

## Overseas teaching experience and motivational currents: The case of EFL pre-service teachers in Indonesia

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### ABSTRACT

Motivational currents have recently gained popularity in research on psychology of language learners and teachers. This study aims to find out whether an overseas teaching program can (1) create motivational currents among Indonesian pre-service teachers and (2) help them build a vivid vision of being a language teacher. This research used retrodictive qualitative modelling (RQM) under a complex dynamic system (CDS) approach to trace back the factors that enabled the motivational currents to occur. The data were collected from semi-structured interviews along with day-to-day diaries of six EFL pre-service teachers in Indonesia. The findings suggest that the overseas teaching program could create motivational currents of three participants while the rest did not experience such intense motivation. This study also finds that there is a dynamic relationship between self-system and motivational currents system. The impact of experiencing the motivational currents on the vision of being a language teacher varies from one participant to another. This study is of great importance especially for teacher educators wishing to design meaningful and effective professional development activities for their student teachers.

**Keywords:** Motivational currents; overseas teaching program; pre-service teachers; teacher cognition; teacher education

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### INTRODUCTION

Teacher education plays a role in the development of pre-service teacher cognition (Johnson, 2015). One central feature of teacher cognition is 'vision' (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014), that is, the way teachers imagine themselves as future language teachers. A teacher with a clear vision commonly attempts to pursue a specific ideal teacher self and engages in any classroom activities related to this future self-image. Thus, building teachers' vision through motivating activities in the teacher education program is of great importance for increasing student motivation as "the former is needed for the latter to blossom" (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014, p. 3).

Building vision, however, is not a facile undertaking considering the complexity of teachers' self-concept (Kubanyiova, 2012). Research has to

consider other self-related constructs that potentially influence the development of teachers' vision. Although considerable research has been devoted to examine self-related constructs (e.g., self-concept, which is a broader self-related construct that subsumes the possible selves (Mercer, 2011), intentionality, which is a broader but fundamental self-related construct (Kostoulas & Stelma, 2016), self-efficacy and self-esteem), very few studies have investigated how these self-related constructs affect (or are affected by) visions/possible selves. Integrating these wide-ranging concepts (Borg, 2015) to fully understand the relationships among these self-related constructs particularly with respect to visions and motivation is critical for the quality improvement of teacher education.

With respect to this challenge, motivational currents may be a potential construct which can explain

language teachers' conceptual change. Motivational currents are conditions in which someone is caught up in a highly intense motivational surge directed at a very vivid vision or a self-concordant goal which overrides any barriers along the path (Dörnyei, Henry, & Muir, 2016; Dörnyei, Ibrahim, & Muir, 2015). This conceptual framework can potentially link, extend and unify existing self-related constructs particularly because it adopts complex dynamic system approach (CDS) (Dörnyei, et al., 2016; Williams, Mercer, & Ryan, 2015). This approach allows the researchers to explore a wide array of self-related factors behind the occurrence of motivational currents.

One possible occasion in which motivational currents may take place is in a study abroad program (Dörnyei et al., 2016). Immersing new teachers in English-speaking countries abroad might have an impact on their motivation and their vision or ideal teacher self. As Kernis and Goldman (2003) argue, the process of exposing individuals to different cultures in this globalized world can sharpen their sense of possibility and develop their possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986) and visions. However, although considerable research has been devoted to investigate the impact of studying abroad program on language learners (e.g., Kinginger, 2013; Pérez-Vidal, 2014; Plews & Misfeldt, 2018; Wang, 2018), rather little attention has been paid to find out the impact of such a program on language teachers.

This study aims to conduct a preliminary investigation into the relationship between overseas teaching experiences, motivational currents, and self-related constructs of Indonesian EFL pre-service language teachers who participated in a language teaching program in Australia. The focus of the study is on the dynamic interplay between teacher motivation and vision before, during, and after the program. The researcher aims to evaluate the effectiveness of this program in shaping (or not) the pre-service teachers' ideal selves as language teachers. The followings are the research questions of this study.

1. Can an overseas teaching practice program create motivational currents among pre-service language teachers studying in an Indonesian university? If so,
  - a. What factors facilitate them to experience such motivational currents?
  - b. What is the impact of motivational currents on their ideal teacher selves?
2. If the teaching practice program does not create motivational currents, what are the reasons?

### **Teacher education and teacher cognition**

Training pre-service teachers through teacher education is not an easy task. Tension (Johnson, 1996) and frustration (Borg, 2015) are usually encountered as these novice teachers often face unexpected practical challenges in the classroom. These challenges are oftentimes not properly addressed as these teachers still perceive teaching from the perspective of a student or

what Lortie (1975) calls the apprenticeship of observation. In this respect, teacher education is expected to make them perceive teaching practice from the perspective of a teacher. This institution has to be a place where they learn to challenge their own assumptions, build their identity, make sense of themselves and know their roles as language teachers (Johnson, 2015; Widodo, 2018).

To address this issue, teacher educators should not position pre-service teachers merely as passive agents (Kayi-Aydar, 2015). Perceiving them as active agents will prevent teacher educators from dismissing the student teachers' initial beliefs on language teaching and learning no matter how 'inappropriate,' 'unrealistic,' or 'naïve' they are (Borg, 2006, p. 54). These beliefs can potentially be used as a gate which helps teacher educators open student teachers' inner lives. Understanding these initial beliefs is the first step without which the change on cognition will hardly occur. Language teacher education, therefore, should be the bridge that accommodates these pre-service teachers' initial desires and builds their awareness of the challenges they will face later in the classroom.

Teacher education needs to have a program with personally motivating activities that provide pre-service teachers opportunities to observe teaching activities from the eye of an actual teacher. For example, they can work with professional teachers in preparing the lesson plan, selecting and delivering the materials, managing student activities and dealing with students' disruption. In this case, overseas teaching practice may be effective in achieving the purpose of teacher education (Burgard, Boucher Jr, & Johnston, 2018; Cushner & Chang, 2015). These pre-service teachers will not only learn directly from the professional teachers, but their motivation is also likely to increase as they experience living in English-speaking countries.

### **Possible selves and other self-related constructs**

Possible selves theory has recently gained popularity in the psychology of language learning and teaching (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). Markus and Nurius (1986) define possible selves as the representation of what an individual would like to become, might become, and is afraid of becoming. The motivational significance of these possible selves is outlined particularly in the self-discrepancy theory (Higgins, 1987) arguing that the gap between the actual self and the ideal or ought-to self may result in different types of emotions.

Dörnyei (2009) adopted this theory and coined the term L2 motivational self-system. This system consists of ideal L2 selves, ought-to L2 self, and L2 learning experience (the present experiences in a particular context). Dörnyei and Kubanyiova (2014) extend the concept of ideal selves and introduced a new construct called 'vision': an imagery aspect of the ideal selves which can be 'seen,' 'tasted,' and 'listened to.' The concept of vision extends the concept of goal in that a vision attaches a tangible image of a real accomplishment to the goals (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova,

2014). For example, while most language teachers have a goal of getting a master's degree, only some create a vision of themselves really handing a master's degree certificate. In other words, with a vision, their goal becomes highly personal.

Although the concept of vision has been successful in establishing a practical framework for developing teacher and student motivation, few studies have attempted to assess the suitability of the complexity theory for explaining the concept of vision. Dörnyei and Ryan (2015) point out that the concept of vision still implies a linear relationship between motive and motivated behavior. Visions/possible selves are still perceived as the sole component fueling subsequent behaviors. Currently, much literature (Dörnyei et al., 2015; Mercer, 2011) suggest that motive and motivated behavior have a dynamic relationship.

To show how vision may relate to other self-related constructs, it is necessary to explain existing self-related constructs other than possible selves. Possible selves are parts of a larger domain called self-concept: what people think about themselves which can be both descriptive and evaluative. The evaluative part of self-concept or the way an individual makes a self-appraisal (Kernis & Goldman, 2003) is mainly derived from a more global construct called self-esteem which is an overall evaluative feeling perceived by oneself that is closely related to self-worth. This cursory glance at the self-related constructs above is enough to show that there is a wide array of constructs influencing a single phenomenon. However, these constructs are usually studied separately, not holistically. Thus, to avoid any simplistic explanation when it comes to discussing complex inner lives of teachers, a framework to accommodate and explain the complexity and dynamism of those constructs is needed.

#### **Pulling it together: Directed motivational currents**

Motive and motivated behaviors have been inaccurately perceived as two separate entities (Dörnyei, et al., 2016). To use Dörnyei et al.'s (2015) metaphor, a behavior is commonly seen as a car that needs fuel in the form of motive to energize its movement. Motivational currents, in contrast, are analogous to the hybrid car where 'the motivated behavior does not use up energy but, conversely, actively generates energy' (p. 31). In a motivational current, an individual is caught up in an intense surge of motivations that 'override[s] or modify[ies] the multiple pushes and pulls that people experience in their busy life' (Dörnyei et al., 2015, p. 96).

Three components of motivational currents include a vivid vision or self-concordant goal, facilitative structures, and positive emotionality. Visions in motivational currents create a specific destination towards which the motivational currents are directed (Dörnyei, 2014) while the facilitative structure maintains the flow of the currents. The structure also includes energy-free behavioral routines which make non-conscious decisions (Dörnyei et al., 2016). These

non-conscious decisions are associated with the vividness of the vision, from which automatic goal-directed actions emerge (Dörnyei et al., 2016). In this component, affirmative feedback provides a sense of real progress towards the goal, and thus, helps fuel the energy of the motivational currents. Finally, positive emotionality is a feeling of joy experienced not only because of the activities being done but also due to the 'feeling of connectedness to the core self or who they really are' (Dörnyei et al., 2016, p. 103). While attempting to achieve the goal, a positive emotional loading occurs in the form of a unique pleasant experience in relation to personal growth (Ibrahim, 2016).

Having been successful in explaining motivation from a new perspective, motivational currents still leave some questions unanswered particularly on how motivational currents relate to existing self-related constructs such as self-concept, possible self, and self-esteem. To put it plainly, little attention has been paid to understand the relationship between motivational currents and a more holistic view of the self.

#### **Teacher education, motivation, and research in the Indonesian context**

There has not been much research on motivation particularly in relation to possible selves/vision in the Indonesian context. One leading researcher, Martin Lamb, has attempted to research motivation using the L2 motivational self-system in Indonesia. Studying the motivational change among Indonesian students in 20 months, Lamb (2007) concluded that learners experienced change in motivation to learn English and those with vivid ideal L2 self were more motivated than those with ought-to L2 self. Prior to this study, Lamb (2003) studied L2 motivation using Gardner's integrative-instrumental motivational framework where he found that Indonesian learners under the study tried to identify not only with English native speakers but also Indonesian users of English. Despite these studies, little attention has been paid to research on teacher motivation. Research on teacher motivation is important as the teacher education in Indonesia gives little concern about the teachers' inner lives (Widodo, Riandi, & Wulan, 2006).

The more recent study (Zein, 2016) examines the impact of teacher education to pre-service English teachers for primary schools in Indonesia. He found that there is no adequate teacher education for pre-service primary school teachers. The teacher education is suggested to provide relevant practice-based knowledge and adequate provision. Although this research has highlighted important aspects needed to reform, there is little attention to the issue of the pre-service teachers' inner lives in the training. There is little concern about the student teachers themselves who actively produce their own knowledge. Thus, research has to put as much emphasis as possible on understanding what teachers think, feel, and believe about themselves as it gives valuable information about their motivational trajectory.

Otherwise, the student teachers will less likely commit to the teacher education program (Widodo et al., 2006).

Indonesia still puts great emphasis on the importance of language teachers' English proficiency (Zein, 2016). Rarely does teacher education pay attention to language teachers' vision and motivation. Therefore, this research aims to fill this gap by investigating the impact of a teaching abroad program on pre-service teacher motivation and vision in a teacher education institution. This program might serve as a medium through which mindful teacher education where the student teachers are encouraged to build their own teaching experience repertoire and find the meaning of being a language teacher as they interact with teacher educators, teachers, and educational personnel can be realized (Johnson & Golombek, 2016).

## METHOD

### Complex dynamic system (CDS) and retrodictive qualitative modelling (RQM)

As its name suggests, CDS focuses on complexity and dynamism (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008) of a particular system. It is a relevant approach for this study which aims to investigate the complexity of self-system and motivational system along with their changes across

different timescales (Larsen-Freeman, 2015). Retrodictive qualitative modelling (RQM) (Dörnyei, 2014) was employed to operationalize the CDS approach. Unlike the traditional way of conducting research, RQM initially searches for the outcomes and then traces back the interactions among salient factors that enable the outcomes to emerge, not the other way around. Followings were the steps of conducting this research.

1. Identifying the participants who had experienced motivational currents (the relatively stable phenomenon).
2. Identifying the salient factors that might interweave each other in that stable system (motivational currents system).
3. Understanding and analyzing the dynamic relationships among the factors in different timescales.

### Participants

Six participants voluntarily participated in this study: Mike, Emily, Farah, Nova, Indri, and Andy (all are pseudonym). Five of them were from the batch of 2015 while the other was from the 2014. There was only one person who admitted to have had a one-year teaching experience (Mike). Table 1 summarizes information about the participants.

Table 1. Information about the participants

Participants	Age	Gender	Teaching Experience
Mike	22 years old	Male	1 year (Teaching Arabic)
Emily	19 years old	Female	None
Farah	19 years old	Female	None
Nova	19 years old	Female	None
Indri	22 years old	Female	None
Andy	21 years old	Male	None

Once I got 6 participants, I stopped recruiting the participants as this number would give more than enough data for this study and exceeding that number could potentially make it difficult for me to carry an in-depth analysis. Those six participants were then given the consent form informing them of the detailed information regarding this study and the rights to withdraw from the interview at any stage of this research. In addition, they were also informed about the confidentiality of their personal information and reiterated this information before the interview was conducted. Looking retrospectively, it turned out to be one of the imperative factors that allowed them to do a deep self-reflection in the interview session. Prior to the data collection, I also made an online chat group for all participants that facilitated them to ask informally any question related to this study. It turned out that some of the participants also asked questions about my experience living in Birmingham and expressed their interest to study in the UK. This positioning of the researcher as someone they were inquisitive about gradually built a close relationship with the participants

and allowed them to speak more openly during the interview session (Mercer, 2011). However, I was also aware that this proximity might also lead into a kind of interview where participants might only want to demonstrate their 'strength' instead of deeply reflecting on what they really felt. Thus, in order to reduce this chance, I always asked them very specific questions and asked them to provide detailed examples during the interview. It was greatly effective for most of the interviews I conducted.

### Instruments

#### *Semi-structured interview*

Retrospective semi-structured interviews were employed in this study as the retrospective approach was suitable with the adoption of the CDS approach and motivation (Henry, Dörnyei, & Davydenko, 2015) and it helped me elicit the participants' past experiences in a retrodictive manner. Most of the participants in the interviews that I conducted could reflect quite deeply although some others seemed a bit hesitant to do a personal reflection on their experiences. The positioning

of the interviewer or the timing of the interviews seemingly influenced how they answered the questions (although I allowed the participants to decide themselves upon the timing of the interview).

I used the interview guide which comprised some questions related to three core elements of motivational currents (vision, structured behavior, and positive emotionality) and three kinds of possible selves (ideal self, ought-to self, and feared self). In addition, depending on how the interviews went, I tried to provide more questions related to self-related constructs when they emerged in the interview sessions. The questions were not necessarily asked in the same order nor were they asked with the same exact words from one participant to another (Dörnyei, 2007). To ensure that the interview guide would be helpful, the researcher conducted piloting and revisions before the actual interviews were carried out (Kvale, 2007). Due to the time constraints, I could not conduct interviews directly on site. Instead, I used Skype to carry out interviews with all participants. This application was selected because it allowed the participants to comfortably participate from anywhere and anytime at their convenience (Janghorban, Roudsari, & Taghipour, 2014) and gave more opportunities for the participants to provide a longer conversation (Lo Iacono, Symonds, & Brown, 2016). Each interview mostly lasted around 30-50 minutes for each participant and provided a corpus of 14,252 words.

#### Diary studies

In this research, I also collected the data from the diaries written by the participants which were originally part of the report required by the English education department after they completed a teaching abroad program in Australia. This individual report provided detailed day-to-day activities (for two weeks) including some

reflections on the problems that they faced during the program. After getting the permission, I collected the diaries and used it along with the interview data to answer the research questions. Diaries provided first-account data and access to their experiences, self-concepts and views about themselves.

#### Data analysis

The data were analyzed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). In analyzing the data, the researcher used 'double hermeneutic' interpretation, meaning that the researcher tried to be both emphatic and critical (Smith & Osborn, 2008). In analyzing the data, I had already had the background knowledge about motivational currents, possible selves, and other self-related constructs. I also tried to find out other psychological phenomena that might be found during the analysis. This openness was suitable with the complexity theory's argument in that we should be open to any number of factors causing particular phenomena to emerge (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008). Following were the steps of analyzing the data.

1. The first interview data were carefully transcribed and read for at least three times to make sure that I was familiar with the texts.
2. After becoming familiar with the data, I made exploratory comments on the left margin of the data. On the right margin, I wrote down the emerging themes.

Unlike the exploratory comments which mostly describe and summarize the participants accounts, in the emerging themes section I made interpretations and pondered what this experience meant to participants and why they made sense of their experience this way. See Table 2 for an example of codes applied to a short segment of data.

Table 2. Example of codes applied to data

Emergent themes		Original transcript	Exploratory Comments
<b>Vivid vision</b>	Participant	Yes, very frequently. Very frequently. Even when I was heading to campus, during the selection process, which was 25 minutes away from my home using motorcycle. So, in that journey, when I was riding my motorcycle, my mind kept wondering. It was like I was being in Australia. It's because I really want to go there.	He was very frequently imagining himself in Australia while in the selection process.  He imagined himself during the journey to campus.
<b>Low self-esteem. Vulnerable to feedback</b>	Participant	First, it makes me stressful. Because they expect too much. But sometimes, I realize I do not know myself well. And they convince me that I can do it. That's helpful.	She at first feels burdened because people over expect her.  She is wrong about the ability
<b>Start building the clarity of self-concept</b>			This internalization is helpful

3. Emerging themes were then analyzed and categorized to find out more general themes. Then, I attempted to see whether the motivational currents emerged in participants' data. Those data from participants who experienced motivational currents were separated from those who did not.

Then, I took a second look at the data to find out the explanation of the differences between and within categories. In this second analysis, I particularly focused on finding out whether self-related constructs could be found and how they were related to motivational currents. In the

analysis, I also paid attention to the timescales and context through which the particular themes emerged or changed which could explain (or not) the dynamism of the system (de Bot, 2015).

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### The impact of teaching abroad program on motivational currents

Of six participants, three were caught up in highly intense motivational currents (Emily, Farah, and Mike). The rest were also experiencing motivation but not as intense as these three participants. Emily, Farah, and Mike not only showed that they had a goal of going to Australia, but they also attached very personal meanings to it.

Emily said that going to Australia was a must for her.

Because my big motivation when I entered this study program in this university is I SHOULD, I MUST join this program. So, I should make it real. You know, so, I tried to apply because that is one of my goals.

Her sense of obligation indicates a very high motivational energy. It was seemingly not working in a vacuum but probably internalized through the social interactions where she eventually found who she thought she was and what she thought she was capable of.

She also created a *facilitative structure* to maintain this current.

Sometimes I was not sleeping. That's my bad habit actually. When I would like to perform I could not sleep. I could manage the time however. I could also do well in my study. For example, at least at 11 or 12 I went to bed. But when I would like to have to perform I went to bed at 3.

Her goal kept her awake ahead of the selection process. It happened quite regularly, and she described it as her 'bad habit.' However, this habit seemingly did not use up energy from the goal. Contrarily, it likely gave the energy as proven by her ability to manage her time.

She also experienced *positive emotionality*. By the end of the program, she became addicted to go to other countries to learn something.

I am happy of course but not satisfied yet. It's not the end of my goal. I have another goal. When this is finish I would like to reach another one.

For Farah, her goal was to improve her English teaching skill.

I was in Brunei before. I studied at elementary school there. And automatically I have English as my basic language. So, when I changed school to

Indonesia and they knew, my friends knew that I know English well, they started to want me to teach them but you know, unfortunately, I still did not know how to teach. I only knew English. But I did not know how to teach.

Although her goal was seemingly originated only from the external pressure of her peers, deeper analysis throughout the interview shows that it mainly came from her own self which was described as a sympathetic person who wanted to understand and satisfied people's needs. In addition to this goal, she had a vivid vision of living in Australia, particularly because her lecturer and her father, who had studied in Queensland, often told her stories about this country.

...She was always like, 'Farah, later when you deal with the immigration process, you'll do this and that.' So, it seemed like as if I was about to go there. 'Farah, don't you know that Australia is like this and that'. So, she always told me that, as if I was really about to go there.

So actually, my dad was graduated from Queensland University. So, actually I was motivated and wondering 'when will I be like my father, to go to Australia'. Before that, I only heard stories from my father that Australia is like this and that, that's why I was always wondering 'when will I be there?' It was only a dream.

Her *facilitative structure* was especially unique because as the selection progressed, she continued to improve.

But overall...[at first] I could not even get the middle rank, I was usually ranked as the third or second lowest. But when the final results were announced, Miss Diana [her lecturer] said, 'congratulations, you got rank 2.'

The source of this progress was the consistent positive feedback from her lecturer and her feeling of acceptance of the possible failure, a lesson she learned from her first attempt. This sense of progress became an outpouring energy fueling the motivational current until the goal was reached.

*Positive emotionality* was reflected in her expression when receiving the positive feedback from her lecturer and hearing the announcement.

I was like (pause), okay thank you. 'Do you wanna take it?' said miss Diana. 'Yes of course I wanna take it!'

She was barely able to express her feeling into words. The same was the case when she was encouraged by her lecturer to do the second attempt in the selections. This encouragement was particularly important for her satisfaction of becoming who she really was (to be an independent and caring person).

I felt like, 'oh my God', I was really happy, I mean, what could I say. I could be a person who is not dependent to other people, like that. It really made me happy.

As for Mike, his vision of being in Australia had been on his mind since he was a junior high school student.

So, I'm actually one of the persons who really like to dream. Since I was in junior high school. And one of the countries where I really wanted to go is Australia. I really, really wanted to learn from Australia.

He recalled that during the selection he always imagined himself being in Australia.

Yes, very frequently. Very frequently. Even when I was heading to campus, during the selection process, which was 25 minutes away from my home using motorcycle. So, in that journey, when I was riding my motorcycle, my mind kept wondering. It was like I was being in Australia. It's because I really want to go there.

*Facilitative structure* was shown when he asked for some advice from the successful participants in the previous year.

So, actually, Mike learned from the previous participants of the program... I always tried to approach them, I asked them many questions, so that I got their tips.

As for his *positive emotionality*, it was reflected in his story of how he finally got selected.

I really wanted to cry. Because finally everything was paid off. There were many steps in the selections. I was happy because Australia is one of the countries that I really wanted to visit. At that time, I was really moved. I really wanted to cry.

From these findings, three components of motivational currents studied by other researchers (Dörnyei et al., 2016; Dörnyei et al., 2015; Muir, 2016) are confirmed. Visions/goals play a significant part since it is a relatively long-term source of energy (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014). However, visions/goals were apparently not the only source of energy in the motivational currents in this study. The participants' ability to create a strategic and detailed plan also became the source of energy and so did the positive feedback. This was also the case for the positive emotion of becoming who they really were (Dörnyei et al., 2016). The cognitive process of imagining themselves in Australia coupled with the intense emotion of doing activities that they considered to be

concordant with their core self and this kind of happiness was much deeper than the usual ones: Emily with her description of herself as a smart student, Farah with her self-portrayal as a caring person, and Mike with his views about himself as a dreamer.

Although perceiving motivational currents as a unified construct comprising three components is pertinent when adopting the dynamic system perspective (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008), foregrounding these three components of motivational currents is somewhat likely to pose a risk to getting a more comprehensive framework for a myriad of other self-related constructs. Therefore, seeing this motivational current from different timescales (Larsen-Freeman, 2015), that is, before, during, and after experiencing the motivational currents and from a multi-nested system perspective is deemed necessary (Mercer, 2015).

### **Self-related constructs behind the motivational currents**

Emily did not instantly build a very strong motivation for going to Australia. Before she eventually arrived at a thought that going to this country was a 'MUST', she had felt a slight self-doubt.

Well, it's pretty challenging for me. I'm basically very shy to join like this and to perform in front of many people. And yeah, it's quite challenging.

Emily seemingly used to have a sense of low self-worth because she viewed herself as an incompetent student. Interestingly, her friends had a completely different view about her. They told her that she was smart.

Everyone expected that I could do it. My friends in this program and in this study program see me as the smart student. So, when I tried to join this program, they said, 'Emily, you can do it. You'll get selected.' Like that.

Despite her friends' positive feedback, Emily was not initially convinced and changed her view about herself. Contrarily, the situation was getting more stressful. Eventually, she became more confident when she finally decided to 'agree' with her friends' view that she was a smart person. Through the self-reflection, she realized she had not known herself well before.

First, it made me stressful. Because they expected too much. But sometimes, I realizee I did not know myself well.

It seems somewhat unlikely that Emily was driven by an ought-to self. Despite expectations from others, Emily did not take them as the reason of applying for the program. Expectations only stimulated her to make a self-reflection that eventually allowed her to experience a shift of self-concept from perceiving herself as a

person who was incompetent to a person who was competent.

For Farah, her vision was inspired by her father's story about his experience living and studying in Australia.

So actually, my dad was graduated from Queensland University. So, actually I was motivated and wondering 'when will I be like my father, to go to Australia'. Before that, I only heard stories from my father that Australia was like this and that, that's why I was always wondering 'when will I be there?' It was only a dream... it made me feel motivated and at that time I could only wonder 'how is it like to be in Australia?'

Although her vision was quite vivid, she did not know yet how to realize it. Unfortunately, when she applied for the program the first time, she failed.

...the year before, I have tried to apply but I failed. Then, I evaluated myself as to why I failed.

A vivid vision was indeed important, but it was not sufficient to generate a motivational current. At that time, she apparently had not had any *facilitative structure*, a well-planned strategy to achieve her goal. Then, she revealed that her lecturer's stories about the life in Australia increased her motivation again. These stories seemingly re-energized her vision.

This finding shows that the participants experienced a self-internalization of people's view. In the self-internalization process, one sees him or herself as (he or she thinks) others see them (Tice & Wallace, 2005). Emily and Farah were not passively affected by others' view about them. Contrarily, their self-appraisals seemed to have taken part as they did not easily accept people's views unless these views resonated with her existing view. Emily's consistent high academic achievements apparently increased her self-efficacy and self-worth. It seems that the low self-worth before she applied for the program was only temporarily triggered by her fear self, a glimpse fear of the possible failure. The fear self seemingly undermined the stability of her self-concept and subsequently affected both self-efficacy and self-esteem working under the same self-system. For Farah, her long-term vision of being in Australia like her father seemingly allowed her to accept her lecturer's view about her. Therefore, this cannot be considered as the ought-to self, where the sole source of motivation comes from external factors and the only purpose is to avoid the people's rejections. Rather, the source apparently came from the long-term vision (for Farah) and the self-concordant goal (for Emily).

Seeing from a complexity perspective, such a small amount of feedback from other people may indeed significantly change an entire self-concept. A concept that best describes this phenomenon is called 'the butterfly effect' (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008), that is, a small change in initial conditions can result in

large differences in a later state of the entire system. These perturbations or triggering stimuli bring changes to the self-system from one state to another. This concept explains changes in Emily's and Farah's self-system from the high self-worth state to the low self-worth state before eventually getting back into the high self-esteem state. Such changes take place probably because the visions and goals become very strong attractor states.

On the contrary, three other participants namely Andy, Indri, and Nova were driven mainly by external factors. Andy was urged to learn English to be a businessman owning an educational institution. He was also apparently more passionate about being a music producer. Indri's and Nova's goals were also originated from an external pressure. While Indri was particularly driven by the pressure to adapt to the globalized world, Nova was forced by her parents to take English major to secure a job as an English teacher. It is worth mentioning that these three participants also experienced a motivational drive, but it was not as intense as the other three.

For Mike, unlike Emily and Farah, his vision and goal apparently had not initially changed. As discussed before, Mike's vision of being in Australia had been so vivid since he was in a junior high school in which he identified himself as a 'dreamer.' This vision gained its momentum and reached its peak once he heard about the program. His self-esteem also became more stable likely because he also had a steady self-efficacy. Having learnt English and Arabic as a foreign language, he claimed that he was proficient enough in those languages and had a wealth of teaching experience in schools. These claims seem to explain his increasing self-efficacy.

These findings indicate that motivational currents are inseparable from the self-system. To carry the students along the motivational currents, it seems vital to pay attention to changes in the self-system especially with regards to the possible occurrence of 'the butterfly effect.' Changes in initial conditions especially with regards to self-esteem, self-concept, and self-efficacy have to be monitored as they may trigger changes in a later state (Kernis & Goldman, 2003). Self-esteem is generally the most stable and susceptible only to temporary changes. On the other hand, self-efficacy and self-concept are more vulnerable: they can easily change as they interact with certain activities in particular circumstances. Changes in self-concept and self-efficacy will eventually trigger changes in the self-esteem (Kernis & Goldman, 2003). Emily, Farah, and Mike generally had more stable self-esteem than other participants. Therefore, it did not take a long time for them to recover from the unexpected changes of their self-concepts. In contrast, since Andy, Nova, and Indri comparatively had lower self-esteem and unclear self-concept, they became weaker to the changing circumstances (Markus & Nurius, 1986). The relationship between self-system and motivational currents can be illustrated in Figure 1.



This figure demonstrates how three salient self-system components are closely related to and dynamically interact with three motivational current components. Self-concept which subsumes possible

selves will affect visions/goals. The closer a particular possible self to the core of self-concept is, the more vivid/personal the vision will be.

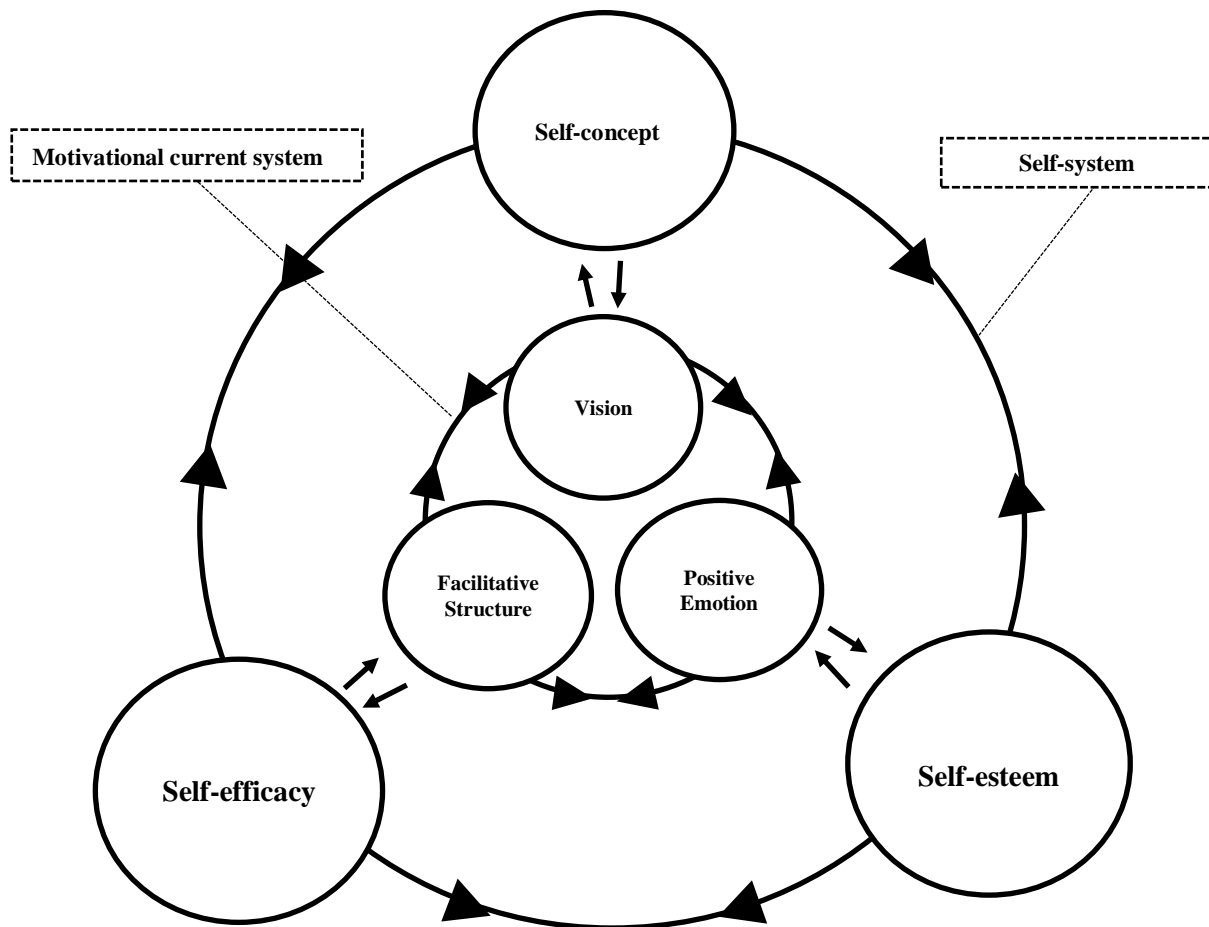


Figure 1. The relationship between self-system and motivational currents

Self-esteem or the feeling of self-worth is also increasing if one's activities are directed at the very center of their core self which eventually increases positive emotionality. In sum, the motivational current works optimally because the self-system is also fully functioning. While the previous study (Muir, 2016) shows that motivational currents are the optimum work of motivational systems, this study demonstrates how such thing can take place in relation to the self-system.

**The impact of experiencing motivational currents on the constructions of ideal teacher self**

Emily, Mike, and Farah's visions and goals as discussed earlier are not specifically related to teaching but to the desire of going abroad. To better understand the development of their goals in the domain of teaching, it is useful to look deeper into their stories from three different timescales: before the student enrolment in the teacher education institution, during their study and after the teaching abroad program. The development of their desire to be a teacher can be clearly traced by looking at these timescales. The significance (or

insignificance) of the program in developing their possible selves in the teaching domain can also be found. In this section, their day-to-day diaries are described and explained to understand their experiences of living in Australia.

The first things to investigate were participants' reasons of enrolling in the pre-service teacher education. The main theme emerged from the data was that Mike and Emily enrolled in this department because they liked English. Contrarily, Farah already had an ideal teacher self prior to applying for a place in this department. She apparently had a high self-efficacy in English but not in teaching.

Once they commenced their study, some changes on their ideal teacher self began to appear. They started to have an interest in being a teacher. One main theme that emerged was that during their study, they eventually knew that teaching was not like what they had thought of before. They realized that teaching was not only about giving information but also about making the students learn through enjoyable activities. After completing the program, these three participants had a

relatively similar ideal teacher self, which is to become a disciplined and friendly teacher.

I think a teacher needs to be disciplined because a teacher is a role model. I am the role model of my students, so I have to give good examples because usually students imitate their teachers. (Mike)

The teachers at this college have a good professionalism. Every morning, the teachers will have an informal meeting. The meeting is conducted at 8.45 and it takes only 15 minutes. (Emily)

I did not want to be a lazy teacher. (Farah)

Emily and Mike, despite their interest in becoming a friendly teacher, emphasized that a boundary should be drawn between teachers and students and that the students should not cross the line.

Yes, there should be boundaries. But still, we need to create boundaries of relationship with them, otherwise, they won't respect us. (Mike)

[In Indonesia, it's] different. Too close. Too close. I mean the teacher and the students still need a relationship like friends, but not too close. They will not respect the teacher because they see their teachers like their friends. (Emily)

Their experiences contrasted with Farah's opinion. She was not particularly interested in being a teacher who asked the students to show respect. Rather, she wanted to be a teacher who deeply cared what the students did. As discussed earlier, she was really passionate about helping others to learn English. She admitted that she was surprised at the following phenomenon in Australia.

I cried trying to catch the students who were silent in the class, and the teacher said, 'okay, this time I tolerate it because you're doing assignment in Math'. So, it's like, if he hadn't done the assignment he would be left and the teacher would be angry at him. Why not stimulating?

Emily and Farah's experiences contrasted with each other although both Emily and Farah taught at the same school. Farah in this respect said that she preferred Indonesian teachers to Australian because Indonesians tended to be caring and understanding especially when students found difficulties. It seems likely that these contrasting phenomena occurred mainly because, unlike Emily and Mike, Farah already had high self-efficacy in English, the language she had previously learnt in Brunei. Pre-service teachers like them do not seemingly perceive self-efficacy in teaching and in English differently (Hiver, 2013). They assume that their students will show respect to them if they do not make any mistakes when using English. From all these

analyses, it is safe to say that visions or goals in the motivational currents during the selection process affected how much experience they gained during the program.

## CONCLUSIONS

The main conclusion that can be drawn from this study is that a teaching abroad program can create motivational currents among pre-service teachers as most of them are likely to have a very personal goal of going abroad. Their overseas teaching experiences and motivational currents, in turn, influence how they construct their future image of themselves as teachers. Unlike the previous studies, this research attempts to avoid any simplification and reduction of motivational current theory by foregrounding only three salient components. In addition, these findings provide additional information about the interplay among the self-related constructs (self-esteem, self-concept, and self-efficacy) which predict how effective a motivational intervention among pre-service teachers will be.

The broad implication of the present research is that teacher education institutions can benefit from a teaching abroad program. Not only does this program yield a deeper insight into EFL pre-service teachers' inner lives but it also affords a powerful motivational intervention through which teachers' visions are built. That being said, it is also worth mentioning that teacher educators need to carefully design the teaching abroad program. They should not confuse pre-service teachers' vision of being in a foreign country with students' vision of being an ideal language teacher. Otherwise, their overseas teaching experiences will not contribute significantly to the development of their vision of being an ideal teacher.

Future studies could fruitfully explore this issue further by conducting a longitudinal study which might provide richer data of moment-to-moment changes in pre-service teachers' vision while they are teaching abroad. Also, while I believe that the self-related constructs discussed in this research are the most salient, future work is certainly required to disentangle the complexities of a myriad of self-related constructs not discussed in this article. The challenge for the future research—one that particularly adopts the complex dynamic system approach is how to find the balance between avoiding simplicity and embracing complexity.

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