**Lots of Selves, some rebellious:**

**Developing the Self Discrepancy Model for Language Learners**

1. **Introduction**

Of all individual differences in second language learning (L2), motivation is considered one of, if not *the* most important factor determining success; moreover, a factor subject to influence through good pedagogical practice. It is unsurprising, therefore, that the vibrant research area of L2 motivation has experienced greater innovation and diversity (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015) than related L2 research areas.

Among the conceptual frameworks of L2 motivation, the *L2 Motivational Self System* (L2MSS: Dörnyei, 2005, 2009) is currently undoubtedly dominant (Boo, Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). The L2MSS is based on the psychological theory of *Self Discrepancy* (Higgins, 1987), whereby tensions between *Actual* and *Possible Selves* generate motivational dynamics. The L2MSS distinguishes between two possible Selves: *Ideal*, stemming from the learner’s own desires, and *Ought-to*, related to external wishes and demands upon the learner, while adding a further learner-context dimension, that of the L2 Learning Experience (teacher, materials etc.).

The L2MSS is often adopted with ‘an air of creativity and room for expansion within the L2MSS concept, with nonorthodox […] methodologies playing a decisive part in ongoing research’ (Boo, Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015:154). Overall, there is evidence, the authors conclude, ‘that a self-based approach has provided a welcoming framework for innovation, thereby proving capable of accommodating radically new theoretical perspectives’ (op.cit., 153). One such recent expansion is the integration of the L2MSS within *Complex Dynamic Systems Theory* (Dörnyei, McIntyre & Henry, 2015), in an attempt to better embed contextual factors. The L2MSS model has greatly enriched our understanding of L2 motivation and offered a valuable foundation for pedagogical applications to foster L2 motivation.

However, concerns remain, including from the author himself (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009), as to whether a concept as vast as ‘self’ might be the best anchor for the research area. Ambiguities exist regarding the delineation of core concepts, such as *Ought-to*, which several studies have flagged up, especially studies with Anglophone language learners (= English as (one of) first language(s); see section 2.2.).

L2 motivation research is dominated by studies investigating *learners of English* (Boo, Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). This skewedness might have -inadvertently- contributed to a bias in conceptualizing L2 motivation. Indeed, empirical studies looking at L2 motivation in Anglophones have described seemingly ‘outlying’ profiles, i.e. not fitting the L2MSS. Given the relative novelty of the discovery of such profiles, further studies will need to determine if this exposes a conceptual problem of the L2MSS generally, or if certain learners (e.g. with specific L1s, such as English) fit the L2MSS badly, and why. In this article, special attention is given to the lack of fitness to Anglophone language learners in particular (section 2.2.2.)

Overall, the L2MSS has yielded many pedagogically valuable insights, and has proven itself adaptable to conceptual innovations. Two examples of recent extensions of the L2MSS are, on the one hand, the incorporation into the meta-theory of *Complex Dynamic Systems Theory* (Boo, Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; Dörnyei, McIntyre & Henry 2015) and *Visions of L2 Self* (Dörnyei & Chan, 2013).

One asset of any Self-based model is that the notions of *Own* and *Other* permit a reasonable conciliation of those theories that emphasize individual differences (roughly corresponding to the *Own* dimension in *Self Discrepancy Theory*), and those that focus on socio-contextual influences (roughly corresponding to the *Other* dimension). Thus, a Self-based model promises not only good scope for adaptation, to better account for Anglophone learners, but also offers a better grip on conceptual influences *if* we return to Higgins’ (1989) original theory first of all.

This article is organized in the following way: the next section presents three self-based motivational models, starting with Higgins’ (1987) original, followed by the L2MSS and a further Self-based L2 motivation model. There follows a review of empirical studies applying the L2MSS (or its variants), focusing on results which indicate lack of fit or lack of delineations of Self. These reviews form the basis for an alternative L2 motivation model, named *Self Discrepancy Model for Language Learners*. Next, in the empirical section of this article, data from two learner groups (compulsory adolescent and mature adult learners) are applied to the new model*.* Results reveal four different learner profiles, three in young learners and one in adults, permitting enhanced insight into the development of L2 motivation.

1. **Literature review**
	1. **Higgins’ *Self Discrepancy Theory* (SDT) and its adaptations**

The origin of SDT lies in (clinical) psychology. At its core, it stipulates that discrepancies between what we are, what we would like to be, should be, and what others expect of us lead to tensions. Higgins distinguished between three Self *domains* *(Ought, Ideal, Actual)* and two Self *standpoints* (*Own/Other***),** resulting in four Self *guides* (*Own/Ideal, Own/Ought, Other/Ideal, Other/Ought*). The current, or *Actual* Self can be viewed either by *Own* or *Other(s)*. Conflict can arise between the *Actual* Self and *any* of the others. However, in well-balanced language learners, discrepancies are considered a motivator for change.

**Table I somewhere here**

*Own Selves* describe Selves that stem from self-determined goals (*Own/Ideal);* conversely, the learner might have internalized goals that stem from outside (*Own/Ought). Ideal* refers to representations of attributes that either yourself or others would like you to possess, while *Other Selves* could be specific others as well as others as wider (societal) influence (Higgins, 1987:320); *Ideal Other* refers to attributes that others would like you to possess, and *Ought Other* to attributes that other think you should possess. No individual can ever claim full and accurate insight into what others’ wishes and demands on the Self might be: thus, the *Other* standpoint has to be understood as mediated by Self perceptions of *Others’* wishes and demands.

In educational contexts, differentiating between *Ideal* and *Ought Other* allows to distinguish between those Selves that another person might impose as a duty (*Ought Other*) and those relating to *Ideals* for the learner (*Ideal Other*). One might imagine, for instance, a teacher wishing for their students to develop confidence in speaking in L2 (*Ideal Other*); by contrast, another teacher might emphasize the need to coach students to pass exams (*Ought Other*).

For the language learner, some discrepancy between Self guides and Self concepts is pedagogically desirable, as it encourages appropriate learner behaviour (Carver & Scheier, 2001), without, however, impinging on the learner’s sense of self efficacy. Large discrepancies could be adjusted in two ways: a) change the *Actual Own* self concept (e.g. *I actually CAN learn languages*, modifying self perception), b) lower *Own* *Ideal* or *Ought* Self guide (e.g. *I don’t need to be 100% correct to communicate well in the target language*). A further possibility, avoiding experiences of the discrepancy between Self guides and Self concepts, is pedagogically undesirable, as it would lead to reducing/stopping (language) learning activities.

Markus & Nurius (1986) focus on *possible* Selves, arguing that only positive, not (equally existent) negative or neutral possible Selves are suitable motivators for learning and change. The authors’ pedagogical focus might explain why L2 motivation research is largely based on their work, rather than Higgins’. Both works differentiate between *Own* and *Other* standpoints, but Markus & Nurius argue that, as others rarely engage in contemplating possible visions of oneself, and furthermore, as others lack access to one’s own Self visions, the *Other* standpoint is less important than *Own* (1986:964). However, in educational settings in particular, significant others such as parents and teachers constantly envision future selves of their dependents, which can have a significant effect on their self development: thus, for the educational context in hand, the *Other* dimension should be of great importance, rather than marginal.

*The L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS)*

Adapting the SDT for language learners, Dörnyei’s L2MSS proposes to distinguish between the learner’s *Ideal Self*, representing ‘what we very much would like to become’ (Dörnyei, 2009: 12), and the *Ought-to Self*, understood as the ‘image of self held by another’ (Markus & Nurius, 1986:958). Dörnyei (2005) conceptualizes the *Ideal Self* as encompassing a wide range of components (ideal L2 self, cultural interest, integrativeness, instrumentality promotion, attitude to L2 community). By contrast, the *Ought-to* dimension responds to external demands (e.g. family influence), and avoids negative outcomes resulting from external expectations (instrumentality prevention). The low rating by Markus & Nurius (1986)of the *Other* standpoint may account for the fact that the L2MSS collapses the *Own*–*Other* differentiation (*ideal* ≈ *own*, *ought-to* ≈ *other*).

**Table II somewhere here**

To adapt the SDT to language learner contexts, Dörnyei included the dimension of the *language learner experience,* to account for (de)motivational effects of external factors such as the teacher, the teaching material, peers, classroom etc.

*Taylor’s quadripolar model of selves*

Motivated by an apparent lack of fit of the L2MSS to some learner profiles (see below for details), Taylor (2013) proposes an alternative L2 Self-based model. Higgins’ original *standpoints of Self* are reintroduced, albeit with slightly different terminology (*own* ≈ *internal, other* ≈ e*xternal*), but *Ideal* and *Ought* are collapsed under the umbrella *possible*. In this model, all external *possible* Selves are imposed, not differentiating between what others (e.g. teachers) might ideally wish for the learner and what they impose by virtue of their position and/or obligations. Similarly, the model does not differentiate between *possible* *own* Selves that respond to a sense of obligation, or to a more intrinsic ideal. Consequently, Taylor’s two-dimensional model differentiates *Ideal, Imposed, Private* and *Public* Selves.

**Table III somewhere here**

Taylor identifies several types emerging from combinations of these selves: *submissive* (discrepancy between *imposed* and *Ideal* Self), *duplicitous* (*Ideal* and *imposed* generate parallel responses), *harmonious* (*Ideal* and *imposed* generate congruent responses) and *rebellious*: the latter describes a learner who rejects an imposed self as it does not match his/her *Ideal Self*.

*Self Determination Theory*

Neither the original SDT nor its adaptations elaborate much on how intrinsic motivation might develop in childhood, given the gradual emergence of Self. Higgins (1987) and a related Self theory, namely *Self Determination Theory* (Ryan & Deci, 2000) both imagine this process as one of *gradual* acceptance of imposed (*Other/Ought*) goals (‘there is evidence that children's general regulatory style does tend to become more internalized or self-regulated over time’, Ryan & Deci, 2000:72). According to this thesis, one might expect young learners to have dominantly *Ought/Other* motivation, and adults *Ideal/Own.* Although L2MSS studies have found older students to be dominantly *Ideal*-motivated (Busse & Williams, 2010; Ryan & Dörnyei, 2013; Ryan, 2009), there is also evidence to the contrary (see below).

*Self Determination Theory* offers the advantage of conceptualizing motivation as a continuum: *externally regulated behaviour* is described as the most *Other*-controlled behaviour, *identified* and *introjected* behaviour somewhat *Other*-controlled, *integrated regulation* largely Self-controlled, and *intrinsic* completely Self-controlled. This gradual conceptualization of control promises a better handle on developmental aspects than SDT alone; we shall therefore return to this scale dimension when presenting the new *Self Discrepancy Model for Language Learners* below.

In the L2MSS, the collapse of *Other* and *Ought*[[1]](#footnote-1) might somewhat obfuscate developmental insight: in the infant, *Other* (e.g. parental) concepts of Self exist before *Own*, and *Actual* *Selves* before *Self Guides*. Thus, early Self visions must somehow be mediated via *Others*. Currently, there are too few studies applying L2MSS to either very young or mature learners (Ryan & Dörnyei, 2013) to permit any generalizations about developments of L2 motivational selves.

The next section discusses conceptual difficulties emerging from empirical work using the L2MSS.

* 1. **Empirical studies using the L2MSS**

The following discussion of the literature, of necessity very selective, focuses on studies that have flagged up conceptual issues. Regarding *Ideal* Self, it remains unclear to what extent this might include motivation concepts from other models, including non-language-specific ones, such as valuing (language) knowledge for its own sake (*knowledge* *dimension*, Cid, Granena & Tragent, 2009), valuing intellectual stimulation(see e.g. Oxford & Shearin,1996: 122f), and enjoying a sense of progress in learning. Similarly, it is unclear if Gardner’s (1985) notion of *integrativeness* is part of the *Ideal* Self; more generally, the delineation between *intrinsic* motivation and *Ideal* Self (Busse & Williams, 2010; Oakes 2013) is also vague, given that instrumental motivation can be part of *Ideal* Self (Papi & Teimouri, 2012; Taguchi, Maget & Papi 2009).

Using Structural Equation Modelling, Papi (2010) reveals a lack of clarity regarding the *Ought*/*Ideal* boundary, more specifically, the meaning of *Ought* in relation to instrumentality (e.g. Csizér & Lukacs, 2010; Kormos & Csizér, 2008; Lamb, 2012; Taguchi et al., 2009). Even more than for *Ideal* Self*,* the *Ought* Selfmight encompass a range of motivations, some to do with influence from others, some to do with preventing negative outcomes, and some internalized (Csizér & Lukacs, 2010). The item wordings used in questionnaires eliciting this dimension might illuminate the underlying problem: statements are dominantly formulated in the *first* person but are used to elicit standpoints of *Others* (Lamb 2012) (e.g. *It will have a negative impact on my life if I don’t learn English*, Dörnyei, 2010:173).

In sum, within the L2MSS, questions remain regarding the meaning of both *Ideal* and *Ought*, as well as the place of non-language-specific dimensions (intellectual stimulation, sense of progress, knowledge orientation). Some researchers have resorted to wider contextual dimensions in an effort to clarify these issues. For instance, the *cultural difference hypothesis* stipulates that *Ought* motivation dominates in cultures that value collectivity over individualism (Taguchi, Magid & Papi, 2009); more comprehensively, Lamb (2009:243) suggests expanding the L2MSS with a Bourdieuian framework to investigate how Selves are either constrained or enabled by their context. A return to Higgins’ SDT will help to clarify the respective meanings of *Ought* and *Ideal*.

* + 1. **Developmental perspectives on language learner motivation**

Motivation and attitude towards learning are known to change with age (Papi & Teimouri, 2012), but there are few empirical L2MSS studies with a developmental focus. Kormos & Csizier (2008) and Lamb (2011) report higher *Ideal* orientation among university than among school students, while others (Papi & Teimouri, 2012) observe a drop in *Ideal* motivation as students enter university, or an increase in *Ought* motivation (Jiang & Dewaele, 2015): thus, there is no generalizable ‘from *Ought* to *Ideal’* trend, however, there are, to the author’s knowledge, no L2MSS studies involving younger learners (aged <10). The L2MSS might not offer the best fit, given these learners’ immature Self development (Ryan & Dörnyei, 2013:95ff), while teenagers and young adults, often at a stage characterized by considerable fluctuations of Self images (Mallet & Rodriguez-Tomé, 1999), might offer the ‘richest pickings’ for a L2MSS approach.

Looking beyond L2MSS, studies investigating adult L2 motivation (e.g. Campbell & Storch, 2011; author 2012) report high *Ideal* Selves, and in particular high non-language-specific dimensions*,* such as enjoying a sense of making progress. Studies not using the L2MSS seem to contradict the developmental thesis that L2MSS offers, namely that older people are less motivated by *Ideal* Selves and are mainly concerned with avoiding negative outcomes (‘As we get older, we become more interested in protecting what we have than seeking further gains’, Ryan & Dörnyei, 2013:96).

To summarize, Self-based models are frequently used to research a variety of psychological dimensions such as learner beliefs (e.g. Mercer, 2011), attitudes, or motivation. The L2MSS model has facilitated useful insights that allow practical pedagogical application. Issues of lack of fit remain, however, especially regarding the *Ought* dimension: recently, these have been reported especially in one learner group, i.e. *Anglophone* language learners, discussed next.

* + 1. **Anglophone language learners**

In an increasingly anglicized world, motivation for Anglophones learning other languages is perceived to be vulnerable (e.g. author 2014; Lo Bianco, 2014). In this context, three studies focusing on L2 motivation in Anglophone *voluntary* learners (author 2012; Oakes 2013; Thompson & Vásquez, 2015) have, independently, described learners with strikingly similar profiles. Thompson & Vásquez (2015:170) cite ‘Alex’, who sees himself as the ‘anti-stereotypical American learning Chinese’ (p.166) reacting against his negatively perceived Anglophone monoglot environment, i.e. expressing conflict between his *Ideal* Self and thatwhich *Others* have of him. In psychology, this is described as *reactance response* (‘urge to perform action because advice to the contrary was given’, see Brehm, 1966). Thompson & Vásquez conclude that the L2MSS does not differentiate sufficiently between *I* and *Other* perceptions. Similarly, author (2012) and Oakes (2013) describe Anglophone language learners rejecting the ‘monoglot attitude’ (Oakes, 2013:189) of their English peers in favour of an *international outlook,* which is described as more important still than any motivations that might relate to affinity with L2 culture or community. Thus, these Anglophone learners distinguish between *Own* and *Other* standpoints of Self, as envisaged by Higgins. These learners also display an interest in belonging to an (imagined) global community: they show *international posture* (IP). Yashima (2002:57) defines IP as

interest in foreign or international affairs, willingness to go overseas to stay or work, readiness to interact with intercultural partners, and [...] openness or a non-ethnocentric attitude toward different cultures*.*

So far, IP has been described mainly in learners of English (e.g. Henry & Cliffordson, 2015), as this global language is most ‘associated with a non-parochial, cosmopolitan, globalized world-citizen identity’ (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015:79). For Anglophone L2 learners, however, learning – by definition – a less globalized language, the pathway to IP is less obvious; nonetheless, it has been described in Anglophone learners with ‘rebellious’ orientation, posing the question of how this learner profile would be accounted for in a *self discrepancy* model.

We recall that Taylor’s (2013) quadripolar model includes a ‘rebellious’ profile, fitting exactly the Anglophone learners described by author (2012), Oakes (2013) and Thompson & Vásquez (2015). For these learners, IP was part of their ‘rebellious’ streak. Thus, ‘rebellious’ attitudes, resisting pressure from others (e.g. peers, wider social milieu), can push a learner *away* from learning, rather than towards it, especially in Anglophone learner contexts, where languages might be perceived as irrelevant (Coleman 2009), gendered (X, X & author, 2002) or only for the ‘brainy’ (Graham, 2006).

‘Rebellious’ yet (highly) motivated learner profiles have not yet been reported in Anglophone learners in *compulsory* settings. Studies looking at L2 motivation in the UK at Secondary schools (age 12 –16) have generally shown poor motivation (e.g. Graham, 2006; Taylor & Marsden, 2014), along with low self efficacy (X, X & author, 2002), which, in SDT terms, is explained as a discrepancy between *Actual/Own* and *Actual/Ideal* (Higgins, 1987:334).

To conclude, empirical studies using the L2MSS have flagged up several issues: lack of fit regarding the *Ought* dimension, lack of *Ought/Ideal* delineation, lack of accommodation of learner profiles described as ‘rebellious’ (or similar), and a lack of clarity regarding the placement of non-language-specific motivation. Empirical studies suggest that a return to Higgins’ original dimension of *standpoints* is a necessary constituent of any *self discrepancy* model. In the next section, these observations are used to develop a language-specific motivation model, based on Higgins’ *full* original SDT. The review of empirical studies using the dominant L2 motivation model (section 2.2.) and

The literature review has revealed that

* the *Ought* dimension in the L2MSS seems to comprise aspects of *Own* and *Others*;
* some language learners have a ‘rebellious’ take on the *Other* versus *Own* discrepancy;
* learners may distinguish between
	+ i) *Known Others* around them, such as teachers, parents, significant others, and
	+ ii) *Others in a wider sense*, such as their national community;
* learners may perceive the influence of *Others* as *supportive* of language learning (e.g. teacher influence) or *non-supportive;*
* the continuum of intrinsic-extrinsic determination (Ryan & Deci, 2000) may serve as a useful addition to developmental aspects of motivation;
* some non-language-specific motivations are entirely Self-controlled (e.g. enjoying intellectual stimulation, IP), some marginally *Other*-influenced (e.g. sense of obligation).

A Self-based model of L2 motivation should incorporate these, starting with a re-instatement of the *Own* versus *Other* standpoints, and differentiate a) between different groups of *Others b)* allowing for the possibility that many different *Other* dimensions can have supportive or unsupportive influences. In this study, it was decided to delineate two *Other* dimensions: *Known* other*s* and *wider milieu*, in order to avoid over-interpretation. Although one could conceivably differentiate between a great number of *Others*, some participants’ comments were not sufficiently detailed on the issue of *Others* to differentiate these further. For instance, in a statement such as ‘*If you put**in the time and effort to learn a language they think you are a hard working person*’ (male, school 2), ‘they’ might potentially refer to future university admission panels, future employers, the immediate or the wider community: it was therefore coded ‘*Ought supportive milieu’* (OSM). The following coding system, differentiating between supportive and unsupportive influences in all *Others*, was applied:

**Table IV somewhere here**

In the following section, qualitative data from two groups of Anglophone learners are mapped onto this model, in order to explore their different Selves and Self discrepancies.

1. **The Study**
	1. **Research questions:**
2. Which Selves and Self discrepancies dominate in i) adolescent and ii) mature adult Anglophone language learners?
3. What do the differences between the two learner groups suggest about developmental dimensions of L2 motivation?
	1. **Method and data**

Qualitative language learner data from two very different Anglophone language learner groups, namely compulsory adolescent (age 13-14) and voluntary mature adult learners (age range 25-60+, average age 49), were collected and analyzed. Qualitative data elicitation was preferred in order to allow free discussion, permitting participants to contribute (novel) aspects that might go undetected in questionnaire-style instruments. Quantitative instruments would also have necessitated considerable adjustment to take account of the two very different age groups of participants, compromising comparability of data. Interviews and focus groups were loosely structured around pre-formulated questions (see Appendix). Each focus group lasted about 20 minutes. With the adolescents, focus groups were preferred as they are known to promote free discussion among students, decrease inhibition in front of the researcher (Field, 2000), and lessen the ‘performance’ effect for the benefit of the interviewer (Lamb, 2009). The researcher was Disclosure and Barring Services checked, in line with national child protection policy. For the mature adult learners, email invitations to a private telephone interview were sent out to 180 language students following a distance language course (beginner level in French, German or Spanish) at a UK university. Eleven students (six male, five female) replied and were interviewed. Ethical permission was sought from the researcher’s institution as well as from each participant.

The school data came from two state comprehensive schools in two small cities in the North-East of England: school 1 had a policy of compulsory language learning for most students up to age 16 at the time of data collection, whereas school 2 selected the top 25% of students at age 14 to continue language study up to age 16. In each school, five randomly selected mixed ability and mixed gender focus groups, each comprised of five to six students aged 13-14 (Year 9), were convened. All school participants were required to study one language. School 1 also had 23% of the cohort voluntarily studying a second language (see Table V).

**Table V somewhere here**

All data were audio recorded and orthographically transcribed, and data files were uploaded into NVivo for coding and analysis. The coded data were scanned for frequencies and concurrences of particular self guides with particular self concepts.

The following section reports first on school students, then mature adults. As the school students were interviewed in groups, most extracts cite several turns, so as to show the conversational dynamics between students. Cited extracts were chosen on grounds of representing a) frequencies; b) diversity of coding; c) clarity of extract representing a particular self dimension.

1. **Findings**

The gender of speakers is given at start of turn (m, f for adolescents; M, F for adults). Focus group participants are numbered consecutively, per turn taken. The interviewer’s utterances are given in *italic*. Codes are given in superscript above each utterance; if an utterance permits two code interpretations, both are given. Each conversation extract is followed by a discussion of emerging selves and self discrepancies.

* 1. **Which Selves and Self discrepancies dominate in i) adolescent ii) mature adult Anglophone language learners?**
		1. **School students**

**Extract 1: school 1 group1**

(m1) I think many people find it is worthless because of English. English is the main language now.NSWM

(m2) Jobs. You get more job opportunities if you have more languages.OSM Not just English. You should learn more languages.OO

(f1) German will be the language of the future.OSM

(m2) Mandarin.OSM

(m3) Mandarin.OSM

(m1) English.NSWM

(m1) In 20 or 50 years time or so it will be more of a choice and not many people will still be learning languages here in the UK.NSWM  There could be like optional lessons after school.NSWM

(f2) Nobody in our group wants to continue with languages.NSWM and INSWM

Extract 1 illustrates the students’ preoccupation with studying the most *useful* language, as determined by external pressures (OSM) (e.g. job market). This rationale is played out against the argument of *uselessness* of L2s in the context of Global English within their educational trajectory (NSWM). For many, the net result of this calculation is to discontinue language learning (see f2). The niche that (m1) envisages for language learning for Anglophones in the future suggests a leisure learner type only. The preoccupation of weighing up other-rated usefulness of learning is also palpable in Extract 2:

**Extract 2: school 1, group 2**

(f1) English is the global language a lot more than 20 or 30 years ago.NSWM

(m1) A lot of people speak English who don’t have it as a main language, like in India and stuff. You will find people who speak English everywhere. In every country.NSWM

(all but one agree).

(f1) Yeah all round the world people speak English.NSWM

(m2) It depends on what languages.OSM

*Is it worthwhile learning languages?*

(f1) Depends on your career if languages are useful.OSM

(m1) Depends on how good you are.AO

(m2) I am really proud of speaking another language.AO You can talk to others that wayIO. Get to know their culture.IO

(f2) You still speak good English. Better than us.IO

(m1) When travelling like to Germany or France you can actually talk to the people.IO

(f3) I think in 100 years or so you can just speak and a computer will automatically translate.NSWM

Participant (m2), a bilingual, contradicts the group’s dominant views by introducing the *own* standpoint in two ways: first professing a positive actual L2 image (AO), then citing *self-determined* Ideal motivations (IP, curiosity). The effect on the group is expressed by (f2) who, in a single utterance, reflects negatively on her AO and hands(m2) two compliments (speaking another language and better English). In short, (m2)’s positive evocation of *own* standpoint triggered critical *own* reflection in others.

**Extract 3: school 1, group 3**

(f1) I feel there is no point in learning languages, everyone speaks English.NSWM

(m1) But if you go on holiday.OSM

(f2) It is disrespectful to just make them speak our language. You should have a go at speaking theirs as well.OO

(m2) Not everyone speaks English, like in France they don’t.

(m3) I think in Russia they don’t speak English.OO

(f1) But holiday places do.NSWM

(f2) The places you intend to go to do.NSWM

(m2) No, most people learn languages for convenience.OSKO Some people want to stay true to their cultureIO and some are just plain ignorant. Most places in China and Korea they won’t be learning English because they want their language to be superior.OKSO Not English.OSKO

(m3) Learning dead languages is like impressive.OO It develops thinking skills. IO You learn lots of fancy words.OO

In addition to the familiar *usefulness* calculation, this extract introduces two new dimensions: a high *Ideal/Own* motivation with reference to a) intellectual development (m3) and b) respect for others (f2). The ‘respect’ argument is expressed four more times in other groups (e.g. school 2, group 4: (m2): *If you only used English abroad you would not be really respected*. (f2): *Yes, at least you must show you are trying*), and the ‘intellectual development’ argument is cited three more times. Furthermore, (m2) introduces a global perspective that stands the ‘*Everyone speaks English so we don’t need to learn a language’* argument on its head: he assesses the future importance of other global languages as greater than English, with the result that the environment is seen as conducive to L2 learning, especially of global languages. (m2) is a first-language Chinese speaker.

**Extract 4: School 2, group 1**

*Why would you learn a language?*

(f1) For your career.OSKO

(f2) You stand out more.OSKO If you could speak another language it sounds really nice.IO

(m1) It is impressive as well. You can say you have done it.OSKO

(m2) It shows commitment.OSKO

(m1) It is useful as well.OSKO If you are in the country and someone talks to you then you might not know what they mean. And if you learned the language you can.OSKO

(m2) When you learn a language you can pick up other ones more easily.IO

This extract again shows the preoccupation with the students’ calculations of ‘benefits versus effort’. These students mainly evoke the academic merits of languages (f1, f2, m1, m2), mostly as strategic asset and high academic currency, an argument mentioned a further four times (e.g. school 2, group 4: *If you put in the time and effort to learn a language you have proven you are a hard worker* (m2) and *They think you are a hard working person (*m3)). However, students also mention some highly *ideal/own* motivation, such as aesthetic enjoyment (f2), and cognitive benefits, mentioned a further four times. Finally, the motivation to converse with strangers in their language, permitting better insights into their culture, suggests the development of IP.

**Extract 5: school 1, group 5**

(m1) When I was in Italy I really wanted to practise like speaking a different language but all of them when they started to speak English… quite annoying. NSWM

(all others agree)

(m2) When I went to Italy we did not know any Italian and they did not know any English so communicating was the funniest thing ever.OKSO

(m3) Yeah for me I go to Turkey for 6 weeks in my summer holidays because I am half Turkish and first time I went I did not know anything so now I know quite a bit more.AO I can’t learn just by writing. I can write things down but then when it comes to saying it I can’t …if I get put out there with some phrases that I can use then it’s OK.AO, OSKO

In this extract, students discuss an additional dimension relating to their learner experience, namely the negative reputation of Anglophones as language learners, and the effect this has on their learning and attempts to practise their L2: all students experienced a switch to English when they tried to use their L2 at some stage. (m3), by virtue of his learner experience *outside school*, is the only student who has maintained a reasonably positive *Actual/Own* learner self in this challenging context.

To summarize, *Other/Ought* selves dominate among these learners, largely because many students calculate the benefits of languages as a formula, weighing up the convenience of Global English and the learning efforts against Other determined benefits of language skills and professional and academic qualifications. Depending on the perceived ubiquity of English, this calculation might lead students to consider language learning as worthwhile, or not. However, there is also a vocal minority of students with relatively strongly developed *Ideal/Own*, citing an impressive range of non-language specific rationales, such as intellectual stimulation, aesthetic merit, showing respect towards others, and IP.

The analysis of the school data has revealed three relatively distinct learner profiles, which are presented in turn:

* + - 1. **The dominantly Other-motivated learner**

The majority of students demonstrate a high *Ought*/*Other* self, sensitive to (positively experienced) external pressures such as teachers, career advisers, and, albeit to a lesser extent, parents (*Known Others*), as well as *wider milieu* (e.g. university or job applications), and viewing their *Actual/Own* self as ‘unfinished’ in respect of language learning. This learner type is represented in Table VI.

**Table VI somewhere here**

* + - 1. **The dominantly Self-motivated learner**

A vocal minority of students revealed themselves to be dominantly motivated by their *Own* standpoints, both *Ought* (slightly stronger) and *Ideal*. *Own*/*Ought* motivations range from the moral impetus to share the burden of language learning, showing respect towards other cultures, and wanting to appear clever, while, in the *Ideal* range, non-language-specific motivations and in particular IP feature highly: there is no discernable *Other* influence here. Some students of this learner type also displayed the ‘rebellious’ motivational streak wanting to counter the negative language learner image of the British.

**Table VII somewhere here**

* + - 1. **The amotivated (Anglophone) learner**

Finally, a small number of students, some of whom see the *wider milieu* as just as non-supportive as the *Self*-motivated learners, come to the opposite conclusion: these students judge the supportive Other influences (e.g. teachers) of less importance than the wider milieu, and, in the context of Global English, judge language learning as quite useless. Thus, they might ‘rebel’ against the obligation imposed by school systems (red arrow) but they perceive no conflict between their Actual (non-L2 speaking) and theirfuture Self in the wider (English-speaking) world. It is unclear if such profiles exist dominantly among Anglophone learners, provoked by Global English. Hence, this learner type is cautiously labelled the amotivated (Anglophone) learner.

**Table VIII somewhere here**

These three types emerge from *this* sample of adolescent learners; other learner profiles are conceivable. Selves among young learners should be considered in flux, subject to e.g. peer influences (see e.g. Extracts 3 and 4 above). The next section presents the analysis of the mature adult data.

* + 1. **Adult learners**

The following section evaluates the adults’ responses which were analyzed using the same coding system. There was relatively little evidence, in these data, of Other guides; these adults’ guides were mainly *Own*-driven. Many adults’ comments made it difficult to establish a clear distinction between *Ought* and *Own*. The majority (eight out of 11) thematized notions of embarrassment, humiliation, or shame, especially when abroad and feeling ‘linguistically inferior’ compared to the language skills of foreigners, belonging to the introjected (= somewhat *Other*-controlled) motivational spectrum:

(M1) I am actually embarrassed I’m really embarrassed if I go to a country and I cannot even say the odd word.OO

(M2): When I lived in France... it is really embarrassingOO, I think, not to try to speak the language of the country you’re in.OO, OI That made me want to learnIO, after years of understanding that and having that embarrassment.IO

Relatedly, the adult students showed a highly developed sense of respect and courtesy towards others, equally belonging to the introjected spectrum:

(M1): I have always tried wherever I have gone to try and say a few words even if it’s just please and thank you.OO

(F1): I think that it [the notion that language learning is unnecessary if you speak English] is a lazy attitude and disrespectful[…] I am actually embarrassed.OO

The adult students also frequently referred to IP and non-linguistic benefits of language learning, such as cognitive benefits, and satisfying intellectual curiosity, belonging to the Self-determined spectrum.

(M3): I would say that learning a language opens your horizon so much it’s always worth doing it.IO

(M1): It [= language learning] opens up different horizons, other cultures, what’s happening in other countries.IO

These students describe a clash between self guides and their L1 in-group, in particular British culture and mentality, which is described as either disinterested in languages, or incompetent at language learning:

(M1) They [the British] have English, they don’t learn, the old saying: they just shout louder.NSWM

(F2) A majority of people cannot be bothered to learn another language – they see no point until it actually affects them. NSWM

(F1) There is certainly an attitude that it’s not necessary, languages are not really promoted.NSWM

(M3)[…] it’s a perception that you have to have a language brain to learn a language.AO It’s complete nonsense, you find people speaking Cornish who never passed an exam or anythingAO. I think languages in Britain are seen as difficult .NSWM The other thing is it’s very badly taught here in schools. They don’t actually teach grammar.AKO

(F3): Certainly the attitude by many here is you don’t need the languages.NSWM

In contrast, the general success in language learning and attitude towards languages in other nations are praised:

(F3): With people learning English it’s not the same. They want to learn to get on in life... a British company that has a global presence you need to have good English […] a lot of people I know have three languages. In my children’s school they started way too late... and then it’s just harder to learn then.

(F1): If you look at the results [of language learning] Britain is probably at the bottom of the table,NSWM Scandinavians probably at the top. They can speak English to an incredibly high standard. Holland is also very good. France is quite poor at other languages, Italy is quite poor, Ireland is not that good either... but Britain is a very big exception.

(M4): I don’t know how they do it in Holland but it works. I can only say it does not work in Britain, I don’t know why really. NSWM

(M2) The Europeans that I have met, both in the UK, Europe and over here in the USA are all fluent in at least 2 languages, if not more! They seem to take it as granted that they need to learn English and usually one other European language other than their first language. When my father lived in Norway in his late teens/early twenties he was made to learn Norwegian at night school in Norway because learning it during his normal day from other Norwegians was hopeless as they just wanted to practise their English.IO

To summarize, the mature adults in this study had strongly developed sense of Self (*Actual* and possible), with a fluid range of *Ought* to *Ideal* locus of control, a findingin line with *Self Determination Theory*. The *Ought/Ideal* delineation in Table IX representing the Self determined learners is therefore jettisoned.

**Table IX somewhere here**

Just like the dominantly *Own*-motivated school students, the adults were motivated by IP and non-language-specific incentives. Their ‘reactant’ or ‘rebellious’ stance, i.e. wanting to distance themselves from the negatively perceived British image (as poor language learners, with low IP) was more strongly developed than in *Own*-motivated adolescents. Adults also evaluated their *Actual/Own* learner Self as more positive than adolescents, i.e. displaying higher self efficacy. Overall, however, the most striking feature of this learner type is the absence of Otherinfluence. The ‘rebellious’ streak can be taken as further evidence of independence from *Others*, but should not be considered necessary for independent learning. In the given context of Global English, these data suggest that the ‘rebellious stance’ might be specific to *some* Anglophone L2 learners.

* 1. **What do the differences between the two learner groups suggest about developmental dimensions of L2 motivation?**

Looking at these four learner profiles from a developmental perspective, the following observations can be made: most adolescent learners seem dominantly motivated by the gap between *Other/Ought* and *Actual/Own*. The amotivated and dominantly-*Other* motivated learners have more in common than is evident at first glance: both react to perceived *other* influences, the difference being that amotivated learners judge the *wider milieu* as largely unsupportive, while *Other*-motivated learners judge the motivating influences of *known others* as positive. In a sense, the global rather than immediate outlook of the amotivated learner, weighing up learning needs against the forces of Global English, is rather mature: the learner demonstrates independence from the *Other*-determination of their immediate surroundings (i.e. their school system). This learner type can serve as a stark warning for all well-intended efforts to motivate Anglophone language learners via an over-reliance on *Ought* *Other* motivations, however valid for the learners’ educational and professional future they might be: in the eyes of this learner type, any imposed *Ought* (e.g. by the education system) lags behind the modern times of Global English, a belief that would be hard to change with any *Ought*-type motivational arguments. In contrast, the dominantly *Own* motivated learner, displaying a range of motivations, including some ‘rebellious streaks’, might be well on their way to becoming an independent learner.

1. **Discussion**

This study set out to address the issue of ‘non-fit’ of data to the L2MSS, and in particular ‘rebellious’ learner profiles described in some Anglophone learners. The results of this study not only confirm the great importance of this motivation type for some Anglophone learners, but also indicate that a *continuum* view of more extrinsic to intrinsic determination, in line with SDT, offers a better fit to the data. Consequently, the two domains (*Ought, Ideal*) and two standpoints (*Other, Own*) of Self, from Higgins’ original SDT, *are* considered important dimensions but must be conceived as permeable and overlapping. The core notion of SDT, however, i.e. that discrepancies between actual and possible Self provide motivational dynamics, offers a valid account of the data. Therefore, a new model named *Self* *Discrepancy Model for Language Learners* is presented:

**Figure 1 somewhere here**

The actual Self (top) could clash with any of the potential Selves, ranging from *Own Ideal* (high intrinsic control, pink) to *Ought Other* (high extrinsic control, grey), with overlapping circles indicating finely-graded, gradual delineations of domains and standpoints. Striped effects (green/grey) in the *Other* dimensions indicate the co-occurrence of supportive and unsupportive influences. In this system, a ‘rebellious Self’ is one that rejects an *Other*-imposed Self as it clashes with their *Actual* and *Own Ideal* Selves. For instance, a ‘rebellious teenager’ might find their *Ideal* Self developing in different directions to that of their supportive teachers and parents, and decide not to learn. The ‘rebellious profile’ that emerged very strongly among the adults in this study, however, was of another kind: these students perceived a clash between an environment described as (ideologically) undesirable and *un*supportive, their *Actual* Self, and highly self-determined *Ideal Self*. As each learner needs to make sense of the many (conflicting) *Other* pressures and influences upon them, it seems all the more striking that this newly described learner type showed remarkable similarity in both perceptions of their general milieu and their *Ideals* (IP, knowledge orientation, curiosity, intellectual stimulation).

Table X serves to give illustrative examples of different Self dimensions, with examples as ‘vignettes’. This table delineates four *Others* groups and have been included because they emerge from the current L2 motivation literature. Different and more sophisticated delineations are possible, as Figure 1 indicates.

**Table X somewhere here**

Regarding developmental perspectives,the observations in this study lead us to the provisional conclusion that fostering any *Own* motivations (along the whole spectrum of *Ought* to *Ideal*) in younger learners may be the most effective way to support lasting L2 motivation and independent learning in Anglophone learners. The findings from this study suggest that IP, hitherto scarcely described among Anglophone learners, may offer promising avenues for future pedagogical *motivating* interventions. Further studies might investigate if such *L2 visions* (Dörnyei & Chan, 2013) are especially relevant for L2 learners operating under conditions that could generally be described as challenging.

1. **Conclusion**

The new *Self Discrepancy Model for Language Learners* stands on the full foundations of the original SDT. Its *new* building blocks elaborate in particular on the notion of *Other*: in our globalized world, motivation stemming from identifications with a *specific* other (L2) community is increasingly sidelined (Dörnyei, 2005). Thus, the need increases to understand the large range of *different* *Other* influences, on the micro-, meso- and macro-level. Much work remains to be done to further validate the model, ideally involving qualitative data (from diverse learner groups, e.g. different ages, L1s and L2s, compulsory and non-compulsory learners), in order to then develop a quantitative instrument fitting the model. It remains unclear to what extent the ‘rebellious’ streak is a feature specific to some Anglophone learners, or, possibly, L2 learners operating in challenging conditions generally.

The recent meta analysis provided by L2 motivation studies (Boo, Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015) has shown a trend away from models favoring linear causality; for now, it would be wise to resist inferring causalities within the *Self Discrepancy Model for Language Learners*. However, by re-instating Higgins’ *Own-Other* standpoints, and proposing an extrinsic-intrinsic continuum *of Other-to-Own* determination*,* the model has

* helped to disambiguate the (in the L2MSS model) ‘troubled’ *Ought* dimension
* offered a fit for different (positive and negative) *Other* influences
* accounted for the ‘rebellious’ learner
* incorporated non-language-specific motivations
* opened a developmental perspective on L2 motivation

A major challenge of any Self-based model is the integration of contextual dimensions. In the L2MSS, this is currently being attempted with reference to Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (Boo, Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). The model presented here, with its manifold delineations of *Others*, offers an embedded (rather than bolted-on) solution to this problem.

Many uncertainties persist regarding the nature and quantity of *Other* delineations: as one size is unlikely to fit all, projects looking at different learner groups might delineate these differently. For instance, future studies might focus on learners’ *perceptions* of contextual influences, or more physical aspects of the *wider milieu* (language education policy, Q-value of the L2 etc). Just as this study has shown that boundaries between *Ought* and *Ideal* are best perceived as permeable, differentiating between *Others* should be conceived along a continuum.

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1. In line with Self models (except for Dörnyei’s L2MSS), *Ought* rather than *Ought-to* will be used from now on. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)