
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Potential Changes in Saudi Students' Motivations and Attitudes towards Learning English as a Foreign Language after Immersion in an L2 Learning Environment

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| ABSTRACT

This study traces potential changes in the motivation of Saudi students studying English as a second language (L2) in the UK. It investigates whether the beliefs and motivations of these students have changed during their learning experience, and identifies the pedagogical implications of such change for English teaching, not only to Saudi students in the UK but also to Saudi students enrolled in Saudi higher education institutions. It aims to identify the reasons behind changes in motivation as well as the impact these may have on students' attitudes towards learning English as a foreign language (EFL). Data from questionnaires, interviews, and observations are used through three phases of the English academic programme. The study subjects are newly arrived Saudi students (three PhD students and 29 Master's students) studying in four different universities in the UK under the fields of Linguistics, Applied Linguistics, and Translation. The conceptual framework is based on Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System Theory and Dörnyei & Ushioda's motivation and L2 self-framework. Changes in motivation are usually accompanied by changes in students' classroom involvement, attitudes towards the target language, and positive or negative impacts on the students' outcomes and language competencies. Similar to other types of learning, L2 learning cannot take place in a vacuum. The present study has various contributions to the field of SLA. First, it validates earlier studies about the issue of motivation in linguistics, attitudes towards language, and changes in one's self-identity as an outcome of language development. Second, it serves as an addition to the body of knowledge pertaining to motivation and attitude of Saudi students towards English as L2 and the important role of culture in this process. Further, it serves as an important contribution to how Saudi students' L2 acquisition is understood using Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System.

| KEYWORDS

Saudi Students' Motivations and Attitudes, English as a Foreign Language, L2 Learning Environment, SLA, Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System

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1. Introduction

The English language is used more widely across the globe in education, business and media, and as such, it is becoming invaluable for countries to increase the L2 English language proficiency of students who are looking forward to becoming a part of the growing English language community in different educational and business fields. Saudi Arabia launched a programme of scholarships in 2005 to equip new generations with tools that are potentially necessary for achieving success in learning English.

Recently, EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learning has become a significant research concern in Saudi Arabia due to the large number of foreign companies operating in the Kingdom and the ambitious scholarship programme promoted by King Abdullah. Despite the vitality of self-identity changes in language learning, not much attention has been paid to this area in the context of EFL in Saudi Arabia. The growing interest in the field of language learning and the establishment of English language centres and preparatory year programmes in Saudi universities have imposed the need to adopt more learner-centred approaches (Schweisfurth, 2011). This was associated with a genuine need to examine self-identity changes of Saudi students at all levels. Some studies tackle the motivations of Arab EFL students at intermediate secondary school levels (Al-Nofaie, 2010; Suleiman, 2015).

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According to Gardner (1985), motivation refers to the combined effort and intention to achieve the goal of language learning and favourable attitudes toward such learning. In this definition, the three subcomponents that operationally comprise motivation are effort, intention, and attitudes. From the point of view of sociocultural theory, this definition requires going through separate steps, which begin with what motivation is and is converted into the definitions of effort, intention, and attitudes within the context of motivation. It should be noted that L2 learning motivation is not an inert process but is a dynamic one. It carries a dialectical connection between the students' previous L2 learning experiences and their current sociocultural environment (Kim, 2006).

The analysis of the current research is based on the data collected through three methods: questionnaires, interviews, and observations. Saudi EFL students in the UK are its target population. The regulating framework of the study is that of Dörnyei and Ushioda (2009). The sociolinguistic encounters are, however, not an interest of the study. The gender, age, and social status variables are not their main interest either. The study mainly focuses on the linguistic issues of motivation, attitudes towards the language, and self-identity changes, as these are prominent aspects that reflect students' language development regardless of their gender, age, and social status.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The understanding of motivation from an L2 viewpoint necessitates consideration of other variables. For example, Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) merge theories of motivation with more extensive issues that are specific to L2 learners, taking account of different levels of language proficiency, age, education, varying cultures, rationales for L2 learning, and societal expectations.

While recent studies addressed Saudi students' initial motivation and inter-cultural experiences for studying English both at home and abroad (Al Qahtani, 2015), no study has addressed the impact that immersion in an L2 teaching and learning environment has on students' motivation. Whilst studies on Saudi student motivation have been carried out in the U.S. (Kampman, 2011) and Australia (Alhazmi, 2010), and whilst studies on Saudi students' motivational stimuli based on gender and major university differences have been carried out (Javid et al., 2012), none had been conducted in the UK.

The paucity of research in the area of self-identity and L2 learning has led this study to investigate whether the self-identity of Saudi students studying ESL in the UK changes during or as a result of their learning experience. In addition, this study will be the first to address the specific issue of change in students' self-identities as a result of immersion in an L2 culture and the impact of this change on their attitudes towards the new language.

Exploring self-identity and motivational changes of Saudi EFL students studying in the UK gives insights into the challenges and dynamics of learners' identity construction and linguistic maturity. Issues such as linguistic performance and cultural diversity present challenges for students who move from first to second languages. So, it needs to be investigated and problematised rather than to be considered innately true.

This research is situated in the UK higher education setting, which has its distinctive and particular academic conventions and activities. A large number of international students constitute the social and academic life in the British university setting. The quality of international students' experiences is considerably important for the reputation of the university as well as for the country in which learning takes place. British universities will benefit from the explorations involved in the learners' learning experiences (Gill, 2007). It must, however, be noted that there is currently a scarcity of research that deals with the academic performance and cultural adaptation of international students, especially Saudi students, in the Western academic culture (Kinginger, 2009).

Saudi students in the UK may experience feelings of frustration, anxiety, and uncertainty. This alienation comes from Saudi students' different religious and cultural backgrounds (Shaw, 2009). As mentioned on the website of the Saudi Embassy (2015), Saudi people generally have a strong religious identity.

Moreover, Saudi students have individual differences amongst themselves. Exploring each student's case is of great potential to yield important insights into the academic experiences of the learners regardless of their backgrounds. Gender differences can also be considered as an important factor in the academic achievement of L2 Arab learners. However, several theories of learning and motivation failed to consider the sociocultural aspects of motivation and holistically connect motivation to the learner's social, emotional, and moral aspects (McInerney & Van Etten, 2001). This will take us to the important link between L2 learning motivation and the sociocultural context, where a dialectical relationship exists between the learner's previous L2 experiences and the sociocultural dimension that he/she currently is situated in (Kim, 2006).

The present study fills the gap in the literature by exploring and investigating the experiences of Saudi students in the UK higher education setting. The findings of this study can be appropriate to other students in the Middle Eastern region with similar

backgrounds by examining these students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds. There is no previous similar research concentrating on the experiences of Arab students in general; and Saudi students in particular in terms of self-identities and motivational changes in learning the English language in an L2 context in the UK. Previous similar research may be useful, but it has a weak relevance to the Saudi learners. Since there are differences in the academic orientations amongst international students, the findings of previous similar studies cannot be useful for all of those students. For instance, several factors have been found to affect the students' self-identities and motivational changes; however, the relevance of these factors to Saudi learners has been inadequately researched (Ali, 2017; McInerney & Van Etten, 2001).

Therefore, this study investigates changes in self-identities and motivations of Saudi students studying English in the UK. This area is understudied, and the findings would be beneficial in the teaching and learning process in Saudi Arabia. Linguistic performance in a different cultural context would give insights into the teaching practices that use the English language in Saudi Arabia.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

This study aims to achieve the following objectives;

1. To identify the original motivations and attitudes of EFL Saudi students in the UK towards English language acquisition.
2. To know the impact of motivation on attitudes towards the target culture.
3. To explore the process of change that takes place during the students' time in Britain and the extent to which Saudi learners of English in Britain interact with native speakers outside the classroom.
4. To know the extent to which immersion with the British culture influences EFL Saudi students' performance in the EFL classroom.

1.3 Research Questions

The research aims to answer the following questions:

5. What are the original motivations and attitudes of EFL Saudi students in the UK towards English language acquisition?
6. How do these motivations influence their attitudes towards the target culture?
7. What is the process of change that takes place during the students' time in Britain, and to what extent do Saudi learners of English in Britain interact with native speakers outside the classroom?
8. To what extent does immersion with the British culture influence EFL Saudi students' performance in the EFL classroom?

1.4 Significance of the Study

The results of this study will be important to educational decision-makers as they will enable teaching methods and curriculum content to be adapted to boost educational outcomes for Saudi students studying English as a second language. It will also give important insights for education field workers to help their students learn a second language. If the study finds that motivation impacts EFL students' learning habits and attitudes, which in turn affects the quality of their level of English and their perceptions of self-identity, this will reveal that success in changing students' motivation can impact their entire L2 education process. The analysis of the direct link between perceptions of self-identity and the ability to acquire new skills could help underscore the role of motivation in second language acquisition. It is expected that the impact of this research could bring about changes in the curriculum, pedagogical methodologies, and L2 learning strategies across the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

On a smaller scale, individual teachers could use the recommendations of this study to motivate students in the classroom in order to change their attitude towards L2 learning. In particular, considering the important link between L2 motivation and the sociocultural context, schools in the UK can develop a curriculum that takes this link into account. The biggest problem facing teachers is the negative attitude that students may have towards the English language. Many students consider EFL learning an obstacle that must be overcome, not a subject or experience to be enjoyed. Thus, changing students' motivations may help to change their attitude towards learning EFL, the positive implications of which may be far-reaching throughout their personal and professional lives. In other words, the study attempts to give new insights into the motivation and self-identity changes among Saudi EFL students in the UK.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Motivation

Motivation 'determines the extent of active, personal involvement in L2 learning' (Oxford & Shearin, 1994: 12). Harmer (2001: 51) states that it is 'an internal drive which pushes someone to do things in order to achieve something. Brown (2000: 160) adds that motivation is a 'catch-all term for explaining the success or failure of virtually any complex task'.

Dörnyei (2001a: 7) states that motivation implies the reason for doing something, how hard the individuals will pursue it, and how much time they will allocate to keep the activity. Even if a learner's motivation is strong, there are other variables that exist, including changes in what motivates a person, which can impact learning (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991).

On the other hand, Dörnyei (1998: 117) commented that 'although motivation is a term frequently used in educational and research contexts, it is rather surprising how little agreement there is in the literature regarding the exact meaning of the concept'. Motivation varies depending on culture and the individuals themselves. For many educators, motivation is the most complicated and challenging issue (Scheidecker & Freeman, 1999: 116). The following definitions reveal different schools of thought about the concept of motivation.

Research regarding the source of motivation led to the development of self-determination theory. This theory is considered one of the breakthroughs in the field of motivational psychology (Dörnyei, 2005: 76). The founders of the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) are Richard Ryan and Edward Deci, who claimed that individuals have the choice and full control 'in initiating and regulating one's own actions' (Deci. et al., 1989: 580). Within this theory, there are two different types of motivations: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation refers to the activities driven by an internal reward such as happiness, and feelings of satisfaction or pleasure, whereas extrinsic motivation refers to an external reward such as getting a good job, receiving praise from others, and getting high marks in an exam, and the like. In light of this theory, a new idea began to emerge, arguing that intrinsic motivation is always stronger than extrinsic motivation.

Language Learning Motivation (LLM) was initially studied by social psychologists in light of its role in developing an acceptable attitude to learning a language (Dörnyei, 2003). Krashen (1981) then became interested in the affective aspects of LLM and developed the Monitor Model, followed by Schumann (1986), who created the Acculturation model. Eventually, Gardner (1985) developed the socio-educational model, in which he states that motivation is "a combination of efforts plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favourable attitudes towards learning the language" (p. 10). Gardner split motivation into integrative (focused on the desire to understand the language and the ability to use it confidently in communication with native speakers) and instrumental (external goal to be achieved such as getting a job or a promotion), with more focus on the former. For Gardner (1985), motivation refers to the inner force that pushes the learner to exert effort and show enjoyment in doing so, whilst orientation refers to the reasons for studying a language.

In 1998, Dörnyei and Otto created the Process Model of L2 Motivation as a response to the challenge of describing the motivational process over time. It arranges the motivational influences of L2 along with hidden actional events, and it contains two dimensions: a) action sequence; and b) motivational influences (Dörnyei, 2001a).

Many Researchers (e.g. Gardner, 1985; Tremblay, Goldberg & Gardner, 1996; Ellis, 1997) were highly interested in studying motivation, primarily because of the complex issues driven by various factors that are involved in affecting motivation. Many studies have focused their attention on second language acquisition amongst Japanese, French, Indian, Chinese, Polish, Lebanese, UAE, and Saudi nationalities. The results and implications of many such studies are presented in elaborate detail whilst reviewing the literature in the second chapter of this dissertation. However, researchers had concluded that a good educational curriculum and appropriate instructions are not enough for successful L2 acquisition, but rather, it is the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations that affect the success of L2 learners in the L2 environment and in the domestic environment.

Motivation and attitude are two effective characteristics that serve as significant variables in successful language learning (Ellis, 1997). Research on attitudes and motivation in L2 learning has been dominated by the studies of the Canadian Psychologist R. C. Gardner and his associates (see, for example, Gardner, 1985; Tremblay, Goldberg & Gardner, 1996). Gardner (1985) proposed a socio-educational model of second language acquisition consisting of three variables: motivation, integration, and attitudes towards the learning situation.

Previous studies have indicated that ESL Saudi learners are utilitarian: they learn English to meet certain job-related needs (Alhuqbani, 2005). Al-Jarf (2009) finds that the instrumental motivation of Saudi ESL learners means that they have definite goals and intentions to achieve in their language studies, although in many cases, the language courses available are not adequate to meet these goals.

Many researchers consider students' attitudes and motivations to be vital elements in contributing to the failure or success of the language learning process (Gardner & Lysynchuk, 1990; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991). Unfortunately, Rababah (2005) and Khan (2011) observe that Saudi English language students who continue their studies at undergraduate and post-graduate levels display disappointing levels of vocabulary and syntax acquisition, in addition to a lack of communicative confidence and competence. Al-Jarf (2009) notes that the majority of Saudi students in the UK are learning English to meet defined professional needs. Unfortunately, Al-Jarf (2009) observes that most students seem to experience problems in attaining a level of comprehension and sufficient understanding to allow them to communicate confidently and competently with native English speakers. Moreover, many

Saudi students prefer to communicate amongst themselves in Arabic and do not extend their practice of English outside the classroom.

This inability to express opinions and ideas more confidently in an English-speaking setting sometimes holds back the real potential of a Saudi student and affects one's professional development. Moreover, in a cosmopolitan setting like the UK, where people from diverse backgrounds speak different languages, English becomes all the more important as a medium of interaction. Therefore, this study will investigate the extent to which a representative sample of Saudi students, both male and female, interact and integrate with native English speakers to assimilate with the culture more easily and climb the career ladder higher.

2.2. Language Learning and Self-Identity

Identity may be defined as 'how people understand their relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how people understand their possibilities for the future' (Norton, 1997: 410). In other words, identity encapsulates one's knowledge of oneself. Thus, one's identity plays an important role in learning a language (Norton, 1997).

Bilingualism appears to result in changes in the self-concept of language learners (Gao et al., 2007). Lambert (1974 cited in Gao et al., 2007: 134) put forth two types of bilingualism in the language learning setting: additive *bilingualism and subtractive bilingualism*. Subtractive bilingualism simply implies that the target culture and language replaced the mother tongue and culture. Commins (1979: 199) reported that this type of subtractive bilingualism may result in loss of the native language, particularly in a setting where the new language is acquired by language-minority individuals. This lack of native language ability could also stir learners to split bilingualism, in which learners may encounter an imbalanced identity between the two languages and cultures.

A foreign language learner has been observed to experience changes in his/her perception of self-identity, such as personal competence, manner of communication, values and ideals, ideas about acceptable or appropriate behaviour, or the overall personality in terms of attitude and behaviour. Generally, these changes depend on a learner's gender, age, motivation to learn English, the age at which EFL learning started, and the attitude towards English as a language. These factors can be regarded as the driving force that brings about the changes in self-identification practices (Gao et al., 2015).

A number of studies have examined students' motivation and self-identity changes which are connected with L2 learning. For example, Bron (2007) conducted a study on Japanese students who learned Swedish as an L2. These learners experienced changes in self-identity, which involved physical and mental processes. Moreover, Gardner et al. (2004) examined the motivational changes in a number of Canadian students who learned French as a second language. They used Gardner's (1985) Attitude and Motivation Battery in order to measure five important factors in L2 acquisition: (a) integrativeness, (b) attitude towards the learning setting, (c) motivation, (d) language anxiety, and (e) instrumental orientation. The findings of this study revealed that there were important changes in the domains of class anxiety, motivational intensity, and teacher evaluation. Ushioda (1998) found that Irish college students perceived learning French as a positive experience, given that participants allotted a high status to French language skills and encouraged students to sustain continuous involvement in L2 learning.

A more recent study by Liu (2007) examined the motivation and attitudes of Chinese undergraduates towards EFL learning. The study comprised 202 students in the English Language Department at Xiamen University in China. All students showed a positive attitude towards learning English with high motivation for learning. They were both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated to learn English.

2.3. Conceptual Framework: Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System

The present study adopts Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System and Dörnyei and Ushioda (2009) Model of motivation and self-identity. This model explains motivation through a three-part system focusing on possible selves and their interaction with language learning environments. This system primarily connects motivation to an Ideal L2 Self and an Ought-to L2 Self, which the learning experience shapes. Therefore, the three parts of Dörnyei's system are identified as the Ideal L2 Self, the Ought-to L2 Self, and the learning experience (Plaza, 2015).

The L2 Motivational Self System was designed to deal with motivation for learning a foreign language out of current notions of self and identity. The individual's images of what he/she might become in the future and how he/she would like his/her life to unfold are represented by the possible self. Therefore, this possible self serves as a future self-guide, mirroring a dynamic conception about one's transformation from the present to the future (Plaza, 2015).

The learner's ability to thoroughly imagine this guide is a primary aspect of becoming motivated by the future self-guide (Dörnyei, 2009b). Markus and Nurius (1987) denote that individuals with connections to sensory qualities experience possible selves as an actual reality. Thus, one's ability to integrate the sensory experience to imagine himself/herself as he/she masters a foreign language has a significant contribution to their aspiration to learn the language. The learners' ability to fully and clearly understand

their self-guides will have an influence on the extent to which these self-guides can motivate them. The initial requirement is the existence of the L2 selves. This is where one can see the necessity of aiding the learners to construct and polish their possible selves (Plaza, 2015). However, Dörnyei (2009b) points out that only when the individual perceives the possible self as *possible* can it become a reality within his/her own circumstances. This condition indicates a necessary consideration among educators in relation to helping learners determine how they can use the language and how mastering it becomes possible. On the other hand, there are circumstances in which peer pressure affects the learners' intention to learn. This is exemplified by the fact that students would sometimes be reluctant to perform well in class because of a desire to conform to peer expectations that view success negatively (Plaza, 2015).

It must be noted that learners should arguably not only possess clear possible selves but should also be actively engaged with these selves. In this regard, they should arguably be given experiences that enable them to remember the value of their ideal selves and Ought-to L2 selves as well as achieving them. Therefore, teachers are tasked to produce lesson contents that help students focus on their language goals. In connection to this, L2 learners require a roadmap of tasks that must be followed in order to estimate the ideal self. Therefore, it is important for teachers to help students put together some practical steps that could allow them to realise their goals. When students are presented with only a vision of their learning objectives but lack clear, tangible steps to achieve them, the result could be discouragement and inability to attain their desired outcomes (Plaza, 2015).

One aspect that necessitates further investigation is how self-concepts differ across cultures (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009). It is worthy of note that Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System is an outcome of his criticism of Gardner and Lambert's integrative concept that formerly governed the L2 motivation domain. The two problems that Dörnyei (2009b) saw in this integrative concept were a lack of sensitivity to cultural differences and the varying view toward the 'inner circle' L1 community (Miyahara, 2015, p. 24).

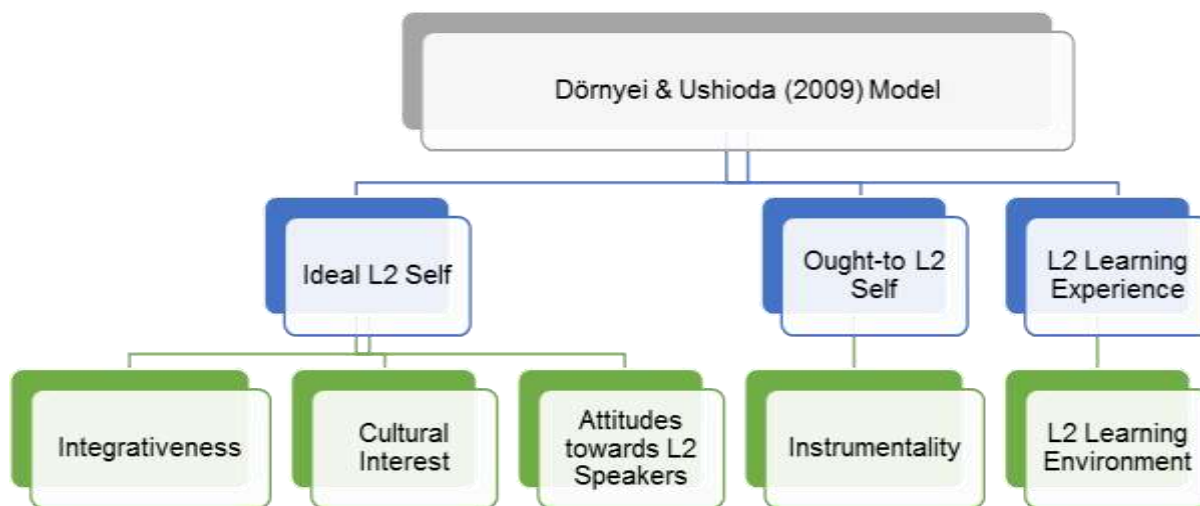


Figure 1. Dörnyei & Ushioda Model (2009).

The relationship between motivation and self-identity has been investigated in many cases. Gao et al. (2007) investigated the connection between motivation and self-identity on approximately two thousand Chinese undergraduates. The results of the study showed that long-term motivation is associated with positive self-identity change. In addition, the findings showed that self-confidence change is associated with personal development. However, the relationship between social responsibility and self-identity change was weak. These findings suggest that the students' motivation to learn English was linked to changes in their identities since motivation resulted in major changes in the students' values, beliefs, and behaviours. The motivation to learn the target language pushes the learners to adopt the cultural style of the target language and immerse themselves in the target language environment.

Boonchum (2009) examined the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation amongst a number of college students in Thailand. The study tried to investigate the relationship between motivation types and self-identity changes. The study's findings showed that intrinsic motivation was correlated with four kinds of self-identity change: additive, productive, subtractive, and split change. Also, the findings of the study showed that extrinsic motivation was correlated with self-confidence, additive, productive, subtractive, and split changes. On the other hand, Boonchum (2009) also found that those learners specialising in English literature, whether in the city or in the provinces, experienced the same level of self-trust, additive, productive, and zero changes. The study also found that

there are statically significant differences between the learners in the subtractive and split changes. Most of the students expressed that, not with regard to their specialisation, they experience additive, productive, zero, and self-trust changes. The study examined the effect of other factors on self-identity changes and found that gender and experience abroad did not affect the learners' self-identity changes.

According to these studies, Saudi EFL students may experience changes in their self-confidence and competency levels. This idea is supported in many EFL contexts. Self-identity changes were seen as a natural outcome after being immersed in an L2 environment, regardless of the type of self-identity change that learners undergo. The learning situation in the United Kingdom is certainly different from the learning situation in Saudi Arabia in terms of culture, way of life, and behaviours. So, Saudi students may experience changes in self-identity after moving to a different culture.

Studies on self-identity change had been mainly conducted in EFL contexts. Gao et al. (2005) investigated the issue of self-identity changes that Chinese undergraduate students experienced. Their study comprised more than two thousand students across mainland China. The results of the study showed that the most remarkable changes amongst the Chinese students were the self-confidence changes followed by zero change. The study regarded self-confidence as a change resulting from English language learners and not from factors affecting English language learners. The researchers claimed these changes occurred as a result of the students being in an EFL context. Students in EFL settings have limited exposure to the second culture. Additionally, students have a higher perception of English language learning affecting their competence rather than their cultural identities (Gao et al., 2005: 50).

The biggest change that occurred was the change in the students' self-confidence and cultural identities of the students. About half of the students claimed that they experienced productive changes, suggesting that self-identity changes are not limited to only the best foreign language learners. Gao's (2001) previous studies showed that the best English language learners (as selected by their classmates in China) exhibited a stable level of productive bilingualism. Furthermore, the students showed that they had experienced additive changes, which mean that the students' first language and first culture are maintained. Also, they stated that the changes that happened in their ideas, values, behaviours, and beliefs were positive changes. Very few students see the changes they experience as a kind of cultural conflict. Subtractive and split changes were less noticeable in the students. However, these changes still exist. Cultural conflicts are not necessarily a negative issue but may be a developmental stage for students with limited knowledge of the language and culture. When the learners' knowledge of the language and the culture are enriched, they might perceive the changes as being positive (Gao et al., 2005).

According to the above-mentioned concepts, we can claim that the learning process in EFL contexts, including motivation, plays an important role in learning outcomes. The non-linguistic outcomes are the interest of many researchers, and identity change is one of the prominent changes. However, this should be investigated in light of the linguistic context in which the students learn. Certainly, when the Saudi students are immersed in an L2 context, they are likely to become better learners of English since they will be exposed to an L2 learning environment in terms of the teachers, resources, curriculum, foreign friends, and learners' autonomy.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Method

A range of research methods can be used when conducting any study, and these are generally split into two categories: quantitative and qualitative data methods. Quantitative research methods are those methods that are closed-ended in nature, such as questionnaires, which enable statistical interpretation of results. Questionnaires and questionnaires are a good way to study numerous participants. Even though the sample was relatively small, information can still be extracted to make some preliminary conclusions regarding the study – Saudi students' motivation and attitudes towards learning English in the UK. These complement the thematic analysis performed on the interviews and questionnaires and the ethnographic observations carried out.

This study used questionnaires, interviews, and observation as data collection methods. Questionnaires and interviews enter into the area of thematic analysis. Participant observation falls in the realm of ethnography, which is a qualitative approach linked with anthropology to study a whole culture. In this case, the culture this research is interested in is the Saudi students learning English in the UK. The researcher is free to observe any amount of variables, which will enrich the results and findings. Even though quantitative methods were used, the main method used for this research was qualitative. Quantitative methods will support the qualitative findings in providing further information on the variables researched. The nature of the sample is small, and caution must be taken when using quantitative methods. Questionnaires were used to ascertain the participants' motivations for learning English, their level of enjoyment and immersion in the target culture, and any changes in their self-identity. Moreover, observation methods were used in the teaching classrooms of the participants across all universities to establish how the participants

responded, reacted and behaved in this particular context (Patton, 2002). The interaction between individuals was assessed, and changes in different individuals' behaviour were noted.

3.2. Participants

Data from questionnaires, interviews, and observations are used through three phases of the English academic programme. The subjects of the study are newly arrived Saudi students (three PhD students and 29 Master's students) studying in four different universities in the UK under the fields of Linguistics, Applied Linguistics, and Translation.

3.3. Data Collection

The data collected from the participants was carried out in three phases using three different methods at each stage: questionnaires, personal ethnographic interviews, and observation. This was carried out in three phases in order to measure changes in motivation and attitudes of the Saudi students towards studying English in the UK, as they immersed themselves in the culture through the duration of the course and the present study. Triangulation is the use of three data collection tools. In this study, the researcher used; questionnaires, interviews, and an observation checklist as the data collection tools. The aim behind using triangulation is obtaining results using more than one tool. This enhances the reliability and validity of the research results.

3.3.1. A 3-Phase Questionnaire

The brief questionnaire was carried out three times, and it was carried out involving all the subjects with no exception. There was a 3-month gap between Phase 1 (beginning December 2014) and Phase 2 (Mid-March 2015) and a 5-month gap between phases 2 and 3 (finishing in September 2015). The first phase necessarily took place at a very early stage of the students' arrival to the UK, within the early months of their course, the second phase halfway through their course and the final phase at the end of their course. At the interview stage of phase one, each participant was given a unique number/ID for future use – this was the only way to clearly map changes in their motivations and attitudes over the period of the study.

In between phases 1 and 2, and between phases 2 and 3, the researcher also observed classroom behaviours as well as social gatherings in order to notate the participants' behaviours in various settings/environments over time, with the purpose of observing and analysing the process of change that takes place throughout Saudi students' studies in the UK and how their motivations and attitudes towards learning English change during their course of study, taking into consideration how British culture and their own intrinsic motivations affect/impact the change. The study is also interested in the weight attributed to the factors affecting the change in motivation. According to Dörnyei (2011: 6), 'motivation does not remain constant during the course of months, years or even during a single lesson.

3.3.2. Semi-structured Interview

The second source of data came from the personal interviews, which were selective: 32 participants were interviewed in Phase 1, and 18 were interviewed in Phases 2 and 3. The format of the qualitative data collection, namely that of interviews adopted for this study, were semi-structured interviews. These interviews involved finding information regarding sociocultural and external factors to review the change in identity through the learning and the research process. These interviews took place in the 4 universities and involved participants from each university that was involved in the study. After each set of interviews, transcriptions were produced to explore changes in feelings, attitudes, and behaviour in future interviews.

The interviews' questions aim to target specific areas linked to our current understanding with a view to negotiating such beliefs. Within Phase 1, questions 1-3 is aimed at discovering the students' background and their motivations within the family context (Hadden et al., 2014) back home. Questions 4 and 5 are concerned with the cultural context of their experience. Questions 6 and 7 address motivation directly in terms of positive and negative experiences. Questions 8 to 11 aim to specifically elicit responses connected with the learning experience. Phase 2 tweaks the questions within phase 1 to account for the transition between the initial perception versus a midpoint of their studies and equally a late to end point.

3.3.3. Observation

In addition to both the questionnaire analysis and interview response analysis, this study was further enhanced through observational techniques of the students both within the context of the classroom and social settings. The students were observed within the setting of the classroom during normal day to day classes to check the validity of the data collected using the questionnaire and the interviews with no interference from the observer in the classroom activities. On the other hand, the same kind of observation was applied outside the classrooms in the different facilities of the universities campuses such as; the library, the cafeteria and other variable activities attended by the students where they have to apply using the language effectively. An observational checklist is used as a key method for the study of human behaviour, as unlike the previous two techniques – questionnaires and interviews – it does not rely upon the students' more controlled responses. Rather, the observer can record

observations displayed by students and analyse correlations to the other study methods. This triangulation is aimed at creating a broader research picture leading to ultimately more reliable findings.

A detailed timeline for this research work is shown in Table 1.

Table .1: *Timeline of the Research Work*

Activity name	Details	Date started	Date ended
Research proposal	Planning the research work and getting it approved	16 th Sept 2013	30 th Sept 2014
Questionnaire/ Interviews	Designing questionnaire/ interviews to ascertain the participants' motivations for learning English.	1 st Oct 2014	8 th Nov 2014
Collecting data	Data collection was done in three phases	27 th Nov 2014	25 th Sep 2015
1 st phase questionnaire	When respondents are in their early months in their universities	1 st Dec 2014	7 th Dec 2014
1 st phase interview	Interviews were conducted at the 4 chosen universities.	1 st Dec 2014	6 th Dec 2014
Transcribing interview responses	Transcription of interview responses of the 1 st phase	11 th Dec 2014	27 th Dec 2014
1 st phase Data collection through observations	The researchers observed the teaching classrooms of the participants across all universities to establish how the participants responded, reacted and behaved in this particular context. The interaction between individuals was assessed as well as changes in different individuals' behaviour were also noticed.	27 th Nov 2014	26 th Feb 2015
2 nd phase questionnaire	In the mid of the respondents' academic programme	4 th Mar 2015	26 th Mar 2015
2 nd phase interview	Interviews were conducted at the 4 chosen universities	23 rd Mar 2015	27 th April 2015
Transcribing interview responses	Transcription of interview responses of the 2 nd phase	20 th April 2015	12 th May 2015
2 nd phase Data collection through observations	At University A, University B, University C, and University D	4 th Mar 2015	15 th June 2015
3 rd phase questionnaire	Close to the ending of the respondents' term	28 th July 2015	6 th August 2015
3 rd phase interview	When respondents were about to finish their term	28 th July 2015	20 th Sep 2015
3 rd phase Data collection through observations	At University A, University B, University C, and University D	28 th July 2015	25 th Sep 2015
Transcribing interview responses	Transcription of interview responses of the 3 rd phase	8 th August 2015	23 rd August 2015
Data coding (Questionnaires)	Coding and recoding the data collected from questionnaires in the 3 phases	20 th Jan 2016	19 th Feb 2016
Data analysis	Analysing the Responses	20 th Feb 2016	20 th Mar 2016
Data coding (Interviews)	Coding and recoding the data collected from the interviews in the 3 phases	21 st April 2016	1 st May 2016
Data analysis	Analysing the Responses	2 nd May 2016	30 th June 2016
Data coding (Observation)	Coding and recoding the data collected from the observation in the 3 phases	1 st July 2016	30 th August 2016
Data analysis	Analysing the Responses	1 st Sep 2016	30 th Sep 2016
Writing the report	compiling it, recording and analysing the responses	1 st Feb 2016	30 th Sep 2016

Finalising the research report	Formatting the report, checking for coherence and cohesion of ideas, conclusion, recommendations, Future Research, Editing & Formatting	30 th Sep 2016	30 th Sep 2017
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4. Results and Discussion

This part of the statistical analysis discusses the calculation of descriptive statistics for the independent variables; Ideal L2 Self, Ought-to L2 Self, L2 Learning Experience, English use anxiety, Proficiency in English, Encouragement and Self- confidence within the three phases in order to compare the sample responses towards the mentioned variables using measures of central tendency (mean, median and mode) and the dispersion measurement standard deviation (SD). Furthermore, graphical representations of mean values of the variables were constructed using bar graphs to show the comparisons between the mean values. It is also necessary for this space to justify the selection of these particular variables. It was the decision of the researcher to apply both the Motivational Self System Variables, together with additional variables from Gardner’s battery so as to approximate, at the epistemic and ontological levels, the central research objectives.

The section that follows imports the data into the context of the central research questions, responding to them by establishing a perspective constrained by the distinctive methodologies and perspectives of this particular study.

4.1 What are the original motivations and attitudes of EFL Saudi students in the UK towards English language acquisition?

This section details the original motivations and attitudes of Saudi Students who are studying English as a foreign language in the UK. Today, English is considered a major international language. This requires both an acceptance of the historical events that shaped present-day trends in linguistic exchange, sensitivity to local language and customs, and their preservation.

Motivations:

- i. Saudi students are driven by the acceptance of the status of English as an international *lingua franca*. There exists (though not wholly so) a desire to better themselves, but also according to the values of British culture as a form of cultural capital.
- ii. Saudi students are driven forth by their choice to study L2 English, and it is wholly regulated by a self-directed intention.
- iii. Saudi students are subject to external pressures that drive them towards L2 English acquisition.

The original motivations of the students to learn English reflect their need to learn the language more than their need to benefit from the language. The majority of the students showed that their earlier motivations to study English revolved around their need to learn English, their desire to know more about the English culture, and their need to gain prestige in the language. Out of the 32 participants, 14 said that they primarily wanted to obtain a degree in the UK, whilst 14 others stated that apart from getting a degree, their reason for coming to the UK was to learn English as a second language. English language learning is seen in the Arabic context as a prestigious language, and the speakers of English in this context are seen as prestigious persons. Hence, after completing the secondary stage, most of the students aspire to study the English language when they join colleges of languages and translation. This might explain the idea amongst Arab speakers that English offers extra social credit to the person who speaks it. The social credit given by the English language to its speakers in the Arabic settings is supported by the report of Alhuqbani (2005); that Arabic students study English in order to get prestige and to become recognised as highly ranked persons in their communities. This shows that the students study English out of superficial needs. They are not fully aware of its value, as they may lack the knowledge and experience that allow them to realise the importance of learning the English language. However, in the data, not many believed that studying English is important to obtain the approval of their peers/teachers/family (M=2.78). Similarly, those who had the viewpoint that they had to study English in order not to disappoint their parents were not of a significant number (M=2.19).

On the other hand, given that English learning was a requirement at their school (M = 3.94), the students were driven by fulfilling the expectation of their community to become fluent English speakers (M=3.50), which was aligned to their own personal value on studying English; that an educated person is supposed to be able to speak English (M=3.69). It may be observed that these results are not that significantly high, which can form a basis of the extent of the students’ motivation to learn English as an L2 in the UK. Further, not many of their close friends were studying English and shared their view of its importance (M=2.84). Neither did many of the students in the study believe that English language acquisition would have had a negative impact on their lives if they did not learn English (M=2.97). These results do not show significantly high Means. It may, however, be inferred that the corresponding outcomes of their interest to learn more about English/Western culture and the native English speaking community

(M=3.84) is parallel to their aspirations to study abroad or to live in an English-speaking country (M= 4.09), and their interest to understand and participate in conversations around English/Western media (M= 4.16).

Furthermore, the intrinsic motivation of the students to study English may be attributed to the self-image notion. Every individual in society aims to have his or her own personal achievement. The students want to have a good self-image, and they see that this can be achieved by studying English and by having a personal achievement. Moreover, the Saudi learners seek to have their own personal achievements (Alrabai, 2017). This corresponds with Hofstede *et al.* (2010), who reported that the students become motivated to learn the language in order to have a personal achievement. This emphasises the individualistic aspect in language learning whereby each individual seeks to enhance his/her own self-image. In the study, the data demonstrate that the students wanted to feel challenged and push themselves further in their studies, mastering the English language as a great academic achievement (M=4.34). They were also intrinsically motivated to study English as they could link it to their future lives, where they could see that English would play an important role (M= 4.16). Moreover, many of the students considered themselves as high achievers and always obtained high marks in their English classes (M=3.81).

It is important to note that motivation has been found to be a crucial factor in language learning at all levels. Yet, it becomes essential when it comes to teaching English as L2 as it has a direct connection with the learners' social nature (Kobayashi and Viswat, 2007). Additionally, motivation has been found to be a fundamental factor for L2 learning as it determines the extent to which the learner engages positively and actively in the target language (Oxford and Shearin, 1994). According to Schmitt (2002: 172), "motivation is a key learner variable because, without it, nothing happens". In the data, the students expressed their intention to learn English so fluently to the point that it becomes natural to them (M=4.25). Identifying the learners' motivational factors helps in selecting the language to be learned and the types of tasks that the learners prefer to engage in, alongside the proficiency level that they anticipate achieving (Abu Baker, Suliman and Razaai, 2010: 72). In addition, identifying the motivational factors is vital in achieving the learning goals and in creating a sound classroom environment (Noels, 2003). In the data, the students perceived that their English language skills are improving and that they have become more comfortable talking to native English speakers (M= 3.97). They also felt very confident in their ability to speak and write English (M=4.22).

Further, the students in this study expressed that they were interested in learning more about the English culture (M = 3.84) and that they had aspirations to study abroad or live in an English-speaking country (M= 4.09). They also expressed their interest in English-speaking countries' culture (M = 3.69) and in putting their English language skills outside of the classroom, with native English speakers (M = 3.84). They wanted to be able to understand and participate in conversations within the English/Western media (e.g., movies, music, news, literature, etc.) (M= 4.16). In this way, they could use the English language as a way to learn more about the cultural community in which they were in, as well as establish an affiliation with this community and its people.

The findings also showed that the students had a positive attitude towards learning English. This has been shown earlier in their perceived improvement in their English language skills and their being more comfortable speaking to native English speakers (M=3.97). Similarly, they felt very confident in their ability to speak and write in English (M=4.22). They were relaxed enough when ordering food, giving street directions, and talking to British residents in English (M = 4.16). They were also comfortable speaking to native English speakers (3.97) and wanted their English language skills to improve so that they would become more comfortable speaking to English speakers (M = 4.03). This is coupled with their effort to try to understand all of the English words they hear and read (M = 4.00).

Whereas motivation reflects the level of interest in learning the target language, attitude towards the learning situation means the "evaluative reaction to some referent or attitude object, inferred on the basis of the individual's beliefs or opinions about the referent" (Gardner, 1985: 9). The learning situation involves a number of components such as textbooks, the teacher, classroom tasks, and so forth, in order to measure the learners' attitudes and motivation towards second language learning. The Saudi students' motivation to study English in the UK is impacted by their realisation of the importance of the English language and its role in their future careers.

The students' ideal L2 self-data shows that their motivation to learn English moved from just an interest (M=3.82 in Phase 1) to being more instrumental in Phase 2 (M=3.66) and in Phase 3 (M= 3.47). This corresponds with Javid *et al.* (2012), who reported that Saudi students are motivated to learn and study English due to the practicality of the English language in the labour market. In the EFL context, the earlier motivations of the students to study English moved from integrative motivations to instrumental motivations as they became more mature and more understanding of the world around them. For example, they denoted that they found pleasure in learning more about English literature and culture (M = 3.72). They also believed that it is important to study English because it will allow them to better understand and appreciate the culture surrounding the English language (M = 3.59).

This is supported by Boekaerts (2001), who claimed that students develop a sense of the world around them and their goals of studying language development as they gain more insights into their environment. It is significant to point out that language learning often deals with overseas cultures, behavioural norms, and cultural adaptations, impacting one's self-identity (Boonchum, 2009). Hence, the students' motivations to learn English and to be familiar with the British culture can be explained by this, given the important role of the sociocultural context that shapes their self-identities.

The above findings are also understood in line with the answers of most of the students who expressed their initial motivations to learn English as derived from their desire and interest in the language. Their attitudes towards the language are reflected in their intrinsic interest in it. The students' earlier motivations account for the changes that happened in their later motivations and attitudes towards language learning. Since the majority of the Saudi students are motivated intrinsically to learn English in the beginning, it is expected that they would experience a different kind of motivation when they move to an L2 context. Their earlier motivations are impacted by realisations inherent in their Saudi environment and by how language learning is viewed in the Saudi academic setting. Their experience in Saudi Arabia has created certain motivations for them to study English out of their undeveloped perceptions of the language and its global role. Moreover, the surrounding environment plays a role in shaping the students' perceptions of the English language, influenced by the teachers' capabilities, the learning environment, the activities used, and the interaction modes inside and outside the class (Nordquist, 2010; Tsagari, 2016).

By understanding the sociocultural factors that shape their students' learning styles in the L2 classroom, L2 teachers would be able to develop suitable materials that can effectively facilitate the whole learning process (Nordquist, 2010). On the other hand, it should also be emphasized that the study of L2 is commonly associated with changes in the student's competence, behaviour, personality, and style of communication (Boonchum, 2009). Hence, as the students in this study claimed of their interest to learn the English language and the British culture, it can be expected that a corresponding change in these areas will likely take place.

From the data in this study, the students expressed that English learning was a requirement in their school ($M=3.94$). Furthermore, they expressed that their expectation was that students moving on to higher education should be fluent in using the English language or at least have the ability to read/write in English ($M=3.50$). All the students have studied English, a compulsory subject in their general education schools in Saudi Arabia. Their motivations to study English and their attitudes towards it are impacted by this enforcement to study the language. Since they went to pursue their higher studies in the UK, no enforcement was made in regard to this. They weighted the benefits of studying English in an L2 context and selected the option that could best serve their goals. This corresponds with Chen et al. (2005), who explained that one's motivations to study the language are the outcome of different factors that shape their attitudes and identity to become oriented towards the language.

4.2 How do these motivations influence the students' attitudes towards the target culture?

The attitudes towards the target culture are a profound variable that bears upon the students' respective learning experiences in both positive and negative ways. This attitude consists of a number of internal dispositions towards the target culture, including their perception and cognition of the culture itself. Phenomena such as cultural immersion, expectation, and real experience all play a part in modifying the experience.

The results showed that the Saudi students developed positive attitudes towards the target culture. Since the students are immersed in the new culture, they have adopted the values, customs, and traditions of the culture. The students' inclination towards the target culture can be explained by their love for the language and their admiration of the learning experience in the L2 setting. In a comparison between three phases according to responses on an English use anxiety variable, they stated that they would feel embarrassed if they could not communicate in English with their professors, friends, and English-speaking family members ($M=3.34$). This scenario would be enough for them to try to learn English as L2 learners in the UK.

The feeling of love towards their language course is one of the basic factors for having positive attitudes towards the target culture. The students who liked the English language were influenced by English movies, books, songs, and literature. Moreover, they expressed that they would feel comfortable when using English and that they can switch between Arabic and English according to the situation. This is stressed by Noels (2003), who stated that the learners' language is highly affected by their inclination towards the culture in which they study the language. Similarly, in comparing the three phases based on responses about the English use anxiety variable, some never felt sure of themselves when speaking in English class ($M = 2.78$). Taking Noels' (2003) idea about the connection between the learners' language and their inclination towards the host culture, one could just ponder on how the students managed to adapt to the new culture.

Moreover, Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System may be used to understand this, as the model explains motivation that focuses on potential selves and their interaction with language learning environments. According to the situation, the students' ability to

switch between Arabic and English is congruent with Dörnyei's (2009b) notion of an ideal self, which is shaped by the learning experience. This notion of ideal self can be exemplified by the students' proficiency in English. Their mean perception of being high-achievers and wanting to learn English fluently generated an escalating trend; that is, Phase 1 had $M= 3.89$; Phase 2 had $M= 3.95$, and Phase 3 had $M= 3.97$.

In the present study, the learners studied English because it was a compulsory subject. Therefore, their positive attitudes and motivation towards English were anchored on this compulsion. All the respondents showed that the study of English would grant them a better education and better practical opportunities in the future. This perception was enough for them to develop a positive attitude towards English language acquisition and adapt to British culture, which facilitates this language acquisition. This is congruent with Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System, which assumes that the individual's images of what he/she might become in the future and how he/she would like his/her life to unfold are represented by the possible self. It was likewise emphasized that the learners' ability to fully and clearly understand their self-guides would have an influence on the extent to which these self-guides can motivate them. In addition, the students had a chance to learn English and gain more cultural awareness through the media, internet, TV, and newspapers. The questionnaire comments regarding the participants' views of the importance of English learning reported similar responses. A respondent noted this importance by the fact that everything now is in English, including books, media, and the Internet. Another respondent said that English is important in his job, while another said it is important for studying abroad and reading English books, articles, and other published materials. Heuser (2007) supported the findings that the media and the environment are significant tools for learning a foreign language. As the learners interact with the cultural elements in the foreign country, their language and their ability to understand the speakers of this language are fostered. This is seen in their agreement with the statement that their English language skills are improving and that they have become more comfortable speaking to native English speakers ($M=3.97$). Their seeming integration with the native culture is also fostered in how comfortable they are with ordering food in English, giving directions in English, and talking to people in English. However, they still have a seeming recognition and understanding of other students' struggle with the English language, as shown by $M=2.59$ for the statement, "I don't understand why other students are nervous about speaking English in our class".

Moreover, Svanes (1987) revealed a similar result that the learners' good attitudes towards the culture play an immense role in developing the learners' ability to learn the language and use it extensively in their daily life. In the data, the students denoted that their interest in English learning has increased ($M=3.69$). In addition, their interest in studying the language increases all the time ($M=3.72$). The learners' motivation and attitudes towards the language are influenced by their integration with the cultural components of the new environment. This is parallel to Lambert's (1974) theory which assumes that language learning affects identity changes as bilingualism. There is a fulfilment of additive bilingualism here since the students retained their native language and native culture as they acquired the target culture and target language. It may be posited that the target culture and the target language are interconnected. For example, the students in this study claimed that they were more motivated to study English now more than when they were in their country ($M= 3.66$). This is because as they learn the new language, a sociocultural consciousness of the country facilitating language learning is being developed in them (Lier and Corson, 1997).

Further, the learners' contact with new foreign friends motivated them to develop positive attitudes towards the target culture. Students can adopt certain foreign attitudes and values during their study. Such attitudes and values may not fit with some of their native conventions, resulting in confusion as to their behaviour and manners with foreign or local friends. Despite this knowledge, it was revealed that the students' improving competency with the language allowed them to be more accepted in the new community, which in the process drove them to achieve more in their EFL class ($M = 3.63$). This is supported by Gardner & MacIntyre (1993), who introduced the sociocultural model and proposed that formal and informal language learning can enhance learners' attitudes towards bilingualism. However, the learners acquire linguistic abilities and gain non-linguistic capabilities. The target culture creates changes in the learners' identity. As the learners absorb the new cultural aspects of the new setting, they are more likely to be linguistically and non-linguistically developed. The data shows that the students did not have to make any extra effort to be motivated in their new environment; however, this response came with only $M=2.88$ rather than a significant score. Since culture is the whole that involves the shared knowledge, beliefs, values, customs, habits, ideas, and traditions between the members of society, culture is also seen as associated with the society since culture and society are interrelated. The inclination of the students towards the target culture was explained by Laborda (2009), who reported that target language classes play an important role in presenting the activities that motivate students to develop positive attitudes towards the culture. For example, students can be asked to find information about the things in question, either by undertaking research or by being given prompts to examine. They can either write a summary or make an oral presentation about the cultural relevance of the thing to the class. This gives students the opportunity to absorb the cultural aspects associated with the language.

Moreover, communication in the target culture is one of the elements that motivate students to learn the language. In the study, communication can be expressed as an attention variable within the three phases. For example, in Phase 1, it was denoted that the students strongly maintained eye contact with the teacher (68.2%). They also wrote down notes strongly when appropriate (52.9%).

According to Abed (2011:167), effective communication can be accomplished by lexical means and using the social language correctly in different situations. Golato (2003) points out that study compliments are central to social interconnectedness and encourage social interaction between the members of society. Furthermore, it cancels any inequalities between the members because the members become involved in one act and thus can be considered as motives for social interaction.

On the other hand, the students developed positive attitudes towards the target culture because they became highly able to properly use the language in social situations. Familiarisation with the target culture is a special challenge for Arabic speakers. They may have a communicative failure since they may not understand what is being said to them. In Arabic contexts, in particular, and in other non-native contexts, the focus is mainly on the learners' linguistic competence with minimal stress on pragmatic competence. The majority of EFL teachers concentrate on grammar and vocabulary instruction without concentrating on instructing the students to use the language in different situations. This is mainly attributed to the dominance of the traditional methods of instruction in the EFL classes, which required the learners to mainly master grammar and vocabulary without putting stress on the learners' communicative competence. Foreign language learners cannot use the proper pragmatic strategies due to poor instruction of pragmatic competence in their language classes. Further, Qu & Wang (2005) reported that EFL learners in China are not trained in speaking with native speakers in the class due to an emphasis on other language areas.

The research data show that location had an impact on the students' attitude towards English ($M= 3.48$) in Phase 2. Their interest to study English increased in the later phase ($M=3.56$). The students' responses to this question corresponded with Csizér and Kormos (2008), who revealed that the target culture is important in developing positive attitudes towards the target language.

Also, the data show that the students' encouragement has increased from $M= 3.20$ in the first phase to $M=4.03$ in the third phase. In this study, the Saudi students are impressed by the culture of the UK and have internalised the values, customs, and traditions of the British culture to some extent. This has impacted their motivations to learn the language of that culture. The Saudi students have experienced a different culture from what they have ever experienced in Saudi Arabia. They have become in easier and open contact with the native speakers, and they engage in daily conversations in which they use the target language naturally as a medium of communication. This contributed to the creation of positive attitudes towards the language.

From the research data, the students were proficient in the target language ($M=3.89$). They were engaged in reading newspapers, going to the restaurants, and interacting with the native speakers in their daily life situations. This gave them the appetite for more involvement in the language learning process. This is consistent with Garcia (2009), who argued that cultural representation is highly associated with society and social situations. The different functions served by language are highly impacted by culture. Studying in an L2 context drives the students to use English as the main medium of communication. They are influenced by the language of the new sociocultural context to which they moved. Hence, the English language replaces their mother tongue. This makes them more oriented towards learning the language of that culture. Therefore, the target culture has changed the Saudi students' motivations to study English.

4.3 What is the process of change that takes place during the students' time in Britain, and to what extent do Saudi learners of English in Britain interact with native speakers outside the classroom?

The study's overall findings are that Saudi self-identity in its L2 English acquiring cohort is not rigid enough to accommodate the new L2. In general, the motivations of the students have changed over time. Their initial motivation to study English was to learn the language and communicate. Then their motivations changed to include pursuing a PhD and finding a job. The possibility of autonomous reasons is problematic, for, as mentioned earlier, the individual is arguably bound up in the culture surrounding them. It is possible to determine a difference between the various stages in the student's conceptualisation of language. This is a worrying component, for it remarks on the manner by which ideations with respect to career choice are hallmarks of individual autonomy. There also exist other reasons for an individual wanting to work; it seems to be the case that money is a primary incentive over 'altruistic reasons...status [or] longer-term goals' (Kniveton, 2004, p. 57). It is arguable that this is not a wholly autonomous choice, though, but rather one that is constructed and prescribed by culture.

The important link between sociocultural context and motivation in L2 has been explored in many studies (Atlugan, 2015; Azadipour, 2013). In the research data, a respondent commented that his English language acquisition was not satisfactory when he was studying in Saudi Arabia. Except for some qualified teachers who made English learning an enjoyable and rewarding activity, he found it boring. He disliked the process because most of his family members were not speaking the language. He liked watching TV on English channels and translating in his discipline as these helped him enhance his English skills. What can be inferred from this scenario is that the lack of connection between the language and the sociocultural context had deterred the respondent's ability to use the target language fluently. Besides the L2 classroom, there were limited social situations in Saudi Arabia in which

English fluency can be enhanced. As mentioned in the data, the respondent's family members did not speak English. Hence, it was stressed that the students preferred settling in an English-speaking country as it is essential to learn the language there ($M= 3.00$). Apparently, settling in an English-speaking country can facilitate a speedier EFL learning process compared to learning English in a non-English-speaking country. The students also stated that they were using their English language skills outside the classroom context, with native English speakers ($M= 3.50$).

Also, the findings of this study suggest that the Saudi students did not have enough exposure to English in their native educational setting. Students learned English in school because they had to, not because they loved to or were interested in it. English studies were a requirement in their schools and were part of its standard curriculum ($M= 3.94$). This was coupled with the fact that the field they were interested in pursuing required English language skills ($M= 4.38$). This might be the result of poor fundamentals in educational settings and the absence of a supportive socio-cultural environment. This was in addition to a community expectation to become fluent English speakers or at least have the ability to read/write in English once they became students of higher education ($M= 3.50$).

Overall, the students experienced self-identity in terms of changes in their self-confidence, ability to interact and to work in groups, and ability to self-learn. They even claimed that they could understand all of the English words they read and heard ($M= 3.78$). In this way, it is necessary to view self-identify as being bound up with self-confidence and other variables, thereby contributing to a holistic picture of a sense of self. A respondent narrated how she developed confidence in an L2 setting. He stated

"At first, I was lost and didn't know how to deal with lectures and curriculums and how I was supposed to do my assignments and all those reading. I got scared. But when I actually did them and received good scores, I felt good. I also used to have a lot of engagements, but with time, I became more confident, and I now believe that pressure can polish our skills. I feel that I am a different person now."

Further, the students expressed that they experienced cultural changes. In other words, they found differences between their native culture and the culture of the country in which they currently live. Furthermore, the above-mentioned self-identity changes correspond with Dörnyei & Ushioda's (2009) model. In terms of the Ideal L2 Self, the students expressed that they imagined themselves speaking English as if they were native speakers of this language. As for Ought-to L2 Self, the students expressed that they had to study English in order to communicate effectively, find a job, and pursue their graduate studies. The students were motivated to learn English in order to fulfil different needs, which include cultural needs, learning needs, and life needs. However, most of them claimed that they had been initially exposed to English in their home countries, such as in school, the home environment, and the job-related environment. Moreover, they associated the ability to use the English language with being an educated person ($M = 3.69$).

Regarding the L2 learning experience, the students expressed that their motivations were related to their immediate learning environment. These motives include the curriculum (e.g., which was shorter), resources (e.g., availability of libraries, online databases, and research-based studies), group work (e.g., students are given the opportunity to interact with their classmates and their professor), and the experience of success (e.g., they expressed that good grades motivated them to continue with the L2 learning). They expressed that they had to keep themselves motivated at all times with improving their English language skills ($M = 4.06$). However, even though they claimed that it was in the UK where their L2 acquisition was boosted, their motivation to study English began to develop during their school years in Saudi Arabia ($M= 3.28$). Their parents also believed that they should study English in order to become educated persons ($M= 2.78$).

The findings showed that gender does not affect self-identity change. However, this finding does not match with Rubin and Greene (1991), who revealed that gender is an influential factor in identity changes. Females had more positive attitudes towards language learning than males. Additionally, self-identity change was found to be affected by the issue of the students' going abroad. This corresponds with Lambert's (1974) theory that proposes that language learning affects identity changes as bilingualism. The additive bilingualism is fulfilled here since the students maintained their native language and native culture together with the target culture and the target language. This means that their experience abroad influences the students' self-identity changes.

Self-confidence is one of the important changes that occur in the learners' identity. This can be explained by the notion that the students developed relationships with foreign friends. The students became self-confident because they felt that they were accepted when they were amongst a group of foreigners or English-speaking persons. They, therefore, obtained the opportunities to practice the skills of speaking and listening during their communication with others. Thus, they became comfortable speaking freely without hesitation to make mistakes. This finding matches Boonchum's (2009) result that self-confidence is one of the changes that students normally deal with when they study English abroad. The students' linguistic anxiety was diminished when they began to interact with their foreign peers. They were able to practice the foreign language since they were immersed in the

daily lives of the new cultural context, such as watching foreign TV series, browsing the Internet, listening to the radio broadcast in English, and reading foreign newspapers.

Conversely, the students can develop their ability to make decisions by themselves through contact with their foreign friends. English is required for all kinds of jobs globally, and a person's good command of English allows him/her to express his/her opinions and ideas freely and perform confidently. This affirms what Yihong et al. (2009) found, who reported that the students are developed both personally and intellectually when they are immersed in an L2 context to study the foreign language.

The number of years of learning English is also connected with self-identity changes. The Saudi students who studied English did gain from the target culture directly. They had to learn English first and use it in their daily lives. In the beginning, they used English only in class. This is contradicted with Svanes (1987), who conveyed that the changes in the students' identities rely on a number of components, amongst which is the years of learning the language.

In addition, the English learners' background or setting is associated with self-identity changes. The learners who study the language in a town are nicely placed to encounter foreign individuals. They can come across different backgrounds and behaviour patterns than the students who study in the country. This corresponds with Clément et al. (1994), who argued that the subject and learners' background play an important role in the changes that occur in the language learners.

Further, it is worthy to note that no simple distinction can be made between the Ideal L2 Self and the Ought-to L2 Self in motivating an individual to study L2 English. This fact is the most compelling findings that emerged about the concept of the L2 self. The English language as a *lingua franca* involves a complex and historical nature where automaticity takes place in relation to the assumption that English is both valuable and enviable. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2009) have earlier pointed out that the Ideal L2 self is the L2-specific surface of an individual's ideal self, representing the ideal image a student wants to possess in the future. For example, the high extrinsic motivation that the students in the study have could be related to the image that they would create for themselves since proficient speakers of English as a second language might act as a strong motivator, since this would reduce the discrepancy between the actual and the ideal self (Calvo, 2015). For example, the students thought that not learning English would have a negative impact on their lives ($M = 2.97$).

The more significant point is that the framework instituted by Dörnyei and Ushioda has spread out to keep away from the boundaries that narrowly limit the L2 self in specific predefined categories. To a certain extent, and even expanded space comes into view for a consideration of more varied and complex L2 selves that merge in the language acquisition experience. In the end, the human-being functions as an actor with complex social relations. In this regard, dyadic relations, which inform any social relations, take place from the embodiment of social network theory (Kadushin, 2012). A number of studies have provided clear evidence of the positive effect of dyadic relations on students' motivation, such as the nature of teacher-learner dyadic communication on the students' motivation to learn English (e.g. Pianta, 1999).

4.4 To what extent does immersion with the British culture influence EFL Saudi students' performance in the EFL classroom?

This relationship of influence is negligible, but the eventual output of the specific cultural component of L2 language acquisition is affected. With the rise of the communicative language approach and the belief that language is best learned if it is used in a communicative context and with communication messages, the communication-based tasks become prominent units in the syllabus design. According to Nunn (2006), tasks lead to comprehensible outcomes when learners engage in writing reports, make oral presentations, and become involved in small-group conversations. The most important aspect in the communicative tasks is the exchange of meaning (Willis, 1996). The task is a piece of work conducted in the classroom, and this entails that the students produce and interact in the target language, shifting their focus from the usage of grammatical knowledge to expressing meaning (Nunan, 2006: 17). Similarly, a respondent stated:

"I learned about the usage of some specific words which expresses different things, which I came to know by being involved in the culture and by using the language on a daily basis."

Furthermore, the dyadic relationship in the L2 learning environment has been shown to influence the students' motivation to learn the language. According to the literature, Saudi students are characterised by utilitarianism, whereby their motivation to learn English is based on an intention to meet certain needs, such as job needs (Alhuqbani, 2005). In the data, this was expressed by their perceived need to speak English for their chosen career ($M = 4.47$ in Phase 1) and in their assumed importance to obtain a better position or job later on ($M = 4.09$). They also saw the extent of the importance of English language skills to their future ($M = 4.41$). Hence, the Saudi students in the present study were extrinsically motivated to learn the English language, without

discounting the fact, however, that there were also things that motivated them intrinsically, like passion for learning English as a second language. There being an intrinsically motivated to learn EFL was expressed by the fact that they looked forward to their English classes (M=3.66) and that they really enjoyed these classes (M= 4.09 in Phase 1; M= 4.00 in Phase 2; M= 4.31 in Phase 3).

On a similar note, the literature demonstrates the continuing progress of the English language as a global language, which is therefore viable in the globalisation process (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2002). The Saudi students had likewise shared this view, serving as their extrinsic motivation to pursue EFL in the UK.

The data shows that the performance of the Saudi students was impacted by a number of factors such as the teaching methods, the activities, the learning environment, peers, and teachers. Moreover, resources, technologies, and evaluation methods were found to influence their performance. Their English teacher encouraged them in their English studies (M= 3.53 in Phase 2; M= 3.56 in Phase 3). They realised the role of the learning environment through the various phases (M= 3.53 in phase one, 3.77 in phase 2, 3.88 in phase 3). Deci *et al.*'s (1991) assertion are worthy of note here. They stated that the correct mix of intrinsic motivation and autonomy results in the learners' desired educational outcomes within the L2 context and any educational context for that matter. The various factors influencing the Saudi students to learn L2 in the UK educational context demonstrate the interplay of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations and the teaching method that contributes to the L2 students' learning style.

The research data show that the students' proficiency had improved from Phase 1 to Phase 3 (M= 3.89 & M= 3.97). They expressed that their improved performance was mainly due to the use of the communicative approach in the class. It aimed to maximise the students' speaking opportunities and interaction in the class. Whilst communicating, the students used the language to accomplish some functions such as arguing, persuading, or promising (speaker & listener or writer & reader). These functions were carried out within a social context. The questionnaire data showed that the students were always keen to participate in class discussions in the English class (M=3.41 in Phase 1; M= 3.53 in Phase 2). In Phase 3, it was shown that they were continuing their English studies (M= 4.22).

However, even though the Saudi students claimed that they were learning to communicate in the British socio-cultural context, some would still get nervous or anxious if they had to speak with a native English speaker (M= 2.84). Some also never felt sure of themselves when speaking in English class (M=2.78 in Phase 1). However, these mean scores were not of significant value, which means that if there were students who became nervous about speaking with a native English speaker or felt unsure of themselves when speaking in English class, their number was only small. Furthermore, not all students in the study were appreciative of the current socio-cultural context (UK) in which they needed to adapt to learn English as an L2. This could be understood as an effect of their struggle to learn English as an L2 in the UK. For example, a respondent indicated that she preferred to complete her PhD in Saudi Arabia but needed to come to the UK because she was forced to do so by her employer. She said that studying in Saudi Arabia was excellent, especially with co-supervision. She furthered that the knowledge and learning styles in the UK were different from those in her country. She mentioned:

"If I completed [my studies] in Saudi [Arabia], I would be more comfortable because I would be familiar with the study style that I have been using since primary school."

Congruent with the above, some Saudi students were worried that other students in their class might speak English better than they did (M = 2.53). Some also said that they would be nervous speaking English outside their classroom (M= 1.94). There were also some who became worried that they had not learned as much as they should in their course (M= 2.97). A few in number also did not want to continue studying English (M= 1.66), and they felt anxious when someone asked them a question or started talking to them in English (M= 1.81). Some also felt nervous speaking in English outside their classroom (M= 1.94 in Phase 2; M=1.88 in Phase 3).

Moreover, some students' body language was strongly reflective of being engaged students (47.1% in Phase 1; 56.5% in Phase 2; 47.1% in Phase 3). They had a strong class attendance (91.8% in Phase 1, 89.4% in Phase 2, 88.2% in Phase 3), which indicates that despite their perceived difficulties with learning the target language, most of them still attended their classes. This class attendance had a decreasing trend, however. Only a small number strongly volunteered for an answer during class discussions during Phase 1 (28.2%), which improved to more than half of the sample during Phase 2 (58.8%) and decreased to 47.1% in Phase 3. Nevertheless, despite the varying scores discussed, many Saudi students still felt more motivated to study English now that they were in the UK more than they were in Saudi Arabia (M=3.66).

5. Main Conclusions

The present study dealt with determining the original motivations and attitudes of Saudi students studying English as a foreign language in Britain and how these motivations and attitudes influence the target culture. The study used both qualitative and

quantitative methods. For the qualitative aspect, interviews and observations were utilised, while frequency, percentage, and mean were used for the quantitative aspect.

In attempting to reveal the Saudi students' motivational and self-identity changes, it was shown that there are many interconnections and relationships between different motivational factors. Going beyond traditional quantitative research methods in identifying prominent motivational factors, this study employed a qualitative research method to explore the changes in the L2 motivational self-system across the study abroad transition. The study clarifies the interaction among different L2 self-images and the interaction among motivation, self-identity, and contextual situations. It is hoped that the findings of this study can not only add to our understanding of the development of the L2 motivational self-system over time and across contexts but also broaden the base on which motivation is conceptualized in Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System within the dynamic and process-oriented approach to L2 motivation research.

The analysis of the interview data revealed that, based on the theme-based codification of learners' narratives and responses, the four most prominent themes were retrieved. One theme conveyed the highly sensitive state of EFL learners' sense of self-confidence, which was easily influenced by situational circumstances in the way that any changes in the process of learning easily could affect EFL learners' self-confidence. Another theme retrieved yielded the significant impact of English mediated media on EFL learners' cultural identity changes. It can be stated that with the spread of global media (especially the internet), experiencing an English context (i.e., cyberspace) for EFL learners is now easier than ever before. Therefore, changes in the learners' cultural values and behavioural patterns are being mediated by English dominated media.

The results show a change in the attitudes of these students from when they were in secondary school to when they were in college. Attitudes towards learning English seemed to be more positive. This shows that attitudes exert a directive influence on the behaviour of individuals. In general, the students appeared to have increased their self-confidence and gained more confidence when speaking the language in college. There also seemed to be more social acceptance of English among these students. There were still a number of them who found the language difficult. It is expected there would be some individuals with such attitudes as learning a second language depending on an individual's attitude towards the language.

The current study suggests that stakeholders (e.g., researchers, teachers, decision-makers, etc.) of language education institutes, especially in EFL contexts, should arguably pay attention to the linguistic and non-linguistic outcomes of FL learning. The totality of the findings of this study is in line with other studies in this thread and yields that individual difference variables like self-identity changes in EFL contexts are more important and even more subtle than EFL contexts. Regarding the pedagogical practice, four implications were suggested: First, EFL stakeholders, especially EFL teachers, must arguably be aware of the fact that non-linguistic outcomes of learning English deserve as much attention as that which is paid to the EFL learners' English skills and proficiency. This is because these two important outcomes of language learning are interrelated and reveal the complex nature of foreign language learning and teaching beyond the scope of just a pedagogic activity, especially when it comes to the issues like changes, crises, and hybridity in FL learners' identities.

Second, as a result, indicated that learners' integrative and instrumental orientations have a major effect on learners' sense of self-confidence, teachers should arguably use different types of learner motivation to build upon the learners' self-confidence in learning, and they should arguably try to tie the instrumental, short-term objectives of the learners with the long-term integrative goals which hopefully result in the learners' sense of self-efficacy, autonomy and more importantly the agency for maximum attainment. Third, teachers and language assessors must arguably pay attention to the high state of learners' sensitivity to identity changes. Therefore, it is incumbent upon them to take advantage of learners' immediate achievements (positive feedback, high test scores, the anticipation of reward, etc.) to help learners raise their sense of self-confidence by carefully monitoring and channelling the situational needs of the learners to avoid possible negative effects on learners' identity changes. Finally, and more importantly, EFL teachers must arguably provide suitable opportunities for learners to draw positive links and associations between home and foreign language cultures and simultaneously cultivate learners' motivations and attitudes toward the integration of systems and cultures rather than contradictions and conflicts. The bottom line is that productive bilingualism should be considered as an ultimate objective in foreign language pedagogy.

The findings of this study suggest that Saudi students, before coming to the UK, do not sufficiently practice English. Many may have poor attitudes towards the language because they do not understand the culture or the nuances of the language. A change in the manner in which English is taught to students could go a long way here. A de-emphasis on examinations and tailoring classes to meet students' needs would be necessary if there is going to be a change in the way English is perceived by Saudi students. In all, a re-evaluation of the method of delivery is needed. Students need to be encouraged to speak English both in and out of the class.

The findings suggest that non-linguistic outcomes should arguably be taken into consideration in English teaching and learning, which did bring a cultural impact upon learners. Teachers should arguably need to design their pedagogical practice carefully to incorporate proper attitudes and cultural concepts of the target and the native languages and cultures in the EFL learning context. A comfortable integration may lessen the split clash between the two. On the other hand, teachers may cultivate learners' integrative motivation and individual development motivation, which will be likely to develop positive changes in self-identity. Finally, instrumental-oriented learners should be guided in accordance with their distinctive strengths.

The last pedagogical implication addresses culture in the classroom. The results of this study provide useful, practical information. For example, it shows that having a clear sense of purpose is important in promoting students' academic motivation, suggesting that teachers must arguably be more conscious of the relationship between class contents and their students' future lives and careers. Research into the nature of identity formation processes in educational settings and, in particular, research that highlights the role of educational environments in promoting adaptive engagement in identity formation is of great interest and importance to the educational psychology community. The results of this study add to a growing body of research indicating that students with a sense of identity have a definite sense of direction and educational purpose and a high level of academic autonomy.

The more a learner invests in a foreign language, the more opportunities s/he will acquire the targeted language and be involved with the targeted culture. Therefore, in addition to teaching grammatical facts and developing language skills, language teachers must arguably also make sure that their students will be fully aware of why they are learning a foreign language and what advantages they may reach if they happen to acquire one. Moreover, designing a longitudinal study would help explore the changing dynamics of motivation and L2 identity in a more detailed way. In this way, motivation and L2 identity can be used as a facilitator in language classrooms in the second language acquisition process.

These findings imply that having distant future goals that go beyond passing a university examination is important for sustaining the long-term learning motivation that leads to higher levels of foreign language proficiency. As many Saudi students need to keep studying English after graduating from the university if they wish to become highly proficient users of English, university English courses must arguably be a source of long-term goals by providing students with meaningful answers to the question of why they need to study English now and in the future.

6. Recommendations

The most pressing recommendations that could be presented for the present study are discussed below:

Research should be conducted focusing on nurturing a sense of autonomy in the student cohort, causing them to precisely self-examine their intentions in studying L2 English. This research will allow academicians, practitioners, and researchers in the language acquisition field to deeply focus on the L2 learner as an autonomous element in the L2 learning process. The present study suggested this in the Ideal L2 Self, demonstrating that the L2 students were interested to learn more about English/Western culture and the native English-speaking community and aspired to study and live in an English-speaking country.

It is also recommended that study abroad programmes should be modified in a way that gives considerable emphasis on the importance of cultural diversity and inclusion of L2 learners. The enhanced emphasis on cultural diversity and inclusion will allow the L2 learners to preserve and appreciate their own culture whilst accepting, appreciating, and adapting to the L2 culture. The L2 students were very interested in British culture. Their attempt to integrate themselves with the L2 culture was displayed by their use of the English language outside the classroom to interact with native English speakers. Hence, the importance of integrating cultural diversity and inclusion in study abroad programmes.

Moreover, L2 classrooms should be guided by a curriculum that promotes the creation of a culture where L2 learning is positively nurtured. This recommendation will further improve the L2 learning process and the resultant experiences of the L2 students within the L2 sociocultural environment.

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