



Exploring Relationships Among Goal Orientations, the L2 Motivational Self System, and L2 Anxiety*

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Received: December 26, 2024

Revised: January 24, 2025

Accepted: February 10, 2025

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*This study was supported by a faculty research grant from the College of Liberal Arts at Korea University in 2024.

ABSTRACT

Cho, Minyoung. 2025. Exploring relationships among goal orientations, the L2 Motivational Self System, and L2 anxiety. *Korean Journal of English Language and Linguistics* 25, 233-246.

Previous studies have demonstrated that the ideal L2 self and the ought-to L2 self within the L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS) represent distinct motivational and behavioral patterns. Building on this, the present study examines the underlying motivational structures by exploring the relationships between goal orientations, the L2MSS, and L2 anxiety through structural equation modeling (SEM). Specifically, the model investigates how mastery and performance orientations influence the ideal L2 self, the ought-to L2 self, L2 anxiety, and L2 experience, as well as how these variables interact to shape L2 motivation. Data were collected from 141 Korean university students who completed questionnaires assessing their existing motivational dimensions. While the model fit indices suggest a suboptimal fit, meaningful relationships emerged among the variables. Mastery orientation was found to positively predict both the ideal L2 self and L2 experience, whereas performance orientation was associated with heightened anxiety. Also, the study found L2 anxiety may enhance L2 motivation to some extent. These findings give insights into the complex interplay between cognitive and emotional factors in shaping L2 motivation.

KEYWORDS

goal orientations, L2 Motivational Self System, L2 anxiety, L2 motivation

1. Introduction

Research on second language (L2) motivation has expanded over the past few decades. Since Dörnyei's (2009) influential L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS), researchers have focused on the role of self-concept in explaining learner motivation and behaviors. According to Dörnyei's model, L2 motivation consists of three key components: the ideal L2 self, which represents the future self-image of the L2 learner one aspires to become; the ought-to L2 self, which reflects external expectations and obligations related to L2 learning; and the L2 learning experience, which encompasses positive past experiences and situational factors that influence engagement.

Research on the L2MSS has primarily focused on validating its constructs, highlighting its ability to integrate aspects of earlier motivational models. Studies have consistently demonstrated that learners' behavioral patterns and attitudes toward L2 learning vary depending on their future self-guides. The ideal L2 self has been linked to promotion-focused behaviors, such as a greater willingness to communicate (Khajavy and Ghonsooly 2017), increased L2 enjoyment (Teimouri 2017), and the use of eager strategies to engage with the target language (Papi et al. 2019). In contrast, the ought-to L2 self has been associated with prevention-focused behaviors, including heightened L2 anxiety (Papi 2010) and the adoption of vigilant strategies when using the target language (Papi et al. 2019).

Given the findings that two aspects of L2 motivational selves function distinctively, it is worth examining the role of goal orientation in understanding L2 motivation. Goal orientation, which reflects an individual's general approach to achievement-related tasks—whether through a mastery-oriented focus on self-improvement or a performance-oriented focus on external validation—offers a valuable perspective for explaining why learners adopt specific motivational behaviors. While the L2MSS provides a broad framework for understanding how learners' ideal and ought-to selves drive their motivation, incorporating goal orientation allows researchers to account for individual differences in the ways learners pursue and sustain their goals.

Goal orientation offers insights into how learners regulate their efforts toward achieving their L2-related aspirations. For example, learners with mastery-oriented goals may approach their ideal L2 self with intrinsic motivation and a focus on long-term improvement, while those with performance-oriented goals may approach the ought-to L2 self with extrinsic motivation and a focus on meeting external expectations. These distinctions can help explain variations in how learners respond to challenges, persist in their studies, and engage with the target language in authentic contexts.

In addition to cognitive factors, L2 motivation has been studied along with emotional dimensions, such as anxiety, enjoyment, and other affective states. Among these, L2 anxiety has been found to be related to L2 motivation (e.g., Jiang and Papi 2022, Papi 2010). By studying L2-related emotions, studies of the L2MSS have sought to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how cognitive and emotional factors work together to shape L2 motivation and behaviors. Building on these strands of research, this study aims to investigate how goal orientations interact with the L2MSS to affect a learner's L2 learning motivation.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The L2 Motivational Self System and Beyond

Dörnyei's (2009) L2MSS has been an influential theoretical framework that explains the motivation of language

learners through the lens of self-concept. The model consists of three main components of the ideal L2 self, the ought-to L2 self, and the L2 learning experience. The ideal L2 self refers to the learner's vision of themselves as a successful and competent user of the target language in the future. For instance, a learner may envision themselves studying abroad or using the language professionally. The ought-to L2 self reflects a learner's desired future that derives from external expectations and obligations, such as societal pressures and parental expectations. These future selves act as motivators, as learners strive to reduce the gap between their current abilities and their idealized future selves. The third component of the L2MSS includes L2 learning experience, which pertains to the learner's immediate experiences in the language-learning process, such as classroom dynamics, attitudes towards the class, and learning enjoyment.

Since Dörnyei's (2009) model, many studies have espoused the role of self-concept in predicting one's motivation. A meta-analysis of L2 motivation and learning showed that the L2MSS played an important role in learner motivation and learning behaviors with large effect sizes (Al-Hoorie 2018, Yousefi and Mahmoodi 2022). The positive relationship between one's future selves and L2 motivation indicates that a learner tends to associate their current behaviors with future outcomes rather than focusing on the immediate present and the current needs (Dörnyei 2020).

Nonetheless, some scholars proposed a cautious approach to intense interest in the model itself, as the influence of other variables was convoluted in the L2MSS model (Al-Hoorie 2018, Boo et al. 2015, Moskovsky et al. 2016). Some researchers tried to understand the underlying structure of this model, by examining its relations to, for example, anxiety (Jiang and Papi 2022), regulatory focus (e.g., Han 2023, Papi and Khajavy 2021) and self-regulation models (e.g., Henry and Liu 2024). For instance, Papi and Khajavy (2021), who examined how regulatory foci underlie the L2MSS framework, shaping learners' behavioral patterns. They explored the motivational drives of regulatory foci and self-concept, finding that a promotion focus—characterized by a motivational orientation to learn and grow from the task—strongly predicts the ideal L2 self. Conversely, prevention focus—defined as a motivational drive to avoid failure and meet obligations—was linked to the ought-to L2 self. When associations were examined, promotion focus was found to predict eager behaviors, such as proactive engagement and risk-taking, while prevention focus predicted vigilant behaviors, such as error avoidance and adherence to structured strategies.

While regulatory focus theory has provided valuable insights into how promotion and prevention orientations shape language learning motivation, goal orientation offers a complementary perspective that may better capture task-specific motivational dynamics in academic settings. Goal orientation theory distinguishes between mastery goals, which emphasize personal learning and skill development, and performance goals, which focus on demonstrating ability relative to others (Elliot and Harackiewicz 1994, 1996). Unlike the broader approach of regulatory focus, goal orientation explains how learners' task-specific motivations interact with constructs like the ideal L2 self and L2 anxiety. By exploring goal orientation, this study aims to extend existing research on L2 motivation, addressing how task-focused goals shape cognitive and emotional outcomes, and ultimately contribute to a deeper understanding of how learners navigate the challenges of language acquisition.

Some studies have shown the relationship between motivational selves and other emotions such as L2 anxiety (e.g., Jiang and Papi 2022, Papi 2010). Many L2MSS studies have shown negative relationships between L2 future selves and L2 anxiety (e.g., Jiang and Papi 2022). More recently, Teimouri (2017) revealed that L2 future self-guides predict distinctive emotion states, such as L2 joy, L2 anxiety, and L2 shame. Specifically, the ought-to L2 self is related to L2 anxiety, as the ought-to L2 self is constructed by others and thus is less internalized. The study also found the positive role of the ideal L2 self in predicting L2 joy.

In summary, the L2MSS has expanded to better account for the structure of the L2MSS including self-

regulation (Wang et al. 2024), self-determination theory (Alamer and Lee 2019) as well as its relations to affective (Jiang and Papi 2022, Teimouri 2017) and achievement outcomes (Alamer and Lee 2019). However, despite the potential accountability of goal orientations in the L2MSS, they have rarely been addressed in previous research (cf., Alamer and Lee 2019).

2.2 Goal Orientation and the L2MSS

Goal orientation concerns individuals' behavioral tendencies in an achievement-oriented task. In educational psychology, achievement goals provide a framework within which both affective and cognitive properties of learner behaviors are formed (Pintrich and Schunk 2002). Despite the popularity of goal orientation theory in various disciplines of human behavioral science (Elliot and Harackiewicz 1994, 1996), as Dörnyei (2003) rightly pointed out, "there have hardly been any attempts in L2 studies to adopt the other well-known goal theory in educational psychology, goal-orientation theory" (p. 9). It is true that although L2 motivation models have drawn motivational concepts from psychology (e.g., Dörnyei 2009), goal orientation has received little attention.

As achievement goals create consistent behavioral patterns, it helps teachers better understand student behaviors and construct classroom environments that are facilitative of learning (Grant and Dweck 2003). Dörnyei (2009) pointed out that the concept of possible selves is larger than long-term goal setting, goal action, and goal achievement, and even combinations of them in that possible selves incorporate experiential elements, "'self states' that people experience as reality" (p. 16). As such, the L2MSS incorporates long-term goals within the context of self and identity, which reflects both the future and current state of the self.

The two models take different approaches to explaining human motivation. While goal orientations may shape task-specific behaviors of learners and the L2MSS guides learners towards their possible selves, the underlying ideas of goal orientation theory parallel the general motivational components of the L2MSS model (Dörnyei 2009). Other similarities exist between the two models' key constructs. Mastery goal orientation can be related to the concept of an ideal L2 self, and performance goal orientation to the concept of an ought-to L2 self, in terms of underlying sources of motivation. For example, an important motivational force for mastery orientation comes from inner satisfaction or enjoyment and intrinsic motivation in the task; the source of motivation of the ideal L2 self is from oneself, and even if the motivation is driven by an instrumental purpose, it must be internalized (e.g., Taguchi et al. 2009). On the other hand, in performance goal orientation, the source of motivation derives from external judgments or from others, in front of whom one wishes to demonstrate competence or conceal incompetence, and this is similar to the construct of the ought-to L2 self.

Although the two motivational frameworks of goal orientations and the L2MSS have not been directly compared and addressed in previous research, parallel relationships between major constructs of the motivational models can be assumed based on their conceptual similarities (e.g., Higgins 1987, 2012, Noels et al. 2000). Motivational sources for both mastery orientation and the ideal L2 self are largely internally driven (i.e., intrinsic motivation), while the sources for both performance orientation and ought-to L2 self are externally driven (i.e., concern for others' evaluation).

Referring to the findings of the regulatory focus theory (Cho 2021, Papi and Teimouri 2014, Taguchi et al. 2009), the relationships between goal orientations and L2MSS can also be hypothesized. Taguchi et al. (2009), drawing on Higgins's (1997) promotion-focus versus prevention-focus self-regulatory behaviors, showed a positive relationship between promotion-focus and the ideal L2 self, and between prevention-focus and the ought-to L2 self. A promotion-focus is related to the concepts of achievement, aspiration, hope, and growth, which is similar to mastery goal orientation. On the other hand, a prevention-focus orientation is concerned with duty,

obligation, security, and safety, where people's motivation develops from a desire to be secure from negative outcomes. This prevention-focus resembles the ought-to L2 self. Overall, Taguchi et al. showed that promotion-focus predicts the ideal L2 self, and prevention-focus predicts the ought-to L2 self. In Papi and Teimouri's (2014) study, they conceptualized the ought-to L2 self and instrumental prevention as representing prevention-focused orientations, and the ideal L2 self and instrumental promotion as related to promotion-focused orientations.

Despite general similarities, the relationships between goal orientations and the L2MSS are not straightforward. The motivational source of mastery orientation is purely intrinsic, driven by a focus on learning, growth, and self-improvement. In contrast, the ideal L2 self can stem from both intrinsic and instrumental motivations, such as learning English to advance one's career (Taguchi et al. 2009). In addition, even though performance orientation is generally driven by external sources, including avoiding negative evaluation and meeting others' expectations, certain types of performance orientation can be more internalized than others. Nevertheless, given the observed similarities, it seems plausible to associate the ideal L2 self with mastery orientation and the ought-to L2 self with performance orientation. Investigation into the relationship between goal orientation and the L2MSS will advance the field by situating context-based goal orientations within the larger picture of the motivational self concept.

2.3 L2 Anxiety, the L2MSS, and Goal Orientation

The role of anxiety in SLA has oftentimes been discussed within other related motivational and emotional frameworks (Hashimoto 2002, MacIntyre and Doucette 2010, Papi 2010, Yashima et al. 2004). In terms of the relationship between anxiety and L2 motivational selves, Papi (2010) argued that the discrepancy between one's current self and ideal self may arouse emotional states like L2 anxiety (p. 469). He examined the relationships between anxiety and other components of the L2MSS including the ideal L2 self, the ought-to L2 self, the language learning experience, and the intended learning effort. He found that the ought-to L2 self (a future aspect of L2 self expected by others) tends to be strongly associated with L2 anxiety, which can be explained in that the ought-to L2 self is formed based on others' evaluation and expectations, and this awareness of external factors may lead to emotional apprehension. Papi's findings align well with one component of anxiety proposed by Horwitz et al. (1986), "fear of negative evaluation," with their definition of anxiety as "apprehension about others' evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations, and the expectation that others would evaluate oneself negatively" (p. 128).

Other interesting findings in Papi's (2010) study are worth mentioning. He found that positive learning experiences were associated with low anxiety, which is somewhat expected in that it has been documented that anxiety tends to grow as a result of repeated negative experiences (e.g., MacIntyre and Gardner 1989). Another finding concerns the positive relationship between L2 anxiety and intended learning effort, which contradicts the general view that anxiety has debilitating effects. Papi conceded that the finding supports a facilitative role of anxiety in learner motivation, as it drives learners' determination to work harder to compensate for their perceived lack of language skills. Nonetheless, he noted that one's determination derived from L2 anxiety leading to actual effort needs further investigation.

Studies examining L2 anxiety within the context of goal orientations have focused on the ways different types of goal orientations are associated with anxiety (e.g., Alamer and Lee 2019, Jiang and Papi 2022, Teimouri 2017). Research has shown that high anxiety tends to be more strongly related to performance goal orientation than to mastery goal orientation (Dykman 1998, Koul et al. 2009, Ng 2009, Sideridis 2005). Dykman (1998) postulated that individuals seeking validation from others (performance goal orientation) will show greater anxiety when expecting stressful events, and he confirmed the relationship in his study. Similar arguments have been made in other studies. Wolters et al. (1996) argued that individuals with mastery goal orientation tend to adopt positive

motivational beliefs such as higher levels of self-efficacy and perceived competence, which in turn help reduce their level of anxiety (p. 212). Their findings supported their predictions, showing that anxiety is negatively associated with mastery goal orientation, and positively associated with performance orientation.

In addition, Koul et al. (2009) examined how different types of intrinsic and extrinsic goal orientations are related to different types of anxiety such as fear of failing English class, fear of negative evaluation, and English speech anxiety. In general, they showed that intrinsically driven goal orientations such as mastery goal orientation tended to be associated with low anxiety, while extrinsic goal orientations such as performance goal orientation were related to high anxiety. In terms of the link between goal orientation and the type of anxiety, although performance goal orientation was associated with all three types of anxiety, mastery goal orientation was only related to one type of anxiety, fear of negative evaluation. Self-rated L2 proficiency was negatively associated with anxiety overall, suggesting that high perceived competence might also be linked to low anxiety.

In sum, the review of the existing studies indicates the potential link between goal orientations and the L2MSS, whose relationships also intertwined with L2 anxiety. It is hypothesized that distinct goal orientations learners adopt in L2 learning would make learners form specific types of L2 future selves and L2 anxiety, which in turn affects one’s intended learning effort. The present study investigates the following research question, and the hypothesized relationships are provided in Figure 1.

RQ: To what extent do goal orientations affect L2 future selves (the ideal L2 self, the ought-to L2 self, L2 experience) and L2 anxiety related to affect L2 motivation?

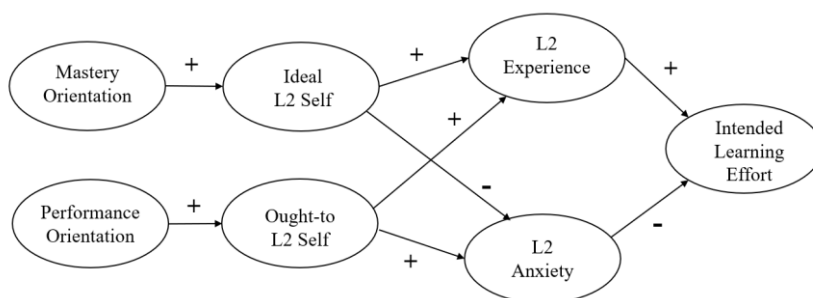


Figure 1. Hypothesized Relationships among Goal Orientations, the L2MSS, and L2 Anxiety

3. Method

3.1 Participants

A total of 141 Korean L1 students learning English as a foreign language (EFL) at a Seoul university participated in the study. Participants were required to have studied English primarily in Korea, with no more than one year of experience living or studying in English-speaking countries. The participants’ English proficiency was considered around the intermediate level, as shown in proficiency measures assessed using Brown’s (1980) cloze test (Tremblay 2011). While the sample included 87 English majors and 54 non-English majors, an independent t-test confirmed no significant proficiency difference between the two groups (English majors: $M = 31.97, SD = 7.17$; non-English majors: $M = 32.59, SD = 8.83; t(139) = -0.461, p = 0.645, d = 0.078$).

3.2 Instruments

To gauge individuals' dispositional goal orientations, the L2MSS, and anxiety, a questionnaire was distributed to the participants in their L1, Korean. The goal orientation items examined the learners' existing dispositional approach toward L2 task. They comprised 10 mastery orientation and 15 performance orientation items, the latter consisting of seven performance-approach and eight performance-avoidance items. Some items were adopted from a study by Ben Maad (2012). Examples of mastery goal orientation items include "Challenging tasks that arouse my curiosity are important to me" and "The most important goal when doing English tasks is to acquire new knowledge," which are intended to reflect the learner's values on advancement or learning through performing tasks. Examples of performance-approach items include "I prefer my task performance to be graded only when I do well" and "It is important for me to demonstrate my speaking or writing skills to others." Finally, examples of performance-avoidance orientation items include "My constant fear of failure always motivates me to be successful" and "I do not want to take risks when I feel unable to complete the task." These performance-avoidance items were intended to probe participants' fear of failure and stance toward hiding incompetence from others, respectively.

The 23 L2MSS items consisted of six items about an ideal L2 self, six about an ought-to L2 self, and 11 on L2 learning experience. An example of the items regarding the ideal L2 self, which represents the future L2 self that one wishes to become, is "I often imagine myself speaking English as if I were a native speaker of English." The ought-to L2 self concerns L2-related properties that one feels one ought to possess in the future, as represented in the example, "I have to study English because if I do not study it, I'll be letting down parents/teachers/friends." These items were adapted from previous research (Dörnyei 2009, Papi 2010, Taguchi et al. 2009).

The questionnaires on L2 learning experience asked how learners evaluate their past and current L2 learning. For example, "Reflecting back, I did not like my English classes" (reverse coding) and "English learning experience was really fun and enjoyable."

Finally, 16 items explored participants' L2 anxiety, which reflects apprehension or worry related to the use of English. The eight items on L2 speaking anxiety are exemplified by "I am afraid that other people will laugh at me when I speak English." L2 writing anxiety (8 items) was examined through items such as "When I hand in an English composition, I know I'm going to do poorly." These items were taken directly from Cheng et al.'s (1999) study.

3.3 Data Analysis

First, a factor analysis was conducted as a preliminary step to validate the subscales for each construct, examining internal consistency among subscales of the same factor as well as relationships among the factors. To assess whether the hypothesized relationships among variables are supported by the observed data, structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed. SEM is generally composed of two parts: the structural model, which indicates the relationships between latent variables, and the measurement model, which defines the relationships between measured variables (i.e., survey items represented by rectangles) and the underlying latent variables that the measured variables intend to measure. For testing the model fit in SEM, indicator variables, representatives of the latent variables, were selected based on the preliminary factor analysis.

Several goodness-of-fit indices were employed to test the proposed model in relation to observed data; these included chi-square statistics, the comparative fit index (CFI), the Tucker-lewis index (TLI), the goodness-of-fit index (GFI), and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). Once the model was accepted, the path

coefficients were examined to find the directions and magnitudes of the relationships among variables. The path coefficients also showed relative contributions of goal orientations to the L2MSS, and to L2 anxiety, which affects the intended learning effort.

4. Results

This study explores the relationships among goal orientations, the L2MSS, L2 anxiety and intended learning effort/motivation. A preliminary factor analysis was conducted to understand the underlying structures of data. Table 1 reveals the descriptive statistics and correlations among variables.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations among Variables

	Mean (SD)	Mastery orientation	Performance orientation	Ideal L2 self	Ought-to L2 self	L2 experience	L2 anxiety
Mastery orientation	3.84 (0.66)	1					
Performance orientation	3.82 (0.71)	0.094	1				
Ideal L2 self	4.28 (0.90)	.296**	.447**	1			
Ought-to L2 self	3.63 (0.80)	0.017	.580**	.326**	1		
L2 experience	3.83 (0.71)	.638**	.235**	.280**	0.014	1	
L2 anxiety	4.18 (0.74)	-.556**	.224**	0.096	.263**	-.518**	1
Intended learning effort	4.18 (0.87)	.528**	.407**	.468**	.209*	.553**	-.207*

Descriptively, the participants’ mastery orientation and performance orientations were similar, but the ideal L2 self tended to be higher than the ought-to L2 self. L2 anxiety was higher than L2 experience, but their intended learning effort was higher than their L2 experience. It appeared that despite relatively lower scores in L2 experience and high L2 anxiety, their intended effort seemed higher.

When correlations among variables were examined, there were no significant correlations between mastery orientation and performance orientation, suggesting that they represent distinctive motivational orientations. In terms of L2 future selves, there exists a small, positive correlation between the ideal self and the ought-to self ($r = .326, p < .01$). This indicates that although there is some overlap in learners’ motivational visions, the relatively low magnitude indicates that ideal and ought-to selves may remain distinct motivational constructs, driven by different internal and external forces.

Additionally, mastery orientation has positive correlations with the ideal L2 self, L2 experience, and intended learning effort, whereas mastery orientation has a negative relationship with L2 anxiety. Performance orientation has a positive relationship with all other variables. The ideal L2 self has a positive relationship with the ought-to L2 self, L2 experience and intended effort, yet it was not related to L2 anxiety. On the other hand, the ought-to L2 self had a positive relationship with L2 anxiety and intended learning effort. L2 experience was negatively related to L2 anxiety, and positively with intended learning effort. These relationships were generally hypothesized in the proposed model, and the overall relationships among the variables were tested via the structural equation model

(SEM).

Before examining relationships among variables, the model’s fit was examined through various indices. The chi-square statistic ($\chi^2 = 380.20, p < 0.001$) indicates that the model differs significantly from a perfect fit; however, this result is not unexpected, as the chi-square test is highly sensitive to sample size. Comparative fit index (CFI = 0.73) and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI = 0.67) fall below the conventional threshold of 0.90, suggesting that the model provides an acceptable but not ideal fit to the data. Similarly, the goodness-of-fit index (GFI = 0.64) and adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI = 0.57) fall below conventional thresholds (CFI/GFI ≥ 0.90 , AGFI ≥ 0.80), indicating suboptimal fit. The root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA = 0.11) exceeds the acceptable range of ≤ 0.08 , suggesting a need for model improvement. While these indices point to limitations in model specification, the parameter coefficients provide meaningful insights into the relationships among key constructs.

Based on the overall acceptability of the model, Figure 2 demonstrates the relationships among variables.

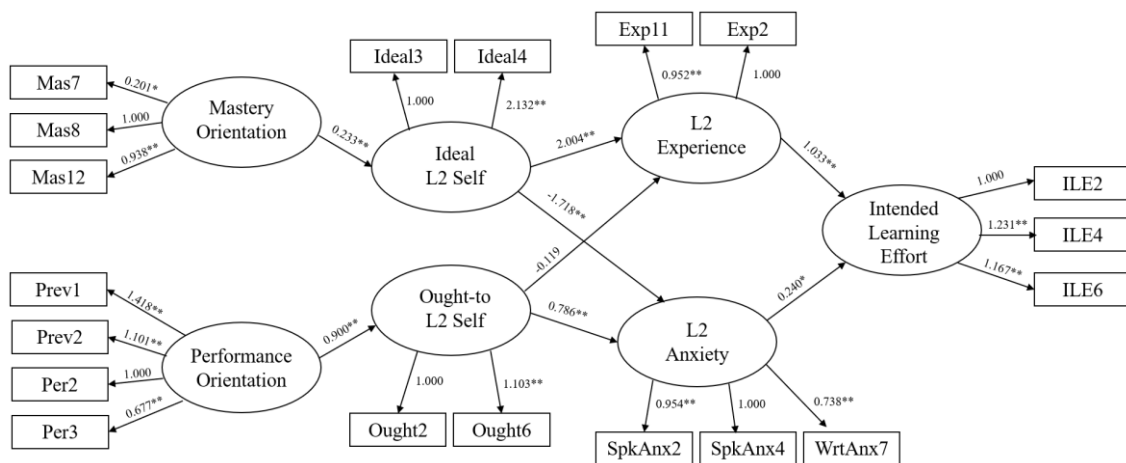


Figure 2. Goal Orientations, the L2MSS, L2 Anxiety, and Intended Learning Effort

Focusing on the relationships among latent variables, there was a positive relationship between mastery orientation and the ideal L2 self (Coefficient = 0.233, $p = 0.002$), suggesting that individuals with higher mastery orientation are more likely to develop a strong ideal L2 self. Similarly, performance orientation, which reflects a focus on outperforming others, shows a strong positive relationship with ought-to L2 self (Coefficient = 0.900, $p < 0.001$).

The results further demonstrate that the ideal L2 self is positively associated with L2 experience (Coefficient = 2.004, $p = 0.001$) and negatively associated with L2 anxiety (Coefficient = -1.718, $p = 0.002$), suggesting that learners who identify strongly with their ideal selves are more likely to have positive experiences and reduced anxiety in L2 learning. Conversely, the ought-to L2 self shows a negative relationship with L2 experience (Coefficient = -0.119, $p = 0.616$) and a positive, relationship with L2 anxiety (Coefficient = 0.786, $p < 0.001$). These results indicate that the ought-to L2 self may amplify learners’ concerns about meeting external expectations, thereby increasing anxiety.

The analysis also revealed the positive impact of L2 experience and anxiety on learners’ intended learning effort. The more positive the L2 experience is, the more students intend to invest their effort in L2 learning (Coefficient = 1.033, $p = 0.006$). L2 anxiety also positively predicts intended learning effort (Coefficient = 0.240, $p = 0.042$), suggesting that mild anxiety may act as a motivator for learners. However, neither the ideal L2 self nor

the ought-to L2 self has any direct relationship with the intended learning effort ($p > .05$)

5. Discussion

The present study's findings suggest that L2 motivation, represented by intended learning effort, can be influenced by a combination of motivational and emotional factors. It is hypothesized that mastery goal orientation and performance orientation will be closely associated with Dörnyei's (2009) ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self, respectively. L2 learning experience is expected to be positively predicted by mastery orientation and negatively by performance orientation. L2 anxiety is significantly predicted by performance orientation and the ought-to L2 self, and negatively related to mastery orientation and the ideal L2 self. This study's findings generally confirmed these predictions.

The finding suggests that individuals with goals of mastering skills through performing tasks (mastery orientation) tend to have a stronger sense of the ideal L2 self. It also indicates that individuals motivated by external expectations or the desire to meet societal standards (performance orientation) have a more prominent ought-to self. These results align with prior research indicating that mastery and performance goals shape learners' motivational systems in distinct ways (Jiang and Papi 2022, Papi 2010, Teimouri 2017).

As for the relationship among mastery orientation, the ideal L2 self, and L2 experience, the findings accord with the generally accepted view that mastery orientation is adaptive and facilitative to learning. While performance orientation is often associated with maladaptive learning behaviors (Dweck 1986, Grant and Dweck 2003, Lau and Lee 2008, Payne et al. 2007, Wolters et al. 1996), the present study showed that it can still positively affect intended learning effort. Nonetheless, the influence of performance orientation, the ought-to L2 self, and L2 anxiety on intended learning effort was weaker than the influence of mastery orientation, the ideal L2 self, and L2 experience on intended learning effort. Al-Hoorie (2018) noted that as the ought-to L2 self is preventive in nature, learning goals set through the ought-to L2 self is by nature less internalized. Thus, it is possible that the goals for learning can be set minimally to meet others' expectations, compared to when they set goals for themselves to thoroughly master it. This in turn results in relatively passive learning behaviors compared to those with the ideal L2 selves.

In addition, the significance of L2 experience in shaping intended learning effort has been widely supported by previous research, with some studies suggesting that its impact can surpass that of future L2 selves (e.g., Dörnyei 2019, Papi 2010). In the current study, the relationship between L2 future selves and intended learning effort was fully mediated by L2 experience, contrasting with findings from earlier studies that identified a direct link between these variables (Papi 2010). This suggests that a stronger ideal L2 self fosters positive L2 experiences, which, in turn, enhance an individual's intended learning effort.

Another notable finding is the positive influence of L2 anxiety on intended learner effort, which contradicts other research findings that support the negative role of anxiety on L2 motivation (Jiang and Papi 2022). While L2 anxiety is often viewed as detrimental to language learning, research suggests it can, under certain conditions, enhance L2 motivation. Moderate levels of anxiety may drive learners to stay focused, work harder, and engage more actively with the task at hand (Gregersen et al. 2014). For instance, Papi (2010) found that learners with a strong "ought-to L2 self," motivated by external pressures and responsibilities, often experienced anxiety that spurred them to meet expectations. In addition, Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) highlighted the importance of the coexistence of positive and negative emotions, as these learners engage deeply with the learning process, leveraging their emotions as motivational resources. Such findings indicate that both positive and negative

emotions can be adaptive when experienced in optimal proportions (Fredrickson 2013).

6. Implications and Conclusion

Although Dörnyei's (2009) L2MSS has been widely accepted in SLA, its motivational structures have focused on learners' future self-concept. This study therefore examined how these self-related motivational constructs are associated with or realized as goal-oriented behavioral patterns. Focusing on similar motivational sources of goal orientations and L2MMS, this study investigated how goal orientations shape L2 learners' L2MMS and L2 motivation. The results of the study showed significant relationships among mastery orientation, the ideal L2 self, and L2 experience, which positively predicted L2 learning motivation. It also showed the relationships among performance orientation, the ought-to L2 self, and L2 anxiety. The findings of this study provide pedagogical implications.

The present study's findings suggest the importance of promoting mastery-focused goals, attitudes, and mindset in the classroom that values learning, advancement, and growth. While external expectations (e.g., societal pressures) can motivate learners to some extent, educators should nurture intrinsic motivation by helping students connect their language learning to personal aspirations. Teachers can use activities like visualization exercises and identity-based learning tasks to help students construct a clear and positive vision of their future selves as proficient L2 speakers. Also, teachers can shift away from performance-oriented practices (e.g., high-stakes testing and competition) and instead encourage personal growth, effort, and self-reflection. Activities such as goal-setting exercises, process-oriented feedback, and portfolio assessments can help cultivate mastery-oriented mindsets.

The present study also found that these motivational constructs to be related to L2 learners' affect such as L2 anxiety and their language learning experience. Educators can consider the importance of positive L2 learning experiences in enhancing learner motivation, but this can also be enhanced by setting and pursuing ambitious language-learning goals such as mastery goal orientation. At the same time, it is important to note that a certain level of anxiety can enhance L2 motivation, when anxiety is manageable and supportive rather than overwhelming or harmful.

Despite these implications, this study's findings should be cautiously interpreted. The model's suboptimal fit indices suggest that additional factors may influence the relationships among goal orientations, motivation, and L2 learning intention. Future research should refine the model by incorporating other variables, such as self-regulation strategies, social support, or cultural context, to better capture the complexity of L2 motivation.

Another limitation pertains to the conceptualization of goal orientations. This study adopted mastery and performance orientations, yet it is possible to adopt the multilevel performance orientation framework (Horvath et al. 2006, Yeo and Neal 2004, Yeo et al. 2009), where performance orientation can be divided into performance-approach goal orientation (i.e., demonstrating one's competence) and performance-avoidance orientation (i.e., avoiding negative evaluations by hiding one's incompetence). As performance-approach orientation can be internally driven, a multilevel goal structure may be a better framework than a dichotomous goal structure to represent the relationship between goal orientation and the L2MSS. Despite these limitations, it is expected that this study can bridge the gap between self-concept and achievement-related goals, and provide a framework to better understand language learners' motivational structures.

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Examples in: English

Applicable Languages: English

Applicable Level: Tertiary