TITLE: When motivation research motivates: Issues in long-term empirical investigations

Abstract

Increasing awareness of how individual motivation to learn language can fluctuate and change puts a premium on longitudinal research methods which can track learners over set periods of time. Revisiting previous research participants is one means of effecting this. This paper describes follow-up studies of an original research project in Indonesia and presents data showing the L2 motivational trajectories of nine participants over a decade. One major finding however was that the participants were influenced by taking part in the research. The paper re-analyses data from all stages of the research and identifies the main source of the influence to be the authority participants invest in the researcher, and the inspiration they draw from occasional contact with a foreigner. The findings therefore lend some support to the long-term motivating power of 'ought-to' and 'ideal' L2 selves (Dörnyei, 2009). In highlighting researcher effects, the paper emphasises the need for reflexivity in designing and carrying out longitudinal research, especially when interpreting interview data. The presence of possible negative effects on at least one participant also raises ethical issues for the selection of participants and their interaction with the researcher.

Introduction

The successful learning of a second language (L2) is always a long-term endeavour, requiring sustained, motivated behaviour over many years. The centrality of time in L2 learning makes it imperative, it has been argued (Ortega and Iberri-Shea 2005), that researchers undertake more research of a longitudinal nature, in order for us to have a better understanding of how key processes unfold over time and how they might be made more efficacious by educational intervention. Accordingly, scholars interested in L2 motivation have directed increasing attention in recent years towards understanding the nature of motivational change (Dörnyei and Ushioda 2011).

However, building a temporal element into SLA research brings significant challenges. First and most obviously, there is the challenge of time itself. The constraints of doctoral study, project design or publication schedules often preclude the possibility of fieldwork extending beyond a year, and as we shall see, most longitudinal research in L2 motivation is on this time-scale or shorter. Another problem is the risk of human attrition in longer projects, while extended involvement of the same people, both participants and researchers, can bring its own difficulties: quantitative researchers must deal with the distorting effects of repeated measures (Dörnyei 2007); qualitative researchers know that prolonged involvement in ethnographic or interview studies may change the behaviour of participants, for example through enhanced self-awareness or the formation of relationships with researchers (Holliday 2007). Meanwhile, researchers themselves change over time – as they learn more about the issues under investigation they may consciously or unconsciously change the foci of the research, or they undergo more profound changes in epistemological or ontological perspective which renders the original design anachronistic.

In this paper I aim to throw further light on these issues by reporting my own extended involvement over 13 years with some research participants in Indonesia. The original (doctoral) research project was a mixed method study of young teenagers' motivation to learn

English during the first two years of junior high school (AUTHOR 2007). The observation period of 20 months was already relatively long for L2 motivation research, but in 2008, and again in the period 2013-15, I re-established contact with some of the research participants and interviewed them about their continuing motivation to learn English. I had not originally intended to do this; I was motivated by personal and professional curiosity, while ongoing relations with the school where the original study took place led me to believe that the participants would welcome renewed contact. As a form of qualitative longitudinal research, this would therefore be categorized as a 'periodic re-study' (Saldaña, 2003) and is, as far as I am aware, unique in the field of L2 motivation. It enabled me to discern unusually long-term patterns of motivation, and also shook my beliefs about the potential impact of L2 research.

Change in L2 motivation

Dörnyei, Henry and Muir (2016) suggest that motivational psychologists have in general had an 'uneasy relationship' with the concept of time, largely because of the way motivation has been traditionally conceived – that is, 'as an initial force or a stable learner attribute' (p. 28, original italics), separate from the learning behaviour which it may or may not induce. This contrasts vividly with the experience of educators, of course, who are well aware of fluctuations in their students' motivation to learn. As L2 motivation theorists became more cognisant of educational issues (Crookes and Schmidt 1991), and also more attuned to the impact of micro-contexts like classroom, peer group and task on learners' motivation (Dörnyei 1994), they began to view motivation as something intrinsically dynamic.

The most common type of research on motivational change has been cohort studies, using surveys to compare the motivation to learn of chronological school years, either longitudinally with the same population (e.g. Chambers 1999, AUTHOR 2007) or cross-sectionally with different populations (e.g. Williams, Burden, and Lanvers 2002). As Dörnyei & Ushioda (2011) summarize, the most frequent finding, mirroring that in mainstream education, is an overall downward trend in strength of learners' L2 motivation in response to school experiences, though different components of L2 motivation have been observed to change in different directions. For example Gardner et al. (2004) found that Canadian students' integrative motivation to learn a foreign language was more stable over a year's course than variables related to the immediate learning situation, while in my own study (AUTHOR 2007), the Indonesian school learners' instrumental motives were seen to strengthen as they grow older and become more aware of the L2's utilitarian value even when their intrinsic motives for learning diminished.

Most cohort studies track or compare motivation over one to three years, but there are two published studies which have a much longer time span. Dörnyei et al. (2006) used surveys to compare the L2 motivation of over 13,000 Hungarian 13-14 year olds in Hungary at three points in time, from 1993 to 2004; their results point to the way L2 motivation can be impacted by geopolitical events, for instance the very noticeable decline in motivation to learn Russian after the fall of communism. Heining-Boynton and Haitema (2007) surveyed American primary school pupils' learning French or Spanish over five years of study, and then interviewed a sample five years later. This study confirmed the general trend of decreasing motivation during school, but also indicated that an early start at L2 learning can result in more positive attitudes towards foreign languages and cultures in later adolescence.

Qualitative research has provided a different kind of evidence for L2 motivational change. Two pioneering studies were Ushioda (2001) and Norton (2000), both of which showed, in different ways, that 'thick descriptions' of individual L2 learners in context inevitably uncovered idiosyncratic patterns of motivational change. Other qualitative researchers, including those using narrative inquiry, are building on our understanding in this area. For example, Shoaib & Dörnyei (2005) used retrospective narrative interviews to identify six 'motivational transformation episodes' in the lives of their respondents: maturation; standstill periods; new life phases: internalized goals/visions; relationships with significant others; and time spent in the L2 host environment. Besser and Chik (Besser and Chik 2014) draw on data from a three-year qualitative study in Hong Kong to show how individual learners can build identities as English speakers by the age of 11-12, but their ability to do this is constrained by sociopolitical factors, such as access to English-medium schools.

Empirical research in L2 motivation has demonstrated convincingly that it is highly susceptible to contextual influence, that the range of relevant environmental factors is huge and that it is extremely difficult to predict how all these variables will interact to affect an individual learner (Dornyei & Ushioda 2011). Motivation theorists have therefore turned to complex dynamic systems theory (CDS) to help conceptualize the nature of change and stability in L2 motivation. If motivation (or elements of motivation such as the 'self', or 'willingness to communicate', or 'task engagement') is considered as a system, nested within other systems, then in CDS it can be viewed as inherently changeable, though it may self-organize into a more stable configuration ('attractor states') at times, while at other times being highly unstable and sensitive to relatively minor contextual influences. Multi-method, longitudinal research within this paradigm has already brought genuine insights into the nature of L2 motivational change at time-scales of a second (MacIntyre and Serroul 2015), an hour (Waninge, Dörnyei, and De Bot 2014), weeks (Piniel and Csizér 2015) and years (Mercer 2015). There are understandably no studies yet published in this paradigm which examine motivational change over a longer-term period – the decade or more which most people would probably regard as the time it took to learn an L2 to their desired level of proficiency.

The research reported in this paper was carried out in a traditional non-CDS framework and did not conceive of L2 motivation as an open, self-organizing, complex system, but it did identify patterns of motivated behaviour which may be worthy of study from a CDS perspective, and which I will describe briefly. The main focus of the paper, however, will be on how these patterns may have been at least partly a product of the research process, in particular the role of the researcher and the relationship formed with participants. While hoping to encourage further investigations of long-term L2 motivation, my purpose is also to highlight issues that may threaten validity of findings and also question the ethics of longitudinal qualitative research.

Methodology

The aim of the original research project was to measure and describe changes in the motivation to learn English of Indonesian pupils during the first two years of study in Junior High School (JHS), and identify factors associated with the changes (AUTHOR 2007). The research site was a provincial city with a booming palm oil-based local economy, but where few westerners lived or travelled. The project adopted a mixed method design involving

distribution of a survey for the whole school year (n= 219) at beginning of Year 7 (2002) – when pupils began formal study of the language – and end of Year 8 (2004), and the selection of 12 'focal learners' for interview, class observation and home visits; based on survey results and teacher comments, eight of these learners were identified as 'highly motivated' (though in different ways) and four as 'less motivated' (also in different ways).

My main findings were that, against expectations, a generally high level of motivation was sustained over the two years, albeit with some fluctuations evident in the motivation of the 12 focal learners. I ascribed this motivation largely to identification processes, nurtured and developed through social interaction at home and in the community, which encouraged many young Indonesians in this context to view English as integral to their future lives. To discover whether these identification processes were continuing, and whether English was indeed integral to their lives, I contacted all 12 of the original focal learners again in 2008, met with 11 of them face-to-face, and interviewed them about their motivation to learn and use English with the help of a written 'language learning history' (LLH), as well as feeding back some of the impressions I had gained about their motivation to learn English in the earlier phase. All the interview data was re-analysed from an 'L2 motivational self-system' perspective (Dörnyei 2009) and I concluded that strong 'ideal L2 selves' had motivated some of the focal learners to invest considerable effort in learning the language over the six year period, while others – those originally designated as 'less motivated' – had 'ought-to L2 selves' with less motivational impetus (AUTHOR 2011).

In 2013, through online social media I managed to trace 10 of the learners now aged 22-24 and returned to Indonesia to interview seven of them, and in 2015 I located and interviewed two more. My purpose and method was the same as in the previous phase in 2008 – to get an update on their learning and use of English – but instead of a written 'history' I asked them in advance to complete a simple line graph ('motigraph') to represent the pattern of their motivation to learn English since JHS, and this formed part of the interview guide which, as in all previous encounters, ranged over their English-related attitudes, feelings and practices. In both follow-up phases, interviews lasted for 30-40 minutes and were conducted in English or Indonesian, according to participant preference.

Though the original study (AUTHOR 2007) was conducted prior to the introduction of my institutional ethics board, I intended at each stage of the research process to follow conventional ethical protocols in recruiting and engaging with the participants. Being minors, this involved requesting written permission from parents for their involvement, and always conducting interviews in public places (usually the school counselling office). In 2008, when the participants were aged 17-18, contact was facilitated through their junior high school, sometimes directly with the ex-pupils, other times via their families; in each case I presented them with a written 'letter' explaining my purpose in re-contacting them, and inviting them to be interviewed and to write the LLH – all agreed. A similar process occurred in 2013-15, though I was less reliant on the school as most now had Facebook accounts, and had either already added me as a 'friend', or responded positively when I sent them a friend invitation. My strong impression was that they all welcomed continued involvement in my research – but I return to the ethics of 'going back' (Miller 2015) to former research participants below.

To help the reader conceptualize this rather complicated, multi-stage process, Table 1 presents the various forms of data generated at different times, and Table 2 gives some

background information on the nine participants, including my assessment of their level of

YEAR	DATA TYPE
2002	Semi-structured interviews with all 12 'focal learners' (henceforth 'participants'); field notes
2003	Semi-structured interviews with all participants; Classroom observation; visits to homes / private L2 school; field notes
2004	Semi-structured interviews with all participants; field notes*
2008	Semi-structured interviews with all participants; Written language learning histories**
2013	Semi-structured interviews with 7 participants; Completed 'motigraphs'
2015	Semi-structured interviews with 2 participants; Completed 'motigraphs'; specific email questions to further 5 participants

competence in English during my final interview with them.

TABLE 1 Data re-analysed for this study
*see AUTHOR 2007 for more details on methodology of original 2002-4 study
** see AUTHOR 2011 for more details on methodology of follow-up study in 2008.

PARTICIPANT (GENDER) (ETHNICITY)	2002 DESIGNATION	2015 LEVEL/USE OF ENGLISH
ANI (F) (S Sumatran)	Regular class; high motivation	Good (TOEFL 547). Interview all in English.
DEWI (F) (W Sumatran)	Regular class; high motivation	Good. Interview mainly in English with frequent code-switching.
DICO (M) (Javanese / N Sum.)	Elite class; medium motivation	Fluent, daily use at work. Interview all in English.
KRISNA (M) (W Sumatran)	Regular class; low motivation	Halting. Interview all in Indonesian.
MARLINA (F) (Jakartan)	Regular class; high motivation	Good, regular use at work, occasional in study. Interview all in English.
RIDWAN (M) (W Sumatran)	Regular class; low motivation	Halting. Interview mainly in Indonesian with some code-switching.
SARWONO (M) (Javanese)	Elite class; high motivation	Fluent, regular use in studies. Interview all in English.
TAHIRA (F) (Javanese)	Elite class; high motivation	Fluent, daily use in studies, regular in work. Interview all in English.
WIDYA (M) (Javanese)	Regular class; low motivation	Halting (TOEFL 480). Interview mainly in Indonesian.

TABLE 2 Background information about the nine participants

Data analysis

The following analysis focuses on my interactions with these nine learners, as recorded in interviews, field notes (including class observations from the period 2002-4), 'language learning histories', and 'motigraphs'. All this data has been re-analysed with a view to identifying key features of the participants' L2 motivational trajectories over the 11/13 year period. I listened again to all the original recorded interviews and coded the data for each case using NVivo v.10. For each individual I attempted to identify what Saldaña (2003) terms 'through-lines', prominent, consistent themes that characterized their talk about learning English, at the same time identifying patterns of change for the whole group. Here I will only incidentally comment on individual 'through-lines'. Instead, after briefly describing the broad trajectories of the group, I will focus on one salient cross-participant finding: the influence of the researcher and the research process on their L2 motivation.

Findings

Broad trajectories of motivation and L2 learning

For the six participants originally selected as 'highly motivated' JHS pupils, the general pattern is one of sustained high motivation to learn English, with occasional rises and falls due to particular circumstances, over the 11 or 13 year period. This is reflected both in the line graphs they drew for me in our final meeting and in the general tenor of their interviews. Five of the six graphs in fact show an overall rising trajectory, which they all attributed to their becoming gradually more aware of the value of English language skills for their future lives. The three participants originally chosen as 'less motivated' pupils show a more starkly rising trajectory, from a lower starting point, though one of them (Widya – all names are pseudonyms) shows a dramatic fall from the age of 19. The occasional rises and falls in the line graphs reflect 'motivational transformation episodes', similar to those identified by Shoaib and Dörnyei (2005); for instance, Krisna had a relationship with a girlfriend who strongly encouraged him to learn English; Ani was demotivated by not having any friends who shared her interest in English.

While the two groups of participants began to converge in terms of their expressed motivation to learn English, their L2 proficiency continued to diverge, as judged on the basis of their performance in interview with me. Krisna, Ridwan and Widya all expressed a deep sense of frustration in their most recent interview, as they sought ways of realizing their aspirations to learn the language. By contrast, the six 'high motivation' pupils were by the age of 21-23 functionally competent in the language, four were using the language daily at work, while the other two (Ani and Dewi) were confident enough to be considering study or travel abroad in the coming years.

Influence of the researcher

The research project was originally designed from a neopositivist/romantic theoretical stance (Roulston 2010); in an initial meeting with teachers in the school, for example, I stressed that 'it's really important that I don't disrupt the pupils' normal behaviour in any way; the research shouldn't affect the lives of the participants' (fieldnotes, March 2002). Informed consent forms referred to my interest in the young people's 'experiences of learning English' rather than 'motivation' directly. The mixed methods design, combining questionnaires with focal learner and teacher interviews, was also intended to minimize my impact on the participants, so that I could observe and describe the 'reality' of English language education in the local context. Over the past decade, with more exposure to the interpretive research paradigm, I came to recognize this position as naïve; but it was still a considerable surprise when in the 5th round of interviews in 2013, several participants expressly cited me as a long-term influence on their L2 motivation, as Dico here:

> I: So just a couple more questions…Apart from Pak B__, is there anyone else who has sort of influenced your learning of English?
> D: Maybe it's you
> I: …Me?
> D: Ya
> I: …In what way?
> D: Because I remember when … someone from England visit me, asking me 'what is your motivation in English?' I am starting to guessing er why he did that? Did he want to know how good is Indonesian using English? So yeah it is, you know, OK when he come again I will show him!

[Interview extract, July 2013]

Re-analysis of the meetings in 2008 and 2013 shows that eight of the nine learners made spontaneous reference to my influence on their learning of English (the exception was Krisna, who I discuss below). All implied that this effect was positive, in that I had enhanced their motivation to learn English or otherwise aided them. In preparation for this paper, I directly asked the participants whether and how they had been affected by participation in my research, two in their 2015 interview, five by email (I had lost contact with Ridwan and Widya). Ani, Dico, Marlina, Sarwono and Krisna all confirmed that their participation had affected their learning of English (I had no email response from Tahira, who was by now studying in the USA, while Dewi chose not to respond to that particular question).

Dico's words above neatly capture the two prevailing aspects of my influence. On the one hand, there is the implication that as young learners they were subject to interrogation by this foreign intruder – *someone from England visit me, asking me 'what is your motivation in English?'.* This unusual and slightly intimidating experience prompted reflection: why did he do that? But the sense that he was being tested in some way was also a form of inspiration for him, encouraging him to respond positively to the challenge: OK when he come again I will show him! The participants' comments indicate their involvement in the project both created a sense of obligation, enhancing already well-developed ought-to L2 selves, and also served as an inspiration, strengthening incipient ideal L2 selves. In the following sections I will present more evidence for these two motivational influences, before examining the troubling case of Krisna.

Researcher as authority figure

Despite my best efforts to put them at ease, it was obvious during our first interviews in 2002 that the participants were anxious. For some time they would have been exposed to authoritative discourses emphasising the importance of English, both for their academic career and for their future working lives (AUTHOR 2007); in fact most of their parents had already initiated this kind of discourse much earlier, sending them to private language schools from as young as 7 (in the case of Marlina and Tahira). Although I stressed repeatedly that I had no particular expectations about their learning of English, the very fact that they had been selected for my project by their teachers - a decision actively endorsed by their parents who signed a permission letter – must have increased their sense of obligation to 'perform'. This tendency may have been exacerbated by the cultural norms of a high 'power distance' society (Hofstede 1980) in which young people are strongly expected to show respect for their elders. What is more, as the first native speaker of English most of them had encountered, I represented a direct challenge to their abilities to communicate in the language; while most of the early interviews were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia, several of the participants did make efforts to use words or phrases in English.

It is clear that this sense of obligation persisted. For example, in 2004, two of the more confident participants, Dico and Marlina, explicitly told me they were nervous during the third interview because they felt they had to speak English correctly. One of the 'low motivation' group, Ridwan, described how he was encouraged to study English by two of the other participants, Ani and Marlina: 'in class, or when we're in the bus together, with other friends of Mr M_____, they tell me I must memorize the language' [translation]. Towards the end of his 2008 interview, Sarwono thanked me for involving him in my research because of the way it had pushed him to study harder: 'I didn't want to hinder the progress of your research because at that time my English is really bad, really terrible' – implying that he believed my real intention had been to assess their level of English. Tahira began a 2008 email to me with the words: 'Firstly I would like to say sorry for my replying your message late. I'll try to make myself more discipline and efficient in using time', suggesting she still saw me then as a figure of authority. Even 13 years after the start of the project, Ani apologized in an email: 'I wrote it in Bahasa not in English. I hope it won't disappoint you.'

Looking back, I was probably being positioned as an authority figure by others in the school. During the first phase of data generation I wrote in my field journal:

> 6.9.02 – [Teacher S] approaches me after a class in a rather agitated manner - she says [Krisna] has handed in a piece of work with nothing on it. Seems ashamed on my behalf and apparently told him "what will Mr M____ think of this?" I try to reassure her that as a researcher I am interested in any outcome, not just seeing successful students.

Here the teacher appears to share Sarwono's view, above, that my real purpose was not to observe but to increase their pupils' motivation and proficiency in 'my' language, English. This was despite my having stated in a letter to the teachers, 'to try to minimize the effect of my research on the learners, it would be helpful if you did not mention the research to [them]'. The impression would have been reinforced by the fact that I regularly visited

English classes and conducted 'conversation lessons' – something I had promised the headmaster I would do in order to gain access to the research site.

Moreover, viewed as an authority figure, some of my 'neutral' interview questions about their learning of English could well have sounded more like pedagogic guidance, particularly perhaps in a culture where indirectness in address is highly valued. 'Do you learn English outside school?' could be reinterpreted by participants as 'you should learn English outside school.' I had encouraged them to complete a journal listing their 'extra-curricular' activities or encounters with English, again carrying the implication that they ought to be doing them. In 2015 Marlina recalled that 'you're the one who told me that I have to watch er movies without the subtitles or listening to the music without any lyrics and then I keep doing that…till now.' Yet a re-examination of my interviews with her shows I never offered any direct advice, only talked with her how she learned or used English outside school. It appears that our discussions of these activities had actually helped to shape her identity as a highly motivated and resourceful learner, such that 12 years she assumed I would be gratified to hear of my positive influence.

Researcher as source of inspiration

If the participants were clearly concerned to meet my expectations, it was also evident that they were excited by being involved in the research, and certainly convinced me that they were happy to continue being involved over subsequent years. Part of the excitement came from the novelty of having contact with a westerner, and being seen by peers having contact, in a geographical context where there were very few foreigners of any kind. As two of the participants make clear, westerners were widely perceived as having motivating qualities as teachers: when asked during his second interview what he thought of his school English lessons, Widya replied:

> W: They're OK.… because there's sometimes a foreigner here, we can talk to that foreigner.
> I: If there isn't a foreigner around?
> W: It's dull... there's no interest.   [2003 interview, translation]

Ridwan was chosen by the teachers as a 'low motivation' pupil, on the grounds of his rebellious attitude during school classes, yet when I asked him if he had any comments for me at the end of our 2003 interview, he suggested:

> how about... not only interviewing the children you've chosen but... better if you interview those who have less English, who don't speak English, it would be good if you choose them for interview, automatically they'll become enthusiastic about learning English.   [2003 interview, translation]

For some of the already more competent participants, finding they could communicate successfully in English with me reinforced their sense of agency. For Dico, cited above, it was a chance to prove that young Indonesians had the capacity and global outlook to learn the international language. In 2013, Tahira reflected that although she had been learning English since she was a child…

> I [had] never met the real native person and I never know that with this very limited skills of English eh I don't know that I actually could communicate with you at that time, so when you seemed understanding me ….it's a very good feeling since then I'll become more interested in learning English.
>
> [2013 interview]

For Dewi my arrival at the school was 'really interesting' because 'it was my first experience to see, meet, and speak with the native speaker of English' [Dewi LLH extract, 2008]. Dico and Ani both mention in 2013 interviews how our meetings had given them confidence to initiate contact with other foreigners, both online and on the holiday island of Bali. As Ani puts it, 'having several opportunities to meet with a foreigner meant I was no longer shy about speaking English. This really helped me expand my horizons and find friends in many different countries' [translation]. Their involvement in the research had seemingly helped them envisage a future English-speaking self and make it seem plausible.

With each meeting, my relationship with the participants naturally became a little closer, and our interactions became less constrained by the research interview format, allowing for the communication and exchange of personal information. They began to ask questions of me, and occasionally to ask for advice or favours (e.g. about their future careers, or the availability of scholarships to study in the UK). They began, in other words, to relate to me less as a 'researcher' than as a valued international contact and confidante, whose interactions afforded them the opportunity to enact their ideal L2 selves. To take one example, as early as 2003 Ani took the opportunity of our interview to criticize her school English teacher; the following year, she mentioned a recent incident when she had been shouted at by another teacher after she had pointed out her faulty pronunciation of an English word, and in each of her subsequent interviews, she retold this story in more depth, in 2013 devoting over seven minutes to its retelling, admitting the incident still made her 'shiver' and castigating the teacher for her 'unprofessional' conduct which 'is like for a village junior high school'. The incident is interesting in itself for the way it crystallizes ongoing inter-generational and social class tensions in Indonesian education, but here I use it to demonstrate how Ani was positioning me as a sympathetic outsider who, bringing a more cosmopolitan perspective on local events, could empathize with her frustration with traditional education practices. Researcher as a long-term burden

So far, I would argue that my influence on the participants was largely positive, in that it ultimately assisted them in acquiring the personally important cultural capital of English language skills. They themselves reflected this positivity when I directly asked them about my influence in 2015. One participant, however, responded in a quite different way. Krisna replied by email: 'I'm sorry actually I don't like to talk about this. Yah that give affect to me. Thank you so much about that.'

As I have described, a few of my original participants had been selected for the project for the purposes of 'negative case analysis' (Miles, Huberman & Saldana 2004), in that according to the results of their initial questionnaires, and confirmed by their teachers, they had lower than average motivation for learning English. None of them ever asked me directly why they had been chosen, and I had asked the teachers to say that it was simply a random decision. But 13

years later, when I emailed him with the question about how his involvement in my research had affected him ('if at all'), Krisna was clearly still conflicted:

> you know when you chose me for your research, I didn't like it because before I met you in the room I imagine I must speak English, yet at that time I couldn't speak any English. But after we talked, when I went back to my class there was an uproar, my friends asked me 'what did you have to do?' 'What did he ask?' etc. Because in my mind you chose me when you could have chosen other pupils who had better English than me…….. I don't like it when someone thinks I'm good or expert about English when they know I'm not, it's as if someone is always testing me. That makes me so uncomfortable.   [2013 email, translated]

It appears that, even now, Krisna was confused by why I had chosen him for the project. Because he was so clearly less proficient than the other participants, he had been subject to the ridicule of peers at JHS. When I visited him at his senior high school in 2008, teachers and classmates were curious about his connection with me and teased him further. After my 2013 visit to his house, even his father had come to believe he had been chosen for the research project because he was good at English, and when they went on the Haj together, had asked him to be the group interpreter. 'Your dream has come true', he wrote, as if my intention all along had been to motivate him to learn English.

At the same time he admitted 'not all will laugh at me, and I'm happy because that made me learn new things'. I was astonished to find out on my 2013 visit that despite very mediocre results at school, he had chosen to study English Language as his undergraduate major. It was a sobering experience for him:

> I faced many challenges, I saw my friends, it was like they were running while I was walking, they already had the basics and were good compared to me, I began to drop back, and after a year I realized wasn't happy there and eventually I quit.
> [2013 interview, translated]

He then embarked on a degree in computing, which had been his hobby as a teenager and his strongest academic subject. In fact Krisna was not the only one of the four 'less motivated' participants to choose to study English at university. Widya also informed me in 2013 that he was now studying English at the local university where his father was a Professor of Education. Surprised, I asked him why had chosen to study English:

> W: I love it [laughs]
> I: where, where does your love of English come from? Do you think? I mean why did you become interested in English?
> W: what?
> I: what is the source of your love? Where did it come from?
> W: from when I was young of course, yes er, in fact you… are a part of me… *there's a small part from when you came, so I desire to develop* [laughs], it made me dream about a time when I could go to America, to London, to Japan, a time when I could go round the world. And English is the universal language, you know…
> [2013 interview, italicized section translated]

Although his academic progress was painful and slow, and his spoken English hesitant, Widya now evinced a strong personal desire to gain functional competence in the language. Trying a different approach to learning, he had spent 3 months at an 'English village' in Java – a kind of rural study retreat – learning the language 'in the rice fields… in the farmers' huts, in the terraces, on the mountains', and planned to go again, even dreaming one day of opening a similar English course in his home town.

Whereas for the 'high motivation' participants, my researcher influence had probably constituted a gentle push along a trajectory that they were already following, for these two their participation had arguably changed their life trajectory. Our interactions had perhaps stimulated the growth of L2-related possible selves which were not in harmony with other aspects of their developing personalities, for example their academic learning styles or the interests of their peer groups, with very ambivalent long-term consequences.

Discussion

In terms of L2 motivation theory, what is perhaps most notable about this finding is that someone who had such occasional contact with learners could have had a significant motivational impact. After all, I have had fewer than 10 personal interactions with each participant, usually lasting less than 30 minutes each. While we are now well aware of the motivational potential of sustained social relationships (e.g. Ushioda 2007), one can only explain the long-lasting effect of such brief encounters through the power of memory and the imagination.

When reflecting on their past experiences, successful language learners are sometimes able to cite key figures who inspired them at a time in the past (Shoaib & Dörnyei 2005; Murphey & Carpenter 2008); their contact may not have been extended but they stirred emotions or provided a 'spark' (Shedivy 2004) for the imagination which then fed on other environmental stimuli and motivated effort to learn. The evidence here suggests that the participants viewed me both as a figure of authority, and as a source of inspiration, and both perceptions fuelled their motivation to learn English, resulting in substantial gains in proficiency over the period for most of them. These two roles neatly match the two 'self' components of Dörnyei's (2009) L2 motivational self-system: it is reasonable to speculate that their involvement in the research strengthened their pre-existing 'ought-to L2 self', and with its preventive orientation they strove to avoid 'disappointing' me (to use Ani's word); but it also likely strengthened their nascent ideal L2 self, helping them visualise a future identity as a cosmopolitan, English-speaking Indonesian who in later interviews they were able to both describe (e.g. through plans to study abroad, or experiences of socializing with foreigners in Bali) and perform, in real-time with me. In the case of Krisna and Widya, their involvement may even have planted the seed of an ideal English-speaking self which with further environmental nurturing (e.g. Krisna's girlfriend) eventually inspired them to study English at university, albeit unsuccessfully.

Research on future self-imagery is showing that it can change over time (You and Chan 2015), and that the vividness and accessibility of the ideal L2 self is a strong predictor of self-motivated learning (Hessel 2015). A pedagogical implication of my research is that in contexts like this, where contact with international English speakers in the course of daily life is minimal, actual personal contact can have disproportionately beneficial effects on learner motivation, especially in early adolescence when future possible selves are in formation

(Zentner and Renaud 2007). The relationship formed does not need to be particularly close, as its motivational power lies mainly in the way it is imagined subsequently, in the expectations and visions it produces in the learner. As argued in AUTHOR & OTHER (2013), this may help to explain the continuing popularity of schemes which place native-speaker teaching assistants in EFL and MFL contexts, even when they do not have qualified teaching status, or indeed even when they are not native-speakers but simply expert global users of the language. Current critiques of native-speaker influence in the TESOL profession (e.g. Copland, Garton & Mann, 2016) should not dissuade L2 motivation researchers from investigating the motivational impact of such schemes (for a vivid example of motivating classroom discourse between a native-speaker teacher and Thai university students, see Forman 2011).

Implications for future L2 motivation research

Understanding how researchers impact their participants in longitudinal research is important for two reasons. Firstly, it can affect the validity of our findings; secondly, we have to do our very best to ensure that the impact is positive.

Researcher effects (also known as 'investigator effects' or 'observer' effects) are one type of the more general phenomenon of participant reactivity – "when the act of doing the research changes the behaviour of participants, thereby making the findings of the research subject to error" (McKechnie 2008: 730; see also Coombs & Smith 2003). Participant reactivity is a recognised challenge to validity even in quantitative, repeated cross-sectional studies, since the act of completing a questionnaire might prompt a process of reflection in respondents that changes behaviour before the second administration of the survey. But clearly the probability of influence is much greater in qualitative research where the researcher seeks to build warm and empathetic relationships both to encourage disclosure and to ensure continued participation in the project. Garton and Copland (2010) demonstrate how pre-existing relationships can influence the talk produced in interviews, as interviewer and interviewee inevitably bring along mutually-recognised identities from outside the research context. In my own study, each time I met my participants we brought memories of our previous encounters and expectations of how the interview would proceed. While I was gradually building images of my participants' personality and their motivation to learn English, they were imagining my own motives, and fitting me into their personal narratives of learning. If in the original project we were co-constructing their L2 motivation, during the most recent interactions we have been co-constructing my researcher influence.

In applied linguistics, increasing attention is being given to the implications of researcher roles and relationships in the production of talk, and for validity of data interpretation (e.g. Holliday 2007, Pavlenko 2007, Mann 2011). But consideration of the long-term effects of research on participants is surprisingly sparse. In a recent volume on qualitative research (Heigham & Croker 2009), several chapters recognise the likelihood of participant reactivity during the conducting of research and admit to the need to take this into consideration when interpreting data, but omit any discussion of possible 'after-effects' i.e. what happens to participants after the research finishes. Richards' (2003) guide to qualitative inquiry in TESOL and Duff's (2008) book-length treatment of case study research are similarly silent on this topic. In fact Rallis and Rossman (2009: 278) suggest that there is an element of betrayal in much qualitative research, when the researcher who has become part of the fabric

of participants' social world abruptly 'ends the interviews, leaves the field and writes up the study', often never to meet again.

Two recent meta-studies of the participant experience in qualitative research (Opsal et al. 2015; Wolgemuth et al. 2015) have found that institutional review boards (IRBs) often underestimate the benefits brought by such research, in terms for example of developing rewarding relationships, learning about issues and prompting self-reflection. When I started out on my own research project, I was, like most researchers, concerned more with avoiding harm to participants than considering what positive impact it might have on their lives. Now it is evident that my participants, with one exception, do view their involvement in a positive light. Admittedly, the argument has still to be made about what constitutes a 'benefit' for participants or their community. Brinkman and Kvale (2005: 169) point out that whereas in therapy it may be unethical if interventions do not lead to change, 'in research interviews, it may be unethical to instigate new self-interpretations or emotional changes'. Helping to reconcile a research participant to aspects of their academic course or job, for instance, may bring short-term emotional satisfaction to both parties, yet we cannot be sure it is in the subject's long-term best interests.

In my own research, as an English language educator my values were broadly aligned with the dominant discourses of school and community, a neoliberal ideology which promotes English as high value symbolic capital and encourages young people and their families to invest heavily in acquiring it so they can better compete in the national economy, and strengthen their country's competitive position internationally (Block, Gray, and Holborrow 2012). But there are forces within Indonesian society that offer a legitimate resistance to the march of English (e.g. it has recently been removed from the national primary curriculum), viewing it as a threat to the development of a more balanced, contextually-appropriate multilingualism (Coleman 2016). Did their involvement in my research contribute in some small way to their abandonment of the study of other valuable languages, for example (almost all had begun studying either Chinese or Japanese when I first met them, and all had given them up by the time I met them again in 2008)?

Then there is the exception, Krisna, for whom participation in the project has been a source of pain as well as pleasure. I followed accepted protocols in recruiting the participants, gaining informed consent from themselves and their parents. But Honan et al. (2013) point out how fieldworkers from a western cultural context can face ethical dilemmas in some developing country contexts; here for example, it is questionable whether Krisna had a genuine choice about whether to participate in my research, once his teacher had chosen him and his parents had agreed to the idea. I myself had not thought through the possible confusion which selection could bring to 'low motivation' participants, thinking only of the value of negative case analysis in throwing light on nature of L2 motivation in the local context. Greater awareness of how I would be perceived by my young research participants, as an adult, educator and foreign friend of their teacher, would have assisted me in data interpretation and in anticipating the ethical consequences of the study. I could, for instance, have directly asked teachers or even parents about how their pupil/child was experiencing the research. Similarly, if in the original project design I had included the kind of 'member-checking' stage recommended by Harvey (2015), deliberately discussing the experience of participation and our joint construction of their motivation, I might have uncovered the discomfort felt by Krisna much sooner, as well as the more benign effect I was having on the other participants.

Conclusion

Follow-up meetings with Indonesian learners of English in the decade after they had left JHS found that their motivation had been sustained at a high level, and that even those who were originally included as 'less motivated' had become motivated, though their proficiency gains were much lower. An associated finding was that I myself, as the researcher, was a factor in sustaining their motivation to learn English, probably through strengthening their ought-to and ideal L2 selves. The process of returning to the research site, re-analysing data and uncovering my influence within it has helped to shape my own trajectory from a neopositivist to postmodern researcher (Holliday 2007), acutely aware that 'the presence and influence of the researcher are unavoidable, and indeed a resource, which must be capitalized upon' (2007: 137, original italics). Future researchers interested in the long-term evolution of learners' motivation should recognise this from the beginning, and build into the design of their projects strategies for monitoring their own influence (such as the meticulous analysis of their own interviewing technique recommended by Richards, 2011), and subsequent member-checking interviews.

We can only become more aware of the consequences of our work as applied linguistics researchers through re-connecting with the involved participants or institutions, either systematically in planned longitudinal studies or in deliberate attempts to follow up cases, as here. I hope therefore that this paper – with its broadly positive story – may encourage other L2 motivation researchers to carry out similar or more extensive appraisals of the long-term effects of their research, perhaps by revisiting former research project participants. Miller (2015) acknowledges there are ethical risks in 'going back' to research sites – tracking them down may feel like 'stalking', and they may not welcome renewed contact if found. But online social media makes it infinitely more feasible than in the past, and it can be intrinsically rewarding for both parties. It could make a significant contribution to our understanding of long-term motivational trajectories. In an era of ever-increasing accountability, both for the ethics and impact of research, such follow-up studies may also help to build an evidence base that our work has benefits not just for own academic communities but for the people we ask to participate and their communities.

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