Title: A study of undergraduate students’ ideal L2 self and ought to L2 self based on the L2 motivational self system

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ABSTRACT

The study of motivation has been one of main interesting areas in second language teaching and learning. The integrative and instrumental motivation proposed by Gardner and Lambert (1972) has been challenged by the rise of global English and the changing purposes of English language teaching, learning, and using worldwide. In this study, the recent theory of L2 Motivational Self System (Dornyei, 2005) has been used as the framework. The objectives of the study were to: 1) study students’ vision as L2 learners; 2) explore the motivational factors behind the students’ desires to learn English as a second language; and 3) explore the factors that students believe they ought to possess to learn English as a second language. The participants consisted of 28 undergraduate students from an international university in Thailand. The instruments used in this study were questionnaires and six task types. Questionnaire data was analyzed by using descriptive analysis in terms of frequencies and percentages. Six task types were analyzed by content analysis. The findings show that: 1) students tend to have a positive degree of motivation towards their ideal L2 self. They have future self-related to future careers; 2) the four main motivational factors behind the students’ desires to learn English as a second language are travelling, global career, passing exams, and interacting with foreigners; and 3) strength of the vision of the ought to L2self is positive. They ought to learn English in order to meet social and family expectations. This indicates that the ideal L2 self is influenced by future careers, whereas the ought to L2 self is strongly influenced by society, parents, and peers. Finally, it is suggested that the sense of L2 self and ought-to L2 self should be promoted in English language classrooms. Language teachers should encourage and guide students to construct their language vision.