

promoting access to White Rose research papers



Universities of Leeds, Sheffield and York
<http://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/>

This is an author produced version of a chapter published in **Motivation, Language Identity and the L2 Self**

White Rose Research Online URL for this chapter:

<http://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/id/eprint/75260>

Published chapter:

Lamb, M (2009) *Situating the L2 Self: Two Indonesian school learners of English*. In: *Motivation, Language Identity and the L2 Self*. Multilingual Matters , Bristol , 229 - 247. ISBN 9781847691279

<http://www.multilingual-matters.com/display.asp?K=...>

Chapter 12

Situating the L2 Self: Two Indonesian School Learners of English

MARTIN LAMB

Introduction

While the concept of identity has a long history in second language learning (McNamara, 1997) it has recently been dominated by post-structuralist approaches (e.g. Norton, 2000; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004; Toohey, 2000). These have yielded important insights, but Block (2007) has argued that a concept potentially so fundamental to personal well-being and successful learning merits examination from a psychological point of view too. Dörnyei's (2005; see also this volume) L2 self-system model has the potential to meet this need, drawing on the insights of self psychology (Higgins, 1998; Boyatzis & Akrivou, 2006) to propose that learners who envision their future selves as L2-users (i.e. have an 'ideal L2 self') will be strongly motivated to work towards becoming L2-users in order to reduce the discrepancy between this vision and their current state; others may ostensibly share the same goal of L2 proficiency but feel it as an obligation, imposed by others or society in general (i.e. have an 'ought-to L2 self'), and this engenders a more defensive stance where the individual's main focus is on preventing failure rather than striving towards achievement. The constructs of 'ideal' and 'ought-to L2' selves may prove to be a valuable 'psychological substrate' (Bendle, 2002: 8) underlying the more fluid and fragmented notion of identity presented in poststructuralist writing, and help explain the differential exercise of agency by learners.

At the same time it is important not to lose sight of the social dimension that is implied by the term 'identity'. The formation of self-guides occurs in and through the social domains in which the individual moves – 'the pool of possible selves derives from the categories made salient by the individual's particular sociocultural and historical context' (Markus & Nurius, 1986: 954) – and Boldero and Francis (1999) point out that the effects of self-guides are by no means uniform or predictable: although ideal and ought-to selves represent distinct self-regulatory systems, their actual impact on behaviour is mediated by several factors, for example the relevance of a particular context to the ideals being

aspired to. Just as constructs from achievement motivation theory are now being viewed less as stable personality traits than as dynamic and highly context-sensitive states (e.g. Bempechat & Boulay, 2001; Volet & Järvelä, 2001), so the development and motivational impact of 'ideal' and 'ought-to' L2 selves will need to be explored at levels of analysis beyond the self, including the situated activity in which learners engage, their home and institutional settings and the wider context of society and global regions. This in turn means supplementing the large-scale quantitative research that is being carried out to validate the L2 self-system model (see for example chapters in this volume by Csizér & Kormos; Magid *et al.*; Ryan) with case studies which investigate the L2 self-guides of specific individuals over time, in their various contexts of learning.

Like the poststructuralist studies cited above, such case studies may benefit from utilising 'middle-range' theories which attempt to explain how individual agency and social structure are mutually shaped and constrained. Two such theories are Lave and Wenger's situated learning theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998) and Bourdieu's (1991) social theory. As in other neo-Vygotskian perspectives such as language socialisation (Kramsch, 2002) and activity theory (Lantolf, 2000), Lave and Wenger view learning as a fundamentally social activity, whereby knowledge and understandings are negotiated in interaction with other people, and skills develop as changing forms of situated practice entailing changed relations with others. Lave and Wenger contend that learning occurs in, or in relation to, 'communities of practice', with learners gradually moving from a position of 'legitimate peripheral participation' toward fuller participation through their engagement in community activities, interaction with more experienced members, and the gradual alignment of their practice with those of these 'experts'. With new forms of participation comes a transformed identity. Communities of practice may be 'as broad as a society or culture, or as narrow as a particular language classroom' (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001: 148); they may be a 'real' community in which a person has regular involvement (e.g. a school) or an 'imagined community' – defined by Kanno and Norton (2003: 241) as 'groups of people not immediately tangible and accessible, with whom we connect through the power of the imagination'.

As several writers have recently pointed out (e.g. Ryan, 2006; Murphey *et al.*, 2005) for many learners of English as a foreign language the global community of English users is more 'imagined' than 'real', in that their actual contact with users might be quite limited. Dörnyei (2005) himself sees a connection between Lave and Wenger's notion of imagination, as an important way of belonging to a community, and his own notion of the 'ideal L2 self', which relies on the individual having a powerful vision of him/herself as a future user of the new

language. Kramsch (2006) has recently elaborated on the power of imagination in potentially motivating language learners, especially in adolescence when identity formation is a central concern:

Like rap and hip hop, a foreign language can reveal unexpected meanings, alternative truths that broaden the scope of the sayable and the imaginable... Seduced by the foreign sounds, rhythms and meanings, and by the 'coolness' of native speakers, many adolescent learners strive to enter new, exotic worlds where they can be, or at least pretend to be, someone else, where they too can become 'cool' and inhabit their bodies in more powerful ways. (Kramsch, 2006: 102)

One further important aspect of situated learning theory is the way identity can be a site of struggle, for a learner's aspirant identity may not be recognised by other community members, or may conflict with his/her aspirations towards membership of other communities. Individual learners may not have equal access to the resources of a community, nor be granted 'legitimate' status. Lave and Wenger's ideas are therefore often linked (e.g. in Norton, 2000; Block, 2006) to the social theory of Bourdieu (1991), which offers tools for analysing the way that agency is constrained, in an arguably non-deterministic way, by social structure. The key notions are those of *capital*, *field* and *habitus*. By the time they enter school, children have inherited (through background and early experience) different amounts of social, economic and cultural capital, and have acquired a habitual way of understanding the world and a predisposition to act in certain ways, i.e. a 'habitus'. The combination of capital and habitus in each individual makes certain 'fields' of social activity (e.g. school) more congenial than others; successful practice within those fields then further shapes the habitus and endows different forms of capital, which Bourdieu argues contributes in the long-term to the reproduction of social classes. Agency is thus constrained both externally 'by the framework of opportunities and constraints the person finds him/herself in', and also internally 'by an internalized framework that makes some possibilities inconceivable, others improbable, and a limited range acceptable' (Reay, 2004: 435), a formulation which neatly overlaps with the psychological notion of 'possible selves' (see above).

In the rest of this chapter I will report on a study of Indonesian junior high school pupils' motivation to learn English as a foreign language. The main research aim was to track their motivation over the first 2 years of formal study of the language in school, to see how it changed and what factors were associated with the change. It was not specifically targeted at investigating Dörnyei's L2 self-system model, but this emerged as one useful theoretical framework for interpreting the data, particularly, as I shall argue, when linked with the two social theories described above.

The chapter therefore offers a description of L2 motivation in specific individuals in a particular cultural context, and suggests a possible way of deploying the constructs of 'ideal' and 'ought-to' L2 self in concert with other more socially-oriented constructs to explain L2 motivation.

The Case Study Research

The research site was a provincial Sumatran town called Ajeng,¹ where I had worked during the 1990s. The school itself (JHS 70) was situated in a relatively prosperous emerging middle-class neighbourhood, though the intake was socially mixed, the facilities themselves extremely basic by western standards, and the most common teaching methodology was traditional teacher-centred 'chalk and talk' based on a mainly grammatico-lexical national syllabus (see Lamb & Coleman, 2008). The research employed a mixed-method strategy, combining surveys of the whole year cohort at the beginning and end of the period with three phases of semi-structured interviews (in Indonesian or English according to preference) and class observations of 12 'focal learners', chosen for having diverse motivational profiles on the basis of their survey responses and teacher comments. All eight English teachers in the school were also interviewed.

Broadly speaking, the survey results demonstrated very high levels of motivation in the school year cohort (Lamb, 2007). Many claimed to learn or use the language outside of school (over half took private courses in English during this period) and, although there was a slight drop in the pleasure which pupils took in their school English lessons, almost everyone considered the language either 'important' or 'very important', with a statistically significant shift towards the latter response after 20 months of formal study.

In this second questionnaire an open item asked pupils to offer reasons for the importance of English. Just under half ($n = 88$) responded, and analysis of their comments revealed a distinction between those which associated English with a personal *aspiration*, either immediate (such as enabling them to play computer games) or distant (such as future study abroad), and those which linked it more to a *requirement*. 42 comments could be identified as falling into the former category, some very general:

English is important, my dreams are connected to English.²

Because English is the international language. My father used to teach English, and I want to become like my father.

and others with a slightly more specific goal:

Because I dream of being able to set foot in Europe...and I would like to play football there.

I'm learning English so I can go to neighbouring countries and because I want to make my family and school proud.
Because English is an international language. And, I can speak with my idol wherever am I (Japan, Taiwan etc.)! [original]

This latter statement can be contrasted to the following one:

Maybe because English is the international language and has to be known and understood.

25 comments can be placed in this 'requirement' category, including those which use the auxiliary verb *harus* ('should' or 'have to') and others which suggest an element of wariness or fear:

So I'm not shy if I'm called to speaking with someone, and if my teacher directs a question or problem at me.

Because in my country there's going to be a free market and we won't be made fools of by foreigners.

With English we can face up to the era of globalisation which confronts the young generation. And it becomes my responsibility to learn the universal language of this time – English.

To protect ourselves!

This broad classification appears to mirror the distinction made by Higgins (1998) between a 'promotion' and a 'prevention' regulatory focus, and which is the basis for the distinction in Dörnyei's L2 motivational self-system between 'ideal' and 'ought-to' L2 self. I am not suggesting that single comments like these are sufficient evidence of an individual disposition, but collectively they indicate that the distinction between these two regulatory foci may be conceptually useful in this context. The rest of this chapter explores this further by concentrating on two individuals who seem to exemplify these two different stances towards the English language. Dewi and Munandar were both aged 11 on entry to the school, and were 13 by the time of my last field visit. I will begin by presenting evidence for their L2 self-guides, and link them to their biographies. I will then look at how each responded to me as researcher, the way they appear to regulate their learning over this period, and their attitude towards their school English lessons, using the theoretical frameworks mentioned above. Finally I will consider the implications of their differing learning trajectories – for themselves, for local pedagogy, and for future research.

Two Learners

Very early in her first interview, Dewi let me know an unusual fact about herself – she was born in the USA. Although she had only spent a year there, while her father had a scholarship to study for a Masters

Degree, this quirk of biography evidently had meaning for her because in her third interview, when asked to say something about herself, she began with the words 'I come from Fayetteville, Texas'. After a period living in the capital Jakarta, her parents were now both lecturers at Ajeng University, and Dewi lived with them and her four younger siblings in the pleasant suburb of T₂, near the school.

Before entering JHS 70 she had studied English for 4 years at one of the best primary schools in Ajeng and her initial questionnaire responses suggest she had very positive attitudes towards English – she gave the highest possible responses for the importance of English, her satisfaction with progress and confidence in ultimate success. In her first interview she also expressed a desire to live abroad:

- I: What's your opinion of westerners, of western countries?
 D: Ooh very good, self-disciplined, and if you want to chat to them, they're very friendly.
 I: What about living there one day?
 D: I'd really like to
 I: Or would you prefer to live in Indonesia?
 D: Mmm... over there!
 I: And do you have any ambitions?
 D: Yes, for example, if I could get to study abroad, then I could become really fluent in English.

Dewi's final comment is interesting in the way it inverts the traditional 'instrumental' motive for learning English – it suggests that, for her, it is fluency in English which is the real goal. During this period, Dewi's goals appeared to become slightly more focused. At her second interview she said she wanted to become a businesswoman: 'so I can help build Indonesia, so it isn't left behind'; her hero, she said, was ex-President Habibie, a multilingual who had spent much of his career in the German aero-industry before returning to serve in government in Indonesia. In her final interview, when asked where she would be in 10 years' time, she replied:

I really want to go to my birthplace, Fayetteville, because I am from Fayetteville so I have to go to my birthplace... maybe I will be a journalist so I can go everywhere, maybe businesswoman... maybe I want to have two *tempat tinggal* (homes), in foreign and in Indonesia [original]

She sounds as if she is imagining her future self as a global professional, a responsible Indonesian citizen yet also comfortable in international settings. English was not the only language that Dewi showed enthusiasm for: 'beside America, I really want to go to Japan', she said, and she enjoyed taking Japanese and Chinese lessons because

'they are very important too...and I think this very unique, maybe my friends will say oh Dewi you are so great because you know Japanese, Chinese...!' [original].

When I first met him, Munandar had just arrived in Ajeng from a rural area of the province. He was unusual among his peers in never having studied English before, either in primary school or in a private course. His father worked in forestry, though Munandar was careful to say that he himself did not chop down trees – a comment that may have been aimed at soothing environmental concerns on my part, but more likely was intended to signal that he was 'in business' rather than working with his hands. His parents had decided to send Munandar to school in the provincial capital, where he lived with his extended family (grandmother, uncle, aunt and cousins), none of whom spoke any English.

From the start he recognised English as important, changing his assessment in the survey to 'very important' at the end of the 20-month period. When elaborating on this importance, he consistently referred to a *need* to learn, as in this extract from his second interview:

M: You know in B_ [a rural area of the province], over there we didn't have any English lessons but in Ajeng we need English, if you don't have English, it's difficult. Wherever we go here we need English.

I: For example, where do you need it?

M: What I mean is, if we've already progressed, got success, started working, we need to be tested in English, everywhere our English is tested.

He makes exactly the same point in his third interview: 'Everywhere, including school, English is examined, it's important.'

Compared to Dewi, Munandar's expressed ambitions were vague, and had no international element. In his first interview he simply said his goal was 'studying well, getting ahead'; in his second interview, he said he had not considered a possible career as he was 'still studying, the important thing is to study first, before thinking about that'. When I asked him in his third interview to imagine himself 10 years ahead, he replied:

M: Yeah, after this JHS, I'll go to senior high school, after that, study, high school, study, university...

I: You want to go to University?

M: Yes

I: Any particular area of study, do you know?

M: Not yet.

I: Ambitions? For work?

- M:** My ambition is . . . be a successful businessman and a footballer, that's my hobby.
- I:** . . . and in 10 years' time, where will you live, B_, Ajeng, where?
- M:** Yeah it depends, if the school's in Ajeng, then I'll live here, if in Jakarta, then there.

Although I have no precise psychometric assessment, Munandar's talk over the three interviews suggests that he has a strong sense of obligation to learn English, an ought-to L2 self, but lacks Dewi's vision of a future English-using self, the key component of an ideal L2 self. Growing up in a small rural town Munandar would have had minimal exposure to English and contact with outsiders of any sort (he told me that I was the first foreigner he had met face-to-face). However, he would have been regularly exposed to official discourses stressing the importance of learning English, as one of the major subjects on the school curriculum. By contrast, Dewi entered JHS 70 with considerable cultural capital – 4 years of primary school English lessons (albeit brief and sporadic), English-speaking parents, and a house containing plenty of English-language resources – 'story books in English, Encyclopaedias in English, what's more the internet . . .', as she reported. The way these resources fed her imagination was neatly encapsulated in a joke in her final interview:

- D:** I ever go to Arab.
- I:** You have been to Saudi?
- D:** Yes, by my book! [original]

In other words, by reading about Saudi Arabia in a book she felt she had already been there.

Participation in the Research

Both Dewi and Munandar willingly agreed to take part in my research, but they differed hugely in the way they interacted with me. Dewi seemed eager to exploit her participation to generate opportunities for interaction in English. For example, in both questionnaire open items and in the interviews, she was ready to depart from my agenda and ask *me* questions. Although in the first interview she used little English, her use of occasional interjections such as 'cool!' hinted at a deeper facility in oral language and an eagerness to participate in authentic communication. In the second interview approximately half of her utterances began in English, and there was further deft use of short interjections, such as 'sure', 'really?', 'of course', and times when she talked to her co-interviewee, a friend, in English. At her third interview, all but six of her 78 contributions were in English (though 13 of them included code-mixing with Indonesian). She felt confident enough to joke with me too,

accusing me of being a 'workaholic' for example, and asked numerous personal questions about my family. A liking for spoken idiom revealed itself in other ways too. In her initial questionnaire responses she said her favourite activities were expressing words in English 'so they sounded really good'; in her second interview she showed her enthusiasm for slang:

D: You know, I also have a magazine that contains slang language.

I: What magazine is that?

D: *CNS...Cool 'n Smart*...do you know it, do you know it Mister?

She also reported picking up English phrases from listening to pop music and watching Hollywood films. Finally, Dewi appeared proud of her involvement with me in front of her peers – for instance, she attached an institutional badge that I had given them as a gift to her school bag.

By contrast, my interviews with Munandar were all in Indonesian. In his second interview he said that he could now say some things in English in class, but not 'in conversations', and when I began the final interview by inviting him in simple English to give some personal information about himself, he replied with a smile 'oh I don't know English yet!' as if such a possibility were inconceivable. Although he was always amiable with me, he appeared to be slightly embarrassed by his association with me; for example, he never made any attempt to talk to me outside of class, and when I visited him in class, he was teased by his friends. Uniquely among the focal learners in the study, when I asked him what advice he might give to a new pupil at the school about how they could learn English, he declined to give any, saying that it would make him appear 'different' and 'intellectually arrogant'.

It is possible to explain these differing reactions in terms of their ideal and ought-to L2 selves. To Dewi, my presence in the school represented a rare chance to participate in the wider English-speaking community. When the encounters went well, it ratified her evolving identity as an English-speaker. To Munandar, though his ought-to L2 self made him feel duty-bound to participate in the research once invited, he may have projected an evaluative function onto my role which persuaded him to 'play safe' – his interviews were shorter than average, and he hardly ever volunteered contributions but merely responded to my own prompts or questions. Although he consistently recognised the importance of the language, he evidently did not see it as a legitimate form of self-expression.

Again, home background may partly account for their contrasting positions. While Munandar lacked any prior contact with the language, Dewi had heard it and even used it occasionally with her parents (see later). She also had regular exposure to the spoken language through a variety of media, including films on TV and video, radio programmes

(‘BBC London’), and songs on her Walkman, and read English for interest in books, magazines and on the internet. To Dewi, English was a living language which could make her, in the words of her teen magazine, simultaneously ‘cool’ and ‘smart’. In Bourdieu’s terms, her linguistic habitus, along with the cultural capital that she inherited, made her feel comfortable with the identity that English generated for her, and which she enacted through participation in my interviews.

Self-Regulation of Learning

Dewi and Munandar received roughly the same amount of instruction in English at school, but according to their own accounts supplemented that to quite different degrees. Outside of school Munandar apparently made little effort to find ways of learning or using English, though he said he always did his homework, which was grammar and vocabulary exercises in the class workbook. In his second interview he admitted that his school grades were low, and that ‘I’ve been told to play less by my Aunt, she says I must play less and study more’. At the third interview he told me with pride that ‘from yesterday I’ve started taking English lessons at *Ganesha Operation*, my parents told me to’. The limited time he did devote to learning English therefore seems to have been at the instigation of others rather than his own initiative. Further, when I visited him at the private institute, it turned out that this was a general tuition school for all school subjects, the main purpose of which was to boost pupils’ state school scores.

As we have seen, Dewi had access to English conversations in the home and she actually saw these as learning experiences:

D: I learn English with my parents.

I: You mean, your parents teach you?

D: It’s me myself who wants to learn from them [1st interview].

In interview and questionnaire she also mentioned a number of other resources she was able to exploit for learning, including books, TV, radio, computer and Walkman. During her first year at JHS 70 she started to feel frustrated (see next section) and she also found opportunities to talk to her parents were fewer. As a result she began taking private lessons:

D: I’ve started taking lessons, you know, at LIA [Indonesia-America Association].

I: Oh, you’re taking private lessons?

D: Yes... So I get most of my practice at LIA now, not at home.

I: Aha, and how are the lessons, are they different from here [i.e. school]?

D: Mmm... they’re more enjoyable.

LIA was one of the best private language institutes in Ajeng, and when I observed a lesson there, I noted that she was enjoying the classes and was a much more active oral participant than she was at school, for example exchanging jokey remarks with the teacher in English as part of a role-play:

T: Dewi, would you like to come to the cinema with me?

D: Yes, but what will your wife say? [original]

Moreover as she reported to me in interview, the institute, in return for the substantial course fee, also supplied her with:

extra money for buying English books, and I read them over and over and if for instance there's a new word, I can immediately practice it there with friends who know English.

As Boyatzis and Akrivou point out, the 'ideal self', once activated, 'promotes the development of a person's learning agenda and then a more articulated learning plan, experimentation and practice with new behaviour, feelings and perceptions' (Boyatzis & Akrivou, 2006: 628). It is possible then that even at this relatively young age, Dewi's 'ideal L2 self' helped her to regulate her learning of English, pushing her to find alternative means when others broke down. With only an 'ought-to' self guide, Munandar may be less likely to put himself in situations where his lack of competence is exposed; hence, a general tutoring college with 40 pupils per class, and with a focus on exam preparation, suits his purpose well.

Of course, Dewi cannot rely exclusively on her own agency to develop her English skills. She needs access to economic capital to pay for her course. Once there, she benefits from legitimate peripheral participation in the community of practice that is the classroom. With a small number of pupils (12), she has regular opportunities for interaction with the teacher (as in the role-play cited above), who in turn is able, in these relatively well-resourced conditions of work, to organise communicative activities of various sorts that provide further oral practice. The knowledge practices of this community therefore mirror, to some extent, those of the wider community of global English users, so reaffirming the participants' aspirant membership of that wider community. Moreover, as Dewi indicates in the quotation above, they are able to draw on each other's expertise, as when trying out new language, and while there may be many personal differences among them, their shared enterprise over the many weeks of the course inevitably gives them a sense of shared identity as current or future English-users. This is exemplified in the following quotation from one of Dewi's friends at JHS 70 who also took a private course at LIA:

It's different [from school], the lessons are at a higher level there... because the competition is different, there we're all in one class, so we think of them as friends, whereas here in school... Maybe they're cleverer than we are, but we just make a big effort.

Judging from her interaction with myself over this period, Dewi's investment in learning outside of school is paying off in terms of an enhanced capacity for participation in English-mediated communication.

Experience of School English Lessons

Except for a period of about five months during her first year when Dewi was placed in a streamed elite class with a particularly popular teacher, the teaching methodology that she and Munandar experienced in their English lessons was very similar. My observation notes report teacher-dominated lessons based on a standard textbook with a grammatico-lexical syllabus and offering a set of traditional activities (cf. Lamb & Coleman, 2008), including teacher explanations of language, reading comprehension tasks, reading texts aloud, grammar and vocabulary exercises, and feedback sessions involving pupils writing their answers up on the blackboard. Oral work consisted mainly of teacher questions, plus some choral chanting. Dewi and Munandar's reaction to this experience was very different.

In her second interview, Dewi complained that her teacher during the first half of the year (whose name she had already forgotten) 'just asked to translate English words, just that, no practice at all'. When I observed her in school classes I noted her behaviour to be highly variable; she sat at the back and appeared disengaged for long periods, but when the teacher asked a genuine question about the pupils' school activity, she came alive, quickly volunteering an answer in English. When nominated to read aloud by the teacher, she visibly made an effort to do her best, reading fluently and with excellent pronunciation, but then quickly relapsed into distraction when the next student began. She also claimed not to care about the marks she received, saying 'my father doesn't hope I get a particular score... what's important is speaking not the grade you get'.

In her second year class, with the same teacher who had frustrated her at the beginning of her first year, she expressed further dissatisfaction:

I: How do you feel about studying English in this junior high school, now you're in your fourth semester?

D: I feel *senang apa?* [happy or what?] but now I don't like er *cara mengajar guru saya* [the teacher's way of teaching] because maybe I can't understand what does he say...

I: ...Have you talked to the teacher about this?

D: Never, because I am afraid. [original]

Later on in the same interview she complained again: 'don't say to her, her pronunciation is not clear' and agreed wholeheartedly with her co-interviewee when she said that 'with Ms TW we only study with book and *praktikum* [practice] very little...and we are in the class very... boring'. In her final questionnaire she rated her progress as 'not satisfactory', though she was still confident of ultimate success, and rated English as very important for all reasons. When asked in interview whether English was more or less important to her, she replied 'sure, more important, but now I feel...so-so' [original], repeating the same comment later on, as if trying to emphasise the distinction between the objective importance of English to her future, and her feelings, which she knew were temporary and related to her class teacher.

Munandar stressed in each of his interviews that he was happy at JHS 70 – 'it's safe, there aren't any nasty friends, the lessons are calm and disciplined' – whereas at his previous rural primary school 'the teacher often didn't come, only when the sports classes were on, then he'd come'. In his English classes he said he was 'happy...I like it...so I learn'. He is equally consistent about what is important for him in school English lessons:

I need to understand what the teacher says. [1st interview]

In English classes and in other lessons we try our best to catch the meaning of the teacher. [2nd interview]

The teacher teaches what's in the book – I try to catch it. [3rd interview]

While in the last two interviews he complains not about the teacher but about his peers, and the way they disturb him. When I actually observed him in class, Munandar appeared to be as much the cause of class disturbances as the victim. He was obviously a popular boy and sat with groups of friends at the back or at the far side of the class. Neither he nor his friends volunteered answers to the teacher's questions, and they were rarely called upon to contribute. And as the long 90-minute lessons progressed, their behaviour became rowdier. I wrote in my observation notes that Munandar 'seems incapable of sustained attention', though I also noted that he seemed to enjoy the experience, as he himself reported.

Clearly every child will have experienced the school lessons in a different way, but the stark contrast in Dewi and Munandar's experience might be interpreted with reference to their L2 self-guides and to the communities of practice they were engaging with. As Norton and Kamal point out, there may be no direct overlap between a learner's imagined community and the school classroom:

When learners begin a program of instruction, they may be invested in communities that extend beyond the four walls of the classroom.

If the language teacher does not validate these imagined communities, students may resist participation in learning. (Norton & Kamal, 2003: 303)

This may help to explain Dewi's frustration in her second year school class. By not speaking the language clearly herself, the teacher does not seem to represent a master practitioner in the wider English-speaking community; and by not providing her with opportunities for oral practice, she offers a very restricted set of knowledge practices that deny Dewi the legitimate peripheral participation she craves for the eventual realisation of her ideal L2 self. As a result she adopted a form of non-participation in which she gave selective attention to class activities, as I observed, and took a detached attitude towards the class community's forms of assessment. Furthermore, while normally the teacher would be accorded great respect in local society, she chose to depart from this script in her interviews with me by criticising her. If, as I have argued, she viewed me as a member of the wider English-speaking community, then voicing her concerns with me could be viewed, along with her non-participation in class, as 'acts of alignment to preserve the integrity of [her] imagined community' (Norton, 2001: 165).

Turning our attention to Munandar, his ought-to L2 self may predispose him to trust the system, since deviation from it is likely to bring trouble. Hence, as his interview comments above show, he at least intends to pay close attention to the teacher's words in class and to do his homework dutifully, and unlike Dewi he does not express concern with the lack of meaningful communication in the language. When I observed him in class he never offered any voluntary contributions himself, only speaking on the rare occasions when the teacher directly addressed him. As Chick (1996) has pointed out, tasks such as completing textbook exercises, choral chanting and sequential reading aloud are 'safe' practices in that they do not threaten the face of either teacher or pupil; they may therefore be popular with teachers whose own English is limited and with learners like Munandar who, with a dominant ought-to self, 'moves away from and protects himself/herself from threatening aspects of the present' (Boyatzis & Akrivou, 2006: 626). But because these activities are so dissimilar to the knowledge practices of expert English users – and the language itself a dry code rather than the value-laden expression of human meanings and intentions – pupils' classroom activity is actually a form of 'legitimate non-participation' in this wider L2 community of practice. Hickey and Granade (2004) comment that 'participants in collaborative learning activities can be completely disengaged from the larger community to which they are ostensibly being acculturated' (Hickey & Granade, 2004: 236). In the long-term such learners may, warn Lave and Wenger (1991), prioritise the 'exchange

value' of learning over the 'use value', and thus focus mainly on passing tests and getting good qualifications, as Munandar already seems to do. Deprived of meaningful forms of identification inside class, he may also be susceptible to contrary youth identities that deny the value of educational achievement and encourage the sort of ill-discipline I observed in his class.

Some Implications

Not all the focal learners in my study had easily identifiable L2 self-guides. Even those who clearly had an 'ideal L2 self' and who seemed to share Dewi's broad learning trajectory had different background profiles and demonstrated different patterns of participation in English-learning activities. I am not intending to portray Dewi and Munandar as 'prototypical' of learners with ideal and ought-to L2 selves. Rather, the contrast between them helps to highlight the contextual influences on the formation of L2 selves, and their operation during early adolescence in the context of a provincial suburb in a developing country.

I believe the study supports the view that ideal and ought-to L2 selves could be useful explanatory constructs in language learning motivation especially when combined with more sociologically-oriented theories such as those of Lave and Wenger (1991) and Bourdieu (1991). For example, in showing how the notion of community of practice can help explain Dewi and Munandar's differing experience of similar school English classrooms, the study supports Dörnyei's (2005) own contention that situated learning theory offers a 'possible promising inroad into understanding the interface of the Ideal L2 Self and the actional phase of motivation' (Dörnyei, 2005: 108). If Dewi has a strong 'ideal L2 self', this may underlie her ability to ride out the frustrations of school and to self-regulate learning outside of school, though Wenger reminds us that

Understanding something new is not just a local act of learning. Rather, [it] is an event on a trajectory through which they [learners] give meaning to their engagement in practice in terms of the identity they are developing. (Wenger, 1998: 155)

Thus the precise nature of the identity they are aspiring to might help explain the choices that learners make in their independent learning. For instance, Dewi's vision of herself as a fluent speaker in the international community may partly account for her use of film and music to learn the language, and her interest in slang, as well as her enthusiastic participation in oral activities at the private language course (and in conversations with myself).

Similarly, Bourdieu's social theory helps us to see how individual agency is shaped, and either enabled or constrained, by context. I have

suggested that Dewi's linguistic habitus was formed in the home, perhaps even in her Texan origins, and that it helped her feel comfortable using the language as a form of self-expression; further, her agency in appropriating the language for her use was enabled by the cultural and economic capital that she inherited, and which allowed her to gain social capital in the form of new English-proficient friends at the private language course. All this makes it more likely that she will ultimately acquire the important symbolic capital of English, which in turn will enable her to provide the family milieu and educational resources necessary for her own offspring to acquire the language. Over the long term English may therefore have a role in accentuating social class differences even in national contexts where it was not previously the colonial language.

Nevertheless, recent commentators on Bourdieu (e.g. Reay, 2004) have stressed the non-deterministic nature of his theory; habitus only becomes active in relation to particular 'fields' of practice, and since context is both multilayered and dynamic, individual agency is always unpredictable and has the potential to overcome social disadvantage, a view which Canagarajah (1999) points out is shared by many of the poststructuralist studies mentioned earlier in this chapter (e.g. Norton, 2000). In my study, the focal learner with the most auspicious background – the son of an internationally-trained Professor of Education at Ajeng University – did not (as yet) display much evidence of either an ideal or an ought-to L2 self over this period, and certainly made little effort to learn English; likewise, other focal learners who invested just as much as Dewi in learning English had quite distinct family backgrounds. As for the future, Dewi appears set on a learning trajectory towards 'full' participation in the wider English-speaking community, and towards actualising her ideal L2 self as a cosmopolitan Indonesian member of that community; though it is conceivable that repeated negative experiences in school English classes (an example of a particular 'field' to which her habitus was not suited) may dull her passion for the language, or failure in formal assessments may reduce her sense of self-efficacy, undermining her ideal self (and recalling George Bernard Shaw's comment about school being the only time his education was interrupted). Munandar's future is harder to discern because although his ought-to L2 self encourages him to adopt an identity of participation in the school classroom and he appears determined to do well in school assessments, the restricted set of knowledge practices do not engage his imagination. Just as he and his friends chose to sit on the physical margins of the classroom, their learning trajectory may also become increasingly marginal in relation to school as a whole.

From an educational policy perspective, it could be argued that Munandar's fate is critical, because his background and school experience

is more typical of his compatriots. If they do not gain any practical competence in the language during their school years then a huge proportion of Indonesia's population are denied access to a major means of self-improvement, while the country's workforce lacks an important component skill. Even a relatively cursory look at individual learners in context, such as the one presented here, shows that motivation is implicated in this problem, and that identity issues are integral to understanding motivation. L2 self guides may prove to be valuable concepts for describing the way individuals identify with a foreign language, but their value for finding practical solutions to motivational problems will be much enhanced if we also explore their origins in, and impact on, the social settings and situated activity of language learning.

Finally, a research methodology issue. I have argued that Dewi and Munandar's interactions with myself as researcher were influenced by their ideal and ought-to L2 selves, respectively. On the one hand this indicates that talking to learners might be a valid way of eliciting active self-guides; on the other hand, if the researcher him/herself is perceived to be implicated somehow in the achievement of those ideal/ought-to selves, then this may distort respondents' accounts of what they do to reduce the discrepancy with their actual selves. Boldero and Francis (1999) point out a similar effect in quantitative research, where the test location affected the results of studies on the impact of ideal and ought-to selves – for example, testing for academic-related self guides in a university classroom produced different results from testing for them in a less relevant location. Identity is being 'performed' even when completing a questionnaire, in that people seek 'to control the reception of the subject positions they choose to adopt' (Block, 2007: 17); face-to-face interaction provides far more scope for identification processes to emerge, but demands a particularly high degree of reflexivity in the qualitative researcher.

Notes

1. I have changed all place and person names to protect the participants' anonymity.
2. All quotations from learners are translated from Indonesian unless otherwise specified.

References

- Bempechat, J. and Boulay, B.A. (2001) Beyond dichotomous characterizations of student learning. In D. McInerney and S. Van Etten (eds) *Research on Sociocultural Influences on Motivation and Learning* (Vol. 1) (pp. 15–36). Greenwich, CT: IAP.
- Bendle, M. (2002) The crisis of identity in high modernity. *British Journal of Sociology* 53 (1), 1–18.

- Block, D. (2006) *Multilingual Identities in a Global City: London Stories*. London: Palgrave.
- Block, D. (2007) *Second Language Identities*. London: Continuum.
- Boldero, J. and Francis, J. (1999) Ideals, oughts, and self-regulation: Are there qualitatively distinct self-guides? *Asian Journal of Social Psychology* 2, 343–355.
- Bourdieu, P. (1991) *Language and Symbolic Power* (G. Raymond and M. Adamson, trans.). Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Boyatzis, R.E. and Akrivou, K. (2006) The ideal self as the driver of intentional change. *Journal of Management Development* 25 (7), 624–642.
- Canagarajah, A.S. (1999). *Resisting Linguistic Imperialism in English Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Chick, J.K. (1996) Safe-talk: Collusion in apartheid education. In H. Coleman (ed.) *Society and the Language Classroom* (pp. 21–39). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2005) *The Psychology of the Language Learner: Individual Differences in Second Language Acquisition*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Hickey, D.T. and Granade, J.B. (2004) Theories of engagement and motivation. In D. McInerney and S. Van Etten (eds) *Big Theories Revisited* (pp. 223–247). Greenwich, CT: IAP.
- Higgins, E.T. (1998) Promotion and prevention: regulatory focus as a motivational principle. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* 30, 1–46.
- Kanno, Y. and Norton, B. (2003) Imagined communities and educational possibilities: Introduction. *Journal of Language, Identity and Education* 2 (4), 241–249.
- Kramsch, C. (ed.) (2002) *Language Acquisition and Language Socialization*. London: Continuum.
- Kramsch, C. (2006) Preview article: The multilingual subject. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics* 16 (1), 97–110.
- Lamb, M. (2007) The impact of school on EFL learning motivation: An Indonesian case-study. *TESOL Quarterly* 41 (4), 757–780.
- Lamb, M. and Coleman, H. (2008). Literacy in English and the transformation of self and society in post-Suharto Indonesia. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* 11 (2), 189–205.
- Lantolf, J.P. (ed.) (2000) *Sociocultural Theory and Second Language Learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lantolf, J.P. and Pavlenko, A. (2001) (S)econd (L)anguage (A)ctivity theory: understanding second language learners as people. In M.P. Breen (ed.) *Learner Contributions to Language Learning* (pp. 141–158). Harlow: Pearson.
- Lave, J. and Wenger, E. (1991) *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Markus, H. and Nurius, P. (1986) Possible selves. *American Psychologist* 41 (9), 954–969.
- McNamara, T. (1997) Theorizing social identity. *TESOL Quarterly* 31 (3), 561–567.
- Murphey, T., Jin, C. and Li-Chi, C. (2005) Learners' constructions of identities and imagined communities. In P. Benson and D. Nunan (eds) *Learners' Stories* (pp. 83–100). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Norton, B. (2000) *Identity and Language Learning: Gender, Ethnicity and Educational Change*. Harlow: Longman/Pearson Education.
- Norton, B. (2001) Non-participation, imagined communities, and the language classroom. In M. Breen (ed.) *Learner Contributions to Language Learning* (pp. 159–171). Harlow: Pearson.

- Norton, B. and Kamal, F. (2003) The imagined communities of Pakistani school children. *Journal of Language, Identity and Education* 2 (4), 301–317.
- Pavlenko, A. and Blackledge, A. (eds) (2004) *Negotiation of Identities in Multilingual Settings*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Reay, D. (2004). 'It's all becoming a habitus': beyond the habitual use of habitus in educational research. *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 25 (4), 431–444.
- Ryan, S. (2006) Language learning motivation within the context of globalization: An L2 self within an imagined global community. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies: An International Journal* 3 (1), 23–45.
- Toohey, K. (2000) *Learning English at School: Identity, Social Relations and Classroom Practice*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Volet, S. and Järvelä, S. (eds) (2001) *Motivation in Learning Contexts: Theoretical Advances and Methodological Implications*. Oxford: Pergamon.
- Wenger, E. (1998) *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning and Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

UNCORRECTED PROOF