

Relationships of L2 Motivational Self-System Components and Willingness to Communicate in English among Thai Undergraduate Students

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Abstract

This paper investigates Dörnyei's (2005) L2 motivational self system (L2MSS) of Thai university EFL students and how it affects their L2 willingness to communicate (L2WTC), with the purpose of developing an understanding of how these students can be motivated to improve their English communication skills. A 37-item questionnaire was administered to 330 Thai EFL students from an unnamed public university, five of whom then voluntarily took part in a series of semi-structured interviews. Mean, SD, and Pearson's Correlation Coefficients were computed to identify relationships of the L2MSS components and L2WTC, while the interview data were used to support those findings. The findings revealed that *the ideal L2 self* was the strongest of the L2MSS components, followed by *L2 learning experience* and *the ought-to L2 self*. Positive correlation between L2MSS to L2WTC showed that students who had spent time living or working in an English-speaking environment more actively engaged in the situation that required communication in L2. The study suggested adding a fourth element to L2MSS, "*Past L2 experience*," which will allow students' L2MSS to better explain their L2WTC.

Keywords: L2 motivational self-system, willingness to communicate, motivation, EFL

บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยนี้นำกรอบแนวคิดของ Dörnyei's (2005) เพื่อศึกษาระบบแรงจูงใจภาษาที่สองของตนเอง (L2 motivational self-system: L2MSS) และศึกษาว่ากรอบแนวคิดนี้ส่งผลต่อความเต็มใจในการสื่อสารด้วยภาษาที่สอง (L2 willingness to communicate: L2WTC) ของนักศึกษาชาวไทยที่เรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศหรือไม่ วัตถุประสงค์หลักของงานวิจัยนี้คือเพื่อการพัฒนาความเข้าใจว่าทำอย่างไรนักศึกษาชาวไทยจึงจะมีแรงจูงใจในการพัฒนาทักษะการสื่อสารด้วยภาษาอังกฤษ ผู้วิจัยเก็บข้อมูลกับนักศึกษาชาวไทยที่เรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศในมหาวิทยาลัยของรัฐแห่งหนึ่ง จำนวน 330 คนด้วยแบบสอบถามจำนวน 37 ข้อ และมีนักศึกษาจำนวน 5 คนเข้าร่วมการสัมภาษณ์แบบกึ่งโครงสร้าง ข้อมูลประมวลผลในรูปแบบของค่าเฉลี่ย ส่วนเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐานและสหสัมพันธ์ ผลการศึกษา

พบว่า ตัวตนในอุดมคติเกี่ยวกับการใช้ภาษาที่สอง (Ideal L2 self) เป็นตัวแปรที่มีอิทธิพลที่สุดในระบบแรงจูงใจภาษาที่สองของตนเองสำหรับกลุ่มตัวอย่าง ตามมาด้วยตัวแปรประสบการณ์ในการเรียนภาษาที่สอง (L2 learning experience) และตัวตนที่ผู้อื่นคาดหวังเกี่ยวกับการใช้ภาษาที่สอง (Ought-to self) นอกจากนี้ระบบแรงจูงใจภาษาที่สองของตนเอง (L2MSS) มีความสัมพันธ์ทางบวกกับความเต็มใจในการสื่อสารด้วยภาษาที่สอง (L2WTC) อย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติ โดยนักศึกษาที่เคยอาศัยหรือทำงานในประเทศที่ต้องใช้ภาษาอังกฤษในการสื่อสารมีความกระตือรือร้นในการเข้าร่วมสถานการณ์ที่ต้องมีการสื่อสารด้วยภาษาอังกฤษ งานวิจัยนี้แนะนำถึงการเพิ่มตัวแปรประสบการณ์การเรียนภาษาที่สองในระบบแรงจูงใจในภาษาที่สองของตนเองซึ่งจะทำให้สามารถอธิบายความเต็มใจในการสื่อสารด้วยภาษาที่สองได้ดีขึ้น

คำสำคัญ: ระบบแรงจูงใจภาษาที่สองของตนเอง ความเต็มใจในการสื่อสารด้วยภาษาที่สอง แรงจูงใจภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศ

Introduction

Willingness to communicate (WTC) was originally born out of research into aspects of first language (L1) communication apprehension (Burgoon, 1976; McCroskey & Richmond, 1982; McCroskey & Daly, 1984). It was identified as a personality variable that indicates the likelihood of someone engaging in communication when given the opportunity to choose to communicate or not (McCroskey & Baer, 1985). A model was soon developed (MacIntyre, 1994) to illustrate the relationships between the variables that dictate L1WTC.

MacIntyre and Charos (1996), and later MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei & Noels (1998), modified the model to account for those extra influences that can affect WTC in second language (L2) compared to L1, in particular “*a number of intergroup issues, with social and political implications, that are usually irrelevant to L1 use*” (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 546). Since its initial publication, the model has been successfully adopted as a framework for a number of studies assessing L2WTC in a variety of different learner contexts (Peng, 2007; LaHuerta, 2014; Simic, 2014). Although the model is successful in its presentation of the various factors and layers that contribute to L2WTC, it has been criticized for failing to demonstrate both the interrelationships between the factors and the relative importance of each factor (Dörnyei, 2005).

Self-confidence is regarded as one of the major contributing factor to L2WTC. The majority of previous research has focused on the effect of self-confidence on L2WTC. According to Clement (1980), self-confidence is comprised of two main

constructs: (1) anxiety and (2) perceived competence. For anxiety, studies have observed strong correlations between anxiety and L2WTC that support the hypothesis that lower levels of anxiety will result in an increase in L2WTC (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; MacIntyre et al., 1998; Hashimoto, 2002; Yashima, 2002). Studies on the influence of perceived competence on self-confidence were inconclusive. For example, while both MacIntyre and Charos (1996) and Yashima (2002) concluded that there was a strong correlation between high levels of perceived L2 competence and L2WTC, Hashimoto (2002) found the correlation to be of little significance. Hashimoto (2002) subsequently hypothesized that the influence of perceived L2 competence on L2WTC was dependent on the interlocutor's proficiency level.

Although other motivational propensities such as *interpersonal motivation* and *intergroup motivation* have not been discussed to the same extent, some studies have illustrated how they also have some effect on L2WTC. Several elements of intergroup motivation, under the umbrella term *international posture*, were found to directly influence L2WTC by both Yashima (2002; 2009) and Pigginn (2010). However, all of these studies were conducted with Japanese EFL learners only, and it is important that studies be conducted in different contexts.

Much of the research on motivation and L2WTC made use of Gardner's socio-educational model (1985) and the integrative/instrumental dichotomy as part of a framework to interpret data. However, as the world's lingua franca (Crystal, 2003), English is in a position where it is increasingly difficult for learners to recognize the group with which they are interacting with (Ushioda, 2010). Thus, the distinction between integrative and instrumental motivation cannot clearly be defined. In fact, Yashima (2000) found that the correlation between integrative and instrumental motivations was as high as 0.60 (as cited in Yashima, 2009).

Consequently, the present research will employ Dörnyei's (2005) L2 motivational self system (L2MSS) to assess the value of the motivational propensities within the L2WTC model in a Thai EFL learner context. The L2MSS includes three components: the *L2 learning experience*, which is the immediate environment in which the L2 situation is occurring; the *ideal L2 self*, the part of one's ideal self specifically related to L2; and the *ought-to L2 self*, the attributes that one feels they ought-to have in order to meet expectations (Dörnyei, 2009). Previous research has indicated that the ideal self plays a more prominent role in individualist cultures, while ought and ideal selves play an equal role in collectivist cultures (Chan, 1997; Cheung, Maio, Rees, Kamble & Mane, 2016). Along with much of the rest of Asia, Thailand has been identified as having a strong collectivist culture (Triandis, 1995; Hofstede, 2001; Patterson & Smith, 2003) where the importance of "face" is prominent (Komin, 1990), insinuating that Thai learners are motivated as much by their *ought-to L2 self* as their *ideal L2 self*. However, this collectivist/individualist dichotomy fails to take the third aspect of the system, *L2 learning experience*, into consideration. In addition, self-confidence has already been established as the

variable with perhaps the greatest effect on L2WTC (Cao & Philp, 2006; LaHuerta, 2014), confirming Cohen and Norst's (1989) assertion of the strong bond between language and the self. It is therefore appropriate to include Dörnyei's (2005) system in the framework for this study.

As of yet there has been little research into the effect of the L2 motivational self system on L2WTC and even less so in the context of Thai EFL learners. The aim of this study is therefore to understand the relationships between each aspect of the L2 motivational self system regarding Thai university EFL students and the impact they have on the students' L2WTC. Gaining an understanding into the motivation of Thai university students and their L2WTC is an important step in raising English proficiency levels in Thailand. Consequently, this study is looking to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent are Thai university EFL students motivated by their *ideal L2 self*, *ought-to L2 self* and *L2 learning experience*?
2. How do the various components of the L2MSS correlate with Thai university EFL students' L2WTC?

Literature Review

Motivation

Motivation in second language acquisition (SLA) refers to “the effort that learners put into learning the L2 as a result of their need or desire to learn it” (Ellis, 1994, p. 509). Motivation theory in SLA has evolved over time, with a variety of constructs, models and systems being developed to accommodate varying trends in linguistic research.

The first major trend in L2 motivation involved social psychological perspectives championed by Robert Gardner and Wallace Lambert. Their work on L2 motivation within bilingual communities in Canada (1972) led to the establishment of the distinctions between both integrative and instrumental influences on motivation. Integrative motivation is “a sincere and personal interest in the people and culture represented by the other language group” while instrumental motivation is “the practical value and advantages of learning a new language” (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991, p. 58). With the growing influence of the integrative/instructional construct in L2 motivation, Gardner (1985) developed the socio-education model, of which the integrative motive was a key part. This construct posited that L2 motivation could be determined from two key learner variables: (1) attitude towards the learning situation, and (2) integrativeness. It should be noted that Gardner (1985) believed instrumental motivation still had a role in certain situations.

The socio-educational model has been used as part of research frameworks in a multitude of L2 motivational studies (e.g., Hashimoto, 2002; Peng, 2007) and, despite the changing trends in L2 motivation theory in that time, it has retained some relevance. However, its continued use over this time does not mean that it has not faced its share of criticism. Dörnyei (1994) argued that the terminology used by Gardner in describing different elements of the model has caused misinterpretation by many researchers. The use of “integrative” at different levels of the construct creates confusion regarding the term’s definition, while the model also suffers from “misrepresentation... as the sum of integrative and instrumental motivation” (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 70). Although Gardner (2000; 2001) addressed these issues to some extent, their presence indicates that the model could not be seen as being comprehensive in its coverage of L2 motivational influences, especially given the developments that were happening in the fields of both linguistics and psychology.

A more recent model of L2 motivation, and the one that will be included in the framework of the current study, is Dörnyei’s (2009) L2MSS. This model was developed from the theory of possible-selves proposed by Markus and Nurius (1986) in the field of psychology as well as conceptualizations from both Noels (2003) and Ushioda (2001) within the field of L2 acquisition. The model was seen as a way to move on from Gardner’s (1985, 2001) concept of integrativeness that had previously dominated L2 motivation theory. The model consists of three parts: (1) *ideal L2 self*, (2) *ought-to L2 self* and (3) *L2 learning experience*. The three L2MSS components are discussed in the following sections.

First, the *ideal L2 self* refers to the person we would like to be, regarding our L2 abilities. The concepts of integrativeness and instrumental motivations are included within this as they help to reduce the gap between our actual and ideal selves. Various studies on the L2MSS have determined the ideal L2 self to be the dominant factor within the system (Papi, 2010; Kim, 2012; Rattanaphumma, 2016), although some studies have indicated that the power of the ideal L2 self is determined by the age of learners (Ryan, 2009; Lamb, 2012).

Second, the *ought-to self* refers to the attributes of L2 that learners feel they are expected to possess by others, which tend to be more extrinsic than those of the ideal L2 self. Previous studies have come to various conclusions concerning the ought-to L2 self and its influence on learner motivation. It has usually been found to be weaker than its “ideal” counterpart, with some studies questioning whether it has any impact whatsoever (Csizér & Kormos, 2009; Aubrey, 2014). It should be noted that multiple studies found a strong correlation between the ought-to L2 self and certain instrumental motivations (Taguchi, Magid & Papi, 2009; Kim, 2012; Rattanaphumma, 2016), although these findings all occurred in Asian contexts, where students face great pressure to achieve academic success. It is therefore questionable whether this result would be found in a wider variety of contexts.

Third, the *L2 learning experience* is a conceptualization of how specific learning environments and experiences might affect learners' motivation. Previous research suggests that L2 learning experience has a strong effect on students' L2 motivation (Csizér & Kormos, 2009; Taguchi et al., 2009; Aubrey; 2014). It would seem, however, that the effect of L2 learning experience is somewhat contextual. Taguchi et al. (2009) noted how classroom experience is not a motivational factor for Chinese students simply because they "cannot afford the luxuries of caring for the niceties of the classroom experience" (p. 87), while it had a greater effect for Japanese and Iranian students. Furthermore, previous studies have been in disagreement about the strength of the relationship between the ideal L2 self and L2 learning experience, which Aubrey (2014) cited as further evidence as to the contextual nature of the effect of L2 learning experience on learners' motivation.

Willingness to Communicate (WTC)

WTC is a construct originally developed within the field of L1, being described as "*a predisposition towards approaching or avoiding the initiation of communication when free to do so*" (McCroskey, 1992, p. 17). It was considered to be a fixed personality trait that was applicable solely to the use of spoken language. However, when applied to the field of L2, WTC was imagined as a situation-based variable affected by both immediate and enduring influences. The increase in complexity and variety of the relationships between those influences demonstrate how L2WTC cannot just be transference of L1WTC into a new context (MacIntyre et al., 1998). Based on previous models (MacIntyre, 1994; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996), the various influences were categorized and arranged into the Heuristic Model of Variables influencing L2WTC (see Figure 1). The various levels and divisions help demonstrate the increased intricacy of WTC in L2 compared to L1 (Yashima, 2002). The model proposes a number of enduring, trait-like influences toward the base of the model, with more situational influences on L2WTC higher up. MacIntyre et al. (1998) stated that the higher an influence appears in the model, the closer in proximity it is to L2WTC. Multiple studies (Yashima, 2002; LaHuerta, 2014; Peng, 2015) have also confirmed that a variable's proximity to L2WTC in the model correlates to the strength of its effect on L2WTC. These studies found that it is a learner's self-confidence, which is comprised of both perceived competence and level of anxiety, located directly underneath L2WTC in the model, which has the greatest effect on L2WTC. It should also be noted that self-confidence appears twice within the model; as both a situational and enduring variable, highlighting the magnitude of the influence of self-confidence on L2WTC. However, that is not to say that other influences have not been found to have an equal or greater influence than state communicative self-confidence. Bektis-Cetinkaya (2005) found that L2WTC of college students in Turkey was directly linked to their attitudes toward the L2 community.

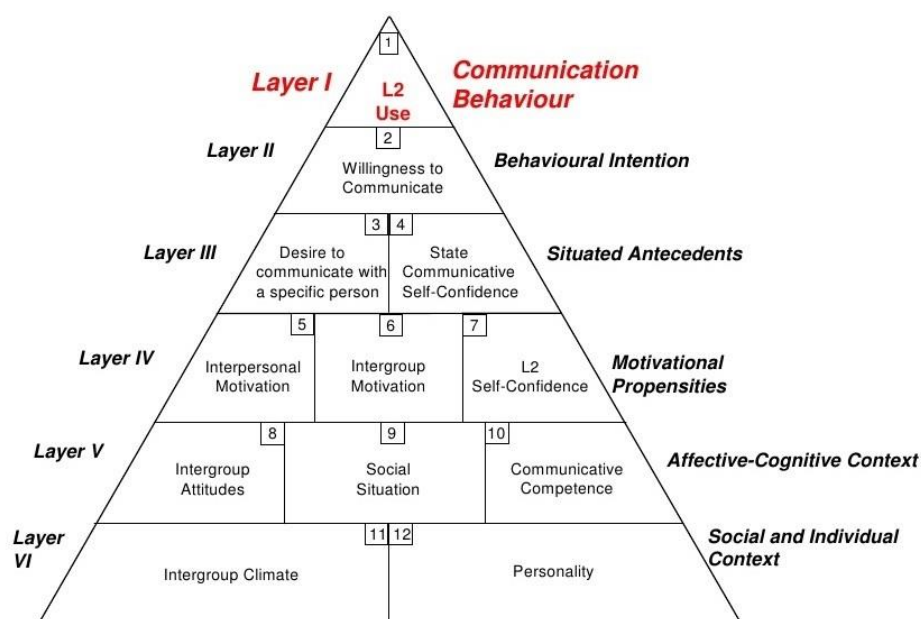


Figure 1: Heuristic Model of Variables Influencing L2WTC (MacIntyre et al., 1998)

MacIntyre et al. (1998) argued that “*the context of communication... involves the interaction of two factors: the society and the individual*” (p.555). Accordingly, these two factors are represented at the base level of the L2WTC model as *intergroup climate* and *personality* respectively. The generally held belief is that a positive attitude toward the L2 community will encourage the study of the L2 language (Gardner, 1985). However the opposite is also true, that intergroup tension will almost certainly have a negative impact on L2 learning and communication. It is suggested that such prejudice and subsequent discrimination towards both the target community and language derived from past experiences with the target community as well as the views of other members within the L1 community (MacIntyre et al., 1998). They claimed that prejudice can also be predicted by the personality patterns and traits that individuals possess. MacIntyre and Charos (1996) found that the “*Big Five*” personality traits from Goldberg’s (1993) taxonomy are all conducive in motivating both L2 learning and communication. However MacIntyre et al. (1998) made it clear that there is no such thing as a “perfect” personality type for language learning and communication, nor is personality hypothesized to be a direct influence on L2WTC in the model.

Within the L2WTC model, it is motivation propensities which are considered to be the enduring influences with the most direct effect on L2WTC. MacIntyre et al. (1998) identified these as interpersonal motivation, intergroup motivation and L2 self-confidence. While it has already been established that L2 self-confidence, whether as a situational or enduring influence, clearly plays a key role in L2WTC, the research regarding the other two propensities is neither as vast, nor as comprehensive. The model identifies “control” and “affiliation” as the two core purposes of communication regarding interpersonal and intergroup motivation. “Control” refers to the preservation and perpetuation of preconceived social

positions, while “affiliation” is seen as the establishment or preservation of a relationship (MacIntyre et al. 1998). These motivations were derived from Gardner’s (1985) socio-educational model of motivation and pay little consideration to psychological aspects of motivation, such as self-regulation, mechanisms that learners employ in shaping motivational outcome (Dörnyei, 2005), that have been hypothesized into L2 motivational theory since the model’s original publication. Thus, the current research intends to investigate the relationships between such psychological motivational constructs, specifically those of L2MSS, and the model of L2WTC designed by MacIntyre et al. (1998).

Methodology

Design

This mixed methods study employed a sequential explanatory design (Creswell, 2003) to collect data. The quantitative data was collected through the use of a questionnaire, while qualitative data were completed through interview sessions.

Research Instruments

The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first contained questions concerning demographic information. The second comprised of 37 five-point Likert-scale items related to anxiety, perceived competence, L2WTC, ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self and L2 learning experience. An original list of 52 items was created. Three experts discussed which of those were most appropriate for the present research, eventually reducing the number of items to 37. The remaining items were put through a “back-translation” process in order to ensure their content validity. They were translated into Thai before three experts separately translated each item back into English from Thai. The items from each expert were then compared with each other and the original questions to ensure that nothing was lost in translation and that the questions would elicit the intended response from participants. Items concerning L2MSS were taken from Taguchi et al. (2009) and Aubrey (2014), and adapted to fit the context of Thai university students. The items concerning anxiety, perceived competence and L2WTC were taken from Bektis-Cetinkaya (2005) and adapted into a five-point Likert-scale.

The interviews consisted of a series of semi-structured questions pertaining to the interviewees’ answers to the questionnaire items. These questions were objective but also allowed for follow up questions to clarify information that had been gained and probe deeper into both the L2 motivational self system and willingness to communicate of each student.

Participants

The survey participants were 330 Thai undergraduate students from various faculties at a public university in the Bangkok metropolitan area. The sample size was derived from Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table based upon the current study having a survey population of 1,000. The participants to be included were determined using stratified random sampling. The population was already divided into 20 classes of 50 students, and 20 students from each group of 50 were asked at random to participate in the study. The questionnaire also included an item about time spent living or studying in a setting where English was the primary language used. The researcher felt this was important to include in the questionnaire as previous research has shown that studying abroad has a strong influence on L2WTC (Yashima, 2009).

Purposeful sampling methods were used to select five students to be interviewed, who were willing to participate. Typical case sampling was used to select two students who were interviewed as being representative of the majority of the sample. One student was chosen based on their experience living or studying in an environment where English is the first language, while two were chosen based on their questionnaire answers indicating a strong ideal L2 self/weak ought-to L2 self or a weak ideal L2 self/strong ought-to L2 self. Prior to each interview, the students' consent to be interviewed and recorded was obtained by the researcher and they were made aware that they could withdraw their participation at any time.

Procedure

The director of the English program was contacted before permission to conduct the research was received. The teachers of each class were asked for consent to distribute questionnaires in their classes and allow the students to complete them in class. Once the results from the questionnaires were processed, those students who were selected for interviews were contacted via email to request consent before doing interviews at a later date.

Data Analysis

The data obtained from the questionnaires were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 18.0. For the first research question, the means (*M*) and standard deviations (*SD*) were calculated to describe the average strength of each variable. For the second research question, correlation procedures, specifically Pearson correlation, were used to measure the strength of the relationships between the many variables. Verbatim quotes from the interview session were used to support quantitative findings.

Results

The findings are presented in accordance to two research questions: (1) to what extent are Thai university EFL students motivated by their *ideal L2 self*, *ought-to L2 self* and *L2 learning experience*? ; and (2) how do the various components of Thai university EFL students' L2MSS correlate with their L2WTC?

Table 1 L2MSS components as perceived by Thai EFL students ($n=330$)

	<i>k</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
L2 Anxiety	7	2.82	0.75
Perceived L2 Competence	7	3.20	0.66
Ideal L2 self	6	3.56	0.69
Ought-to L2 self	5	3.16	0.73
L2 Learning Experience	5	3.47	0.71

As can be seen in Table 1, the highest rated component contributing to L2MSS among Thai EFL participants was Idea L2 Self ($M = 3.56$; $SD = 0.69$), followed by L2 Learning Experience ($M=3.47$; $SD 0.71$) and Perceived L2 Competence ($M = 3.20$; $SD = 0.66$). L2 Anxiety was rated the lowest as a contributing factor to L2WTC by the participants ($M = 2.82$; $SD = 0.75$).

Regarding the influence of the ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, and L2 learning experience as contributing factors of motivation among Thai EFL learners, it was found that the ideal L2 self ($M = 3.56$) was the strongest among the three components of Thai university students' L2MSS, followed by learning experience ($M = 3.47$) and ought-to self ($M = 3.16$), respectively.

As mentioned earlier, the researchers wanted to determine if experience of spending time living or studying in an English environment played a role in the L2MSS. The findings suggested that the idea L2 self was more influential in motivating those who have spent time living or studying in an English speaking

environment ($M = 3.80$) than those who have not ($M = 3.52$). Conversely, L2 learning experience was more influential on those who have not lived or worked in an English environment ($M = 3.50$) than those participants with experience ($M = 3.39$). The ought-to self, meanwhile, had a similar influence on those with experience ($M = 3.18$) and those without ($M = 3.16$). Those students who have spent time in an English speaking environment reported higher perceived L2 competence ($M = 3.52$) than those who have not ($M = 3.15$), as well as lower levels of anxiety ($M = 2.50$ and $M = 2.87$, respectively)

Table 2 Intercorrelations of L2WTC and L2MSS Components, as perceived by Thai EFL undergraduates

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. L2WTC	-					
2. L2 Anxiety	-.446***	-				
3 . Perceived L2 Competence	.406***	-	-			
4. Ideal L2 self	.288***	-	.502***	-		
5. Ought-to L2 self	-.054	.057	-.019	.088*	-	
6. L2 Learning Experience	.158**	-	.353***	.538***	.109*	-
		.298***				

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Table 2 shows the relationships between the different components of L2MSS and L2WTC. Pearson correlation coefficients revealed moderate positive relationships between the Ideal L2 Self and L2 Learning Experience ($r = .538$, $p < .001$), and the Ideal L2 Self and Perceived L2 Competence ($r = .502$; $p < .001$). In addition, moderate positive relationships were found between Perceived L2 Competence and L2WTC ($r = .406$; $p < .001$), and Perceived L2 Competence and Perceived L2 Competence ($r = .353$, $p < .001$). Negative correlations were found among the pairs of L2WTC and L2 Anxiety ($r = -.446$, $p < .001$), L2 Anxiety and Perceived L2 Competence ($r = -.487$, $p < .001$), and L2 Anxiety and L2 Learning Experience ($r = -.298$, $p < .001$). Overall, L2WTC positively correlated with the L2MMS components of Perceived L2 Competence, Ideal L2 Self, and L2 Learning Experience, while negatively correlated with the components of L2 Anxiety and Ought-to L2 Self.

In order to investigate further, the researchers examined the intercorrelations between L2WTC and L2MSS components for those students with experience in English speaking environments compared to those without. The findings suggested

that the correlations of L2WTC with both ought-to self and L2 learning experience were stronger for those who had been spent time in an English speaking environment ($r = .300$; $p < .05$ and $r = .333$; $p < .05$), than those who lacked such experience ($r = -.117$; $p < .05$ and $r = .161$; $p < .05$, respectively). Conversely, the relationship between L2WTC and ideal L2 self was stronger for those who never spent time in an English speaking environment ($r = .291$; $p < .05$), than those with such experience ($r = .114$; $p < .05$). Further investigation revealed differences between the two groups of students. Such differences included the intercorrelations between L2WTC and L2 Anxiety. While the positive relationship was marginal between L2WTC and L2 Anxiety among those who have spent time in an English speaking environment ($r = -.332$; $p < .05$), a moderately negative relationship was found for the group of participants who lacked exposure to such an environment ($r = -.441$; $p < .05$). Moreover, different levels of intercorrelation between perceived L2 competence and L2WTC were found between the two groups of participants, as it was marginal for those who have spent time in an English speaking environment ($r = .159$; $p < .05$), while moderate for those without such experience ($r = .429$; $p < .05$).

Students' views related to their ideal L2 selves

Data from the interviews revealed students' thoughts of their ideal L2 selves. A number of students demonstrated their motivation for English-language communication, while several students spoke about their desire to travel to around the world. They all concluded that the ability to communicate in English would improve the possibility and ease of such travels. For example, Natalie (N.B.: all names used in this study are pseudonyms), when asked about how English is important to her, explained:

"I think, I like travelling, so it's important because right now I can speak English...we can travel abroad."

Another student, Julia, explained:

"my dream is to travel around the world because I want to see many new things and go to the places that are unseen. I want to see new things and new culture. I want to know many things and people, to know how they think. I think to be able to communicate with them in English is very important."

This desire and need to communicate with others around the world was reaffirmed by Sally who explained:

"I think now it's...the world has networks to connect us, and I can have friends in foreign countries. If you don't, if you can't speak English, maybe... no I'm sure you can't."

The ability to access and understand media from around the world is another part of the students' ideal L2 selves. Tara explained:

“what motivates me is about my entertaining purpose. When I’m reading the Japanese cartoons on the website or watching Korean movies, sometimes it doesn’t have Thai subtitles so I should know the English to understand it.”

Both Julia and Polly, meanwhile, described how their desire to become medical professionals influences them. Polly noted:

“In my future, as a medical student, it (English) has a lot because all the textbooks and new research are in English and it opens my world to many kinds of information that could, that could be beneficial to my career.” Julia echoed this, stating: *“I’m studying in the medical field. I’m going to be a doctor. So English will help me with speaking and communicate with patients. Also when I have to read research or textbooks, most of them are in English so I can learn faster.”*

Students’ views related to their ought-to L2 selves

The students shared their views on how they felt their L2WTC was affected by expectations of their English abilities. A couple of students voiced concern that they may not be able to meet the expectations that people may have of their English abilities while also demonstrating that their communication was tempered by their own expectations. Polly explained that:

“if that person is encouraging and doesn’t mind if I make stupid mistakes, OK, I’ll be more confident of speaking”.

Sally indicated similar feelings, explaining:

“my classmates are very, speaking and using English very well... but when they look at me I feel a little bit anxious.”

As a student who has experience in an English speaking context, Natalie expressed similar concerns:

“Some of my friends already know that I was an exchange student so they might expect me to speak very well or something like that so I’m just afraid that I’m not as smart as they expect.”

Students' views related to their L2 learning experience

Students' responses to questions concerning their L2 learning experiences were primarily focused on the role of their teacher. Polly was positive about the effect that her teacher had on her L2 learning experience. After revealing she studies with one of the native-speaking teachers, she noted:

"He's funny! He always have games to play in class and sometime we have the roleplays to do in class...these kinds of fun things".

In fact, the nationality of the teacher was important in the L2 learning experience for several students. Having had both a Thai and native-speaking English teacher at the university, Julia was firm in her preference for studying with native-speaking teachers, stating:

"When I hear that I have to learn with a foreign teacher I feel good, I feel this class will be very fun and active and I feel that I want to come to class but if I learn this semester with a Thai teacher I feel I don't want to go because it will be boring like other subjects."

Conversely, Tara explained that she preferred to study with Thai teachers over native-speaking teachers:

"This semester I'm studying with teacher Barry. He is a foreigner, so I feel nervous because... for that I have no confidence that what I say is right in grammatical way. But in the first semester I study with a Thai teacher, so in the first semester I have more confidence that whenever I say things wrong he can help me and correct me."

One aspect of the students' L2 learning experience that has had a negative effect is the proficiency levels. When asked about her English classes at the university, Sally lamented:

"I get pretty nervous because in my class there are many friends that their skills is much better than me."

Natalie voiced the same concern, only from a different perspective:

"It's too easy...there are too many people... they kind of mix the standard of each class. It's too broad." She further mentions: *"I already think that my English is good and because I think that the class is easy I'm not very into it."*

Regarding those students who have spent some time in an English environment, the content covered in their classes is of particular importance to their

motivation. When asked what motivates her to study in English class, Natalie responded:

“I think it’s about the topic that I study. If it’s one that I don’t know before then I want to learn more and will speak more.”

Discussion

With the results showing that the ideal L2 self is the strongest component of the L2MSS among Thai EFL undergraduate students, followed by L2 learning experience and the ought-to self, the present research corroborates the findings from previous L2MSS studies such as Papi (2010), Kim (2012), and Rattanaphumma (2016). Although the ought-to L2 self was the weakest of the components, the gap between it and the other components was fairly small, contradicting previous research (Csizér & Kormos, 2009; Aubrey 2014) that questioned whether it had any effect whatsoever. This could be explained by considering the collectivist culture that has been associated with Thailand (Triandis, 1995; Hofstede, 2001; Patterson & Smith, 2003), as well as the importance of face within Thai culture (Komin, 1990). Taguchi et al. (2009) came to a similar conclusion regarding the collectivist culture in China and its effect on the ought-to L2 self of Chinese EFL learners.

The ideal L2 self was significantly stronger for those students who have experience living or studying in an English speaking environment. This difference could be a result of what Markus and Nurius’ (1986) referred to as the “realization” of that particular self. In this case, the students have experienced the “realization” of their ideal L2 self during their time in an English speaking context. These experiences likely would have included some potential elements of the ideal L2 self mentioned in the questionnaire, for example, item 34 – *“I can imagine myself living abroad and using English effectively with local people”*. Indeed, the mean score for this particular questionnaire item rose from 3.65 for those students without experience in an English-speaking environment to 4.08 for those students with such experience. Having already gained experience in scenarios such as this, with varying degrees of success, those students who have spent time in an English-speaking environment are likely to feel more capable of achieving it again in the future, which strengthens their ideal L2 self.

Consistent with past research (Yashima, 2002), L2 anxiety and perceived L2 competence, direct influences on L2WTC in the MacIntyre et al. (1998) model, correlated most strongly with L2WTC. That the components of the L2MSS all had weaker correlations with the students’ L2WTC suggests that they are enduring influences and would be included further down MacIntyre et al.’s model as enduring influences on L2WTC, rather than as situational influences. Of the three L2MSS

components, only the relationship between the ideal L2 self and L2WTC was near to being directly meaningful and the ideal L2 self having the strongest relationship with L2WTC matches previous research (Taguchi et al., 2009; Aubrey 2014). The indication here is that for those students with no experience in an English speaking context, their ideal L2 self is, to some extent, responsible for their L2WTC. The relationship between these students' ought-to L2 selves and their L2WTC was, conforming to previous research (Peng, 2015), particularly weak. However, it is worth noting that the correlation was negative, indicating that these students would rather simply not communicate in English at all than lose face by attempting to communicate and making a mistake, a further example of how face plays an important role in the ought-to L2 self of these Thai students.

That the ought-to L2 self and L2 learning experience of the students who had spent some time in an English-speaking environment had a stronger relationship with their L2WTC than either their ideal L2 self, L2 anxiety or perceived L2 competence was somewhat of a surprise. Previous research into the correlations between L2WTC and L2MSS has not divided its data into groups in the same manner, thus there are no past findings with which to compare these results. However, based upon Dörnyei's (2009) explanation of the ought-to L2 self, these students may feel the expectations of others concerning their English-speaking abilities are much higher as a result of their experiences. Thus they feel the need to demonstrate that their experiences in an English-speaking context had a positive effect on their abilities that others, in particular their parents and family, might expect. It is hard to give a firm explanation for the increased correlation between L2WTC and L2 learning experience for this group, given the lack of previous research specific to students with experience in English-speaking environments, along with the contextual nature of L2 learning experience (Taguchi et al., 2009). However, Natalie's comments concerning the effect that both her proficiency, as well as the class content, has on her L2WTC give us one possibility. The contextual experience these students have gained in an English speaking environment gives them a greater understanding as to the value of what they do in classes which, in turn, determines whether or not they choose to communicate.

Both the quantitative and qualitative data from this study indicate that Dörnyei's (2005) L2MSS alone cannot explain the students' L2WTC. The manner in which the correlations between L2MSS and L2WTC differ depending on the students' experience in English-speaking environments insinuates that another factor is necessary. The study therefore proposes an additional variable of "Past L2 experience" be used in conjunction with L2MSS to help explain students' L2WTC. "Past L2 experience" refers to a conceptualization of how a student's past experiences with the target language outside the classroom, involving native speakers of the language, might affect their L2WTC. It would act as the enduring, out-of-class opposite to the more situational L2 learning experience.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to investigate the L2MSS of Thai university EFL students as well as its effect on their L2WTC. Confirming the findings of past research, the present study showed that the ideal L2 self was the strongest of the three components, followed by the L2 learning experience and the ought-to L2 self. The data indicates that the various components of the L2MSS act as enduring, indirect influences on the students' L2WTC and would best fit in below the situational variables of L2 anxiety and perceived L2 competence within MacIntyre et al.'s (1998) model of L2WTC. The effect of the L2MSS on the Thai university EFL students' L2WTC is dependent upon whether the students had extended experience in an English-speaking context. The ought-to self and L2 learning experience are stronger influences on the L2WTC of those students with experience in an English-speaking context and the ideal L2 self is a stronger influence on the L2WTC of those students without.

Implications

The major practical implication of this study is that it provides possible explanations behind Thai university students' (lack of) L2WTC as well as hinting at potential solutions to improve it. For example, it has been established that fear of judgement from classmates acts as a deterrent from L2 communication. Teachers could alleviate this issue by proactively fostering a positive classroom environment where students do not possess such qualms. A second practical implication can be derived from the finding that learners' experiences in English-language environments affect the effect of their L2MSS on their L2WTC. Learning about the educational history of their students could provide teachers with insights into how their students are motivated. Curricula, lesson plans and activities could subsequently be altered to provide students with classes that will increase their L2WTC.

Limitations and Future Studies

This study had a few limitations. Owing to time constraints, there was no comprehensive pilot study conducted. Instead, just a small, four-participant pilot test of the questionnaire was conducted. A more comprehensive pilot test would have

allowed for further refinement of the questionnaire and its various items. Furthermore, the participants were required to complete an in-class test during the same class that the questionnaires were distributed. This may well have had an effect on the participants' answers concerning L2 Learning Experience. One final limitation is that only five students were interviewed as part of the qualitative data collection, a result of time limitations. Future studies should research the effects of extended experience in English speaking contexts on L2WTC through the inclusion of the "Past L2 experience" variable defined above. Further studies into this relationship are vital for their implications into language learning and the psychology of language learners' motivation.

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