



Are Students Motivated Enough? : A Study of Students' Motivation in Online English Course

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Abstract: It is still debatable whether distance learning is effective when implemented fully. In a pandemic where classes have been conducted online for more than a year, students' motivation to attend lectures fully is questionable. This study aims to determine students' motivation in attending lectures gradually. The students' motivation six months after the face-to-face meeting was prohibited is compared to their motivation a year after the classes were conducted online. This research is a quantitative study using a quasi-experimental research design with a time-series model. The population of this research includes all 1st and 2nd-semester students who took English For Business 1 and 2 courses. Data collection was carried out using questionnaires to assess students' motivation, utilizing Dornyei's L2MSS questionnaires and an additional 10 items from regular face-to-face classes modified to address online language learning in the Language Learning section. Data analysis was conducted using the t-test for paired samples. The results of the analysis indicate that distance learning is effective in maintaining students' motivation in attending classes in the shorter term, while it may possibly decrease over a longer time. Teachers may need to employ creativity to sustain students' motivation.

Keywords: Blended Learning, Distance Learning, L2 Motivational Self-system

INTRODUCTION

Long before the teaching-learning process shifted to a distance format, studies on online learning, where teachers and students do not meet face-to-face in a traditional classroom, had been conducted, and the results were satisfactory (Zhang, 2005; Sethy, 2008; Zhonggen et al., 2018). However, the worldwide spread of the pandemic has compelled all classroom activities to be conducted fully online, starting from March 2020 to August 2021, and possibly continuing indefinitely in the future, particularly in most areas of Indonesia.

Despite these circumstances, challenges have arisen. Irsa (2021) notes that Senior High School students prefer face-to-face meetings over online learning due to technical issues such as poor internet connections and a plethora of tasks. Additionally, psychological challenges, such as a lack of motivation and easy distraction, contribute to the preference for in-person classes. Moreover, Malelak et al. (2021) state that college students face psychological problems, including a lack of seriousness in attending lectures (8%) and boredom during online courses, leading to a decline in enthusiasm for online learning (18%). Based on these studies, it is reasonable to assert that teachers must address their students' psychological conditions, particularly their motivation in language learning.

It is well understood that motivation is constructed based on human experiences from birth. One's continuous development is gradually shaped, bit by bit, resulting in the person they are today and their current state of mind. Certain moments, or even just one moment, in life can alter someone's perception and potentially change their life forever. Motivation is a part of this life process, arising from past experiences that have shaped someone's enthusiasm for learning. The following study aims to observe whether students' eagerness to learn and their motivation or positive outlook on language learning can be influenced by lessons experienced in real life during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In Indonesia, where this study was conducted, English has been promoted as a beneficial factor for modernization and has been introduced as the first foreign language since the 1960s (Lamb et al., 2016). This study aims to explore the relationship between the motivation to learn English and students' learning experiences during online classes in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic in Lampung, one of the provinces in Sumatra Island, Indonesia. The specific questions posed were: 1) How does motivation relate to students' online learning experience during the lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic? and 2) What kind of online activities may trigger students' motivation?

When motivation to learn, whether it is L2 or a foreign language, arises, Dörnyei points out that with sufficient motivation, language learners have a big possibility to achieve mastery in using the language, regardless of cognitive characteristics (Dörnyei, 2001). This implies that students must be motivated enough to learn the language and go through the hardships during learning to master the language (Harmer, 2001).

For the purpose of understanding motivation in language learning, Dörnyei's motivational self-system is comprised of three key components. The first, Ideal L2 Self, represents the L2-specific facet of an individual's 'ideal self.' If the person one aspires to become is proficient in an L2, the 'ideal

L2 self' acts as a potent motivator for learning the language, fueled by the desire to minimize the gap between the actual and ideal selves. This component typically encompasses traditional integrative and internalized instrumental motives.

The second component, Ought-to L2 Self, revolves around the attributes that an individual believes they ought to possess to meet expectations and avoid potential negative outcomes. Corresponding to Higgin's ought self, this dimension aligns with the more extrinsic, less internalized types of instrumental motives.

The third component, L2 Learning Experience, delves into situated and 'executed' motives linked to the immediate learning environment and experience. Factors such as the impact of the teacher, the curriculum, the peer group, and the experience of success contribute to this component, which is conceptualized at a different level from the two self-guides. Subsequent research is anticipated to delve further into the self-aspects of this bottom-up process. In the contemporary context, where self-motivation is increasingly vital due to limited face-to-face interactions, Dornyei's concepts underscore the significance of considering the learning experience in fostering and sustaining students' motivation, even when confined to online platforms.

These notions are particularly relevant in the current situation where self-motivation is crucial, given that meetings are limited or can only be conducted through screens. Dornyei's concepts also emphasize that the learning experience cannot be neglected in building or maintaining students' motivation in learning a language, even when it is done solely through a screen.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Participants

This is a quantitative study in which primary data is collected using a questionnaire adapted from Dornyei's Motivational Self-System. The first phase took place four months after the learning process was conducted fully online, and the second phase occurred seven months after the first phase. Out of the total 125 students in the program, 41 students were excluded from the first phase quantitative analysis for failing to submit the questionnaires, while 54 students failed to submit in the second phase. The participants were first-year college students (18-21 years old) taking English as a foreign language class in their first and second semesters, respectively. In the first phase, these students were new to the college experience, having only undergone online classes in high school for around three months and fully online when they

started college. The second semester or the second phase also involved all online meetings.

Instruments

The abrupt shift to online learning in the first phase necessitated an improvised teaching-learning process. Due to limitations, some meetings were conducted only via WhatsApp and Google Meet as the media, with recorded lectures uploaded on YouTube. Zoom meetings were not frequently used due to the supporting technology still being in the adaptation phase. The second phase was more advanced, with learning taking place via Zoom meetings, recorded materials through Canva, online discussions using WhatsApp groups, and the utilization of Mentimeter to gather answers. Importantly, students were better adept in the second phase.

The survey utilized two parts. First, to assess students' motivation, Dörnyei's L2MSS questionnaires (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009) were employed, with an additional 10 items from regular face-to-face classes modified for online language learning and added to the Language Learning section. Therefore, three questionnaire sections were taken from Papi (2010), namely Ideal L2 Self, L2 Ought to Self, and L2 Learning Experience. The modified questionnaire is named L2 Online Learning Experience. Changes can be observed in questions such as "Do you like the atmosphere of your English classes?" modified to "Do you like the atmosphere of your online English classes?" A five-point Likert Scale asked respondents to rate from 'very true of me' (5) to 'not at all true of me' (1). A close-ended survey format was used based on a study on participants' engagement in language learning and their willingness to keep learning the language (Lepp-Kaethler & Dörnyei, 2013).

Data Analysis

Given its purpose to observe the relationship between situational characteristics, specifically students' L2 online learning experience and their motivational components, the relationship was investigated by calculating the mean use of each of the L2MSS questionnaires and correlating it with the L2 online learning experience (Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2012). The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to analyze the correlation between each item. Therefore, the reliability coefficient was considered to ensure the items in the questionnaire were united and reliable (Setiyadi, 2006).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

The data obtained in this study are presented in the following tables. The first two tables depict the students' psychological condition, specifically

their learning experience and online learning experience during the initial months of online learning. To address the first research question, the data is displayed in Tables 1 through 4. Table 1 illustrates the correlation between Ideal L2 Self, Ought to L2 Self, and L2 Learning Experience in the first phase, when the students were new to college life.

Tabel 1. Correlation Between Ideal L2 Self, Ought to L2 Self and L2 Learning Experience in The First Phase

		Ideal L2 Self	L2 Ought to L2 Self	L2 Learning Experience
Ideal L2 Self	Pearson Correlation	1	.375**	.653**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	84	84	84
Ought to L2 Self	Pearson Correlation	.375**	1	.500**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	84	84	84
Learning Experience	Pearson Correlation	.653**	.500**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	84	84	84

***.* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The second table presents the correlation between Ideal L2 Self, Ought to L2 Self, and L2 Online Learning Experience in the first phase.

Tabel 2. Correlation Between Ideal L2 Self, Ought to L2 Self and L2 Online Learning Experience in The First Phase

		Ideal L2 Self	Ought to L2 Self	Online Learning Experience
Ideal L2 Self	Pearson Correlation	1	.375**	.444**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	84	84	84
Ought to L2 Self	Pearson Correlation	.375**	1	.449**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	84	84	84
Online Learning Experience	Pearson Correlation	.444**	.449**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	84	84	84

***.* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From Table 1 and Table 2, it can be observed that Learning Experience and Online Learning Experience are significantly correlated with Ideal L2 Self and Ought-to L2 Self. This suggests that students maintained motivation during the first phase, as evidenced by the significant correlations between Learning Experience and Online Learning Experience with Ideal L2 Self and Ought-to L2 Self. However, the initial finding from this study indicates a slight difference in the values of Learning Experience in Table 1 (0.653 and 0.500) and Online Learning Experience (0.444 and 0.449) in Table 2, suggesting a potential preference for online learning only if the situation does not improve. The next table presents the correlation between Ideal L2 Self, Ought to L2 Self, and L2 Learning Experience in the second phase, or the students' second semester of college life.

Table 3. Correlation Between Ideal L2 Self, Ought to L2 Self and L2 Learning Experience in The Second Phase

		Ideal L2 Self	L2 Ought to L2 Self	L2 Learning Experience
Ideal L2 Self	Pearson Correlation	1	.474**	.548**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	71	71	71
Ought to L2 Self	Pearson Correlation	.474**	1	.663**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	71	71	71
Learning Experience	Pearson Correlation	.548**	.663**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	71	71	71

Table 4. Correlation Between Ideal L2 Self, Ought to L2 Self, and L2 Online Learning Experience in The Second Phase

		Ideal L2 Self	Ought to L2 Self	Online Learning Experience
Ideal L2 Self	Pearson Correlation	1	.474**	.532**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	71	71	71
Ought to L2 Self	Pearson Correlation	.474**	1	.575**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	71	71	71

Online Learning Experience	Pearson Correlation	.532**	.575**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	71	71	71

The data presented in Tables 3 and 4 reflect the current circumstances where students can maintain their motivation during the pandemic. As observed from the tables in phase one, Learning Experience and Online Learning Experience in phase two are significantly correlated with Ideal L2 Self and Ought-to L2 Self, indicating that students were able to sustain their motivation. However, even though not directly indicated by the students, the numbers in face-to-face learning are still slightly higher than in online learning. These overall tables also suggest the possibility that teachers' efforts in employing different teaching methods may influence students' online learning experiences, potentially forming part of the findings in this research.

To address the second research question, students were given a close-ended survey regarding the most effective way for them to follow during online classes. Choices included teaching techniques such as using a YouTube channel, utilizing recorded materials through Canva, and other media used during the second phase of online learning. The figure below illustrates the students' preferences for their preferred learning media.

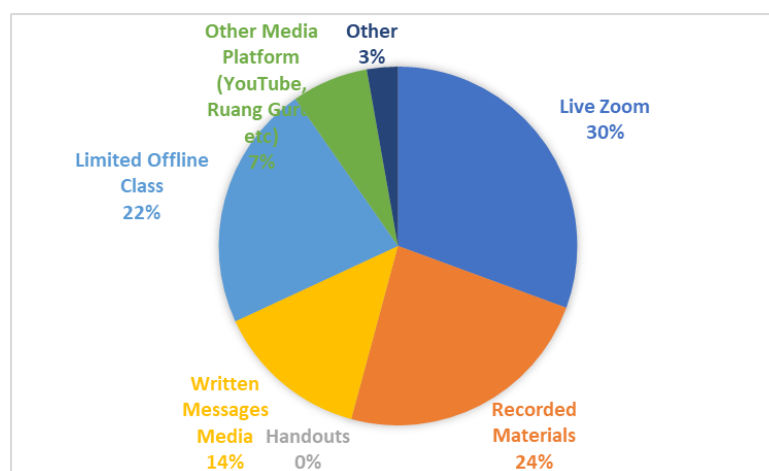


Figure 1 Preferable Media

From the survey, it is evident that 22.2% of the students prefer traditional or offline classes compared to online classes, even though some changes towards more interactive teaching techniques have been implemented. However, a significant 76% of the students prefer online classes using various kinds of media, with only 2.8% choosing other techniques. The third finding in this survey is that none of the students would like to learn from handouts. Meanwhile, the fourth finding indicates that the number of students who prefer online learning remains

stable.

Discussion

It seems fair to assume that the problem occurs in online learning experience is notably engagement to the lesson or to the teacher, or to the class itself since each of the student is in their own place and situation and connected only through screen. The situation described previously by Irsa (2021) and Malelak *et. al* (2021) mostly reflect Dornyei's (2019) statement regarding L2 learning experience which contributes to L2 motivational self-system.

"L2 Learning Experience may be defined as the perceived quality of the learners' engagement with various aspects of the language learning process (Dornyei, 2019)".

L2 Learning Experience is considered to support the development of motivational self-system as it covers a broad range of motivational influences related to the whole process of learning L2 (Dornyei, 2019). In other words, learning experience is considered a contribution to motivation due to its nature as an actual process of L2 learning. This view has been a concern since online learning is done. Whether the students get sufficient L2 learning experience and contributes to the students' motivation in language learning.

The first finding of the study was acquired at the beginning of the students' campus life. The students prefer to learn online only if the situation does not get better which means online learning is felt as an emergency. In the first phase, the students are facing two new things. First is the new learning environment since the students and the lecturers are new to each other and they barely meet. They meet mostly through social media. The second is the changes in learning process from offline to online. Malelak *et.al* (2021) mentions the possibility that students prefer offline learning since their teachers do not master the technology well. This might be a case of generation gap where digital natives (the students) are taught by digital immigrants (the teachers) (Prensky, 2001). The digital immigrants' inability to cope with the technological problem immediately may lead to students' demotivation in learning the language.

The second finding shows that when the teacher put more efforts by making varieties in teaching, it may contribute to students' online learning experience. The length of the face-to-face prohibition had lasted for 16 months at the time the questionnaire was given. From the first phase, there is tendency that the student's prefer offline learning by a slight bit and in the second phase it stays almost the same which means the students have adapted and have possibly adjusted to the situation and the teacher has put effort to at least maintain the situation. As mentioned before, due to the insufficiency in skills in technology

there is possibility that the teaching learning process in the first phase do not feel natural since the lectures were done by distributing handouts, giving tasks, discussion through WhatsApp and the conduct of Google Meet and Zoom meeting were felt like moving the classroom to screen. While in the second phase, even though the discussion is still done in Zoom meetings, but there are additional in recorded power point presentation and gathering students' opinion through Mentimeter. The somehow better interaction and teaching learning process may contribute to students' motivation in learning.

It is then confirmed by the survey where 76% of students prefer online classes or it seems fair to say that they are now well adept to online learning. The written answers in the survey show that students prefer Zoom since they can see the lesson and listen to the teacher's accent during the lectures. Some students prefer recorded materials through Canva or YouTube since it can be repeated and the source does not have to be the teacher. This is in-line with Wang & Chen's (2019) which reports that based on the results, they propose the complementary use of English teaching videos provided in YouTube. Some other students prefer written media such as WhatsApp. In his study, Zhang (2005) mentions that students who learn in a fully interactive multimedia based achieved a better performance and higher level of satisfaction than those of traditional classroom. From this study, it would be better to considered the use of e-learning even though the face-to-face meetings have already allowed.

Interestingly, from the psychological side, one student prefers online classes since it is low on pressure. The student argues that when the teacher forces the student to use English, his psychology is possibly breaking down. The student suggests that the teacher support his learning regime and he will support the teacher back. The items that should be considered in language teaching is the use of game which is suggested a student. In what form does game through screen may entertain the students and motivate them eventually is still a work in progress.

From the findings to answer the first research question, it is sufficient to say that the students are motivated and the L2 online learning experience that they have during online classes correlates significantly with L2 ideal self and Ought to L2 self. It also reflects that the students are engaged to the lesson even when facing the transformation from offline to online learning.

To answer the second research questions, it can be seen from Figure 1 that students accept Zoom meetings, recorded material through Canva and YouTube, and messenger. One interesting thing and it is the finding of the research is that handouts are not an option for native digitals. It may have to change teaching learning process at schools and in colleges because schools are still using work sheets which is bundled into books with less explanation and abundant problems to be worked on. Therefore, there should be further research regarding this

generation's reading habits. It should be considered since the number of students choosing reading through WhatsApp is more than those who learn through handouts.

In the field of research in motivation, there is a superstition that in order to make the students motivated, the teacher must improve and develop themselves by not neglecting the obligation of a teacher. It is not by making yells or clapping hands in the classroom. As a contribution to research in motivation, these findings may remind us that right now the students are getting younger while the teachers are getting older. Even millennial teachers are now facing generation Z (people who were born in the 2000s) or called as native digitals which makes the teaching learning process should be improved. Therefore, teachers might open possibilities of doing both ways, digital learning and classroom learning.

CONCLUSIONS

There is a tendency that L2 online learning experience contributes to students' motivational self-system, with some requirements in technical and psychological fields. Technical aspects involve having sufficient support from gadgets, a stable internet connection, and available credits. Meanwhile, psychological support refers to the teachers' ability to create an atmosphere that makes students comfortable and stimulates their enthusiasm for learning. The limitation of this study lies in the fact that it was conducted without direct interaction with the participants, meaning that the psychological bond between teachers and students was not established, and teachers had to rely solely on technology. Additionally, the study focused primarily on observing students' motivation, excluding their achievements, exams, or comprehension. This approach was taken to prevent any assumptions about whether students were genuinely engaged in learning, which might be reflected in their comprehension of the lesson.

An actionable recommendation is for teachers to explore and learn various useful applications or software, as students need a variety of activities to prevent boredom and keep them motivated during online courses. From a pedagogical perspective, it should be acknowledged and considered how L2 online learning experience contributes, as the world has shifted in that direction, even though the circumstances leading to this change were forced by the pandemic.

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