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L2 Acquisition of English present perfect semantic and pragmatic conditions

Sviatlana Vadim Karpava
University of Central Lancashire

1. Introduction

This study investigates L2 acquisition of English present perfect by Greek Cypriot Greek speakers. With regard to current research, semantic and pragmatic conditions compatible with present perfect are different in CG and English, thus L2 learners of English might fail to notice these conditions. According to Menardos (1969), CG lacks a productive present perfect. Greek Cypriots tend to use past tense instead of present perfect. CG has only present perfect B (formed with auxiliary ‘have’ or ‘be’ and an agreeing passive participle, which independently functions as an adjectival participle) and past perfect B forms and lacks present perfect A (formed with auxiliary ‘have’ and an invariant perfective participle) and past perfect A, while SMG has all four forms. Karyolemou (1995) reports the same situation with respect to present perfect, but observes that contemporary Cypriot Greek has past perfect A, although not as the only option, as past tense can be alternatively used.

Given (a) that the present perfect B form has a limited distribution and (b) that the auxiliary is not always ‘have’ (namely, it is ‘be’ with unaccusative predicates and ‘have’ with agentive predicates), Cypriot Greek speakers...
might not consider the so-called present perfect B forms as perfect forms. Most probably, they might perceive English present perfect and Cypriot Greek present perfect B as unrelated structures/tenses. They might have a tendency to use past simple instead of existential present perfect due to transfer from L1 CG. L2 learners of English might overlook these semantic and pragmatic conditions related to present perfect, as in their L1 there are no such meanings and conditions and, as a result, would equate the semantics of present perfect with semantics of past simple. L2 acquisition theories are going to be tested against the evidence based on the collected data (elicitation and natural discourse). The aim of this study is to reveal the cause of non-target/deviant production of L2 English present perfect, transfer from L1 to L2, and the role of semantic/pragmatic contexts of the present perfect, lexical aspect, sentential aspect, transitivity of the verb, type of the sentence, type of the adverbial modification as well as the role of age, age of onset and the length of L2 input on the comprehension and production of English present perfect.

The paper is organised as follows. Section 2 describes different types of present perfect in English and CG, the difference between past simple and present perfect, and provides an overview of L2 present perfect acquisition studies. Section 3 presents the methodology of the experimental study. The results and their interpretation in the light of L2 acquisition theories are provided in Section 4. Conclusions and implications for further study are presented in Section 5.

1.1. Present perfect

1.1.1. English present perfect

According to Comrie (1976), English present perfect has morpho-syntactic properties of both tense and aspect. Tense is responsible for positioning the event in time, while aspect for how exactly this event unfolds in time, showing either continuation or completion. Present perfect is non-deictic, secondary tense with analytical construction. It is formed with the help of auxiliary verb ‘have’ and the past participle form of a lexical verb and it is incompatible with past time adverbials (e.g. yesterday, last month).

English present perfect has four main semantic meanings (Comrie 1976; Huddleston and Pullum 2002; Siemund 2004): resultative (e.g. He has opened the window); extended-now or continuative (e.g. I have lived in Cyprus since 2003); experiential (e.g. I have never been to Africa), and recent past or hot news (e.g. The prime minister has resigned recently).

The resultative present perfect describes the past action that has caused the change of the state at the moment of utterance (Davydova 2011). The resultative perfect is mostly associated with the verbs of accomplishment and achievement. According to Comrie (1976) and Siemund (2004), the meaning of the resultative perfect is ‘a central manifestation of a perfect’, and explicitly shows the current relevance. The result of a prior situation still holds for the present. The resultative perfect can also show ‘nil results’ or failure of a result (Huddleston and Pullum 2002). The extended-now perfect is also called inclusive past-and-present, universal perfect, the continuative perfect or perfect of persistent situation (Filppula 1999). The extended-now present perfect depicts the situation which started
in the past and continues to be/is still valid at the moment of utterance (Davydova 2011). Verbs of activity and duration are combined with this type of perfect and certain time adverbials such as since, for a long time, all his life, and up till now. The extended-now perfect describes “an event which started to occur at a certain point in the past and has occurred regularly up to the moment of utterance” (Davydova 2011: 58). The experiential perfect or ‘existential perfect’ or ‘indefinite anterior’ perfect describes “a situation or an event which has taken place once or several times during a period of time leading up to the present” (Davydova 2011: 60). Stative verbs and verbs of activity and duration are compatible with the experiential perfect. Iterativity and repeatability are the characteristics of this type of present perfect (Dahl and Hedin 2000). There is no such explicit current relevance as with the resultative perfect.

The perfect of recent past describes “situations where the present relevance of a past situation is simply the one of temporal closeness, the past situation is very recent” (Comrie 1976: 60). Thus, the perfect of recent past is used with adverbs such as recently, lately, and this year (Huddleston and Pullum 2002: 145). It has a very general semantic nature; it can be used with all types of verbs: state, activity, accomplishment and achievement (Davydova 2011).

Davydova (2011: 63) proposed the semantic composition of the perfect and preterite (see Table 1):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference to the past</th>
<th>Current relevance</th>
<th>Focus on the present</th>
<th>Focus on the past</th>
<th>Indefiniteness</th>
<th>Definiteness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preterite</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfect</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Bardovi-Harlig (1997), present perfect and past simple are similar in terms of anterior feature, while present perfect and present simple are similar in terms of the current relevance feature.

The choice between preterite and present perfect usage can be influenced by time adverbials (McCoard 1978; Davydova 2011). McCoard (1978: 135) proposed the feature ±THEN in order to classify time adverbials: +THEN (–current relevance), e.g. yesterday, last night; ±THEN (±current relevance), e.g. recently, always; −THEN (+current relevance), e.g. at present, so far, since (Davydova 2011: 68). Adverbials of ±current relevance can trigger the co-occurrence patterns of preterite and present perfect in L2 English, as these adverbials are less explicit than other types of adverbials.

Pragmatic knowledge, discourse, ‘speaker’s view of the event’ (McCoard 1978: 47) together with semantic knowledge are crucial for differentiation between preterite and present perfect (Elsness 1997; Davydova 2011).

1.2. L2 acquisition of present perfect

There are two main approaches regarding tense and aspect acquisition: meaning-oriented and form-oriented. The former one is a functional perspective focusing on semantics and pragmatics, on learners’ production
rather than comprehension, on how learners try to establish temporal relations, according to it, learners first start to use pragmatic and lexical expressions of temporality, such as discourse and adverbs and then move to the implementation of grammatical means, such as morphological marking (Bardovi-Harlig 2000).

Form-oriented approach is focused on the emergence of verbal morphology that expresses temporality, it deals with learners’ knowledge and use of verbal inflectional morphology with respect to their L1 background. There is no unanimous opinion about the role of L1 transfer in L2 acquisition and whether L2 learners can reach a native-like attainment in L2; some researchers support the full access to Universal Grammar (UG) view (Schwartz and Sprouse 1996), the others partial access to UG (Hawkins and Chan 1997) or no access to UG (Smith and Tsimpli 1995).

According to the Form-before-Meaning Hypothesis (Slabakova 2002; Montrul and Slabakova 2002), morpho-syntactic discrepancies (mismatches) and L1 transfer cause difficulty in L2 acquisition of tense and aspect; L2 learners have a problem distinguishing semantics of present perfect due to the absence of one-to-one morphological correspondence at the syntax–semantic interface.

There is a predictable/universal order of tense and aspect acquisition: tense is acquired/market prior to aspect (Dietrich et al. 1995). The emergence of present perfect follows the emergence of past simple, when the learners have a high competence in past simple (accuracy rate, well-formedness and appropriate use). In order to use present perfect L2 learners have to restructure their knowledge of the use of past simple, they tend either to overgeneralize (use present perfect in the past simple contexts) or undergeneralize (use past simple and present simple tenses in present perfect environments), which has been called Interlingual Form-Mismatch by Han and Hong (2015).

Previous research by Bulut (2011) on the acquisition of English present perfect by Turkish speakers revealed that L2 learners use past simple instead of present perfect due to negative L1 transfer. Similar results were found for Japanese (Yoshimura and Nakayama 2009), Korean (Han and Hong 2015) and Portuguese (Rocha 2004). Liszka (2004, 2005) found that L1, differences in feature inventory for tense-aspect distinctions, encoding of [+/-perfect], between L1 (e.g. Japanese, German and Chinese) and English and sensitivity to these differences can affect present perfect acquisition in L2 English.

The Inherent Lexical Aspect Hypothesis (Shirai 1991; Andersen and Shirai 1996; Bardovi-Harlig 1999, 2000) suggests that L2 learners at initial stages of L2 acquisition are influenced by inherent semantic meaning of the verbs with respect to acquisition of tense and aspect morphology: past and perfect morphology is related to punctual-telic predicates (achievements or accomplishments), while atelic or durative predicates are uninflected, without morphology. At the later stages of L2 acquisition, inherent aspectual properties of verbs are not so important.

Salaberry (1999) proposed the Default Past Tense Hypothesis, according to which L2 learners at the initial stages of L2 acquisition tend to assign a
default past tense form across lexical categories and then when their level of proficiency increases they start to adhere to the Aspect Hypothesis. Vendler (1967) proposed to divide all English verbs into four lexical aspectual classes (Mourelatos, 1981): state (+homogeneous +durative, –dynamic, –telic e.g. want, know); activity (+homogeneous, +durative, +dynamic, –telic e.g. jump, work); accomplishment (–homogeneous, +durative, +dynamic, +telic e.g. write, bake); achievement (–homogeneous, –durative, +dynamic, +telic) (e.g. realise, find) (Sharma 2009: 3). Static and activity predicates are both atelic, homogeneous and durative, while accomplishments and achievements are telic and lack internal homogeneity. Verkuyl (1972, 1993) suggested that a verb together with its arguments should be taken into consideration in order to determine aspectual class of the predicate and lexical aspect class should be determined on VP level and not on V level. According to the Sentential Aspect Hypothesis (SAH) (de Swart 1998), aspectual class of a sentence is determined not only by the lexical aspect of the verb and its arguments, but also by such operators as negation and adverbs (time adverbials, adverbs of quantification). If there is (im)perfectivity marking in L1 then L2 learners would be sensitive not only to the lexical aspect of the verb, but also the derived aspectual class of sentences. English is not sensitive to (im)perfectivity, it has morphological markers for tense, but not for perfective/imperfective aspect. It has overt markers of past tense and progressive aspect (Sharma 2009; Roberts and Liszka 2013).

The distribution of tense/aspect forms in interlanguage can also depend on discourse organization (Discourse Hypothesis). The use of verbal morphology depends on narrative grounding (foreground and background). The foreground is related to the structure of discourse, the foreground events are elaborated/supported by the background; past simple is used mainly in the foreground, while pluperfect is used in the background (Hopper 1979; Bardovi-Harlig 1992).

Overall, previous studies on L2 acquisition of English present perfect have shown that licensing of English present perfect by L2 learners depends on multiple factors such as L1, frequency of L2 input, accuracy rate, order of instruction, pedagogical practices (past simple is taught prior to present perfect in L2 classrooms), task type, individual differences, cognitive skills, perceptual saliency and prototype, rote-learning strategies and metalinguistic knowledge of L2 learners, context, discourse type, memory, mental encyclopedia knowledge, association knowledge of adverb collocation with particular tense, presence and absence of adverbs, type of adverbs, lexical aspect, Aktionsart of the verb, type of verb, type of sentence, negative and semantic contexts (Sugaya and Shirai 2007; Han and Hong 2015).

1.3. Present perfect in CG

According to Menardos (1969) and Agouraki (2006), in CG present perfect is formed differently with transitive and intransitive verbs. For transitive verbs, auxiliary verb eho ‘have’ is used and a participle which agrees in phi-features with the object; for intransitive verbs, present perfect is formed with the help of the auxiliary ime ‘be’ and a participle agreeing in phi-features with the subject. It should be noted that of intransitive predicates it is only
unaccusative predicates that can form present perfect B (Agouraki 2006: 43), see Table 2.

Table 2
*Present perfect and past simple in CG*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present Perfect</th>
<th>Past simple Tense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>(eho 'have' + adjectival participle — for transitive verbs)</em></td>
<td>can only have result reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(ime 'be' + adjectival participle — for unaccusative verbs)</em></td>
<td>can only have result reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Present Perfect</strong></td>
<td><strong>Past simple Tense</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(eho 'have' + adjectival participle — for transitive verbs)</em></td>
<td>can only have result reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(ime 'be' + adjectival participle — for unaccusative verbs)</em></td>
<td>can have “definite”, existential, and result reading</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unaccusative verbs are intransitive verbs with non-agentive subjects (e.g. a glass dropped, the door closed), while unergatives are also intransitive but have agentive subjects (e.g. laugh, swim). In CG, present perfect can have only resultative reading, while past simple can have definite, indefinite, existential and resultative readings. In CG, there is no continuative/universal perfect or the hot news perfect, associated with present perfect (Agouraki 2012). The continuative/universal reading is expressed with the help of present simple, and hot news reading with the help of past tense (verb-initial sentences). Present perfect in CG is incompatible with past time temporal adverbials (e.g. yesterday, last week). CG has distinction between perfective (e.g. *elisa ‘I solved’ aorist past tense*) and imperfective (e.g. *elina ‘I was solving’ imperfect past tense*). CG is sensitive to (im)perfectivity distinctions, which are not correspondent to verbal morphological distinctions, markings in L2 English.

A recent study by Melissaropoulou et al. (2013) suggests that present perfect, which is formed with the help of auxiliary verb *eho ‘have’* and the perfective participle (e.g. *eho diavasi ‘I have read’*) is emerging in Cypriot Greek koine, taking over functions of the simple past, and has two semantic functions of experiential and resultative, but more research is needed.

Karpava and Agouraki (2013) investigated the acquisition of resultative and existential present perfect by L2 learners of English with L1 Standard Greek and L1 Cypriot Greek backgrounds. In CG, present perfect has only resultative reading, while for existential reading simple past is used. Elicitation tasks were implemented based on Agouraki (2006) focusing on the (in)compatibility of certain adverbial modifiers with resultative and existential present perfect. The study had a large sample of participants; the findings showed that L1 (CG) influences L2 acquisition of English present perfect and supported the Full Transfer/Full Access Hypothesis (Schwartz and Sprouse 1994, 1996).

1.4. Research questions/predictions

The aim of this study is to examine both comprehension and production of present perfect in L2 English, to investigate whether L2 learners of English transfer from L1 CG with respect to English present perfect production and comprehension and whether positive/negative/partial transfer is influenced
by such variables as age, gender, length, quality of exposure to L2 input, level of proficiency in English and whether the participants are aware of the semantic and pragmatic conditions warranting the present perfect and understand the difference between the existential and the result reading in Greek and in English. Specifically, if learners of L2 English use past simple instead of existential present perfect this could be the evidence of L1 transfer from CG.

The other question is to identify which of the variables, such as adverbial modification, Aktionsart, type of sentence, transitivity of a verb, and semantic context/type of present perfect, influence target and non-target production and comprehension of present perfect and whether the Lexical Aspect Hypothesis (Andersen and Shirai 1996; Bardovi-Harlig 1999) is supported and L2 learners of English use past simple and present perfect with achievement and accomplishments rather than with state and activity verbs, resultative present perfect with achievements and accomplishments and existential/experiential present perfect with activities and state verbs.

2. Methodology

1.1. Participants

One hundred Greek Cypriot university students (89 undergraduate, 11 MA level) took part in the study. Among them there were 69 males and 31 females. Their age ranges from 17 to 36 years, length of exposure (LoE) to L2 input from 2 to 20 years, and age of onset (AoO) to L2 from 5 to 27 years (see Table 2). Twenty-five students have graduated from private, English-speaking schools, while 75 students have finished government, Greek-speaking schools. Only 16 students have been exposed to authentic L2 input: they visited or studied in English-speaking countries, and 19 students additionally know a foreign language other than English (e.g. Italian, Japanese, Spanish, Turkish, French, Swedish, Russian and German). The L2 English proficiency of the participants in English was identified with the help of the test of English language proficiency, International English Language Testing System (IELTS) as this test is designed to assess the language ability of non-native speakers of English who intend to study at university. The students were examined on four skills: listening, reading, writing and speaking. The IELTS scores of the participants were from 3.5 to 8.5, with a mean score 6.36 (SD 0.87): 1 student had 3.5 IELTS score (extremely limited user); 5 students had 4-4.5 IELTS score (limited user), 17 students had 5-5.5 IELTS score (modest user), 44 students had 6-6.5 IELTS score (competent user), 31 students had 7-7.5 IELTS score (good user) and 2 students had 8-8.5 IELTS score (very good user), see Table 3.

Table 3:
AoO, age and LoE to L2, IELTS score, level of English proficiency of the participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AoO</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>27.00</td>
<td>13.66</td>
<td>4.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>17.00</td>
<td>36.00</td>
<td>21.6300</td>
<td>3.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LoE to L2</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>7.9700</td>
<td>3.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IELTS score</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>6.36</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.2. **Materials and Procedure**

The first part of the study examined the sensitivity to grammatical norms, while the other part of the study was focused on the actual production. A short questionnaire with 18 questions was used in order to elicit the information on students’ socio-economic status and linguistic background, their motivation and attitude towards English. All of the tests were piloted with the native speakers. 10 L1 speakers of English, university students, 20-25 years old, their results were taken into consideration in order to create valid and reliable testing battery as the items that were considered incorrect/deviant/ambiguous by native speakers were removed.

The first part of the experimental study was the elicitation task, a passage correction exercise or a kind of proofreading test based on Odlin (1986) and Odlin et al. (2006). The participants were presented with three text passages (2,300 words in total) and were asked to proofread it and to correct if necessary the underlined tense forms (60 items). Among 60 items, there were 25 errors: present perfect (10 resultative and 15 existential/experiential) replaced by present simple (12 items) and past simple (13 items). Present perfect contexts were created with the help of discourse and adverbials of current relevance: *for*, *as a result*, *since*, *over*, *so far*, *yet*, and *latest* (10 with adverbs, 15 without adverbs). The task of the participants was to detect and correct errors where the present perfect was replaced by an anomalous use of the past or present tense. There were also 35 distractors: 20 correct and 15 incorrect usages of present simple/continuous, past simple/continuous and future simple. The distractors also examined the relative level of proficiency of the participants in English. This task included acceptability judgement of the participants, as they had either to accept the tense form and leave it like it was or to consider it ungrammatical and correct it. Examples (1) and (2) show error types in the elicitation task:

(1) Virtually none of the thousands of women who **were financially assisted** (past simple instead of present perfect) by the bank for over 20 years **defaulted** (past simple instead of present perfect) on their payments.

(2) These borrowings **enable** (present simple instead of present perfect) Bangladeshi women to set up numerous small-scale projects which directly benefit their families and the communities in which they live. The success of the experiment **brings** (present simple instead of present perfect) about a revolution in the way anti-poverty programmes are now organised.

It is very difficult to elicit the use of present perfect in L2 English, as it has a hybrid nature with both past and current relevance. It is very difficult to provide the context relevant for present perfect, as then it can be easily compatible either with present simple or past simple (Odlin et al. 2006). A specialised use of perfect, the experiential perfect, can be elicited with the help of essays describing personal experiences, though then it is difficult to compare individual performances of the participants (Bardovi-Harlig 2001). The second part of the study was focused on the elicitation of natural written
discourse, with students being asked to write essays about personal experience, which could elicit experiential/existential and resultative perfect. A small written corpus of 100 essays (see Table 4) was analysed in terms of present perfect contexts: resultative perfect, existential/experiential perfect, perfect of the recent past, and extended-now present perfect.

Table 4
Written corpus: words, sentences, MLU/word

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Words</td>
<td>18754</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>187.54</td>
<td>67.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentences</td>
<td>1076</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>10.76</td>
<td>5.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLU/word</td>
<td>1825.69</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>18.25</td>
<td>4.48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The aim was to find out whether L2 learners of English use target present perfect in these contexts or substitute it with simple tenses, such as past simple and present simple. The other concern was to examine the Aktionsart of the verbs (state, activity, accomplishment, activity) used with each type of the present perfect, as well as which types of adverbs modify present perfect (+current relevance, –current relevance and ±current relevance or no adverb modification at all), the type of the sentence (negative, affirmative) and transitivity of the verbs (transitive, intransitive), relevant to the sentential aspect.

The clauses/sentences in written corpus/essays were analysed with respect to lexical-aspectual information, obligatory contexts of present perfect, target/non-target production of present perfect and its substitution by other tenses (e.g. present simple and past simple) in order to reveal possible L1 transfer from CG and lexical/aspectual influence. The temporal contexts of present perfect were identified based on internal properties of the clause and contextual discourse information, narrative frame, obligatory contexts for present perfect. Analysis of the discourse is essential for the identification of present perfect contexts. The context analysis of the clauses in students’ written essay revealed 151 obligatory contexts for present perfect in 100 students’ essays. Then the morphological marking of the temporal content in these contexts was examined. The lexical-aspectual properties of these clauses (with perfect contexts) were analysed based on Vendler’s classification and coded as state, activity, achievement and accomplishment which is quite challenging (Gujord 2013). The coding of lexical aspect in written essay was based on standard diagnostic tests by Dowty (1979), Robinson (1990), Shirai (1991), Shirai and Kurono (1998): stative verbs cannot take imperative form; activity verbs have entailment from progressive to simple past; accomplishments are accepted with time-span adverbials, achievements are accepted with punctual adverbials. The across-category analysis of lexical aspect has been implemented in line with Bardovi-Harlig (2000) and Gujord (2013) as the focus is on the morphological form (present perfect vs. present simple vs. past simple) and the distinction of this morpheme across the lexical-aspectual classes was observed. Only token counts were used. It is important to use different tasks to avoid the task effect as elicitation can
trigger monitoring of language form, while narrative can deal more with learner’s competence (Tarone 1988).

3. Findings and Discussion

3.1. Elicitations task, passage correction exercise

The analysis of the error correction in the proofreading task showed that only 400 (16%) of all errors were corrected and L2 learners used target present perfect. The other errors (2,100/84%) were either not corrected or L2 learners tended to use other non-target tense forms instead of present perfect (see Table 5):

Table 5
(Non)-target present perfect production

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Target/Present perfect</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-target</td>
<td>2,100</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-target production</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past simple</td>
<td>1,154</td>
<td>46.16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past perfect</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past continuous</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>1.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present simple</td>
<td>809</td>
<td>32.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present continuous</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>3.80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The distribution of (non)target production of present perfect by L2 learners of English according to the number of years of exposure to English is presented in Figure 1. There is a slight increase in the use of target present perfect with the increase in the number of years of English learning and there is a slight decrease in the use of non-target past simple. It seems that the length of exposure to L2 is an important factor for present perfect acquisition in L2 English.

Overall, it seems that L2 learners of English have a problem with English present perfect (84% non-target production). They tend to use past simple (46.16%) or present simple (32.36%) instead. The use of past simple can be explained by L1 transfer from CG.
L2 learners had more ‘no changes’ for past simple test items (63.76%) than for present simple test items (48.41%), with both past simple and present simple test items having the same percentage of changes to present perfect (17% and 16.33%). Present simple test items were more changed to past simple (29%) than past simple test items were changed to present simple (17.33%). Consequently, the most preferable tense used instead of present perfect is past simple (see Table 6).

Table 6
(No) attempted corrections of test items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No changes</th>
<th>Past simple items</th>
<th>Present simple items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No changes</td>
<td>829 (63.76%)</td>
<td>581 (48.41%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Changed to</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Present perfect</td>
<td>221 (17%)</td>
<td>196 (16.33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past perfect</td>
<td>7 (0.53%)</td>
<td>3 (0.25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present simple</td>
<td>225 (17.33%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present continuous</td>
<td>18 (1.38%)</td>
<td>47 (3.93%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past continuous</td>
<td>25 (2.08%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past simple</td>
<td>348 (29%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No significant difference was revealed between target production for existential and resultative present perfect. CG speakers might not perceive the limited occurrences of eho/ime + agreeing participle as present perfect forms in CG, otherwise they would have achieved a higher percentage of target resultative present perfect forms. But L2 learners of English used more past simple for existential present perfect (50.44%) than for resultative present perfect (38.70%). This can be due to transfer from L1 CG (usage of past simple instead of existential present perfect). They used more present simple for resultative present perfect (39.60%) than for existential present perfect (27.46%) (see Table 7).

Table 7
(Non)-target production for resultative/existential present perfect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Existential present perfect</th>
<th>Resultative present perfect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Target/present perfect</td>
<td>16.40%</td>
<td>15.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-target</td>
<td>83.60%</td>
<td>84.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past simple</td>
<td>50.44%</td>
<td>38.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past perfect</td>
<td>0.40%</td>
<td>0.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past continuous</td>
<td>1.30%</td>
<td>1.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present simple</td>
<td>27.46%</td>
<td>39.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present continuous</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2.70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2 shows the distribution of (non)target production of existential present perfect by L2 learners of English according to the length of exposure.
to L2 English factors. With the increase of the exposure to L2 English, number of years of English learning, there is a slight increase in the use of target existential present perfect and a slight decrease in the use of non-target past simple

![Graph](image)

**Figure 2**: Years of learning English factor: existential present perfect (non)target production

Figure 3 shows the distribution of (non)target production of resultative present perfect by L2 learners of English according to the length of exposure to L2 English factors. With the increase of exposure to L2 English, number of years of English learning, there is a slight increase in the use of target resultative present perfect and a slight decrease in the use of non-target past simple.

![Graph](image)

**Figure 3**: Years of learning English factor: resultative present perfect (non)target production

Overall, L2 learners showed better production for distractor items than for test items. This suggests that they have a particular problem with present perfect rather than with other tenses (present simple/continuous, past simple/continuous, future simple). They had a higher percentage for acceptance of the correct distractor items (75.85%) than for the correction of incorrect distractors (52.34%) (see Table 8).
Table 8
(In)correct distractors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total distractors (35)</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Target</td>
<td>2317</td>
<td>(66.20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-target</td>
<td>1183</td>
<td>(33.80%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correct distractors (20)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target (no correction)</td>
<td>1517</td>
<td>(75.85%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-target (correction)</td>
<td>483</td>
<td>(24.15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorrect distractors (15)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target (correction)</td>
<td>785</td>
<td>(52.34%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-target (no correction)</td>
<td>715</td>
<td>(47.66%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A paired samples *t*-test showed a statistically significant difference between target and non-target present perfect production (*t*(99)=14.992, *p*=.000), target present perfect and non-target past simple production (*t*(99)=8.060, *p*=.000), target and non-target distractor production (*t*(99)=9.338, *p*=.000), and present perfect and past simple production in existential contexts (*t*(99)=8.713, *p*=.000).

One-way ANOVA showed that age, length of exposure to L2, and gender are not crucial factors for L2 present perfect production. Pearson correlation analysis showed that target and non-target present perfect production is correlated with target and non-target distractor production (proficiency): Sig 2-tailed .000. Thus, L2 proficiency is the crucial factor for target/non-target L2 present perfect production.

### 3.2. Elicitation of natural discourse

With regard to elicitation of natural discourse: discourse about personal experiences based on essays, overall, it was very difficult to elicit present perfect in natural discourse due to the low rate of present perfect production (151 obligatory present perfect contexts for 100 essays). It was found that L2 learners used more non-target tense forms (64.91%): past simple (45.05%) or present simple (19.86%), than target present perfect (35.09%) in the obligatory present perfect contexts (see Table 8). They used both present and past simple instead of present perfect due to similarities of certain features of present perfect and present simple (current relevance) and present perfect and past simple (anterior) (Bardovi-Harlig 1997).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present perfect obligatory context</th>
<th>151</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Target production</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present perfect</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-target production (98/64.91%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past simple</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present simple</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Examples (3) and (4) show the usage of present simple instead of present perfect, and examples (5) and (6) the usage of past simple instead of present perfect.

(3) Michael has passion of photography and travel over 20 years as photographer for national geographic magazine.
(4) I have made a lot of mistakes but I never regret them.
(5) People liked his pictures so he became a professional since then...
(6) It is nice to spend your free time discovering things you did not see before.

It was found that target present perfect was used mainly in resultative contexts, while non-target past simple was used both in resultative and experiential/existential contexts, and non-target present simple was used in resultative, extended-now and recent past. It seems that the semantic context of present perfect influences target and non-target production of present perfect in L2 English. Cypriot Greek students tend to use past simple instead of present perfect in existential/experiential contexts, which can be explained by L1 transfer, as in CG they use past simple instead of experiential/existential present perfect.

Target present perfect was mainly used with achievement verbs, non-target past simple was used both with achievement and state verbs, and non-target present simple was used with achievement, state and activity verbs. The data is compatible with the Inherent Lexical Aspect Hypothesis (Andresen and Shirai 1996; Bardovi-Harlig 1999), as L2 learners use mainly achievement and accomplishment verbs with perfective and past tense morphology.

Target present perfect is mainly used either without adverbial specification or with the adverbs of current relevance, non-target past simple is also used mainly with no adverbs or with the adverbs of current relevance, but it has a higher percentage of the use with the adverbs of –current relevance and ±current relevance, and non-target present simple is used mainly without adverbs or with –current relevance adverbs. The type of adverb might influence the choice of tense only to a certain extent. Target present perfect, non-target past simple and present simple are used more with transitive types of verbs and in affirmative types of sentences (see Table 9).

Table 9

<p>| Semantic context, Aktionsart, type of adverb, sentence and verb transitivity |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Present perfect obligatory context | Semantic context | Resultative | Extended-now | Experiential | Recent past |
| Present perfect (target) | 37 (24.5%) | 6 (3.97%) | 7 (4.63%) | 3 (1.98%) |
| Past simple (non-target) | 31 (20.5%) | 4 (2.64%) | 20 (13.24%) | 13 (8.60%) |
| Present simple (non-target) | 13 (8.6%) | 7 (4.63%) | 3 (1.98%) | 7 (4.63%) |
| Present perfect obligatory context | Aktionsart | State | Activity | Accomplishment | Achievement |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Present perfect (target)</th>
<th>Present perfect (nontarget)</th>
<th>Present simple (target)</th>
<th>Present simple (nontarget)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13 (8.60%)</td>
<td>17 (11.25%)</td>
<td>7 (4.63%)</td>
<td>4 (2.64%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 (3.97%)</td>
<td>11 (7.28%)</td>
<td>7 (4.63%)</td>
<td>4 (2.64%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 (6.62%)</td>
<td>18 (11.92%)</td>
<td>5 (3.31%)</td>
<td>2 (1.32%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24 (15.89%)</td>
<td>22 (14.56%)</td>
<td>11 (7.28%)</td>
<td>21 (13.90%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Present perfect       | Present perfect (target) | Present perfect (nontarget) | Present simple (target) | Present simple (nontarget) |
| Obligatory context    | 19 (12.57%)              | 28 (18.53%)                 | 14 (9.26%)              | 16 (10.59%)               |
| Telic vs. atelic verb | Present perfect (target) | Present perfect (nontarget) | Present simple (target) | Present simple (nontarget) |
| phrases               | 19 (12.57%)              | 28 (18.53%)                 | 14 (9.26%)              | 16 (10.59%)               |
|                       | 34 (22.51%)              | 40 (26.48%)                 | 16 (10.59%)             | 10 (6.62%)                |

| Type of adverb        | Present perfect (target) | Present perfect (nontarget) | Present simple (target) | Present simple (nontarget) |
|                      | 18 (11.92%)              | 16 (10.59%)                 | 3 (1.98%)               | 4 (2.64%)                 |
|                      | 1 (0.66%)                | 7 (4.63%)                   | 4 (2.64%)               | 2 (1.32%)                 |
|                      | 4 (2.64%)                | 9 (5.96%)                   | 9 (5.96%)               | 6 (3.97%)                 |
|                      | 30 (19.86%)              | 36 (23.84%)                 | 21 (13.90%)             | 17 (11.25%)               |

| Transitivity          | Present perfect (target) | Present perfect (nontarget) | Present simple (target) | Present simple (nontarget) |
|                      | 43 (28.47%)              | 51 (33.77%)                 | 24 (15.89%)             | 9 (5.96%)                 |
|                      | 10 (6.62%)               | 17 (11.25%)                 | 6 (3.97%)               | 59 (39.07%)               |

| Type of sentence      | Present perfect (target) | Present perfect (nontarget) | Present simple (target) | Present simple (nontarget) |
|                      | 4 (2.64%)                | 9 (5.96%)                   | 0 (0%)                  | 30 (19.86%)               |
|                      | 49 (32.45%)              | 59 (39.07%)                 | 30 (19.86%)             | 30 (19.86%)               |

Figure 4 shows the distribution of target production of present perfect with respect to the length of exposure to L2 English, there is a slight increase of the target present perfect production with the increase of the number of years of learners’ exposure to L2.

**Figure 4.** Length of exposure to L2 English: target present perfect production
There is a reverse picture for non-target production of present perfect and its substitution by past simple, L2 learners tend to use fewer non-target past simple tense forms when they have more exposure to L2 English, see Figure 5.

![Figure 5. Length of exposure to L2 English: non-target present perfect production](image)

**Figure 5.**
Length of exposure to L2 English: non-target present perfect production

Figure 6 presents target present perfect production and lexical aspect (state, activity, accomplishment and achievement verbs types) with respect to the length of exposure to L2 factor. The written production data seems to be in line with the Aspect Hypothesis as with more years of exposure to L2 English there is an increase in the use of target present perfect with telic predicates (achievements and accomplishments) and there is a decrease in the use of present perfect with atelic predicates (state and activity).

![Figure 6. Length of exposure to L2 English: present perfect: lexical aspect](image)

**Figure 6.** Length of exposure to L2 English: present perfect: lexical aspect

It was found that resultative perfect is mostly associated with the verbs of accomplishment and achievement, both for target and non-target production, which is in line with the findings of Davydova (2011). The extended-now perfect contexts were combined with the verbs of activity and duration, both for target and non-target production. Stative verbs and verbs of activity and duration are compatible with experiential perfect. The perfect of recent past has a very general semantic nature; it can be used with all types of verbs: state, activity, accomplishment and achievement, and the data supports this. Overall, the lexical aspect or Aktionsart of verbs...
influences the production of present perfect in relevant semantic contexts (see Table 10).

Table 10
_Type of present perfect and Aktionsart_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Obligatory present perfect contexts</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Accomplishment</th>
<th>Achievement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Target present perfect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resultative 37 (24.5%)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7 (4.63%)</td>
<td>24 (15.89%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended-now 6 (3.97%)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (0.66%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiential/existential 7 (4.63%)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1 (0.66%)</td>
<td>1 (0.66%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recent past 3 (1.98%)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (0.66%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-target past simple</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resultative 31 (20.52%)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8 (5.29%)</td>
<td>22 (14.56%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended-now 4 (2.64%)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (0.66%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiential/existential 20 (13.24%)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3 (1.98%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recent past 13 (8.60%)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4 (2.64%)</td>
<td>2 (1.32%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-target present simple</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resultative 13 (8.60%)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 (1.32%)</td>
<td>8 (5.29%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended-now 7 (4.63%)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1 (0.66%)</td>
<td>2 (1.32%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiential 3 (1.98%)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 (0.66%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recent past 7 (4.63%)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 (0.66%)</td>
<td>2 (1.32%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Paired samples _t-test_ analysis showed that there is a statistically significant difference between target present perfect production and non-target present simple production (_t_(99)=1.979, _p_=.051) and non-target past simple and non-target present simple production (_t_(99)=3.224, _p_=.002).

One-way ANOVA showed that MLU is an important factor for present perfect correct production (_F_(99)=1.671, _Sig_.052), but not for non-target past simple and present simple production. One-way ANOVA showed that age is a crucial factor for production of non-target present simple tense (_F_(99)=5.592, _Sig_.=.000), while AoO does not influence target and non-target production of present perfect. Regarding exposure to L2, years of L2 English learning is an important factor for target present perfect production (_F_(99)=5.304, _Sig_.=.013), while the level of English proficiency is not an important factor.

According to the paired samples _t-test_ statistical analysis, there is a statistically significant difference between resultative present perfect correct and the use of present simple instead of resultative present perfect (_t_(99)=2.741, _p_=.007), between experiential present perfect correct and past simple used instead of experiential present perfect (_t_(99)=2.312, _p_=.023),
between past simple and present simple used instead of experiential present perfect \((t(99)=2.896, p=.005)\), between resultative present perfect correct and experiential present perfect correct \((t(99)=4.025, p=.000)\), between present simple used instead of resultative present perfect, and between present simple used instead of experiential present perfect \((t(99)=2.595, p=.011)\).

4. Conclusions

This study is an attempt to shed light on L2 acquisition of English by Cypriot Greek speakers with regard to present perfect. Both comprehension and production of this particular linguistic phenomenon have been examined. It was found that L2 learners transfer from L1 CG, specifically using past simple instead of existential present perfect. L2 learners ignore semantic and pragmatic conditions compatible with the use of English present perfect; they mostly equate the semantics of the past tense with the semantics of the present perfect. Their production improves with more exposure to L2 English.

L1 transfer and (non)-target comprehension of English present perfect (elicitation) depend on L2 proficiency level rather than on age, age of onset to L2, length of exposure to L2 input or gender, while the actual production of English present perfect (written corpus data) is affected by MLU, age, age of exposure to L2, length of exposure to L2, but not the level of L2 English proficiency.

It was also found that Aktionsart or the lexical aspect of the verb influences (non)-target present perfect production rather than other factors such as the type of adverbial modification, the type of sentence, transitivity of a verb, and semantic context. The Lexical Aspect Hypothesis is partially supported (Andersen and Shirai 1996; Bardovi-Harlig 1999). L2 learners used perfective and past tense morphology with both punctual-telic predicates (achievements or accomplishments) and atelic or durative predicates (state or activity). Their production of target present perfect improves with more years of exposure to L2 English and is more in line with the Aspect Hypothesis at the later stages of L2 acquisition as they decrease the use of perfective/past tense forms with atelic predicates and use these forms more with telic/punctual predicates.

There is a difference in form, semantics and functions of present perfect in English and CG. There is one form of present perfect and one semantic reading (resultative) in CG and one form of present perfect and four semantic readings (resultative, existential, extended-now and recent past) in English. In CG, present perfect B has a limited use, and is far from being the typical way of marking the resultative reading in that dialect, thus native speakers of CG might not categorize this form as a perfect form.

L2 learners might also have a problem distinguishing semantics of present perfect due to the absence of one-to-one morphological correspondence at the syntax–semantic interface, which could be in line with the Form-before-Meaning Hypothesis (Slabakova 2002; Montrul and Slabakova 2002). This could be investigated in future studies. Moreover, it is important to expand this research to child L2 learners and the older generation of L2 learners, and examine both oral and written production and comprehension of English present perfect.
References


Melissaropoulou, D., Charalambos, T., Tsipplakou, S. & S. Tsolakidis. (2013). The present perfect in Cypriot Greek revisited. In P. Auer, J. C. Reina & G. Kaufmann (Eds.), *Selected papers from the sixth international conference on language variation in Europe (ICLaVE 6)* (pp. 159-172). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.


Understanding the self: a review of Dörnyei’s Second Language Motivation Self System and its relevance in explaining motivation of the Zimbabwean foreign language learner

“Through others, we become ourselves.”
Vygotsky

Alfred Ndhlovu1
University of Zimbabwe

Abstract
There are two main objectives that this study seeks to address simultaneously; to discuss the concept of self system as explained by Zoltán Dörnyei and to establish its relevance in explaining foreign language motivation in Zimbabwe. Basing mainly on recent empirical investigations done by Ndhlovu (in press) and Mkhize and Chisoni (2015), this study will also review Dörnyei’s L2 motivation self system model in its application to FLL contexts with Zimbabwe being an example. The view expressed in this study is that although the model’s contribution in the L2/FL motivation discourse is unequivocally significant, it does not do justice to the understanding of the FL self system and its development especially in FLL contexts such as the Zimbabwean FLL setting. The model does not have a unitary significance since it seems to ignore social factors that are crucial in determining the nature of the FL self in most FL contexts such as Zimbabwe. In this study, these factors are known as the determinants and include factors such as cultural factors, lack of policy frameworks, FLL support and career opportunities among others. The understanding is that the impact of these determinants upon the former and present selves (positive or negative) not only determines the nature of the future self but also the amount of motivation that will determine both the learner’s performance and continuity of learning the foreign language. The study then proceeds to offer suggestions or amendments that can be made to the model in an attempt to increase its significance to cover foreign language learning contexts such as Zimbabwe. The integration of these factors is demonstrated in a proposed new model entitled the L2/FL situational Self model of motivation. While avoiding to completely dismiss the concept of motivation, this model, just like Norton’s (2000/2013) concept of investment, seeks to incorporate socio cultural factors that determine the construction of the foreign language self.

Keywords Dörnyei’s L2 motivation Self System, L2/FL situational Self model of motivation and Foreign language learning in Zimbabwe and similar contexts

1 Bio: Alfred Ndhlovu has taught German as foreign languages at the University of Zimbabwe for over three years. He is currently pursuing research in areas such as Foreign Language (FL) Motivation Interaction in foreign language learning, Identity in foreign language learning, Teaching and Learning of German as a foreign language (Deutsch als Fremdsprache) in Zimbabwe.) Contact: alfndhlovu@yahoo.com
2 In this study, FL stands for Foreign Language while FLL stands for Foreign Language Learning. SL stands for Second language or L2, while SLL stands for Second Language Learning.
1. Introduction

This discussion has been prompted and inspired by the questions raised by Schmidt and his colleagues concerning the application of motivation theories and constructs in other contexts, for example, non European FLL environments. Schmidt and his colleagues begin by raising questions related to the meaning of the term “motivation”, they proceed to ask whether the concept of motivation is unitary or has several facets. What is more significant for this study, is their exploration of the question whether motivation is a universal concept or a cross cultural variable (Schmidt et al., 1996, p 11). The latter question in particular has prompted this study to review the aspect of the self which is central in Dörnyei’s L2 motivation self system model of motivation. The main reason being the observation that the understanding of the self usually carries cultural connotations. In western cultures for example, the self may suggest the nature of being an “independent construal” (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). This paper therefore, seeks not only to review Dörnyei’s theory of motivation but also to find out whether it can be applied to non European contexts such as the Zimbabwean FLL context or not. It has already been mentioned that this study has been prompted and inspired by the questions raised by Schmidt and his colleagues concerning the concept of motivation. One of the questions they raise that can act as a proper background for this study concerns the meaning of the term "motivation" itself. To begin with, one has to note that “motivation is without question the most complex and challenging issue facing learners today”3. Motivation has also been described as a multifaceted construct and as such, various definitions have been propounded depending with the field of study and context. These range from social psychological (behavioural science) to cognitive influenced definitions. Researchers in the area of behavioural science were mainly interested in what made a passive animal to move or be active. In view of this, they concluded that to be motivated is “to be moved to do something”5. In cognitive terms (based on the research work done by Maslow, 1970), motivation has more to do with decisions and choices people make as to what experiences or orientations they choose and the degree of effort they will exert in achieving their task. Gardner (1985) defines motivation as the extent to which the language learner strives to achieve a particular goal (according to him goals are also “orientations”). In view of the few definitions given above, one can justifiable state that the concept of motivation is not a “simple and straight forward concept since it is composed of many different and overlapping factors which differ depending with situations and circumstances...”6 Hicks provides useful information concerning the characteristics of motivated and non motivated learners. According to Hicks

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3 Schneidecker and Freeman (1999)
5 Ryan and Deci (2000, p 54), see also Lakhiam (2015)
6 Williams and Burden (1997, p 111)
7 Note that there is deliberate avoidance of the terms such “amotivation” (which according to Ryan and Deci (2000, p 61) means “lacking an intention to act and “demotivation” which refers to reduced or low levels of motivation.
(2008), a motivated learner is “enthusiastic and dedicated, demonstrates effort and determination, studies with intensity and has good reasons for leaning”\(^8\). In contrast, a non motivated learner is disconnected, not involved and lacks commitment.

For the benefit of this study, motivation in SLL\(\L\)FLL will therefore, be defined as the dynamically changing cumulative arousal in a person that initiates, directs, co-ordinates, amplifies, terminates and evaluates the cognitive and motor processes whereby initial wishes and desires are selected, prioritized, operationalised and (successfully or unsuccessfully) acted out (Dörnyei and Otto, 1998, p 65). This definition does two things: firstly it takes into consideration of both behaviourist and cognitive aspects of motivation and therefore it is at least for this study inclusive. Secondly, it embraces the idea that motivation, just like the Self, is not static but rather a dynamic construct which is context dependent and process oriented. Therefore, since this study is dealing with a model propounded by one of the researchers credited with spearheading the campaign to view motivation as dynamic, this becomes a suitable working definition for this study.

The L2 motivation Self System model is based on earlier theories in psychology, namely Markus and Nurius' (1986) theory of “possible selves”, Higgins' (1987) “Self Discrepancy” theory\(^9\) and Markus and Wurf’s (1987) “Self System Schemata” theory. In its review of The L2 motivation Self System model, this paper would therefore, make reference to these theories. The model therefore, deserves the credit of suggesting the borrowing of the self notion from psychology and applying it in L2/FLL. Defining the self in itself is problematic because of the elasticity of the term. Various definitions stemming mostly from personality psychology have been discussed. A detailed discussion of these definition is however, beyond the scope of this study. A definition by Harter will be taken as a working definition of self in this project. According to Harter (1999), self is basically anything and everything we call "me" or "I". Hence in this view, the self relates solely to an individual as opposed to other/s.

1.1. Dörnyei’s Second Language Motivation Self System

It is the desire to move away from the socio-psychological dominated views, the realization that second language motivation is dynamic rather than static and focus on L2 classroom contexts that motivated criticism of the socio educational model and gave life to theories such as the L2 Motivated Self System. While retaining some of the main concepts of the L2 motivation (as already developed by Gardner and others), the proponent Zoltán Dörnyei developed his model of L2 motivation self system. According to Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011, p 86), the L2 motivation self system model consists of three components namely the ideal self, the ought self and the L2 leaning experience.

1.1.1. The Ideal L2 self

\(^8\) Hicks (2008, p 7)
\(^9\) Taylor et.al (2013)
This is the L2 specific facet of one's ideal self and is based on the desire to be or be like. If a person we desire to be speaks an L2, then the ideal L2 self becomes a powerful motivator to learn a second language. One is motivated by the desire to reduce the discrepancy between the actual and the ideal L2 self. The desire to be that ideal person becomes a stimulator to learn and achieve that goal.

1.1.2. The ought to L2 self
This concerns the attributes that one believes ought to possess in order to meet certain expectations and avoid negative outcomes. If the language learner believes he/she ought to be a successful language learner, then this belief will motivate them to succeed in their endeavours of language learning.

1.1.3. The L2 learning experience
This concerns situated motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience such as; the impact of the teacher, the curriculum, peer group or the experience of the teacher. The model, as demonstrated above, is centred on the self or individual image. In Murray's (2007) terms, the theory is based on vision or imagination in the sense that having a vision of our ideal self as a foreign language speaker can be a powerful force motivating us to learn a language. In view of the three components that make up the structure of the model, the model makes a number of assumptions. Firstly, the model seems to assume that the self is a unitary concept with a universal applicability across diverse cultures and diverse language contexts. For example, that the fancy vision of the perfect “ideal” L2 self is a dream of every L2 and FL learner. Secondly, the model seems to disregard the significance of other external factors that affect the self such as cultural factors, economic limitations among others. The model also disregards the significance of the actual or present self. However, the above observations do not take away the contribution of the model in the understanding of L2/FL motivation. For instance, the model makes reference to other factors that are relevant to the immediate learning environment such as the impact of the teacher and the curriculum among other factors.

1.2. External factors that affect the L2/FL self
1.2.1. Language learning contexts
Most researchers in the field of L2 motivation including Keblawi (2010) and Dörnyei (1990) have acknowledged the view that theories and research results obtained from L2 contexts “in which the target language is learned at least partly embedded in the host environment are not directly applicable to FLL situations” (Dörnyei, 1990, p 45). This view has been seen as a call for more contextualised research. In this regard, one has to take note that in Zimbabwe for example, German, French, Chinese and Portuguese and other languages commonly referred to as the modern foreign languages are taught as foreign languages. They play no major role in the community and are primarily limited to the classroom environment. In such a learning environment, the understanding of the self may be different compared to an L2 environment. In a recent study meant to determine the impetus behind
FLL in Zimbabwe, Ndhlovu (in press) established that most Zimbabwean learners are motivated by instrumental goals as compared to integrative motives. If this is the case, then Dörnyei’s view of equating the ideal L2 self to integrative motivation creates a conflicting situation in its application to the Zimbabwean and similar FLL contexts. In his explanation of the ideal L2 self, Dörnyei states:

If one’s ideal self is associated with the mastery of an L2, that is, if the person that we would like to become is proficient in the L2, we can be described as having an integrative disposition (Dörnyei, 2005, p 102).

Such an interpretation creates two problems; firstly, Gardner himself, as the proponent of the socio educational model, has already shot down the comparison, describing it as adding confusion in understanding integrative motivation (Gardner, 2005). Secondly, if most Zimbabwean learners of foreign languages are mainly influenced by instrumental rather than integrative motives (as demonstrated by Ndhlovu, op.cit), this will probably imply that the ideal L2 self (as the central concept of the L2 motivation Self System model), lacks practical significance for the Zimbabwean foreign language learner. After all, Dörnyei himself observed that “in FLL situations, instrumental and socio-cultural motives, and/or other motivational factors that have not yet been analysed may acquire a special importance” (Dörnyei, 1990, p 48).

1.2.2. Cultural factors

In this study, the discussion of cultural factors that may probably affect the interpretation of self as it relates to L2/FL motivation is based upon Markus and Kitayama’s (1991) theory of independent and interdependent self construals. According to Markus and Kitayama, most European and American cultures are classified as independent construal, a category of cultures that value individual identity and performance rather than collective efforts and interests. Most Asian and African cultures are classified as interdependent construal. This category values social relationships. One would note that, Zimbabwean culture fits into the latter category. Although global interests have not spared foreign language learners in Zimbabwe, the spirit of ubuntu is still considered a value among many. There is a Ndebele saying that goes; umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu. This demonstrates the collective nature of the Zimbabwean culture. Hence, the self in a Zimbabwean context needs to be interpreted in harmony with this observation since it has been noted that “the exact content and structure of the inner self may differ considerably by culture” (Markus and Kitayama, 1991, p 226). However, this understanding does not go along with the interpretation of the self as presented in the L2 motivation Self System. Firstly, Harter’s (1999) definition of the self as anything and everything we call "me" or "I" is more

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10 A bantu term that means “humanity to others”
11 It means “you are what you are because of others”
12 Similar views have been expressed by Triandis and Suh (2002).
individualistic in nature (suiting the views of independent construals). This definition is more concerned with, to borrow Higgins’s (1987) terms, the own rather than the other. Secondly, the L2 motivation Self System is based on an individual’s vision or imagination of learning a foreign language. However, in a Zimbabwean context, the choice of subjects that a learner makes, as with its prospects, usually goes beyond individual desires, it is subject to family scrutiny. This is due to interdependence of family members. What then becomes a source of motivation is for a learner to be involved in something that will secure the family’s future financial being. Intrinsic individual endeavours become secondary and slave to the bigger picture of being a hero, who will lift everybody else on his/her shoulders. This shapes the self and motivation of most learners in Zimbabwe.

Markus and Nurius’s (1986) discussion of the possible selves also demonstrates the significance of the society in shaping the self. They pointed out that although the possible selves are individualised or personalised, they are however, socially based. This therefore, shows the social nature of the self as interpreted in the Zimbabwean society. This influence of other close people in determining the values and interest of an individual is also shown through what Taylor et al. (2013) describe as a possible familial agreement, where by learners get influenced by people close to them on the choice of academic subjects they are to learn. This therefore, suggests that in most interdependent cultures, submissive L2/FL selves are more common compared to ideal L2 selves. Other selves that might be of importance in understanding the FL self in Zimbabwe and similar contexts include the public and imposed selves. Public selves refer to (actual and external) various social representations that a person may display depending on the relational context while imposed selves refer to (possible and external) representations of other people’s hopes, desires and expectations of what an individual should achieve. They are therefore, significant in understanding the FL self and motivation in those communities such as Zimbabwe where the notion that, through others we become ourselves (Vygotsky, 1987) is still cherished.

1.3. **FLL support as factor that determines self motivation**

The research conducted by Ndhlouvu (op.cit) has demonstrated that Zimbabwe does not have clear policy frameworks that address the teaching and learning of foreign languages. This implies that although support given to foreign languages has presently improved when compared to the colonial period, a lot remains to be done if Zimbabwe is to be at par with other countries (in Africa) which are making great strides in promoting FLL such as South Africa. Lack of adequate promotional activities therefore, remains a great concern in Zimbabwe since it seems to impact negatively on FL motivation. According to Ndhlouvu (op.cit), in Zimbabwe, foreign languages are shunned by most public schools and tertiary institutions. They are offered mainly at a few private institutions.

This situation creates two problems, firstly, people lose interest in pursuing foreign languages. Secondly, those who proceed to study foreign languages are tormented by questions related to career opportunities. This position is aggravated by a dire economic situation that has seen most foreign owned companies closing down and thus further narrowing the prospects for a
foreign language learner of getting employed. As observed by Mkhize and Chisoni (2015), this problem preoccupies most Zimbabwean learners of foreign languages. Mkhize and Chisoni (ibid) end up suggesting that foreign languages institutions such as the Confucious Institutes should attempt to create jobs or increase links with companies to enable students to get employed. These observations therefore, demonstrate that in Zimbabwe, self motivation mainly resides not in the intrinsic values of the individual learner but in the extrinsic values that are related to the future of the foreign language learner. Lack of adequate support given to foreign languages therefore, contributes in shaping the values and interest of a Zimbabwean FL leaner and thus shaping the FL “ideal” self or to use a better term “possible” self.

In his explanation of the ideal L2 leaner, Dörnyei states that if the person we desire to be speaks an L2, then the ideal L2 self becomes a powerful motivation to learn the L2. This might suggest that one needs a model in order to visualise himself/ herself as successful as that model in learning a foreign language. In SL contexts, where clear and effective SLL policy frameworks are in place and where the learner has access to native speaker communities, such models are easy to come by. However, in FLL contexts such as Zimbabwe, where learners have almost no access to native speaker communities and where foreign languages are hardly promoted in order to breed a class of successful FL learners, such models are hard to come by. According to Mkhize and Chisoni (op.cit), FL models that are readily available to most Zimbabwean learners are their language instructors. In FLL contexts such as Zimbabwe, if one has to create an ideal FL self based on vision, then this has to be a religious vision based on faith not on possibilities. For example, it is easy for a child who grows up in a country that supports the work of astronauts to visualise himself/herself as an astronaut compared to another child who does not only know what an astronaut is but also has not seen any astronaut activities in his/her country. In this view, governmental support and creation of opportunities becomes a motivational force that determines the prospects of a learner and thus shaping the vision of an ideal or rather possible self. FLL in Zimbabwe therefore, needs to be adequately supported and opportunities created in order for an ideal FL self to be a feasible notion. One L2 researcher even suggested that, if we want bread to rise, we need to provide yeast (Maley, 2015).

1.4. Other short comings of the model

The L2 motivation Self System occupies a very important place among L2 motivation theories. However, in its application, the model possesses a number of short comings. In most of his researches on L2 motivation, Dörnyei has reiterated on the view that motivation is dynamic. However, in his discourse on the L2 self, he seems to ignore the dynamic state of the self itself. As Van Lier (2010) has pointed out, the self is not a passive phenomenon. To use Bruner’s (2002) terms, the self is a work in progress. It is something we construct and reconstruct in order to meet needs of the situation we find ourselves in. Following these views, the self is seen as an
unstable state whose understanding depends upon various contextual meanings and situations. This is the main reason that has encouraged this study to discuss these contextual factors giving examples from a Zimbabwean FL context and suggesting that the self system is not unitary. Researchers have also raised eye brows on the exclusion of the actual self which probably acts as a beginning point of understanding the self system. The actual self is part of Higgins’ (op.cit) theory of self discrepancy upon which the L2 motivation Self System is partly based. According to Taylor (op.cit), in order to understand the starting point of a motivational process, the actual or present self is of utmost importance. The study of the actual self kicks starts an investigation into the learner’s present desires, aspiration and cognitive abilities which in turn will create a visual picture of what they can possibly become. Including a former self will therefore, help in creating a complete picture of the learner’s self system. This understanding of the self system is well presented by Gardner in his explanation of the role of self in SLA. Gardner (2001) mentions three important phases which make up the process of self modification. These are the past, the present and the future. Past: It refers to an individuals’ past experiences, family, cultural background which are important in SL learning. It also refers to past experiences that influence emotional and cognitive abilities. Present: The teacher present materials, makes demands or requests and the students respond to these demands. Hence the notion of the present refers to the learner’s current classroom experiences that influence emotional and cognitive baggage. Future: It refers to the use of the language immediately after the current language experience.

1.5. Suggestions
In order to present a complete self system, it would be a brilliant idea to consider including the actual or present self. Omitting or disregarding the actual self will be tantamount to omitting crucial information that shapes the projections of the future self. In Zimbabwe for instance, lack of FL teaching and learning policies and a harsh economic environment impact on the everyday learning of foreign languages. This becomes part of the reality of FL learners in and outside the classroom and thus part of the actual self. The lack of support for teaching and learning of foreign languages not only impedes on teachers’ performance and motivation but also affects the learners who study under strenuous condition and without adequate learning materials. The model also needs to take note of other situational factors that affect the self system such as cultural factors. For example, whether the learner’s culture is interdependent or independent since this as discussed in this paper, can determine the nature of the self. A review of the terms used in the L2 motivation Self System would be necessary if the model needs to have a universal significance and application. For example, using the term possible L2/FL selves instead of the term ideal L2 self. The term possible L2/FL selves is an elastic term that

13 The term “possible self” is taken from Markus and Nurius’ (1986) theory of possible selves.
is cognisant of various situational circumstances that can censor the self. In FLL contexts such as Zimbabwe, it is more feasible to talk about what is possible than what is ideal to a foreign language learner. This is due to consideration of various situational factors discussed above. Hence, beside the need to incorporate some of Gardner’s (2001) views of self modification, a review of the terms used is necessary.

Lastly, this study proposes a new model that is based on the above suggestions. The working name for this model is the \textit{L2/FL situational Self model of motivation} and is shown in Fig.1.

In this model, there are two important aspects that are crucial in understanding the self system. These are the former self and the present self. These two aspects develop within the L2/FL context or learning environment. The former self refers to the past performances of the language learner especially those that have attributional effects to his/her future L2/FL performance and motivation. It also refers to the past attitudes towards the L2/FL target language in particular and language learning in general. The present self refers to the present L2/FL language performance of the learner.

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{Fig1.png}
\caption{Fig 1. represents the L2/FL Situation Self model of motivation}
\end{figure}

It also refers to the current attitudes towards the target language and the significance of the target language to the learner. Both the former and present selves are at the mercy of factors that determine the progress of the learner in learning the L2/FL. These are referred to as the \textit{determinants}. These determinants include career opportunities, L2/FL teaching and learning support, cognitive abilities, other limitations such as lack of financial support and cultural factors among others. The impact these determinants have upon the former and present selves (whether positive or negative) creates or rather determines the future self. Simply put, the amount of motivation that becomes part of the desire to quit or excel in learning the L2/FL is determined not only by the standpoints of the former and present selves but also by the influence of the determinants upon these selves. In its relation to the performance of learning the L2/FL, the future self can
therefore, be either negative or positive. It can also breed other selves such as the imposed, submissive or public selves. In this way, this new model tries to cover some areas which seem to have been neglected by the L2 motivation self system model. Most importantly, this new model attempts to incorporate sociocultural factors that determine the identity construction of FL learners. Hence it attempts to move towards Norton’s (2000/2013) concept of “investment” which she considers as a sociological rather than a psychological construct. According to Norton (2000), the notion of investment

conceives of the language learner as having a complex social history and multiple desires. The notion presupposes that when language learners speak, they are not only exchanging information with target language speakers, but they are constantly organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world (p. 10-11).

Such theorizing has led to a review of motivation in the field of SLA, favouring movement of viewing motivation in terms of the individual psychological processes to discussing it in the contexts of social activities (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009). However, views and suggestions outlined here do not intend to take away the credibility and significance of this model in L2/FL motivation discourse.

2. Conclusions
This main objective of this study was to analyse Dörnyei’s L2 motivation self system model, a model that seeks to explain L2 motivation by discussing the self system and how it can contribute to learners’ L2/FL motivation. Basing mainly on the empirical investigations done by Ndhlouv (op.cit) and Mkhize and Chisoni (op.cit), the study also reviewed the L2 motivation self system in its application to FL learning contexts with Zimbabwe being an example. The conclusion of this study is that, in its present state, the model does not have a universal significance since it seems to ignore certain factors that are crucial in determining the nature of the FL self in most FL contexts such as Zimbabwe. In this study, these factors are known as the determinants and include factors such as cultural factors, lack of policy frameworks, FLL support and career opportunities among others. The impact of these factors upon the former and present selves (positive or negative) not only determines the nature of the future self but also the amount of motivation that will determine both the learner’s performance and continuity of learning the foreign language. The incorporation of these factors is demonstrated in a proposed new model entitled the L2/FL situational Self model of motivation. The proposed model acknowledges the importance of the psychological concept of motivation as represented here by Dörnyei’s model of L2 motivation, but just like Norton’s (2000/2013) sociological concept of motivation, it seeks to incorporate socio cultural factors that determine the construction of the foreign language self. The endeavour here is to come up with a model that is cognisant of various external social factors that are strongly influential in the process of FLL in contexts such as Zimbabwe, where most learners are instrumentally motivated.
References


