

**Shifting from Passive to Active Attitudes in English Learning:
Based on Experiences of Learning English**

ESP1a L2 Motivational Self System

Final Draft



I have been learning English passively from elementary to senior high school. Now, I regret this experience because I realized the difference between myself and those who have been actively learning English. However, I thought back on my learning experience with reference to “the L2 self system” (Dornyei, 2016, December 2, 13:13) and discovered some tips to help me actively study English. One of the hints is a speech by a famous person such as President Joe Biden. Therefore, in this essay, I discuss what I think the L2 motivational self system is, my passive attitude, regretting my learning experience, and connecting interests about English contexts.

My Definition of the L2 Motivational Self System

According to Dornyei's speech, ‘the L2 self system’ consists of three components that are necessary to motivate the second language(L2) learning (Dornyei, 2016, December 2, 13:13). He explained these three elements are the ‘L2 learning experience,’ ‘ought-to L2 self,’ and the ‘ideal L2 self.’ The ‘L2 learning experience’ refers to motivation in the learning environment at the time while on the other hand, the ‘ought-to L2 self’ and ‘ideal L2 self’ refer to self-image (Dornyei, 2016, 10:28). _He (2016, 11:16) suggested the former refers to the self that others expect you to be and the self that you must become, yet the latter is the ideal self-image of what you want to be in the future, using your second language. In addition, “vision” is important in the L2 motivational self system that is “a vivid mental image, especially a fanciful one of the future” (Dornyei, 2016, 0:58). According to Dr. Vye’s article, learners expressed their language learning by drawing pictures (Vye, 2016). Also, Dr. Irie incorporated the idea of “narrative self,” “a uniquely human quality to be able to tell stories,” into her own research (Irie & O’Neil, 2015, 1:42).

My Language Learning Experiences

I started to learn English when I was in kindergarten. At that time, an Australian teacher came to my kindergarten, and we sang English songs and danced to them. It was

enjoyable. From the time I was an elementary school student, basically, I studied English to get good grades and pass entrance exams. The teachers frequently told us the scope of the test and the points of the entrance exam so that we could get good grades. I was grateful for this and used it in my studies. This experience was truly the “English as a Foreign Language” program (Kaneko & Yanagihara, 2017, p. 39). I was studying English for entrance exams and grades, in other words, for my future.

My Ought-to Self

Next, I will discuss my ought-to self, including that I have been learning English passively since entering university. When I was in kindergarten, my first exposure to English, the teacher wanted us to sing and dance in English, so I followed her lead. From elementary school to high school, I followed my teachers’ teachings in order to get good grades and pass entrance exams. As a result of this experience, I now have a problem with learning English. I often feel interested in learning English, but sometimes English is difficult for me because I compare myself to people who have been actively learning English. I think I do not have enough ability to use English. Therefore, I decided to study abroad while I was still in university because I had a vague desire to try something new, and I am learning English with my friends who are aiming to study abroad. However, many of my peers have already studied abroad and have read a lot of English literature, which means they are actively learning English. In addition, they already seem to have a clear vision of the future of their ought-to selves and their ideal selves because, as Dornyei mentioned, visions have the power to direct people’s actions (Dornyei, 2016, December 2). I regret my English learning experience and find it challenging to raise my motivation in this situation.

My Ideal Self and Hints Leading to Motivation

On the other hand, the learning experience gave me some hints that could lead to my motivation. There are three experiences that gave me those hints:

Firstly, it was a positive experience that broke down the barriers I had against learning English. One day, in senior high school, my reading and listening teacher provided me with the audio of President Joe Biden's and Vice President Kamala Harris' speeches and the scripts. He offered me these tools as a break from studying for my exams, but I realized that English is a straightforward language, which motivated me to learn English.

Secondly, it gave me hope for my future English study. When I was a senior high school student, my writing teacher always said, "Languages are changing every time." He was an English dictionary enthusiast and had always studied the English language to the fullest. Furthermore, he always enjoyed teaching, and his words had a strong persuasive power. From this experience, I thought I would like to enjoy such changes because language changes continue.

Finally, it gave me the best way for me to study English. It is trying something interesting to read, listen, write, and speak in English. In the class called "Global Talent Basic I," my teacher recommended TED Talks to study English. I felt enjoyable watching TED Talks because there are many unique topics. I would like to explore various subjects such as economics by using English. I found that the content I was interested in and the words that influenced me could form my motivation.

In order to achieve my "process goal (Josh, 2016, 11:45)" of continuing to learn English, I am going to practice my "product goal (Josh, 2016, 11:45)" of watching one video a day from celebrity speeches or TED Talks. In this way, I hope to be able to enjoy the change of language in the process of learning.

Discussion About Finding Motivation

I have described my L2 ought-to self and ideal self as regretting my learning experiences and connecting interests, respectively (Dornyei, 2016, December 2). In addition,

each of these elements is closely connected to my learning experience of English. For these reasons, I will consider what kind of English learning method would be best for me.

I think it is the best way for me to study various subjects such as economics by using English. The reason is that it is related to 'connecting interests.' For example, as I mentioned, some articles written in English were interesting for me. Still, sometimes I struggled with reading them because their expression was complicated for me. However, I could enjoy using English content in the 'English for Specific Purposes 1a' class, so I would like to study harder by using English content and studying abroad.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I discussed my passive attitude, regretting my learning experience, and connecting interests about English contexts. Specifically, I described my regrets about my passive attitude toward learning English and the possible motivational triggers I gained from my learning experience. Furthermore, I discussed ways to achieve active English learning. However, I fear that I may not be able to devote as much time to learn English as I would like to if I had more class assignments at the university. Therefore, I would like to find a way to increase the efficiency of my English study with an awareness of 'connecting interests' so I will be able to make learning English a habit and enjoy it.

Word Count: 1,260

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