EXPLORING MOTIVATION IN EFL LEARNING: A CASE STUDY OF ELEMENTARY STUDENTS IN A RURAL AREA

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ABSTRACT

Motivation is a key factor in determining success in foreign and second language learning. However, the relationship between motivation and intended effort, "a mediating factor between motivation and success" (Papi, 2010, p. 468), has been studied mostly quantitatively rather than qualitatively, and even fewer studies have addressed this relationship among elementary school students in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, especially in rural districts. In response, this study examined such a relationship qualitatively drawing on Dörnyei's (2005) L2 Motivational Self System as the theoretical lens in a fifth grade class in Taiwan. The purpose was to bridge the divide between rural and urban contexts. Data collection involved participants' drawings and written responses to motivation-related questions, interviews, and the researcher's observations and reflection journal. The study found no direct or linear link between motivation to study English and intended effort. In addition, this relationship was social. Furthermore, participants' learning experiences played a critical and complex role in mediating intended effort. The findings suggest that teachers should create motivated learning experiences rather than try to motivate students through tests.

Key Words: motivation, motivational L2 self, motivational L2 self in EFL learning

INTRODUCTION

That motivation plays a key role in L2 learning is widely accepted (Moskovsky, Racheva, Assulaimani, & Harkins, 2016). Motivation is a driving force in L2 learning, determining the amount of effort learners are willing to expend (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010) on initiating and sustaining their learning (Dörnyei, 2005). Thus,

motivation is "one of the key factors determining success in foreign/second language (L2) learning" (Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007, p. 153).

The above consensus emerged from a long history of L2 motivation research dating back to the 1950s and 1960s, when Canadian psychologist Robert C. Gardner and his associates proposed a social model of motivation in which English as a Second Language (ESL) learners' integrativeness and attitudes toward L2 learning were two antecedents of motivation (Gardner, 1985; see also Moskovsky et al., 2016). Integrativeness involves learners' attitudes toward the L2 community, namely their desire to become part of it (Csizér, 2019; Moskovsky et al., 2016; Papi, 2010), a dimension that has been widely researched (Dörnyei, 2005). However, Gardner's theory was not sufficient to embrace cognitive or process theories or to address the English as Foreign Language (EFL) context (Csizér, 2019; Dörnyei, 2005; Papi, 2010).

To address this gap, Dörnyei (2005) proposed the L2 Motivational Self System for EFL contexts based on dynamic theories of self-concept, self-regulation, and self-control, drawing on psychology theories of possible self (Markus & Nurius, 1986) and self-discrepancy (Higgins, 1987) (Dörnyei, 2005; see also Csizér, 2019), and his own empirical studies. Markus and Nurius (1986) showed a link between cognition and motivation by suggesting that self-concept mediates behaviors. In their view, "possible selves represent individuals' ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming" (p. 954). In particular, Higgins (1987) proposed three domains of self: actual, ideal (wish, hopes, and aspirations), and ought-to self (responsibility and obligation), and claimed that attempts to bridge the discrepancy between actual and ideal or ought-to self created motivation.

Dörnyei's (2005) model embraces cognitive aspects of imagined or virtual communities that can address those EFL learners who have little to no access to the L2 outside of the classroom and thus find it difficult to identify with any target language group (Csizér, 2019; Moskovsky et al., 2016; Papi, 2010). Today, Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System has become widely researched, and relevant articles have been published almost weekly in major international journals (Csizér, 2019). However, few have taken an in-depth look at EFL elementary learners, especially those living in rural areas, a group worthy of special attention in the era of English as a global language, with many countries extending the years of English learning down to that level and thus widening the gap between rural

and urban contexts as students in rural districts show lower motivation and English proficiency and have fewer models to whom to aspire (Lamb, 2012). Thus, drawing on Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System, the present qualitative study examined the relationship between motivation and intended effort with fifth grade students in the Taiwanese context. The purpose of the study was to promote younger students' motivation in a rural area. The following section first explains Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System.

The L2 Motivational Self System

Dörnyei's (2005) motivational self theory proposes possible selves as a motivational mechanism controlling and regulating behaviors and actions and thus linking self and action. His L2 Motivational Self System (or self-guides) involves three components: Ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, and L2 learning experience.

Ideal L2 self involves two elements: An imagined future L2 self involving the person the learner aspires to become, personal goals, growth, and desired L2 competence, and the impetus to bridge the gap between future and current L2; taken together, these generate motivation (Dörnyei, 2005). This imagined future L2 self makes it theoretically possible to use the L2 to communicate with foreigners in the learner's own or the target language country or to obtain a job, job promotion, or a higher income (Dörnyei & Taguchi 2010; Papi, 2010; Taguchi, Magid, & Papi, 2009). Motivation is generated when an individual bridges the gap between actual and ideal (Csizér, 2019; Dörnyei, 2005).

In contrast, the ought-to L2 self has a prevention focus (Dörnyei, 2005, 2008). Individuals are motivated through the external force imposed on them or driving them to fulfill obligations or avoid negative outcomes such as avoiding obtaining low grades or failing a course or graduation, meeting others' expectations, or gaining recognition and respect from family, teachers, or peers (Dörnyei & Taguchi 2010; Papi, 2010; Taguchi et al., 2009).

Finally, L2 learning experience "concerns situation-specific motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience," with an individual being motivated through a positive, enjoyable, and pleasant learning environment (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 106).

Relevant Studies of the L2 Motivational Self System

Research relevant to the L2 Motivational Self System uses intended effort as a criterion measure, as explained by Al-Hoorie (2018), who conducted a meta-analysis of selected quantitative studies from journals. Intended effort refers to the extended time and work devoted to learning English, or "a mediating factor between motivation and success" (Papi, 2010, p. 468) and is elicited in questionnaires through statements such as "I would like to spend lots of time studying English" and "I am prepared to expend a lot of effort in learning English" (p. 477). Meanwhile, learning experience is typically surveyed through questions about attitudes toward English classes such as "Do you like the atmosphere of your English classes?" and "Do you find learning English interesting?" (Taguchi et al., 2009, pp. 95-96).

These studies reveal that all three components of the Motivational L2 Self System correlate with intended effort to learn EFL in contexts such as Hungary, Japan, Iran, and China, (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2002; Lamb, 2012; Moskovsky et al, 2016; Papi, 2010; Rajab, Far, & Etemadzadeh, 2012; Taguchi et al., 2009). More specifically, these studies show a weak link between ought-to L2 self and intended effort, while ideal L2 self and learning experience show a stronger correlation, which can be attributed to individuals expending minimum effort to meet requirements or others' expectations (Csizér, 2019) or to the fact that ought-to L2 self can be a demotivating factor when an individual faces external pressure to learn the language (Al-Hoorie, 2018). In fact, learning experience showed the strongest correlation with intended effort in Lamb's (2012) study of three Indonesian contexts (metropolitan city, provincial town, and rural district), with teachers having a greater impact on shaping students' positive attitudes, leading to more effort.

These scholars have also shown a degree of variation between the L2 Motivational Self System and intended effort. For example, Papi's (2010) study revealed that the correlation between ideal L2 self and intended effort is mediated by learning experience as an imagined future self is motivated if learners perceive an accessible and appropriate learning environment. Taguchi et al. (2009) revealed a correlation between ideal L2 self and ought-to self by finding a noticeable correlation between some aspects of instrumental promotion (ideal L2 self) and ought-to self in Chinese and Iranian contexts with studying English focusing on future promotion or further study (ideal L2 self) to gain a high salary, support one's family (ought-to L2 self), or meet parental expectations. Furthermore, these

researchers found that those questionnaire statements related to studying English for the purpose of going overseas captured both ideal L2 self (own desire to go) and ought-to L2 self (imposed by the company to work overseas).

Additional variables, including emotion, achievement, and sociocultural and geopolitical factors have been added to studies to address the multidimensional aspects of self-guides and intended effort. Papi (2010) found that ideal L2 self and learning experience decreased learners' anxiety while ought-to L2 self significantly raised it. Papi also found that English-related anxiety leads to and maintains intention rather than action toward intended effort. Moskovsky et al. (2016) found no correlation between three motivational self components and achievement due to the gap between intended and actual action. Lamb (2012) showed that such a correlation reflects geopolitical differences (metropolis, provincial town, and rural district), with his adolescent participants in metropolitan contexts showing the strongest correlation between ideal L2 self and intended effort while those in rural districts revealed the lowest, a difference Lamb attributes to students in the former setting having more encounters with role models. However, the correlation between learning experience and intended effort was strong in all three contexts.

Although these studies contribute greatly to our understanding of the relationship between the L2 Motivational Self System and intended effort, they are not sufficient in addressing several issues. First, self-guides listed in questionnaires are conceptualized as "static constructs" or "fixed 'targets' that the individual strives to achieve or live up to" (Henry, 2015, p.83), whereas the self or L2 Motivational Self Systems are dynamic (Henry, 2015; Kim, 2009; Mercer, 2016). For example, Kim's (2009) longitudinal study found that one of his Korean ESL participants revealed a changeable and diverse future self whose goals in studying English were evolving and conflicting. Second, these studies were difficult to show individual variation (Al-Hoorie, 2018; Csizér, 2019). In particular, Al-Hoorie (2018) argues that these studies pay little attention to the effects of individual characteristics. Kim's qualitative study (2009) found that individuals vary in degree of internationalization of self-guides such as ought-to L2 self. Csizér (2019) thus posits that qualitative studies are required to take a deeper look at individual variation in the learning process. Third, these studies ignore the interaction between individual and context. Lamb's (2009) longitudinal qualitative case study found that self-guides were impacted by the context and by individuals' exercise of agency as individual self-guides determine participation in class

activities. Fourth, the research methodologies (questionnaires) used in these studies lacked participants' self-reports and were designed from researchers' perspective (Higgins, 1987; see also Al-Hoorie, 2018), in which items listed in survey questions tap into "stable personality traits" (Lamb, 2009, p. 230). Lamb also argues that researcher's questions may distort the participants' replies to questions about how they bridge the gap between ideal and ought-to self as his adolescent participants' self-guides were elicited through talk with the researcher. Thus, these limitations on assigned attributes in questionnaires are particularly problematic in studies of children, whose views are difficult for adults to capture. Fifth, young students' own points of view on this connection remain unclear as these studies were conducted mainly at higher secondary or above levels (Lamb, 2012). Finally, these studies investigated learners in urban areas rather than rural districts (Lamb, 2012). Despite all the above challenges, quantitative studies have dominated the field (Csizér, 2019).

To fill this gap, this study was conducted qualitatively in an elementary school in a rural area of Eastern Taiwan in order to take a deep look at EFL students' perspectives relevant to the English motivational self system and intended effort. The study aimed to fulfill the same goal as some qualitative studies (e.g., Kim, 2009; Lamb, 2009) that enabled in-depth insights to the field (Csizér, 2019). The research question was: What is the relationship between students' English motivational self system and intended effort in EFL learning?

This study is significant in that it fills a major research gap by exploring motivation for EFL learning in rural settings and could thus be a critical step toward bridging the socioeconomic divide between rural and urban contexts. The ultimate aim is to mediate students' negative learning attitudes in the early stages of EFL learning. For example, students in rural districts of Eastern Taiwan, a region considered less economically developed than Western and Northern Taiwan (including Taipei, the capital), often show low motivation in EFL learning along with lower average scores. In particular, indigenous students in rural districts often show only "limited success" in EFL learning (Lin & Yang, 2015, p. 228; see also Lin, 2008). As the rural district chosen for this study involved mainly indigenous people, below is a brief introduction to this population.

Indigenous groups in Taiwan are ethnically Austronesian (Council of Indigenous People, 2019), involving various tribes and constituting 2% of Taiwan's population, the majority of which consists of Han Chinese (which subdivide into two different cultural groups). Indigenous groups are socialized into a Han-dominated

society by attending a Han-dominated educational system and finding jobs or marketing their farm produce in Han-dominated communities. Those who live in mountain areas tend to preserve their culture more successfully. (See also Tseng, 2017).

This is a first-phase study of teaching research in which I examine students' English motivational self system and intended effort in EFL classrooms prior to implementing an intervention focusing on a motivated learning experience.

METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study elicited participants' perspectives in order to take a deep look at the relationship between their English motivational self system and intended effort. The search for a suitable research site (an elementary school in a rural area) and participants was guided by the research question and "purposeful sampling" (Lincoln & Guba, 1986, p. 102).

Context and Participants

Kung-Hsien elementary school (all names in this study are pseudonyms) was chosen based on its willingness to participate, location, and available schedule after I visited several potential sites in rural Eastern Taiwan. This school is located within an indigenous tribe. It is a small school, with only over 30 students from first grade to sixth grade, 80 percent of them indigenous and 20 percent ethnic Han. Most are from low socioeconomic backgrounds. According to the Principal, the indigenous students have been highly socialized into the dominant Han culture.

Following negotiation with the school, the study was conducted in a fifth grade class, with all five students (three indigenous males and two Han females) participating in the research. All three indigenous students live among their tribe close to the school, while one Han student also lives with the tribe, where her parents have a business. The other Han student lives nearby due to her parents' job or in a city according to her parents' schedule. The three indigenous students' parents are part-time workers, with educational levels ranging from middle to senior high school. The two Han students' parents have regular jobs, holding junior college to college degrees. The participants were identified by their English teacher as proficient (S3: male, indigenous; S5: female, Han), struggling (S1: female, Han; S2: male, indigenous), and struggling and diagnosed as having

reading difficulties (S4: male, indigenous).

Like all schools in Taiwan, this school follows national curriculum guidelines for language teaching, which mandate two weekly classes (40-minute period for a class) for English from third grade to sixth grade. EFL teachers are required to use English textbooks written according to national guidelines, practice grammatical patterns and vocabulary and follow the material at a set pace. The textbook lessons used for this grade each begin with dialogues with embedded sentences patterns and vocabulary followed by several practice sessions focusing on substitution drills and phonic practice.

Take one typical class (40-minute period) on the lesson entitled "The noodles smell good" (Chen, 2014, p. 1) as an example. The English teacher focused on repetition and imitation of key new vocabulary and sentence patterns in the following sequence. First, the students formed two groups and played a game, competing on who could first touch on the whiteboard an English word, printed on a flashcard, dictated by the English teacher. The students then repeated each word after the teacher twice. Second, the students read aloud dialogues from the lesson (pp. 1-4) once with assistance from the teacher. Students were then required to repeat two key words ("smell" and "taste") nine to ten times each after their phonics were taught. Next, they were required to practice three sentence patterns from the dialogues they could not read aloud well by repeating difficult words and then reading each sentence aloud three to six times. Third, the students practiced substitution drills, substituting words in the blanks in sentences in two practice sessions (A and B), with one acting as questioner, the other as replier after the teacher did a demonstration and the students repeated after her. The teacher then explained grammar. Fourth, all students practiced sessions A and B together. Students were then required to substitute with each English word shown by the teacher. Finally, the students wrote in their workbook and filled in blanks for these sentence patterns, and then each group read one item aloud.

Research Design

To collect data relevant to the research question on the relationship between students' English motivational self system and intended effort, the research was designed to invite participants to express their thoughts on the subject through drawing and writing, a choice of research tools due to several considerations. First, communication is multimodal (Jewitt, 2005, 2008; Kenner & Kress,

2003), and multimodality has the potential to embrace diverse students with diverse multimodal abilities, including visuals, drawing, music, and handicrafts (Ajayi, 2009). Second, multimodal data collection can facilitate expression, especially for those students whose strength is drawing and who can express their thoughts more easily through that medium, such as young children and disadvantaged students.

To investigate the L2 Motivational Self System and intended effort, questionnaires were designed to invite participants to answer prompts on three different sheets of paper, each guided by one component of motivational L2 self: Ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, and L2 learning experience. For each self, they had to draw below the prompt written at the top of the sheet (see below) and then write in Chinese in reply to another prompt relevant to intended effort at the bottom of the sheet below their drawing. For each self, the prompt was adapted from its definition.

For ideal L2 self, the prompt was designed to meet the requirements of the definition by asking participants to envision an imagined future L2 self. However, to lower the conceptual load for fifth grade students, participants were simply asked to identify who they aspired to be. Thus, they had to draw who they saw as an ideal English user according to the written prompt (in Chinese): "Draw someone who knows English (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) as you would like to be yourself." As regards the intended effort participants devoted to bridge the gap between present and future self, they were asked to write a reply to the prompt: "What do you need to do to reach this?"

In contrast, for the ought-to English self, prompts were designed for participants to identify the set of extrinsic forces or external factors impacting them, as follows: "Draw people and all the things that affect your English learning." As regards intended effort, participants were asked to write in Chinese in response to the request: "Identify above what makes you want to learn English very much and what makes you *not* want to learn English and why."

Finally, for learning experience, a questionnaire invited participants to identify positive learning experiences and to write about the reasons for these experiences, as follows: "Draw English teaching activities that make you want to learn English and write about why these activities make you want to learn English."

Data Collection

Background information questionnaire

Each participant was first asked to complete a questionnaire to enable the collection of background information relevant to their family, English learning experience, and attitude toward English.

Drawing and writing

Participants responded to the prompts relevant to their motivational English self system and intended effort (as stated above) after they completed the background information questionnaire.

Interviews with participants

After participants completed the above two steps, they were interviewed by the researcher on a one-to-one basis based on their drawings and written responses. However, additional interview questions on each self as well as intended effort were included to elicit further information. For example, for ideal English self, the questions addressed their wish for future English proficiency, their intention to use English in the future, the efforts they needed to make to achieve the above goals, and possibilities to devote further time and effort to EFL learning. For the ought-to English self, questions addressed the external impacts of their intended effort on their EFL learning. Finally, for learning experience, they were asked to describe their best learning experience and favorite teaching activities. Data collection was completed within a three-hour visit, with drawing and writing taking 1 hour 20 minutes and interviews about 15 minutes for each participant. All interviews were audio- and video-recorded and transcribed in Chinese and relevant excerpts were translated into English by the researcher.

Interviews with the English teacher and administrators

Interviews were also conducted with the English teacher and school administrators: two administrators in charge of academic affairs and the school Principal. The purpose was to learn about the participants' family and English learning backgrounds and English language levels, the school, and school policy regarding the teaching of English. All interviews were on a one-to-one basis and lasted about one hour each.

Reflection Journal

I documented my observations of the school context, insights into participants' drawing and writing, and the research design in a reflection journal. The English teacher's teaching was observed and a typical class was video-taped.

Data Analysis

In this qualitative study, data analysis was first conducted inductively (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Second, the data, including each participant's drawings and writings and transcripts of interviews, were further categorized based on the research question and the theoretical lens of Dörnyei's (2005) three motivational English self categories: Ideal self, ought-to self, and learning experience, each corresponding to intended effort. However, each participant's drawings under each self were further re-categorized within the self to which they belonged. For example, if drawings and words on ought-to self were judged by the researcher to belong to ideal self (e.g., going abroad), these were re-categorized accordingly.

The third step was to read and re-read the categories in order to identify patterns, described by Miles & Huberman (1984) as "recurrences" and "whys" (p. 67). The recurrent theme was participants' conflicting and contradictory perceptions within, between, and among selves and intended effort. For example, S5 showed her ideal English self in wishing to go abroad but she withheld such effort because she is unable to finance such a trip. Each participant had different conflicting points and these were therefore examined separately.

The next step was to identify connections across patterns. As the patterns showed complex and even conflicting relationships, to obtain a clearer picture, I created a web-like representation showing each individual in separate webs. Each web was designed by placing each self at the top and intended effort at the bottom and using arrows to show their relationships. Incidences relevant to each self or intended effort were placed next to these. This web was modified several times and further developed, as explained in the following paragraphs and shown in Figure 2. Due to space constraints, only three participants' data representing three distinct features and both a proficient learner (S5) and struggling learners (S2 and S1) will be presented here.

Validating the Research

This qualitative study was validated through the use of triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Maxwell, 2005). Triangulation is accomplished by "collecting information from a diverse range of individuals and settings, using a variety of methods" (Maxwell, 2005, p. 112). This study involved a diverse range of participants as well as various methods, namely drawings and written words, interviews, class observations, field notes, and a reflection journal.

As regards member checking, which consists of "systematically soliciting feedback about your data and conclusions from the people you are studying" (Maxwell, 2005, p. 111), I continuously solicited, verified, and clarified responses from participants during interviews. Taking S2 as an example, I required this participant to describe his drawing and writing (Figure 6) as well as what he said by asking the following questions: "What is this situation? Could you describe it?" (line 3, Excerpt 1), "Why?" (line 5), and then asking him to explain his responses (lines 7, 9). The aim was to reduce researcher bias. For example, his description of this drawing "Superman" and "a fiercer Superman" (Figure 6) differed from what I saw, namely "a female-like human being."

This study was also validated through peer debriefing, "a process of exposing oneself to a disinterested peer in a manner paralleling an analytic session" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 306) in order to further clarify and probe for researcher bias. I debriefed with various scholars before and during data collection and analysis to assist me in reframing both processes and to see them from different angles.

RESULTS

The qualitative findings of this study suggest that the relationship between motivation and success is dynamic, complex, and social and that participants' learning experiences play a critical and complex role in mediating intended effort. In the following, S5's, S2's, and S1's L2 (here English) Motivational Self System will be introduced separately, each of which will begin with a brief introduction to that student's background.

S5's L2 Motivational Self System

S5's attitude toward English, proficiency, learning, and family background will be introduced first. This student showed a moderate liking for English. She was a proficient English learner as identified by her English teacher, yet she labeled herself a moderate or even low-proficiency learner. She began learning English from third grade and attended a tutoring center. Her father strongly encouraged her to learn English. Both her parents held college degrees. She was very articulate during the interview.

S5's future goal was to master English as required by the school. In the interview, she stated that her aim was to master basic English and vocabulary and sentences competently enough to communicate with foreign visitors to Taiwan. She aspired to be like her main room teacher, showing him in her drawing of ideal English self because he knew all the English in her workbook, and she set herself the goal of being like him: "I need to concentrate in the class and do whatever the teacher dictates," she said. Her other goal was to score high on tests. She was pressured to learn English and reported feeling tired about memorizing words before tests. But if she did not memorize words, she could not get a good score and felt upset.

S5 showed conflicts between ideal English self and reality, within ideal English selves, and between ought-to English self and learning experience, as shown in the following.

Conflict between ideal English self and reality

S5's ideal English self faced a challenge from reality. Her ideal English self was expressed in her drawing of her ought-to English self (Figure 1), which she created in response to being asked to "draw people or all the things that affect your English learning." That she was motivated by envisioning herself flying to the US to study there was categorized as ideal self, defined as imagined future L2 self using English and involving communicating while living or studying abroad (Dörnyei & Taguchi 2010; Taguchi et al., 2009). As she explained during her interview:

> This is the sea [pointing to the blue waves in the bottom right portion], this is the US [pointing to 美國, the Chinese characters for "US"]. When you fly to the US, you need to learn English.

Figure 1. S5's drawing of ought-to English self

However, S5 ran into obstacles derived from reality when it came to fulfilling her ideal English self and thus withheld intended effort. As she explained during the interview, she foresaw no possibility of going to the US "because I do not have enough funds." Later, she stated that she traveled little, commenting: "I see no difference between learning and not learning English. After all, I only went abroad once [to a nearby Asian country]," she stated while explaining her rationale for not being willing to learn English. Later, she commented: "I am not willing to spend time studying English. I see no importance in English. If I don't go abroad, basically, I won't have any opportunities to use it" in response to questions during her interview on her willingness to spend time and effort learning English. Her point of view is expressed in Figure 2 below, which shows going to the US as pointing toward intended effort while taking a detour related to financing such a trip and the low probability of doing so.

Conflict within ideal English selves

S5 arrived at conflicting conclusions when she revealed her ideal English self along with its instrumentality and promotional focus, or studying English as a benefit for getting a job (Taguchi et al., 2009). S5 stated her vision of the use of English for her future job and of learning English to communicate with foreigners. "If a foreigner comes to Taiwan and I'm a tour guide, I can translate for them." Yet later she replied "No" to a question about being a tour guide as a job in the future. This is also shown in Figure 2, where being a tour guide points to intended effort to learn English with a detour to no possibility of taking such a job.
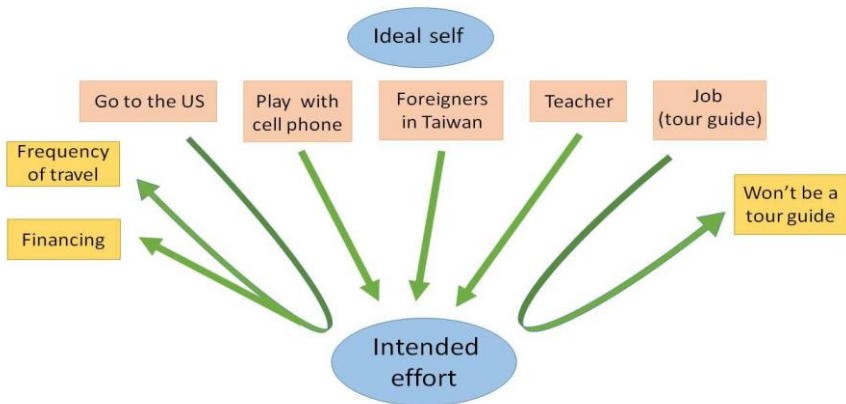

Figure 2. S5's relationship between ideal English self and intended effort

However, S5 was willing to make efforts to learn English in two cases: playing with her cell phone and meeting foreigners in Taiwan, as shown in Figure 2, which shows arrows pointing toward intended effort. In her Chinese commentary (Figure 1), she wrote: "When I play a game, it's all in English, and I can't read it." During her interview, she explained that "Basically, when I play with my cell phone, I get to the US and the UK and then I can't understand. Then, I feel I need to learn English; otherwise I can't read."

Conflict between ought-to English self and learning experience

S5 also revealed a conflict between ought-to English self and learning experience. Her father strongly encouraged her to learn English while her mother held a more moderate attitude. As she

expressed it (see also her written Chinese in Figure 1): "My father forces me to learn English, but I don't want to learn because I need to go to an after-school tutoring center." She further explained that she feared going to a tutoring center because she was punished for doing her homework slowly and for failing to memorize vocabulary. She thus violated her parents' expectations that she should learn English as a result of an unpleasant learning experience. Thus, parental expectations led to a detour via the tutoring center rather than to intended effort (Figure 3).
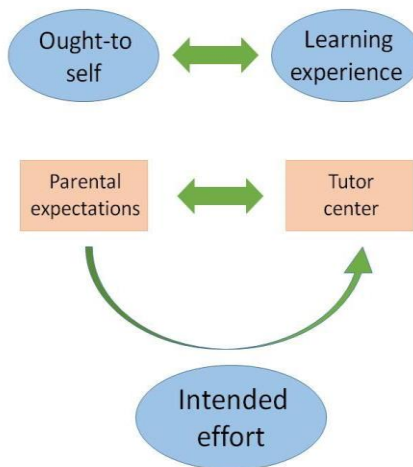

Figure 3. S5's relationship between ought-to English self and intended effort

S2's L2 Motivational Self System

Unlike S5, S2 showed a different attitude toward English, proficiency, and learning as well as a differing family background. S2 held an ambivalent attitude toward English. He first said that he liked English but later that he disliked it. He was a struggling and slow learner as identified by his English teacher, but he perceived himself as proficient. He began learning English from third grade and had never attended a tutoring center. S2's desired English competence involved "scoring 100 in the test" and "being like an American." To achieve the latter, he suggested memorizing words gradually. Both his parents were middle school graduates and held part-time jobs but had a relaxed attitude toward finding work. S2 was quieter than S5

during the interview and failed to answer some of the questions and often nodded or shook his head to express "yes" or "no."

Conflict between motivational components

S2 showed a conflict between ideal English self, ought-to English self, and learning experience. He drew an American for his ideal English self and stated that he wanted to be like him (Figure 4). He described his drawing as "an American who has blond hair, smokes, and chews betel nuts." He also explained that he drew a heart to show that smoke was inhaled into the heart, correcting this to "lungs" after I questioned him on this word choice. His written response to how he proposed to reach such a goal was: "I need to learn more, read aloud 30 times, read one more time, and read the textbook's lesson many times." (See the Chinese words at the bottom of Figure 4 and a summary of his ideal self and intended effort in Figure 5).

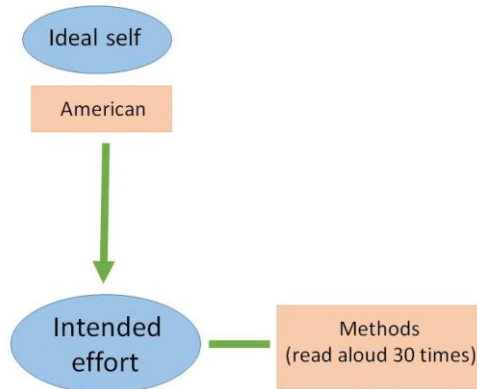*Figure 4.* S2's drawing of his ideal English self

Figure 5. S2's relationship between ideal English self and intended effort

However, S2's proposal for reaching his ideal English self, namely reading and re-reading the class materials aloud, was a response to the teacher's expectations as well as to literacy practices and learning experiences he hated. It took him a while to arrive at such a point during his explanation of his drawing, a female-like human being (Figure 6), as his ought-to English self. Replying to a question about what he had drawn, he said: "Superman" and "a fiercer Superman." When he was further asked twice to clarify how Superman impacted his English learning, he responded that "he [Superman] is constantly flying around my brain" and "I can't figure it out." Asked again to clarify this point, he answered: "Because the teacher gives us the most difficult questions, and then I can't figure out what the answer is" and "He [Superman] is constantly flying around and keeping me from figuring out the written response," thus blaming Superman for his failure at learning. S2 finally stated that his most hated learning experience was when he was asked to read aloud and to clarify his written responses (Chinese words, bottom of Figure 6). The following is the exchange between S2 and the researcher (T):

Excerpt 1

T: Could you read this [his written Chinese] for me?
S2: When I see the teacher, I don't want to learn English.
T: What is this situation? Could you describe it?

S2. Superman in my brain says to me: "I don't want to learn English."
T: Why?
S2: Because he himself doesn't want to learn English.
T: Why? Why doesn't he want to learn English?
S2: The teacher asks us to repeat when we can't read aloud well. So we constantly read aloud again and again. So I don't want to learn English.
T: Why don't you want to read aloud again and again?
S2: I just want to read aloud once.

S2 revealed his unwillingness to learn English because of the constant repetition required by the teacher. Instead, he expressed his preference for reading only once. However, this conflicts with the goal he set for himself, namely reading 30 times in order to reach his ideal English self as an American, thus compromising the effort needed to reach such a target. Later, he stated that he had not fulfilled his goal but that he would do so once he was a senior high school student because there would be tests every day. This is summarized in Figure 7, in which his ought-to English self makes a detour from intended effort to teacher's difficult questions and repetition.

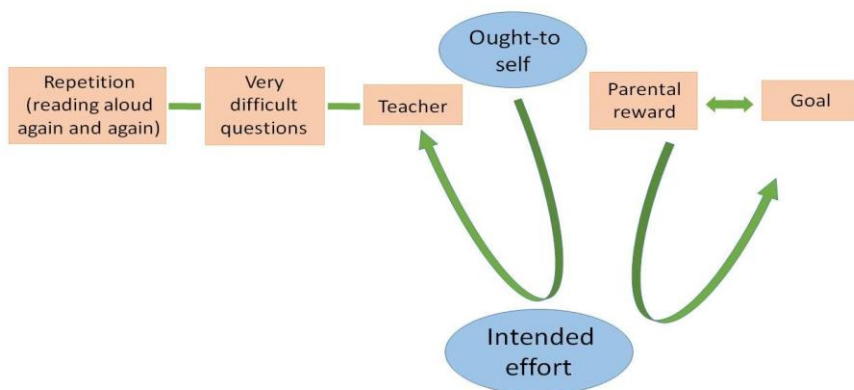*Figure 6.* S2's drawing of his ought-to English self

Figure 7. S2's ought-to English self and intended effort

Conflict within ought-to English self

S2 showed a conflict between meeting his parents' expectations and intended effort. He expressed how he wished to score 100 on tests because this would bring him a red envelope [in which money is inserted and given to children during Lunar New Year as a Taiwanese custom] from his mother. "I already promised mom I'll get 100 on the English test," he said. However, he shook his head at his willingness to devote effort and energy to learning English. Thus, in Figure 7, parental reward is a detour from the goal he set for himself.

S1's L2 Motivational System

S1's attitude toward English was average and she was a struggling learner in the class. She was identified by her English teacher as weak in oral and listening skills. She labeled her English proficiency as average. S1 began learning English from third grade and had never attended a tutoring center. Her parents pay attention to her English learning. Her father holds a regular job and her mother is a housewife and runs a business that hosts travelers. Her parents hold junior college degrees.

Conflict within ought-to English self

For S1, tests (here of English) contradicted extrinsic forces impacting her motivation and intended effort. S1 was motivated to

study English by tests. In response to a question about the time and effort she devotes to learning English, she replied: "Average. I will study for several weeks before tests." She was motivated as she wished to score 90.

However, S1 was also demotivated by tests. She expressed how she does not know what more to study after each test, as she further explains Excerpt 2 below. Moreover, her goal of scoring 90 was accompanied by the literacy practices that annoyed her, namely memorizing more words and reading aloud more. She expressed that she felt pressured, commenting that "It's annoying to memorize so many words" and "Some words are so long that I can't memorize them." Thus, her desired test score motivated her to make efforts to learn English even though this is a detour for the above two reasons (Figure 9).

Furthermore, S1 was also demotivated by tests when she was subjected to an inferior position in a competitive situation. S1 disked S3's statement that he "beat" her on a test score, as expressed in her drawing on ought-to English self (Figure 8) involving herself (left) and S3 (right) sitting next to her and conversing with her. The dialogues (in balloon format) show tests and scores. (Note that students' names have been masked and the English translation of the Chinese dialogue has been numbered line by line in a sequence corresponding to Chinese punctuation marks.)

Figure 8. S1's drawing of her ought-to English self

	1. See, I got 100. What did you get?
2. *I got 87.*	3. Very bad!
4. *Annoying!*	5. My score is higher than yours. Super great! I beat you!
6. *Oh, Yeah! Really great! Roll the eyes!*	

Being required to explain "Roll the eyes," S1 said: "His bragging about himself is very annoying" and "I feel upset to hear that." S1 also read aloud the Chinese words written at the bottom of the paper:" 1. A classmate who loves to brag about himself very much; and 2. Makes me lose confidence and not want to learn English." She further clarified these words by saying: "I'm very annoyed because he's constantly bragging about himself. Annoyed!" and "I hate it. I hate others who do something like that." Evidently, S1 was demotivated to learn English by S3's behavior.

Conflict links within ought-to English self

In the above exchanges, S1 showed that tests served to demotivate her when S3 bragged about his score. She demonstrated a link between her feelings toward S3's behavior and her parents' expectations. The exchange between the researcher (T) and S1 below demonstrates how three extrinsic forces—tests, classmates' behavior, and parental expectations—are linked.

Excerpt 2

T: What score should a confident person get?
S1: Over 85.
T: What if you can't get over 85?
S1: If I get below 80, I think of tearing up the test sheet.
T: Why?
S1: Because I'll be scolded for getting a low score.
T: By whom?
S1: By my mom.
T: What will she say?
S1: "Why didn't you do well on the test? S3 did better than you."

T: Did he do better than you?
S1: Yes.

The above excerpt confirms that three extrinsic forces are linked, in particular S1 mother's expectations of her test scores compared to S3's, which in turn leads S1 to hate S3's bragging behavior and demotivates her to English learning.

However, S1 does not know how to live up to her parents' expectations in terms of improving her scores. When asked whether she would study English after hearing her mother's comments, she replied, "No, I'll continue to play whenever I want because I don't know what more to study" and "After all, the test was over." Thus, ought-to self is sidestepped as a result of facing a classmate, parental expectations, and test results (Figure 9).
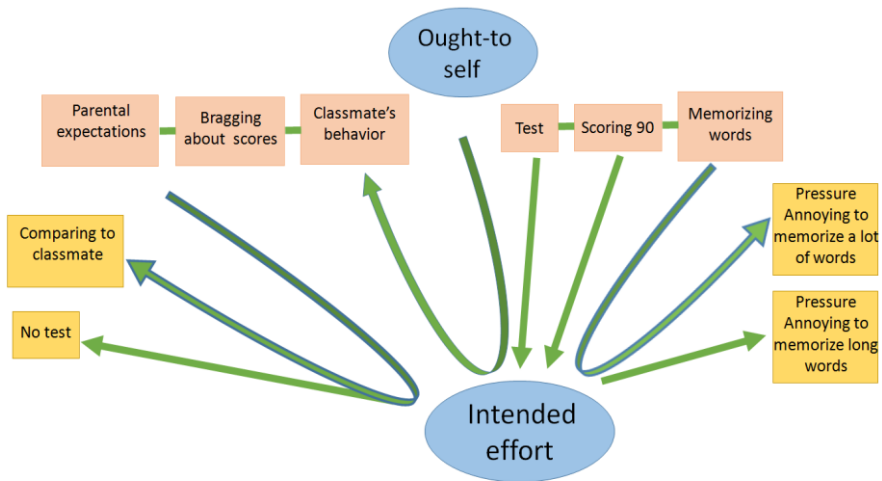

Figure 9. S1's ought-to English self and intended effort

DISCUSSION

As can be seen above, the participants showed contradicting relationships between motivational English self and intended effort. S5's imagined ideal English self (communicating with foreigners abroad) contradicted the realities of not being able to finance such a trip. Meanwhile, her vision of being a tour guide in the future conflicted with her denial of taking such a job. She violated her father's expectations that she should learn English in the tutoring

center due to an unpleasant experience there. S2's goal to reach his imagined ideal English self contradicted the literacy practices actualized in the classroom, which he hated. He also expressed his wish to meet his parents' expectations by getting high scores on tests, yet he was not willing to expend more effort in studying English. Finally, S1 was motivated by the tests to study for them. However, she was also demotivated because she did not know what more to study after the test and was annoyed at having to memorize words for it. Most importantly, she was annoyed by her classmate's behavior as he expressed how he beat her on a test score, a feeling that connected to her mother's comparing her score to that student's. In brief, the participants' contradicting and conflicting selves withheld the efforts they could have devoted to studying English. These findings are discussed below under three dimensions: Linearity, social factors, and learning experience.

Linearity

This study showed that participants' link between their English motivational self system and intended effort was not direct nor linear. S5's correlation between ideal self and intended effort was weak and tentative as well as canceled out by realities and conflicting points. Her link between ought-to self and intended effort was counteracted by negative learning experiences. S2's link between ideal self to intended effort was canceled out by setting up a goal of literacy practices he hated. His correlation between ought-to self and intended effort was also countered by his teacher's literacy practices and by less effort placed on meeting his parents' expectations. S1 revealed a correlation between ought-to self and intended effort shown in taking a test while it was countered by not knowing what more to study after the test and by the classmate's behavior in bragging about a score linked to parental expectations. In sum, the participants' unsettled self, conflicts, contradictions, and going back and forth between self and realities disrupted a linear relationship. These shifting selves thus support Henry's (2015) claim that self-guides should not be a static construct as illustrated in quantitative studies and concur with previous theory and research showing that the self system "constantly adjusts and changes through its ongoing development" (Mercer, 2016, p. 19) and that the L2 motivational self is dynamic (Henry, 2015; Kim, 2009).

Social Factors

Participants' link between their English motivational self system and intended effort was also determined by social factors, social relationships, and sociopolitical contexts. Participants withheld intended effort due to complex, intertwined, and negative social relationships. For example, S5 feared her father's expectations that she should attend the tutoring center as a result of punishment by the teacher. S2 hated the teacher's literacy practices, especially repetition and her fierce face. S1 hated her competitive relationship with a classmate, S3, who bragged about his higher score, and this feeling was associated with her mother's wish that she competed with S3.

Furthermore, the participants' relationship between their English motivational self system and intended effort was also driven by the sociopolitical context, affecting their construction of ideal and ought-to selves. For example, S5 was demotivated when she foresaw no possibilities of going abroad due to financial difficulties though she was from a middle class family. S2 did not mention "going abroad" and "parental expectation to go to tutoring center" as motivating factors as these two were not options for him due to his family's financial difficulties. Thus, financial obstacles discouraged S5 and S2 to construct their ideal self and both ideal and ought-to selves. This concurs with Henry's statement (2015) that "possible selves are also dynamic in the sense that the power they exert is situationally determined" and shift along with circumstantial factors of "availability" and "accessibility" (p. 4).

Judging from the above social factors, this study raises questions over the self-guides presented in quantitative studies. Quantitative research reveals a link between the L2 Motivational Self System and intended effort by fragmenting attributes into variables and linking each one to intended effort. For example, self-guides may investigate these separately through statements such as "I study English because close friends of mine think it is important," "I have to study English because if I do not study it, I think my parents will be disappointed with me," or "Studying English is important to me in order to gain the approval of my peers, teachers, family, or boss" (Taguchi et al., 2009, p. 92). However, these are not sufficient to address several issues. First, these variables were studied independently of the social context, even though social factors determined participants' motivation. For example, the classroom context (including tests and classmates) and parents' expectations worked together to determine S1's motivation and intended effort. Second, these variables were universally applied to every student despite each participant being unique, resulting in a

diverse social context. S5's social relationship (her father's expectations and the tutoring center teacher) differed from those of S2 (the teacher's literacy practices and negative facial expression) and of S1's (S3 and parent). Third, the variables were too simple to address participants' complex social relationships. Finally, the social variables seen in quantitative instruments were conceptualized as positive statements, counter to my participants' negative experience of social relationships, which resulted in intended effort being withheld.

Learning Experience

In this study, the participants' learning experience played a critical and complex role in mediating their intended effort, thus concurring with previous studies (e.g., Lamb, 2012) while differing from quantitative studies, which address the relationship between learning experience and intended effort by simplifying it. Participants' learning experiences were diverse, involving teacher's behaviors such as punishment, traditional teaching methods, and testing, and were therefore difficult to capture through attitudinal questions (Taguchi et al., 2009). This supports Csizér's (2019) claim that quantitative studies using attitudes as the criterion for measuring learning experience are too simplistic and not sensitive enough to capture complex learning processes. Thus, students' voices should be the main guideline for how to motivate them, concurring with Higgins' (1987) view that it is necessary to elicit participants' self-reports. Furthermore, participants' ought-to self, and especially tests, serve as both motivating and demotivating, a dimension not captured by quantitative studies, which focus exclusively on positive statements.

In addition, participants' effort in studying English was withheld or constrained by learning experience. Participants' negative learning experiences, such as a traditional behaviorist learning method focusing on repetition and imitation (S2), teacher punishment (S5), and tests (S1) were critical enough for these learners to withhold effort in studying English. Furthermore, participants' future goals were also constrained. S5's future goal was to learn basic vocabulary and sentences for communication with foreigners in addition to being like her main room teacher who knew all the English in her workbook. S2's desired competence was to score 100 on the test, and efforts to reach his ideal English self, that of being like an American, consisted of reading aloud repeatedly and memorizing words. S1 studied for the test by memorizing words and ceased studying after

the test. These findings also concur with Lamb's (2009) study, which found that one participant adhered to traditional English practices but was constrained by them without addressing future visions or pursuing further knowledge outside school.

CONCLUSION/IMPLICATIONS

This qualitative study investigated the link between the English motivational self system and intended effort in elementary school students in a rural area of Taiwan. The purpose was to offer teachers suggestions for motivating such students and promoting their English learning. The findings differ from those of quantitative studies in suggesting that the link is complex, dynamic, and social and that learning experience plays a critical and complex role in motivating students' learning. Unfortunately, these learning experiences were often negative for these students, with participants showing many demotivated behaviors regarding EFL learning, thus requiring specific attention in the early stages of learning English. This is particularly critical in rural areas, where participants' access to English and motivation to study the language comes almost exclusively from classroom learning experiences as they gain little inspiration from role models, encounters with foreigners, possibilities to travel abroad, or probabilities to use English in their future career. These findings suggest what is in young students' minds and how to motivate them. This is significant in an era when English is considered a global language as well as in response to the need to bridge the language gap between rural and urban areas.

This study offers teachers a number of specific suggestions. First, since there is no linear relationship between the English motivational self system and intended effort, teachers need to understand whether students hold a tangible goal, and if so, whether the teaching method makes it possible for them to reach that goal. In rural areas in particular, teachers need to provide such a goal, as suggested in my previous study (Tseng, 2017). For example, in the present study, learning English to play games was a tangible goal for S5. Second, teachers need to foster a friendly and collaborative learning environment in which students can help each other in the learning process rather than endure the harmful competitive relationship S1 experienced. To this end, teachers should invite students to work in groups and avoid judgmental comments. Third, teachers should avoid using tests as motivators and give few to no tests, especially in the early stages of EFL learning as these constrain participants' future

selves as well as effort, create competitive and negative social relationships, and result in frustration for learners. Furthermore, teachers should "avoid social comparison," one of the motivational strategies suggested by Cheng & Dörnyei (2007, p. 158). This is especially true of struggling learners, who are often demotivated as they find it difficult to alter such negativities as getting lower scores, especially in the earlier stages. In fact, even proficient learners feel pressured and upset by tests.

Finally, teachers should create a positive and pleasant learning experience to motivate students rather than use tests as motivators, among other reasons, as Lamb (2012) suggests, to bridge the gap between rural and urban learning communities. First, a motivating learning environment can be created through course-related factors such as teaching methods, tasks, and materials that are of interest and relevant to students' lives, as suggested by Dörnyei (1994) as well as other scholars (Freeman & Freeman, 1992; Freeman, Freeman, Soto, & Ebe, 2016; Harste & Short, 1988; Short & Burke, 1991). Take the lesson on food discussed above as an example. The teacher can invite students to bring in a dish they like and describe whether it smells or tastes good, incorporating vocabulary and sentence patterns from the lesson (here and also in all activities below), and student can write these down. Students can also draw their favorite dishes on paper plates, write the English for these on the plate, and present their own artifacts. They can also act as food critics to describe dishes presented to them through pictures. All of these are relevant to students' lives and of interest to them.

Second, since EFL learning should be meaningful, teachers can create a brief story about food. Third, the teacher can initiate a learner-centered curriculum (Freeman & Freeman, 1992; Freeman et al, 2016; Harste & Short, 1988; Short & Burke,1991) to "promote learner autonomy," one of several motivational strategies, a suggested by Cheng & Dörnyei (2007, p. 159) through collaborative learning. For example, students can work in groups to prepare favorite dishes for dinner by using clay or drawing on posters, writing about these, and presenting them orally in English, following Chen (2008), who found that collaborative learning motivated struggling adolescent EFL learners in Taiwan. Finally, students' voices should be heard and respected. The teacher should listen to students' presentations without error correction or value judgements. As Henry & Thorsen (2019) found, perspective taking, or the teacher's engaging students through soliciting responses and participation while listening and respecting their voice strongly motivates students to participate in English learning.

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