from Phaplu Community Higher secondary school and 27 data was collected from Solukhumbu multiple campus.

The questionnaire was designed and validated by The School of English Studies of The University of Nottingham, UK. It followed the theoretical framework of the L2 Motivational Self- System (Dörnyei, 2005; 2009) and was adapted and implemented in three recent studies on the L2 Motivational Self System, -: 1) Ryan (2009); 2) Papi (2010); and 3) Islam et al. (2013). The questionnaire was composed of three parts totaling 56 questions-: 1) six background questions (eg. Age, Gender, education level etc.); 2) nine questions regarding participant's cultural interest and attitudes towards L2 community; and 3) 41 statements about English language learning motivational variables. Nine of 50 items were questions with a 5-point Likert scale with a frequency range ranked from, very much to not at all. The remaining questions were determined by a 6 point Likert scales, with a strongly agree to strongly disagree scale.

In conclusion, the finding of the study shows that the participants are more inclined to get motivated by Instrumentality prevention compared to other factors except three dimensions of Dörnyei's L2 motivational self-system. The positive attitudes towards the L2 community are also motivating learners to learn English. Concerning the three dimensions of Dörnyei's L2 motivational self-system, ideal L2 self proves to have the strongest impact in motivating the participants with strong correlation except English anxiety and ought to L2 self. The r-value obtained by ideal L2 self- indicated that the participants are more likely got motivated by their desire to be like the speaker they admire. The average mean score is among the three i.e., ideal L2 self, the-ought to L2 self and L2 learning experience, the highest is scored by ideal L2 self by 5.03 where L2 learning experience has 4.51 and the -ought to L2 self has the same value of 4.51. This again reveals that the learners are intended to get motivated by ideal L2 self. Out of four hypothesis that the researcher made one was invalid and other three were valid.

The result has shown that only two dimension of L2 motivational self- system impact on language learning. The two dimensions that impacted learning language among the rural Nepalese college level learners are ideal L2 self and L2 learning experience. The ideal L2 self comes to be the most powerful factor to motivate learners 'achievement and the other is L2 learning experience. The ideal L2 self- proved that learners intended to study more if they desire to achieve their goal from their self-realization. The-ought to self on the other hand has shown what external pressure could produce in promoting students' motivation to achieve their goal. The study also explain how the anxiety level of the learners rise and demotivate students to learn instead of motivation. The English anxiety just being correlated with milieu, ought to L2 self and instrumental promotion proves that the Nepalese college level learners in the rural district Solukhumbu of Nepal won't be motivated through the extrinsic motivation. Similarly, several other factors that motivate learners such as cultural interest, attitudes towards L2 community, instrumentality prevention, and milieu.

The study reveals that motivation can be an interesting tool to be used in teaching by teacher. Since this study has shown some interesting results such as positive

attributes of learner's behavior towards attitudes on L2 community, cultural interest, instrumentality prevention and the influencing factors regarding motivation can be applied to the Nepalese learners in Solukhumbu district in helping them to achieve their goals in learning a language. First, teachers are recommended to interpret different motivational learner types and from the most influential motivational factors, teachers can emphasize certain tasks and behaviors related to ideal image as well as their learning experience. Second, since Nepalese classrooms in rural areas lack basic things required for effective teaching and learning, teacher can employ motivational strategies to make their teaching effective. Third, teachers need to help students to think of their future selves and make that their learning goal so that it can be expected to result in motivated behavior with high learning achievements.

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