

Introduction

Motivation has been a widely researched area in second/foreign language learning and researchers are fascinated with various factors contributing to learner motivation. In recent years, the study of motivation has moved from Gardner and Lambert's (1972) and Gardner's (1985) concepts of integrative and instrumental motivation under the framework of social cultural context to a self oriented stance proposed by Dornyei's (2005, 2009) L2 motivational self system. In subsequent years, studies have been carried out on selves as motivators in second or foreign language learning and a new wave of research on the topic has emerged.

The L2 motivation system sets its foundation on Possible Selves Theory (Markus & Nurius, 1986) and Self-Discrepancy Theory (Higgins, 1987). According to Possible Selves Theory, the concept of individuals' ideas of "possible selves – what they might become, what they would like to become and, what they are afraid of becoming" (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 954) is an integral part of oneself with the person one was in the past, the person one is now, and the

person one might be in the future. Similarly, Self-Discrepancy Theory (Higgins, 1987) differentiates between actual self, ideal self, and ought self, with ideal self and ought self as future self-guides to motivate oneself in closing the gap between actual self and future self. Both theories pinpoint the importance of selves in personal development and which resulted in motivated behaviors in pursuit of becoming an ideal future self. Thus, based on these concepts of selves, the L2 motivation self system centers on the combining effects of ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, and L2 learning experience as the three components of a motivation system that influence and predict L2 learners' learning behavior (Dornyei, 2009).

With research supporting Dornyei's (2005, 2009) L2 motivational self system, and suggesting stronger impacts of ideal L2 self on motivation than that of ought-to L2 self, little has been said about the interrelationship between ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self (Dornyei & Ushida, 2009b; Huang, Hsu, & Chen, 2015; Kim & Kim, 2014; Papi, 2010). Therefore, based on the constructs of L2 motivational self system, this study aimed to examine the interrelationship between

ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self, and their impacts on motivational strength, specifically the desires and the intentions of the English learners in Taiwan. A structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to examine a path model for the prediction of motivational strength from ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self, and the mediating effect of ideal L2 self between ought-to L2 self and motivational strength.

Review of the Literature

Impacts of L2 Selves on Motivation in an EFL Context

The L2 motivational self system views motivation as a construct of future self-guides, including ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self, and L2 learning experience (Dornyei, 2005; Dornyei & Ushida, 2009a). Ideal L2 self is how one idealizes oneself as an L2 user, “if the person we would like to become speaks an L2, the ‘ideal L2 self’ is a powerful motivator to learn the L2 because of the desire to reduce the discrepancy between our actual and ideal selves” (Dornyei, 2009, p. 29). On the other hand, ought-to L2 self “concerns the attributes that one believes one ought to possess to meet

expectations and to avoid possible negative outcomes” (Dornyei, 2009, p. 29). Ideal L2 self is more integrative with internalized motives, while ought-to L2 self is more extrinsic and relating to instrumental motives. The third component of the L2 motivational self system is the L2 learning experience “which concerns, ‘executive’ motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience” (Dornyei, 2009, p. 29), and is a different component apart from the two future self-guides described above. Since the purpose of the research was to investigate the interrelationship between ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self, and their impacts on motivational strength, L2 learning experience was excluded.

Ideal L2 self has proven to be a strong predictor of motivated behavior, while ought-to L2 self is a relatively weak predictor and sometimes non-significant (Csizer & Kormos, 2009; Kim & Kim, 2014; Kormos & Csizer, 2008; Lamb, 2012; Papi, 2010; Ryan, 2009; Taguchi, Magid, & Papi, 2009; Taylor, 2013; Xie, 2014). The two selves vary in their influences on motivated behaviors and they are often seen as two different constructs in one’s self system. Ideal L2