

Ideal L2 Self and Ought-to L2 Self: A Study in the Thai Context

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The European Conference on Language Learning 2016
Official Conference Proceedings

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 new theory of L2 Motivational Self System (Dornyei, 2005) has been used as the framework. The objectives of the study were to: 1) explore how students view themselves as L2 users; and 2) explore what students believe they ought to meet expectations. The participants consisted of 28 undergraduate students from an international university in Thailand. The instruments used in this study were questionnaires and student's vision form. Questionnaire data was analyzed by using descriptive analysis in terms of frequencies and percentages. Student's vision form data was analyzed by content analysis. The findings show that: 1) students view themselves as L2 users who have to use English in their work and daily life in the future; 2) students perceive that 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.

Keywords: L2 motivational self system, L2 vision, ideal L2 self, ought to L2 self

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