LANGUAGE LEARNING AWARENESS & MOTIVATION

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I. Brief history of motivation
II. Current understanding of motivation
III. Dörnyei’s L2 Motivational Self System
IV. Rationale for raising students’ language awareness
V. Classroom interventions
MOTIVATION IN SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

1. Social Psychological Period
2. Cognitive-Situated Period
3. Process-oriented Period
SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL PERIOD

- 1959-1990
- Gardner and Lambert in Canada
- Generalized view of L2 learning
- Relationship between L1 and L2 communities
- Integrativeness: “individual’s willingness and interest in social interaction with members of other groups” (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993a, p. 159) (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 68)
- Problems with L2 motivation couldn’t be “solved”
COGNITIVE-SITUATED PERIOD

- 1990s
- Crookes and Schmidt
- Situated L2 learning (focus on the classroom)
- Self-determination theory, Attribution theory, Task motivation …
- Problems with “dynamic character and temporal variation” of L2 motivation (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 83)
PROCESS-ORIENTED PERIOD

- Turn of the century
- Dörnyei
- Problems: “the actional process is [not] well-definable and does [not] have clear-cut boundaries; actional process does not occur in relative isolation” (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 86)
SOCIO-DYNAMIC PERIOD

- “In sum, from the process-oriented period of L2 motivation research, we are now moving into a new phase characterized by a concern with the situated complexity of the L2 motivation process and its organic development in dynamic interaction with a multiplicity of internal, social and contextual factors; and by a concern to theorize L2 motivation in ways that take account of the broader complexities of language learning and use in the modern globalized world” (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 72).

- “…linear approaches to motivation cannot do full justice to the unique individuality, agency, intentionality and reflexive capacities of human beings as they engage in the process of language learning” (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 76).
“As Sealey and Carter (2004, p. 196) explain, a key difference between a linear and a relational approach is that a relational approach is not concerned with identifying ‘variables’ and tracing cause-effect relationships (e.g. how task performance impacts on self-efficacy or vice versa). It focuses attention instead on the evolving network or dynamic system of relations among relevant features, phenomena and processes – relations which are complex, unpredictable, non-linear and always unique, since every person and context are unique” (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 77).

Dörnyei’s response: L2 Motivational Self System
L2 MOTIVATIONAL SELF SYSTEM

- Based on Possible Selves Theory (Markus & Nurius, 1986)
- “Concerns how people conceptualize their as-yet unrealized potential, and as such, it also draws on hopes, wishes and fantasies” (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009, p. 11)
- Future self-guides – including ideal selves (best case), likely selves (default), and feared selves (worst case) – are NOT goals
- “Possible selves involve tangible images and senses” (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009, p. 11)
L2 MOTIVATIONAL SELF SYSTEM

1. Ideal L2 Self
   “the L2-specific facet of one’s ‘ideal self’”

2. Ought-to Self
   “concerns the attributes that one believes one ought to possess to meet expectations and to avoid possible negative outcomes”

3. L2 Learning Experience
   “concerns situated, ‘executive’ motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience” (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009, p. 29)
RECENT RESEARCH ON POSSIBLE L2 SELVES


Rationale for L2 self intervention

→ “Are students aware that motivation is dynamic? Is there light at the end of the tunnel? We’re not researching just for our purposes but also to help our students” (Ushioda, 2014, August).
“Although research suggests that aptitude explains a relatively large portion of variability among learners, other IDs such as motivation, which are more susceptible to teacher intervention, may ultimately result in being much more robust explanatory variables in TL learning (Juffs & Harrington, 2011). In other words, a highly motivated, self-confident learner who may have a dispositional tendency toward low cognitive abilities still has a fighting chance to acquire high proficiency in a TL” (Gregersen and MacIntyre, 2014, p. 78).
Some more thoughts on the role of the teacher and the classroom in raising language learning awareness:

- “Hotho concludes that teachers, rather than make courses easier or more fun, should concentrate on helping students to re-focus their goals or their expectations of language learning” (Macaro, 2003, p. 107).

- “As Nunan (1996, p. 41) recommends, ‘language classrooms should have a dual focus, not only teaching language content but also on developing learning processes as well’” (Cohen & Macaro, 2007, p. 160).

- “We believe that an explicit awareness of the motivation process that unfolds during specific tasks can lead to students noticing both their own unique sources of motivation, and those shared with other learners. If greater awareness is achieved through a learner’s self-analysis, greater autonomy can be possible in their own learning” (Gregersen & Maclntyre, 2014, p. 115).
L2 MOTIVATIONAL SELF SYSTEM: CLASSROOM INTERVENTION

- construction of the Ideal L2 Self: creating the vision
- imagery enhancement: strengthening the vision
- making the Ideal L2 Self plausible: substantiating the vision
- developing an action plan: operationalizing the vision
- activating the Ideal L2 Self: keeping the vision alive
- considering failure: counterbalancing the vision
CLASSROOM INTERVENTION 1

Describe your future, ideal L2 self.

Reflection essay
Recurring qualities of students’ ideal L2 self

- travel
- family history
- family future
- career
- leisure activities
- love

with class discussion of these ideal L2 selves
Problems with the Monolingual View of Bilingualism:

- A person cannot become a native speaker of another language. A native speaker is born into the community in which the language is used.

- Most people are incapable of achieving native-like speech (pronunciation, idiomatic oral proficiency, etc.) in a second language.

- Finally, the native speaker is only an abstraction.

(Cook & Singleton, 2013)
CLASSROOM INTERVENTION 3

- Identify a **positive L2 role model** whose language learning trajectory you would like to emulate.
- Identify a **negative L2 role model** whose language learning trajectory you would NOT like to emulate.

Class discussion: What can we learn from these L2 users?
SAMPLE POSITIVE L2 ROLE MODELS

If I could choose an L2 user that is good at using two languages, it would be my father. He came to America for the first time in his twenties having learned English in school in France. He was expected to find work, a residence, and be able to communicate around the community. He took classes to learn more English and to especially improve his writing skills. He has worked in jobs where he speaks in fluent English, must write reports in English, and has been immersed in the culture since he moved here. Along the way he has picked up colloquialisms, cultural knowledge, customs, and habits of America, but he remains fluent in French and in French culture. He is not embarrassed when he makes mistakes with pronunciation, and he asked me when I lived at home to proofread his letters, correspondence, and general writing when it was in English. He is always willing to learn something new as an English learner.
A negative example of an L2 learner is my cousin, Jerez. He is very shy and does not like speaking English. He actually has the best English out of all of my cousins based off tests in school, but is shy about speaking it. He absolutely refuses to speak English around my sisters and me since we are American and speak English fluently. He understands English perfectly, but only responds back in Tagalog. Because he does not like to practice his English, he is limiting his English speaking potential. I chose him as a poor example of an L2 learner because I think I am probably more like him when it comes to learning a second language. Like him, I am shy when it comes to speaking French. During the French Café, it was difficult for me to speak in front of a big group. However, I know I need to practice my French to get better. I can use him as a mirror example for me on what not to do and how to improve my L2 language abilities.
A language user I would like to emulate is my coach, Kwon. He is Korean and came to America almost 11 years ago. At the time, he knew no English. However, he had to learn quickly because he coached us everyday. For the first couple of weeks, he would carry around a dictionary and a notepad, and would have to look up each word he wanted to say and write them down on his notepad. Eventually, he began to remember words and did not need to carry around a notepad to formulate sentences. However, since his dictionary had no conjugations, he would also always ask a lot of additional questions to our parents and us. He eventually started reading English books, and would come to my parents’ house for English “lessons”, since my parents knew how it was to learn English as a second language. I chose Kwon because he had to learn English all on his own and was able to do it really well and very quickly. He continues to try and improve his English everyday, and is a great example of a L2 learner.
The language user whose trajectory I’d like to not follow would be my uncle. While his English is good enough to understand, he is still not fluent in it despite having lived in Canada for 20 years. He mostly sticks to people who can also speak Mandarin, so his progress in learning English is painfully slow.
SAMPLE POSITIVE L2 ROLE MODELS

1. Nelson Mandela is an L2 role model. He spoke English and his native language, Xhosa. He used his abilities to endorse peace and equality in South Africa and is an icon for his work to end apartheid. He was able to begin bridging the gap between the native South Africans and the white South Africans.
A language user who I would not like to emulate is NBA basketball player Joakim Noah. Noah is one of the best players at his position in the NBA, and is fluent in French. Noah holds citizenship in the U.S., Sweden, and France, and lived in Paris until he was 13 years old. While he is admired for his effort and toughness during games, there are also aspects to his life which are less than admirable. In the past, he has been charged with both drug possession and DUI. Noah has also been insensitive to different cultures through numerous remarks he has made to the media. His actions have resulted in questions about his character outside the game basketball.
CLASSROOM INTERVENTION 4

Timeline to ideal L2 self

Next year: Take 2 more semesters of French
Junior year: Spend a year abroad
Senior year: Major in French, apply for graduate school
Summer after college: Backpack through France
In 4 years: Start grad school, teach French at the college level
Timeline to ideal L2 self

Sophomore year:
Enroll in Medical French Course

Junior and Senior year:
 Volunteer at medical clinic serving immigrants and refugees

In 3 years:
Start medical school
(alternate routes)

In 3 years:
Spend a year volunteering abroad at a Francophone medical clinic
SAMPLE TIMELINES

Beyond the L2 of the course

Sophomore year: French 102 in school; begin learning Spanish by self. Summer: supplement Spanish studies w/ dinners at Paula's.

Junior year: take 2 more semesters of French; read, watch TV in French + Spanish. Summer: medical program in Spanish-speaking country.

Senior year: take medical language classes?

Medical school: find more volunteer opportunities in other languages. After graduation: begin Germand (?) studies; teach kids other languages.

French Maymester?

Learn Mandarin; spend my summer in Taman; get an internship; spend a year working there from my parents.
2014 PUBLICATIONS WITH L2 SELF INTERVENTIONS

Gregersen and MacIntyre, 2014
Hadfield and Dörnyei, 2014
FINAL THOUGHT (Hadfield & Dörnyei, 2014, p. 298)
REFERENCES


