

# L2 Motivation and Identity

*A Chat Log Study of an L2 Adolescent in an L1 Educational Environment*



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## Abstract

Motivation and identity have been vastly investigated within second language acquisition (SLA). These issues are restrained by their complex and dynamic natures, which indicate that they are far from easy to research. The purpose of this essay was to continue traditional areas of research in order to add to the empiric requirement. The attempt was to show that systematic research is necessary in order to strengthen knowledge within the field of SLA motivation and identity. The study presented in this essay was conducted through a chat log interview with one participant. The participant was an L2 adolescent who recently relocated from Sweden to the UK. A content analysis of the data was conducted together with theoretically framed interpretations. The findings in this study indicated that the respondent's motivation was generated both by external and internal factors; that is, the individual and the surrounding context both appeared to have had an impact on each other. Ethnic identity could have determined the participant's language preferences, and there seemed to have been a continuous dynamic movement between identity and motivation that, in turn, could potentially have promoted SLA success.

*Keywords:* chat log, context, ethnicity, identity, in-group identification, motivation, multilingualism, sense of self

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## Introduction

Amongst many other western countries, Sweden as a society has become more linguistically and culturally diverse, which is something that educators need to take in to consideration in their professions (Skolverket, 2012, p. 7). These diverse developments lead to unique senses of selves and driving factors for motivation; however, that is not to say that these are isolated from each other or limited to a learner's origin. Complexities such as identity and motivation can, in fact, be cultivated and effectuated from within and outside the individual (e.g. Creese & Blackledge, 2015; Trofimovich & Turuševa, 2015; Hoffman & Walker, 2010; Dörnyei, 2001; Ushioda, 2015; Dörnyei, 2009). An individualistic approach is, therefore, appropriate in the Swedish school system where all learners should be given equal opportunities for success through various methods –promoting motivation and identity formation.

The perception of identity varies between individuals; moreover, feelings of exclusion and alienation amongst adolescents with a different mother tongue than Swedish have through several studies been shown to increase in Sweden (Skolverket, 2012, p. 131-132). Experiences of discrimination are not exclusive in Sweden; in fact, this is currently a highly discussed issue across various western cultures. It is, therefore, valuable to further investigate identity perceptions and motivations that promote integration as well as inclusive environments – specifically school environments.

L2 motivation and Identity has been widely researched and explored; although, the subjectivity of identity and the complexity of motivation is undeniable. Consequently, further systematic studies are necessary in order to gain more concrete knowledge about these intricacies. Skolverket (2012, p. 15)

provides information about an inspection that shows a result of teachers in Sweden not being prepared enough to didactically manage lessons with learners that have different mother tongues than the dominant population. Thus the purpose of this essay is to extend prior research with the attempt of adding to necessary empirical evidence; even more, highlight practice-based relevancy for practicing and pre-service teachers. Succinctly, the findings in this essay indicate the value of further studying complex territories within social sciences. The findings provide importance to the idea of improving praxis within the educational profession.

The results presented in this essay were derived from an interview via a chat log with a *multilingual* (see Cenoz, 2013, p. 5 for definition) adolescent. The participant is a Swedish citizen who, up until recently, transferred to a British upper secondary school in the UK. The study evolves around the adolescent's perspectives on what might or might not generate motivation, and his reflections on his identity in a new country. Thus this essay aims at answering the following research questions:

- What contributing factors to an L2 learner's motivation are there?
- What contributing factors to an L2 learner's identity and sense of self are there?
- Are there any connections between identity, sense of self, and motivation?

If so, what are they?

In order to answer these research questions, the following chapter will establish the theoretical framework for this study. A brief presentation of previous studies will follow the theoretical framework in order to highlight current knowledge and consensus on the issues. Thereafter, a section about the used method will be

presented to give further background information about the participant, ways of data collection, how data were analysed, potential limitations, and ethics. The analysis will, subsequently, be presented with subheadings demonstrating various themes and categories that emerged during the analysis process. Eventually, a conclusion will be presented via a summary of the findings, and discussions about implications for practice as well as limitations.

## **Theoretical Framework**

This chapter accumulates the theoretical framework for the upcoming analysis in this essay. Various terminologies will on their first appearance be presented in italics. Finally, a brief review on previous studies will be displayed.

### **Identity**

Language is, amongst other things, a way to express who we are (Geeslin & Long, 2014, p. 11; Trofimovich & Turuševa, 2015, p. 237; Cenoz, 2013, p. 9; Dressler & Dressler, 2016, p. 24) and our social preferences; for example, what group of people do you prefer to identify yourself with? L2 communication often requires a learner's social engagement, and "the ability to live in a second language rests on the acquisition of sociolinguistic competence, which allows us to have and express an identity in a second language." (Geeslin & Long, 2014, p. 11). Languages occur in social settings, and it is far from improbable that identity is a social construct (Creese & Blackledge, 2015; Trofimovich & Turuševa, 2015) that, in turn, signifies that individual's perceptions of their identity-features surface because of interactional situations with other individuals (Creese & Blackledge, 2015, p. 23). Embracing the possibility that identity is a social construct means that some people's emotional connections to certain languages, that are important to their identities, need to be considered (Creese & Blackledge, 2015, p. 25).

Identity is not isolated to an individual's internal existence; in fact, an individual's identity can be mended and emerge depending on group belonging. Personal and group identities are demonstrated in language learning groups where continuous contact between the learners is noticeable (Trofimovich & Turuševa, 2015, p. 235). Furthermore, everyone eventually takes part in a community as a

group member through socializing and interacting with surrounding individuals (Skolverket, 2012, p. 120). This leads to a sense of belonging through *in-group identification*; that is, when an individual identifies with a group, and feels similar to the group-members in that particular group (Leach et al., 2008, p. 146). Leach et al. (2008) further clarifies this accordingly:

More recently, self-categorization theory (Turner et al., 1987) suggested that in-group identification is indicated by a “depersonalized” self-perception, whereby individuals come to “self-stereotype” themselves as similar to other members of their in-group (for a review, see Oakes, Haslam, & Turner, 1994). We refer to this component of in-group identification as *individual self-stereotyping*. (p. 146)

According to self-categorization theory, the concept of a person’s self is effectuated depending to the group you identify with (Leach et al., 2008, p. 147).

**Ethnicity.** The definition of identity has increasingly changed over the years; it has parted from a standpoint based on essentialism. Moreover, identity is strongly connected to ethnicity, which means that in lieu of looking at *ethnic identity* as a continuous thing, it should be seen as something changeable and inconstant. For example, an individual’s perception of his/her identity in relation to ethnicity may change from either being Swedish, or Swedish-Romanian, or sometimes one or the other (Skolverket, 2012, p. 127). Establishing that identity could be a social construct indicates the subjectivity of ethnic identity, specifically, in relation to and individual’s perception of belonging to a certain group (Trofimovich & Turuševa, 2015, p. 235).

Ethnicity is the definition of when an unintended group of people share the same culture; additionally, ethnic identities in ethnic groups are shaped and



defined by external and internal judgements (Hoffman & Walker, 2010, p. 40). External judgments on an individual's identity could potentially lead to an identity-conflict when migrating (Skolverket, 2012, p. 127); that is to say, expectations on certain cultural commonalities and features have been pre-determined by external populations. Ethnic groups share commonalities "such as language, religion, race, homeland or origin, culture, interests, and goals" (Hoffman & Walker, 2010, p. 40) that, further, results in common activities that people choose to partake in –for example, celebrating Christmas.

Interestingly, Edwards (2009, p. 16) problematizes the limited way in which ethnicity is often defined; he states that ethnicity should not be restrained by objective features such as involuntary group memberships that depend on race, religion, and so on. On the contrary, ethnicity and ethnic identity is in need of subjectivity. Thus ethnic identity could be defined as a group membership that depends on an individual's perception of group belonging that, further, is linked to individuals' emotional connectivity to a certain group (Edwards, 2009; Creese & Blackledge, 2015; Trofimovich & Turuševa, 2015).

An endorsing attitude towards language learning is "speakers embracing a new language and culture despite a strong sense of ethnic identity, thus adding a new language and culture without losing their own" (Trofimovich & Turuševa, 2015, p. 236). Trofimovich and Turuševa (2015, p. 236) present the idea that learners do not necessarily compromise their own identity just because they have taken on a new language and culture. In the Swedish syllabus for English at upper secondary, it is clearly stated that part of the aim of the subject is to enable students to develop various linguistic proficiencies as well as energize students' inquisitiveness regarding language and culture (Skolverket, 2011, p. 1).

**Accent.** In many instances, nonnative accents tend to be associated with language difficulties; yet, this associating is related to people's perception of verbal language that indicate accent. People's perceptions of nonnative accents may also lead to discrimination issues (Trofimovich & Turuševa, 2015, p. 237) based on marginalization attitudes and stereotyping that, furthermore, lead to experiences amongst nonnative speakers of alienation from various social settings (Gluszek et al., 2011, p. 30). In the Swedish curriculum for upper secondary school, it is stated that the school environment must encourage a humanitarian attitude, and any type of discrimination or violation towards an individual must be confronted and dealt with (Skolverket, 2011, p. 1).

Gluszek et al. (2011, p. 29-30) discuss that the outcome of an individual's accent is strongly connected to "sociopsychological factors, such as motivation and sense of identity" (p. 29-30). Identity in social contexts has an impact on a person's "needs, goals, and ambitions" (Gluszek et al., 2011, p. 29), and it is undeniable that language takes part in a person's identity. Gluszek et al. (2011, p. 30) state that the more you identify with the nonnative home country, the closer is your accent to the native-like. Moreover, the more you identify with you ethnic group, the more you will fail to attain a native-like accent. In some cases, people's nonnative accents are conscious preferences to gesticulate parts of their identities, opinions, culture, and so on (Gluszek et al., 2011, p. 30).

### **Motivation**

Zafar and Meenakshi (2012, p. 641) present two types of motivation that are of importance in SLA, namely, *integrative* and *instrumental motivation*. Integrative motivation is generated by an L2 learner's desire to integrate and assimilate with the L1 community. Whereas, instrumental motivation is generated

by an L2 learner's desire to make use of the language in settings where it is necessary, and sees the L2-knowledge as a beneficial additional skill (Zafar & Meenakshi, 2012, p. 641) rather than a means of integration (Krashen, 1981, p, 28).

Zafar and Meenakshi (2012, p. 641) remark that motivation is an essentiality in second language learning, and it is the prominent explanation for SLA success. Also, the more motivation an L2 learner has, the more the second language will evolve. It is a certainty to claim that both integrative motivation and instrumental motivation are advantageous for obtaining SLA success (Zafar and Meenakshi, 2012, p. 641). The differences, however, might depend on the individual and the society thus "L2 learning by a member of the dominant group in a society may benefit more from integrative motivation, and L2 learning by a subordinate group member may be more influenced by instrumental motivation." (Zafar & Meenakshi, 2012, p. 641).

Dörnyei (2001, p. 47) displays self-determination theory as something that involves a sequence of regulations that, in turn, occur depending on type of motivation, specifically, *intrinsic* or *extrinsic motivation*. Intrinsic motivation is described as *self-determined* that is placed on one end of the sequence; and, extrinsic motivation is described as *controlled* that is placed on the other side of the sequence. Regulations are placed somewhere in this sequence between the two motivations. Additionally, the placement of a regulation is determined by "how much the regulation has been transferred from outside to inside the individual" (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 47). There are five types of regulations in total, and three of them will be further explored in this essay (Dörnyei, 2001):

external regulation (i.e., motivation coming entirely from external sources

such as rewards or threats); introjected regulation (i.e., externally imposed rules that students accept as norms they should follow in order not to feel guilty); identified regulation (i.e., engaging in an activity because the individual highly values it and sees its usefulness). (p. 47)

Dörnyei (2001, p. 53) also discusses the relevancy of *self-motivation* in an educational environment, specifically, classrooms in order for teachers to be able to habituate students with appropriate strategies for maintaining autonomous motivation.

**Motivation and Self.** The self-concept is generally based on an individual's view of him/herself; moreover, there is also a notion of what is referred to as *future selves*, which is an individual's imagined future self (Dörnyei, 2014, p. 7). Dörnyei (2014, p. 8-9) applies the concept of self to a system called *The L2 Motivational Self System* (see also Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 79) that demonstrates connections between SLA and motivation. In this system, there are two types of selves reflecting a learner's motivation to learn a second language based on internal and external desires: (a) The *ideal L2 self* concerns a learner's desire to become a person with an accomplished second language who is, therefore, motivated to strive for the ideal L2 self by willingly learning the language, and (b) the *ought-to L2 self* concerns assumed obligatory L2 features that the learner believes he/she must uphold with a risk of disregarding what he/she she actually wants (Dörnyei, 2014, p. 8; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 82). Furthermore, Dörnyei (2014, p. 8-9) states that these two types of selves cannot exclude *L2 learning experience* because situational classroom events might also generate motivation such as success in a test.

The senses of selves in the L2 Motivational Self System are envisioned and imagined by the L2 learners, hence why the word *vision* is oftentimes used in this type of research. Vision in this sense is a vital representative of what generates an individual's motivation. A vision goes hand in hand with an individual's goal; in other words, a person can vividly imagine an accomplished goal with his/her future self in it (Dörnyei, 2014, p. 12).

When a learner makes a personal assessment of his/her capability of achieving something, the learner will either have a low or a high sense of *self-efficacy* (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011, p. 16). To demonstrate, a low sense of efficacy is when a learner perceives a specific task as troublesome and risks compromising his/her potential successful achievement by worrying about all that could go wrong. In other words, a low sense of self-efficacy is created by a person's senses rather than actual abilities (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 16). Classroom activities focusing on personal learning goals could increase a learner's self-efficiency and personal development (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 27).

Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011, p. 27) remark that structures that are competitive in classrooms can have both negative and positive outcomes for learners' motivations. Advanced learners might benefit from competitions, while, less advanced learners in that same group might experience feelings of discouragement or low self-esteem. Self-esteem is important in SLA, and it is related to "personal judgment of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes that the individual holds towards himself/herself." (Zafar & Meenakshi, 2012, p. 643).

### **Multilingualism**

It is not unusual that L2 learners' first language interferes with the second language; specifically, errors are prone to occur more frequently in relation to

“phonology, vocabulary and grammar” (Derakhshan & Karimi, 2015, p. 2112) when L2 learners depend on L1 structures while using the second language. This obstruction of the L2 is called *interference* (Derakhshan & Karimi, 2015, p. 2112). This issue could compromise an individual’s SLA as the L1 interference could potentially obstruct the acquisition. However, transmissions between a learner’s L1 and L2 are not always negative because of the fact that positive transfer promotes SLA (Derakhshan & Karimi, 2015, 2113). It goes without saying that negative transfer decreases if a speaker has a high level of fluency in his/her L2.

Cenoz (2013, p. 6) discusses two divisions between multilingualism: *unbalanced* and *balanced multilingualism*. These two divisions depend on a speaker’s fluency in the languages he/she knows. Equal fluency in languages signifies that the speaker is a balanced multilingual, while, different levels of fluency in a speaker’s language proficiency shows for unbalanced multilingualism. Nevertheless, a more modernized approach towards multilingualism does not require flawless balance between languages in order for someone to be called a multilingual. Furthermore, multilingual individuals adapt to the appropriate language depending on the communicative context through, amongst other things, code-switching (Cenoz, 2013); and, L2 learner’s capability to live and interact in between cultures develops when living in a natural L2 environment (Dressler & Dressler, 2016, p. 24).

### **Context**

*Context*, specifically within complex dynamic systems theory (for further info on CDST see Ushioda, 2015; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011), is a complex matter and is not limited by settings, conditions, environments, and so on. Context is

often described as something that affects an individual; for example, a learner's motivation can be impacted by the type of educational context he/she is in, and that indicates that the context influences the learner and not the other way around (Ushioda, 2015, p. 47). At the same time, learner context connections are complex and not so monolithic in their directions. Input as part of context can be exemplified as proof to this point (Ushioda, 2015):

After all, the ways in which language learners orient and respond to language input will affect the content, quantity and quality of further input in the developing context of the interaction. In this sense, there is a dynamically evolving relationship between learner and context, as each responds and adapts to the other. (p. 47)

This enables research to consider the relationship between context and learner as something dynamic where context and learner shape each other naturally (Ushioda, 2015; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011).

According to Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011, p. 33), Vygotsky's sociocultural theory enables a connection between motivation and social interactional learning. Even though the Vygotskian approach mainly focuses on learning, motivation seems to share the same existential approach with it being "a socially mediated and culturally situated phenomenon." (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 33; see also Dörnyei, 2001, p. 45). Additionally, a cooperative classroom environment where learners work collectively is likely to promote motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 27). A classroom environment can be separated into two types of contexts: *instructional* and *social context*. Instructional context is based on matters that shape the classroom setting, for example, the curriculum, the teacher, and so on. The social context, however, is based on students' identity

developments as well as personal interactions and relationships between students (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 237).

A learner's internal systems interplay with external attributes "such as L2 input, classroom instruction or peer group relations." (Ushioda, 2015, p. 51). This interplay influences a learner's cognitive and social ability that, in turn, has an impact on a learner's motivation and social identity (Ushioda, 2015, p. 51; for further discussion on social identity see Geeslin & Long, 2014, p. 89; Dörnyei, 2009, p. 236). To clarify, SLA learners are directly connected to external social contexts through their social identities (Ushioda, 2015, p. 51; Geeslin & Long, 2014, p. 89). Geeslin and Long (2014, p. 89) refer to this prospect as the *Identity Approach*. The Identity Approach is grounded on two fundamentals: "(1) the social identity of language learners is complex and dynamic, and (2) socially structured relations of power affect learners' opportunities to interact with speakers of the target language community." (Geeslin & Long, 2014, p. 89).

The emergence of identity occurs when interacting with others, which signifies that identities can be negotiated (Creese & Blackledge, 2015, p. 25; Cenoz, 2013, p. 9) depending on the interactional context. The possibility to negotiate identity depends on life events and contexts that individuals are exposed to which, in turn, lead to the emergence of (Creese & Blackledge, 2015, p. 24) an "identity repertoire" (Blommaert & Varis, 2013, p. 157). This could be related to *hybrid identities*, which is when a speaker adapts to certain life events and contexts by using different languages. Hybrid identities can be beneficial when having difficulties with integrating in a new culture as it helps a speaker to know how to adapt and not stand out significantly from the native population (Trofimovich & Turuševa, 2015, p. 238).



There are a number of things that determine and influence an individual's identity, hence why identity is a highly subjective matter. Intersectionality is an essential factor to identity as well as life experiences that, further, might inflict on a person's sensibility towards other cultures. Ethnic identity does not differ from identity in its complexity; moreover, Hoffman and Walker (2010, p. 41) evolve the concept of ethnicity by stating that it is a complex concept that should be measured according to individuals and contexts. Ethnic identity is dynamic (Hoffman & Walker, 2010; Geeslin & Long, 2014; Trofimovich & Turuševa, 2015) and can, in fact, consist of more than one ethnicity. Multi ethnic identities in one person can merge and be exposed depending on context; to exemplify, an L2 speaker with multiple ethnic identities might negotiate his/her spectrum of ethnicity depending on "different types of intercultural contact but also within a single intercultural transaction" (Trofimovich & Turuševa, 2015, p. 236). It goes without saying that identity is a complex and dynamic matter that is connected to context (Creese & Blackledge, 2015; Dressler & Dressler, 2016; Cenoz, 2013; Skolverket, 2012).

### **Previous Studies**

The myriad amounts of research on motivation and identity give great significance to the issues. Complex and dynamic phenomena such as the L2 self and motivation have been studied by researchers such as Miyahara (2014), Mercer (2015), Irie and Ryan (2015). The results of their studies all portray these phenomena as situational, temporal, individual, and truly revealing to learner's ways of changing senses of selves and states. In other words, motivation, identity, and the L2 self are not static in their existence. Variables that contribute to these phenomena are both unique and common amongst L2 individuals.

Zafar and Meenakshi (2012, p. 643) mention a study that concluded self-esteem to be an important variable for teachers to intentionally boost in learners; high self-esteem leads to positive learning outcomes. Furthermore, another study showed that there are several factors that influence a learner's will to communicate in a language other than the native one. Some of the mentioned factors are motivation and personality (Zafar & Meenakshi, 2012, p. 643).

Krashen (1981, p. 30) reports on various studies related to self-image and found that a learner's self-image is important in English as a Second Language (ESL). To clarify, a learner will have an increased chance to success in the L2 if his/her self-image is more on the positive side of the spectrum. Furthermore, those learners with a more negative self-image are more likely to lack in ESL success.

In their study, Hoffman and Walker (2010, p. 42) discuss how immigrants in Canada tend to experience strain on their integration because of the outside expectations to fully assimilate. Interestingly, there are also showings pointing to the perception of nonnative accents being connected to alienation and discrimination (Hoffman & Walker, 2010, p. 42).

## **Method**

The layout of the method behind the study will be presented in this chapter. The choice of method was qualitative, and the gathered data were analysed through a content analysis. Information about the participant will be revealed, and further information about limitations as well as confidentiality will be presented.

### **Interview**

I have conducted a qualitative interview through a chat log where the data collection was conducted over a period of one week. The rationale behind the chat log was because of its naturalistic environment as the participant and I have a kinship, and we habitually chat every day. Because of my kinship to the participant, I made an effort to avoid leading questions (Seidman, 2013, p. 87) as there was a risk of subconsciously asking questions expecting a certain answer that I might have known the answer to beforehand. The interview was semi-structured, which is when questions are based on the interviewer's generic ideas rather than questions that are predetermined (Nunan, 1992, p. 149).

### **Participant**

There was a single participant in this study who is someone I have a close relationship to. The participant is a multilingual adolescent who recently moved from Sweden to the UK. He is now at upper secondary school preparing for his General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), which contains a number of tests for the purpose of attaining a certificate of qualifications that, furthermore, is preparatory for further advanced studies. Swedish is his first language, whilst English is his second language. Romanian and Arabic are both part of his mother tongue; however, he is intermediate in Romanian and has a basic level of understanding in the Arabic language.

## **Content Analysis**

The material was analysed through a content analysis according to Graneheim and Lundman's (2004) paper. I extracted interview-conversations from the chat log, and identified various categories based on similarities and differences between the chat sequences. Categories were divided in to main categories and sub categories; additionally, chat sequences were summarized in order to place them in the appropriate category. A further search for connections was conducted by looking at the main categories to create themes based on those connections. Graneheim and Lundman (2004) point out the significance of keeping main categories apart and in lieu connect them through themes.

## **Reliability and Limitations**

The interview was conducted in Swedish, thus the analysed sequences were translated in to English for the purpose of this essay. The translation might take away from the interview's authenticity, especially, because of idiomatic differences. However, much effort was put in to making English translations with meticulous equivalence to Swedish.

Interviewing via a digital medium limits an organic interaction that involves matters such as gestures, eye contact, and interviewer's ability to create an easeful atmosphere. (Seidman, 2013, p. 114). However, the participant's established habit of chatting with me testifies a level of comfort, and he could easily reshape his answers –something that could otherwise be problematic when interviewing via a medium like e-mail (Seidman, 2013, p. 113). The lack of physical encounter via virtual interviewing is somewhat debatable; however, in a society where digitalized encounters increasingly become a part of the norm as

well as naturalistic, scepticism could instead be aimed at the questioning of virtual interviews (Hine, 2000).

Seidman (2013, p. 44-46) problematizes interviewing people you have a previous relationship to. To exemplify, “interviewers and the participants who are friends usually assume that they understand each other” (Seidman, 2013, p. 46), and that can limit the exposure of in-depth information. This issue was fully taken in to account, and leading questions were avoided as previously mentioned.

### **Ethical Principles**

Apart from Seidman’s (2013) notifications, Vetenskapsrådet’s (2002) guide regarding issues such as confidentiality and consent was also taken in to consideration. After a verbal agreement, the participant received an information sheet where it was stated that his participation was voluntary, and that he could interrupt his participation at any time. The letter also stated the aim of the study, data confidentiality, and participant’s anonymity. On the back of the letter, there was consent form where the participant’s signature was required. To maintain anonymity throughout this essay, the participant will in the following chapter be displayed as the “respondent”.

## **Analysis & Discussion**

The results will be displayed and interpreted in this chapter. Chat log sequences will be followed by interpretations framed by earlier presented theories. The following headings mirror the themes and categories that emerged during the content analysis. To clarify, the 3<sup>rd</sup> level subheadings reflect categories within themes that are displayed as 2<sup>nd</sup> level headings.

### **Obligations**

**First day back.** The respondent had just gone back to school after a week's vacation, which resulted in to a slow start the first day back. He seemed demotivated and indicated a sense of obligation as the primary factor to his lack of motivation. The respondent also said that he was not alone in feeling demotivated as all of his peers seemed to be tired and in distracted mind-sets.

I (Interviewer): How was school today?

R (Respondent): Good, although a bit slow because it was the first day after one week off. I couldn't really be bothered to make an effort during classes.

I: What made you go to school this Monday morning then?

R: Well, the fact that I have to be there and mum would get angry if I would skip school.

I: What would happen if you would have skipped school?

R: It is not so much about what would have happened. It is more that I would be missing important stuff and feeling guilty. I would not be able to skip school for a whole day and be relaxed with that on my conscience.

In the respondent's case, his motivation seemed to be more extrinsic rather than intrinsic. He expressed a sense of obligation that could suffer consequences if broken which, in turn, could be caused by external regulations. Dörnyei (2001) points out that this regulation is partly driven by risks that, in turn, are determined by external factors such as an angry mother in the respondent's case. Another possibly applicable regulation on the spectrum of motivations is introjected regulation (Dörnyei, 2001). The respondent explicitly expresses the possibility of feeling guilty if skipping school.

Another possible interpretation could be based on the respondent's in-group identification. He mentioned that he was not the only one feeling fatigued and low in motivation that day. There could conceivably be a connection between the respondent's in-group identity and motivation in knowing that his friends do not have the habit of skipping class. Perhaps he felt the need to reciprocate their habits to be similar to them, which might have resulted into his motivation to go to school even though it did not align with his desires. This influences the respondents L2 learning experience that might have an effect on his ought-to L2 self because of the fact that he has a sense of obligation (Dörnyei, 2014).

**Detention.** A part from classroom structures that focus on learners' personal ambitions, consequential forces can also generate extrinsic motivation. I asked the respondent how he keeps himself motivated, and the conversation ended on an interesting note:

I: What if you don't feel like doing your homework or be active during class?

R: Well, I force myself to do it anyways. I want to avoid getting behaviour points that are bad and can lead to detention. I don't really want to be at school more than necessary.

The risk of getting detention is an external regulation that causes the respondent's extrinsic motivation (Dörnyei, 2001). In the respondent's case, this motivation is generated mainly because of the feelings of obligations when not being in the mood of participation in an instructional context, or completing homework. At the same time, motivation is not linear and connections between context and the individuals are, in fact, interconnected (Ushioda, 2015; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). To clarify, detention is a variable in the educational context and it generates the respondent's extrinsic motivation; while, his influence on teacher's lesson plans means that he influences the instructional setting, which probably generates intrinsic motivation.

### **Benefits with peers**

**A sense of relief.** During the fall vacation, the respondent had been working on an assignment that was due the first week back at school. It was a preparatory assignment to the GCSE, and he had to read two letters as well as answer various questions related to the texts.

I: Did you manage to complete your GCSE homework assignment? Have you come up with any more ideas for the fourth question?

R: I'm not completely finished. I asked some of my friends about the fourth question, and they had a difficult time answering it as well.

I: Were they facing the same kind of difficulties as you?

R: Yes, totally. The text is complicated and almost a bit abstract, and it makes it hard to find an exact answer.



After more conversation via the chat, the subject expressed relief over the fact that he was not the only one having difficulties with the fourth question. I asked him why he felt relieved:

R: I feel like I'm not standing out, that I am like everyone else. At first I felt kind of stupid, but then I realized that I am not.

He then confirmed that it mostly had to do with the fact that English is his L2 compared to all of his peers who are L1 speakers in English. It seems as if the respondent is self-stereotyping himself according to a group-membership with his friends. To clarify, he perceives himself as similar to his peers based on the fact that they too had the same difficulties with the homework. The cause of his relief might be a confirmation of him being a part of the group; that is to say, his in-group identification gets confirmed. It is also possible that this confirmation contributes to a positively boosted self-image that according to Krashen (1981) increases a learner's chances to L2 success.

It could be possible that the respondent's mind-set derives from a wish to integrate to the dominant population. Even though Zafar and Meenakshi (2012) state that there might be differences in the benefits of integrative and instrumental motivation depending on learner's socially determined group association, both types of motivations are advantageous. The respondent's motivation might in this case be generated by a wish to integrate to the dominant population, which could in this instance be argued as a positive factor because it contributes to a positive self-image.

**Collective learning.** After the respondent's utterance about his difficulties regarding his homework, I requested an update on the assignment process.

Interestingly, there seemed to have been a shift in the respondent's abilities once he started working with his friends.

I: I forgot to ask, how did it go with your GCSE homework in the end?

R: Pretty good. My friends and I finished it together, and we managed to find the main points in the texts. So I got one of the best scores in the entire class.

I: Oh wow, you already got feedback and scores?

R: Yes.

I: How was it completing your homework together with friends?

R: It made things easier because we could explain stuff to each other and develop our individual answers. Basically using each other's strengths.

After some more chat about their study group, I asked the respondent if his friends were explicitly helpful with his language and he answered: "Yes and no. I mean, I knew what I was supposed to write without their help. But they helped me write better, like grammar and stuff". The respondent also added that he felt grateful for his friends' help to improve his writing.

This result indicates that the respondent's social identity and motivation might have been directly influenced by the interplay between his internal system and the situational collective learning (Ushioda, 2015). The fact that the outcome of the respondent's homework was successful adds to the empirical evidence of social contexts' significance for a learner's SLA. Having a Vygotskian approach to learning and motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011) suggests that group related activities in class should be encouraged by educators. It goes without saying that

promoting group tasks in an instructional context could potentially generate motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011).

### **The future**

**Meaningful school subjects.** The respondent has a big interest for economy as a school subject, and expressed that he feels extra motivated in economy class:

R: I like the subject, and I will probably work within the field of economy in the future.

I: How would you compare your motivation for economy and English as school subjects?

R: Well, English is at least as important to me as economy.

I: Why is that?

R: Because it is very important to get a good grade in English to get in to sixth form which eventually and hopefully will enable me to get some sort of business degree at university. I also think it is very important for me to be good in English in the future as I will probably go on a lot of international business trips.

I: Was your internship at Siemens this summer part of you reaching your future goal in business?

R: Definitely! I even hope I will get a summer job there next year. Or at least at a different company in Sweden so I can be home the whole summer.

It goes without saying that the respondent has a vision of becoming an L2 user in international business settings. This indicates that the respondent's motivation might be intensified by his vision of an ideal L2 self of being an English-speaking international businessman. Moreover, this vision reflects the goal of getting in to

sixth form, having a summer job relevant to his vision, and attaining a business degree.

It could be possible that the respondent's intensified vision might also be connected to his sense of efficiency. The noticeable sense of efficiency might seem a bit general in this particular finding; however, the respondent has a high sense of efficiency towards the task of completing his English course. That is not to say that the respondent's self-efficiency will constantly remain high or that it will guarantee success (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Completing an English course as a task is generalizing what tasks actually are. If we were to dissect the English course, then we would understand that it contains different tasks and segments. Therefore, the respondent's sense of self-efficiency might vary depending on the respective task during the course.

**Moving to the UK.** I asked the respondent what good he thinks will come out of his move to the UK and, amongst other things, he replied:

R: Because I will work in business in the future, I will have to be able to communicate with people all over the world and I think I am better at that now.

The respondent's attitude towards the English language seems to signal that he finds it to be a beneficial communicative skill; a skill that will benefit his vision and future L2 self. From this aspect, the respondent's motivation is considerably more instrumental than integrative. He understands the necessity of the language; additionally, because of his instrumental motivation, he judges that his communicative skills in English are up to this point successful. This result might help prove the possibility of the benefits of instrumental motivation in SLA to minorities (Zafar & Meenakshi, 2012).

## **Classroom settings**

**Competition.** When asking the respondent what the teachers do to help his motivation, he wrote that they sometimes have task-based competitions in class with prizes. He further added that these types of class activities “makes school more fun and engaging” which helps his motivation. Additionally, the respondent uttered the significance of teachers who are willing to promote a democratic classroom, and takes learners’ wishes in to consideration when planning classroom activities.

It is apparent that the respondent benefits from competitive classroom activities, and there seems to be no negative effects on his self-esteem, which Dörnyei & Ushioda (2011) state could be a risk in competitive classroom settings. This interpretation is, however, not an indication of the respondent’s abilities or level of proficiency in English.

Learners’ wishes could potentially reflect their goals –something the respondent’s answer indicates at least. Classroom structures focusing on activities that are personally relevant to learners might, according to Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011), promote self-efficiency and personal development. A possible interpretation is that positive classrooms experiences generate motivation induced by identified regulation that, in turn, promotes the ideal L2 self as well as the ought-to L2 self (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). It is also likely that teachers who actively work to promote learners’ autonomous motivation management increases the chances of self-motivation.

## **Ethnicity**

**Ethnic Identity.** The respondent and I were talking about what constitutes as someone's language. The respondent tended to refer to English as "their language"; that is to say, his peers' native tongue. Whereas, the respondent clarified that "his" language is Swedish:

R: My language is Swedish because I was born and raised in Sweden.

I: What about Romanian, do you consider that to be your language?

R: Not really. It wasn't until recently that I started speaking the language fluently.

I: How did you define yourself when you lived in Sweden?

R: If people asked or if someone spoke Romanian for example, I would of course tell them that I'm partly Romanian and partly Syrian.

Obviously I still do that.

The respondent reflected briefly on what it means to understand a language and what value that gives him. He came to a conclusion of not having been exposed to the Romanian language or culture enough. He also added that he could only remember his grandmother making a real effort speaking to him in Romanian. I asked him if understanding the language and growing up with it is not enough in order for him to feel that it is his. He answered that "I'm Swedish which means that Swedish is my main language", and also expressed that he identifies more with Sweden because he grew up amongst Swedish speaking people.

The respondent's sense of ethnicity is clearly subjective, and it is also clear that his ethnic belonging is tied to his own perception of belonging that goes beyond, amongst other things, ancestry and religion. (Edwards, 2009). However, according to Hoffman and Walker (2010), this perception could be viewed as an

internal judgment; furthermore, other people might consider the respondent to be Romanian, or Romanian-Syrian-Swedish. The respondent's use of language aligns with the theory of language as a means of expressing who you are (Geeslin & Long, 2014; Trofimovich & Turuševa, 2015).

It is also possible that the respondent's ethnic identity could be externally judged as multi ethnic. The fact that the respondent discloses his ethnic background depending on the context indicates that he has the ability to use his "identity repertoire" (Blommaert & Varis, 2013, p. 157) and negotiate his ethnic self –via hybrid identities (Trofimovich & Turuševa, 2015).

**"Britishness"**. The respondent contacted me shortly after getting home from school in an excited and humoristic manner. He seemed eager to tell me about his friends' comments about his ethnicity and accent.

R: Do you know what my friends told me today!?

I: Tell me!

R: They told me I am getting more and more British haha!

I: Really? What do they think makes you more British then?

R: I use a lot British expressions and I am getting used to the slang, especially amongst my friends. BUT I do not want to be British.

I: What are your thoughts on being British?

R: It is not so much about Britishness, it is more that I want to be myself.

My friends have also commented on my accent because they think I sometimes pronounce words weirdly, and then they imitate what they think is a Swedish accent and start making IKEA jokes and stuff.

The respondent continued the conversation by comparing the area he lives in now with the suburb he grew up in in Sweden. He concluded that there are racist

attitudes in both areas, and that his friends, at times, do not really know how to approach people that are culturally different from them. He thinks that they live in a “bubble” and said: “I do not want to sound British because I like being different, and I want to represent Sweden”.

It becomes clear that the respondent has an emotional and strong connection to his ethnicity that, in turn, validates the theoretical discussions on identity being closely connected to an individual’s accent (Trofimovich & Turuševa, 2015; Gluszek et al., 2011). He explicitly states that he uses his nonnative accent to display parts of his identity such as his Swedish background, which Gluszek et al. (2011) state is something L2 speakers do consciously just like the respondent in this study. It is, however, also possible that the respondent unconsciously uses typical British expressions among his friends as a way of negotiating his identity to adapt to the situated social context (Creese & Blackledge, 2015).

The respondent’s experience of his peers’ reactions regarding his accent and jokes indicates that accents indeed can enable stigmatisations and marginalisation (Trofimovich & Turuševa, 2015; Gluszek et al., 2011).

### **Situational language**

**Interference.** The respondent expressed that he has a tendency of mixing Swedish and English in Swedish environments; however, when speaking English in an English L1 environment, the mixing of languages is not applicable.

I: What do you do when you get stuck and cannot come up with an English word?

R: I either ask someone to help me come up with the word by explaining what I mean. Or I just do not say anything.

I: Have you ever experienced people not understating you?



R: No I have not. Although, I have said things in Swedish by mistake, for example, “asså”.

I: What was your internal reaction to speaking in Swedish by mistake?

R: I was kind of hoping they would not notice, to avoid being the laughing stock. But at the same time I did not really care.

The respondent's L1 interference does not seem to have a negative effect on his verbal ability; consequently, there is no negative interference (Derakhshan & Karimi, 2015). However, it is difficult to analyse the respondent's L1 interference in this particular study because of limited information and the method per se. It might also be disputable that his code-switching between English and Swedish might be a sign of an accomplished path towards balanced multilingualism (Trofimovich & Turuševa, 2015; Cenoz, 2013). The respondent's code-switching might also indicate that he has an additive attitude towards languages, and has managed to embrace the L2 without compromising his ethnic identity that (Trofimovich & Turuševa, 2015), as shown in a previous sequences, is strongly connected to the Swedish language and culture. This result might suggest that the respondent has learned how to successfully live between two cultures (Dressler & Dressler, 2016).

**Target-language bravery.** The respondent was commenting on a language error that one of his peers had recently made. He uttered a sense of chock because an L1 speaker would make such an error. He, furthermore, signalled a sense of pride because of the fact that he noticed his peer's grammatical error, and could talk about it on a meta-level. The respondent added that he, on several occasions, had corrected his L1 peers in both grammar and pronunciation. Next, the conversation lead to the following:

I: Do you ever compare yourself to your classmates –language wise?

R: I mean... I definitely want to be like them, on their level. Or perhaps even be better than them in English and bully them a bit haha!

I: Bully them in what sense?

R: Bully them because a Swede knows better English than them.

The respondent's motivation seems to enhance his L2, and that might partly be enriched by the fact that the group he associates with are L1 speakers of the target language. The respondent is situated in a certain social context in relation to his L1 classmates, which seems to increase his level of motivation. This finding indicates that interaction and socially entangled relations has an effect on both learning and motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011).

## **Conclusion**

The purpose of this essay is to contribute to the investigations of complexities such as identity and motivation. Three research questions have been the main focus of this essay in order to generate further reflections on practice-related approaches to motivation and identity. The research questions will be explicitly answered in the summary; whereas, discussions on practice implications, limitations, and future directions will conclude this essay.

### **Summary**

#### **What contributing factors to an L2 learner's motivation are there?**

The findings in this study showed that extrinsic motivation often emerged because of external factors such as obligation to participate in school, homework, and expectations from home. Feelings of obligation and guilt might have generated extrinsic motivation. Moreover, the respondent seems to have some influence on the instructional context, which illustrates the interconnectivity between context and the individual (Ushioda, 2015; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011).

Collective learning seems to be an influential attribute towards the respondent's motivation; additionally, the respondent's SLA success appears to generate motivation. Next, instrumental motivation might have a beneficial effect in relation to his personal judgement of his level of L2-proficiency. Zafar and Meenakshi (2012) state that instrumental motivation could primarily benefit L2 individuals that live in an L1 culture.

**What contributing factors to an L2 learner's identity and sense of self are there?** The findings in this study showed that language interference did not appear to be an issue for the respondent, and his code-switching could indicate a level of balanced multilingualism (Trofimovich & Turuševa, 2015; Cenoz, 2013).

This might further indicate that the respondent has embraced the new culture without his sense of ethnicity being affected, and that he has an accomplished capability of living between cultures (Dressler & Dressler, 2016). The respondent's "identity repertoire" (Blommaert & Varis, 2013, p. 157) enables his negotiation of his ethnic self, making his living between cultures successful.

The respondent's internal judgment on ethnicity creates his perception of belonging to Sweden. He expressed that he prefers to stand out with his nonnative accent, which is something that can occur consciously among L2 speakers (Gluszek et al., 2011). Furthermore, this could possibly be a means of expressing who he truly is (Geeslin & Long, 2014; Trofimovich & Turuševa, 2015). Moreover, his peers' reactions to his accent might validate Trofimovich and Turuševa's (2015) remark on how perceptions of nonnative accents can cause discriminatory incidents.

The respondent's self-stereotyping might have boosted his self-image. He finds himself similar to his peers, which validates his in-group identity. Integrative motivation has shown to possibly have been generated by a positive self-image, and this could illustrate that this type of motivation is positive for individuals other than those from the dominant population. Zafar and Meenakshi (2012) state that both integrative motivation and instrumental motivation are beneficial in SLA.

**Are there any connections between identity, sense of self, and motivation? If so, what are they?** The findings in this study showed that in-group identity and motivation seem to be connected. The respondent's actions are influenced by his peers, and that motivates his participation in school and possibly promotes an ought-to L2 self (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Another finding

indicated that the respondent's motivation is also partly generated by his self-efficiency, and vision of an ideal L2 self (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011).

The respondent's self-esteem does not seem to get diminished during competitive classroom activities, and individualistic classroom structures might have helped promote the respondent's self-efficiency and personal development – this indicates a connection between motivation and self-efficiency.

### **Implications for practice**

It seems greatly valuable for teachers to actively promote and incorporate motivation in their lesson plans. School and classroom policies that boost learners' self-esteem could be considered as appropriate approaches to motivation. In this particular study, we see that good self-esteem possibly generates motivation, which is even more of a reason to promote self-esteem. This approach to self-esteem aligns with Skolverket's (2011, p. 3) explicit statement about the issue per se.

Strong learner-learner, and teacher-learner relationships seem to have a potent impact on motivation and identity-formation which, in turn, can be a tool for dismissing faulty behaviours such as ethnic discrimination. The participant's experiences of discrimination are not explicit in this study; however, he stated that he sensed racist attitudes amongst his peers, which indicates that discrimination does exist. As earlier mentioned, this is an international issue and something Skolverket (2011, p. 1) states needs to be prevented. This prevention is highly relevant in a Swedish context to stop the increasing trend of discrimination in Swedish schools (Skolverket, 2012, p. 131-132).

Strong School policies could sustain healthy settings within instructional and social contexts. The Swedish curriculum allows teachers to actively contribute

to an improvement in these contexts, and Dörnyei (2009) clarifies the definitions of these two contexts that allow us to understand that it is possible to influence both settings. What I personally find exiting amongst my findings is the fact that a testified instance of collective learning has proven to give effect on the respondent's motivation and SLA success. The classroom is an outstanding arena where teachers can actively incorporate group activities that, hopefully, influence and go beyond instructional contexts.

### **Limitations and future directions**

Because of the narrow scope of this study, it goes without saying that generalizations to wider populations are impossible. However, the findings in this study might provide more in-depth information. The external validity of this study is, therefore, weak. Conducting a series of studies of this particular kind could strengthen the validity.

It would be valuable studying motivation and identity as separate matters to deepen the understanding of the complexities' subjectivities. This particular study might be regarded as somewhat culturally limited because of the fact that the participant lives between two cultures that are quite similar to each other. If L2 learners from places beyond Europe were to be studied, how would the relevancy of cultural background differ in relation to in-group identification, or integration?

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