

## The Exploration of Ideal L2 Self and Ought to L2 Self through the Lens of Teaching Materials

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### Abstract

This paper reports on the implementation of materials development to enhance L2 motivation for English foundation course at an international university in Thailand. The course was conducted as one of the English foundation courses offered for undergraduate students. Drawn from the current sociolinguistic landscape associated with English language teaching, the spread of English has resulted in a significant diversity of social and educational contexts in which English is being used and learned. Regarding teaching materials, they should positively entail the connection between the rise of globalization and students' classroom situational contexts. In this study, six task types were designed to create students' desired L2 future selves; learner's vision form, photovoice writing task, your future history writing task, exposure to L2 positive role model activity, a collection of L2 biographies, and L2 related desires (five wishes). Twenty-eight undergraduate students participated in the study. The findings show that the materials help students envisage their future selves and construct their vision. Moreover, students are motivated to build up their own desired language selves. This indicates that the teaching materials should be designed for students' needs to learn English. The materials should involve students' contextual dimensions to help them see themselves and their community as sources. It is recommended that second language teachers should adapt, adopt, or design teaching materials to correspond to the students' contextual factors.

**Keywords:** materials development, L2 motivation, English language teaching

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## Introduction

The current sociolinguistic landscape shows an undeniable challenge that English has become the language of international communication (Medgyes, 2017). As stated by McKay and Bokhorst (2008), the spread of English has resulted in a significant diversity of social and educational contexts in which English is being used and learned. The statement is supported by Street and Leung (cited in Alsagoff, McKay, Hu, and Renandya, 2012: 85) that the use of English as an international language (EIL) for communication is an increasingly diverse range of contexts and purposes, involving complex participant language backgrounds and interests, has demanded revisiting of some established and powerful conceptual certainties in the fields of language and literacy education. In this respect, teaching materials should positively entail the connection between the rise of globalization and students' classroom situational contexts.

In Thailand, the position of English has not officially been an international language, but it is clear to state that recent education policy in Thailand

reflects an increasing awareness of multilingualism (Baker and Jarunthawatchai, 2017). These international dimensions cause many challenges to non-native English students whose motivation may not be a desire to integrate themselves into target cultures. The concepts of the earlier integrative motivation may not be longer meaningful to learners of a second language. Regarding the situations, the introduction and design of teaching materials to enhance L2 motivation would be more relevant to the reality of the context where the number of non-native speakers outnumbers the native speakers.

## Theoretical Foundation

### 1. Motivation and L2 Motivational Self System

Motivation has been one of the essential variables in second language learning. The exploration of motivational study has been both the global and local concerns of language researchers for several decades. The investigation should be dated back to the influence on L2 motivation initiated by Gardner's and Lambert motivation theory (1959, 1972).

The theory has been best-known for two basic types of instrumental and integrative orientations to motivation which the first refers to acquiring a language as a means for attaining instrument goals: furthering a career, reading technical material, translation and so forth whereas the latter describes learners who wish to integrate themselves into the culture of the second language group and become involved in social interchange in that group (Brown, 2007). It is undeniable that the theory has led to a large number of motivational research studies worldwide; however, with the increasing diversity and complexity of the ELT landscape, the association between context and motivation are also becoming more complex (Ushioda, 2013). Drawn on this phenomenon, Dornyei and Csizer (2002) contend that the term "integrativeness" is not so much related to any actual or metaphorical, integration into an L2 community as Gardner's original conceptualization. This claim has been supported by Graddol (2007) in his book "English Next" that the current enthusiasm for English in the world is closely tied to the complex processes of globalization then native-speaker norms are becoming

less relevant as English becomes a component of primary education in many countries.

The fact that integrative or instrumental motivation in second language classroom can strengthen or lead learners into the positive directions of language learning success is likely to be questioned since the rise of global English. The enormous growing number of non-native speakers of English has changed the landscape of English learning contexts. Dornyei (2005) recently lists the category of this motivational approach to conceptualizing second language learning motivation within a "self" framework (Dornyei, 2009, in Dornyei and Ushioda, 2009). This concept is called the L2 Motivational Self System. The system emerged after a growing concern with the concepts of integrative orientation that reflects a desire to integrate into the L2 community. In the past decade, this orientation seemed convincing in a way that learners or users acquired English as a means to integrate themselves into the English speakers' cultures. However, a drastic change in the spread of English is currently interconnected with non-native

and native speakers of English around the globe. The motivation to learn or use English should instead lie in the contexts of learning and using English in the globalized world (Ushioda, 2013). This could be explained that motivational study should be focused on real persons who possess own unique feelings, history, and backgrounds.

## **2. Materials Development**

Defined by Tomlinson (2003: 1), materials development is both a field of study and a practical undertaking. As a field, it studies the principles and procedures of the design, implementation, and evaluation of language teaching materials. As an undertaking, it involves the production, evaluation, and adaptation of language teaching materials. This could be said that the term “materials development” consists of a process of materials evaluation, materials adaptation, materials design, materials production, materials exploitation and materials research (Tomlinson and Masuhara, 2017). However, the definition of “materials” itself defined by Tomlinson (2011) can be informative, instructional, experiential, eliciting and exploratory. In

the view of Nunan (1999), materials should bring the content to life and help learners make a connection between classroom world and the world beyond it.

In English language teaching programs worldwide, there are some fundamental principles of second language acquisition relevant to the development of materials such as novelty, variety, attractive presentation, appealing content, and achievable contents (Tomlinson, 2013). Thus, it is undeniable to bridge the relationship between language teaching and materials development. In this case, it would be appropriate to describe the framework of language teaching in relation to materials development. McDonough, Shaw, and Masuhara (2013) suggest that the contextual factor plays a very significant role in materials design; therefore, learners, teachers, and educational settings should be put into an account at the early stage of the course design. More or less similar to what Richards (2010) states, “Materials writers will wish to consult the second language acquisition (SLA) literature, especially when considering which language structures to

focus on, and how and when to present them”.

Concerning both a field of study and a practical undertaking, it is necessary to overview the theories of curriculum provided by key scholars (Graves, 1996, Nunan, 1988, Nation and Macalister, 2010). Stated by Graves, a curriculum will be understood in the broadest sense as the philosophy, purposes, design, and implementation of a whole program. The framework components suggested by Graves are needs assessment, determining goals and objectives, conceptualizing content, selecting and developing materials and activities, organization of contents and activities, and evaluation. Similarly, Nation and Macalister (2011) introduce the model of the parts of the curriculum design process consisting of three outer circles and a subdivided inner circle. The environmental analysis containing learners, teachers, and situations is the starting point to consider for the curriculum development. Types of activities are essential to help learners learn, and they should be designed with careful consideration.

Drawn from the framework components of materials design, it is apparent to claim that needs assessment or needs analysis has become the first key step for a material designer to consider. The needs analysis should be involved with the contextual factors such as learners, setting, and teacher. There are also some fundamental considerations that can be considered such as age, interests, level of proficiency, mother tongue, academic and educational level, and motivation, etc. (McDonough, Shaw, and Masuhara (2013). Besides, the setting will determine the objectives of a program based on learners' needs assessment. Finally, teachers play a crucial role either directly or indirectly in the context of teaching and learning.

### **3. EIL Curriculum**

Across the world, as it can be seen from the real linguistic landscape, globalization, global English is having a significant impact on educational policy, curriculum provision, language pedagogy, and on student motivation (Ushioda, 2013). Regarding curriculum provision, Brown (2012) compares the different notions between traditional and English as

an international language curriculum development assumptions. In his view, the traditional curriculum put the emphasis on native speaker models, and the objectives of learning English are obviously for global not local reasons. This assumption is seen far beyond the contextual reality which native speaker models are perceived debatable. On the contrary, the target language and culture, objectives of learning English, curriculum contents (Brown, 2012 in Alsagoff, McKay, Hu, and Renandya 2012) have become emerged issues in EIL curriculum. It is evident to state that English is seen as a key to knowledge and personal success in the globalized world (McKay and Bokhorst-Heng, 2008), therefore, the traditional paradigm which native speaker culture is perceived inferior may not be realistic. According to McKay (2012), the rise of English has implied a pedagogy that resonates with the local linguistic landscape and curricular should promote cross-cultural awareness.

As earlier discussed, sociolinguistic changes affect English and materials development, Kirkpatrick (2010), Baker (2015), Kumaravadivelu (2012), McKay

(2012), Brown (2012). Kirkpatrick and Sussex (2017) introduce a lingua franca approach to the teaching of English which one of the implications is the native speaker is not the linguistic target as well as the cultural target. Regarding material development, it could be said that local teachers and material developers should fully utilize the resources of students' local cultures and identities. Another critical view from Kumaravadivelu (2012) who discusses that the challenges of globalism lead to a break from its dependency on western-oriented or centered-based in terms of teaching methods, cultural competence, and textbook industry. Finally, McKay (2012) demands to revisit of curriculum and materials design that should be reestablished on contextual reality.

### The Gap of the Study

As a language teacher, gradual sociolinguistic changes in our teaching and learning context should be put in our prioritized concern. It is also our challenge to find and design motivational strategies or materials to enhance students' learning motivation. Recently,

Dornyei (2005) proposed the concept of ideal L2 motivational self-system which consists of three constituents: Ideal L2 Self, Ought-to L2 Self, and L2 Learning Experience. Ideal L2 Self concerns the L2 specific facet of one's ideal self, whereas ought-to L2 Self concerns the attributes that individuals believe they ought to possess to avoid possible negative outcomes. The L2 learning Experience concerns situation-specific motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience. According to the concept, Dornyei and Kubanyiova (2014) suggest that language teachers should integrate vision into language classrooms. In other words, learners should be enhanced to create their L2 vision. In my view, there is a need to create teaching materials to enhance learners' vision. It is hoped that the study will reveal a better understanding of roles of the L2 motivational self-system through the lens of material development. For language teachers, the findings will provide ample evidence to design varied classroom materials or activities to enhance learners' L2 vision and generate L2 vision. For learners, it is assumed that L2 vision will

enable learners to construct their L2 roadmap or learning plans.

### The Study

The purpose of the study is to report the implementation of the teaching materials to build up L2 vision in a foundation English III course at an international university in Bangkok, Thailand. Twenty-eight undergraduate students from Faculty of Law participated in the study. All of them are Thai with the mean age of 20 years old. The theoretical framework for motivating learners through vision is adapted from Dornyei and Kubanyiova (2014). The materials consisted of six task types, namely learners' vision form, photovoice writing, your future history, exposure to L2 positive role model, a collection of biographies of L2 language users who they admire, and L2 related desires. The objectives of each task will be briefly described below.

#### Task 1: Learner's vision form

The objective of this material is to create students' English language vision. The form consists of 2 parts; part 1 is the student's personal information, and part 2



is an open-ended question consisting of 9 items (see Appendix A).

### **Task 2: Photovoice writing**

The objective of this material is to find out what inspires or motivates students' desires to learn English as a second language. This technique requires the students to capture their experiences through photos and talk about what these mean for them (Dornyei and Kubanyiova, 2014). Students were asked to bring or take any picture of any situations, events, people that matter to them as persons and L2 learners or users. Then they were asked to write about 250-300 words why that picture matters to them.

### **Task 3: Your future history**

The objective of this material is to engage students in constructing their future visions (Dornyei and Kubanyiova, 2014). Students were asked to narrate about 250 words their future plans involving L2 as if they had already experienced the outcomes. Some examples of questions or narration included: imagine that is two years ahead of time and you were looking back at those two years. Where were you now? What were you doing? Where have you

been on holiday? Where are you working? What had you achieved in L2 learning that you were most proud of and why?

### **Task 4: Exposure to L2 positive role model**

The objective of this task is to raise students' hopes for the future and motivate them to pursue similar roadmaps or any alternative paths. A Thai student was invited to give an inspirational talk on the topic "Everyone can master English: a way forward". The justification for selecting this student is that she was a non-native learner who was studying at the same university with the participants. She also had close social and cultural background to the participants. Her English performance was advanced. It was assumed that this model could generate a possible future L2 positive role model. After the presentation, students were asked to write a 200 -word reflection on what they had learned from the talk.

### **Task 5: Collect biographies of 5 L2 language users or learners who they admire**

The objective of this task is to explore students' L2 positive role model as L2 learners or users. The task also



explores the factors that lead to language learning success. Students were asked to choose five people whom they admired as L2 learners or users. Then students were asked to write a summary of one of the five biographies.

#### **Task 6: L2 related desires (five wishes)**

The objective of this activity is to explore students' desired language selves. Students were asked to complete the five wishes by using if/clause sentences. They were instructed to have five different wishes. The if/clause was provided as an example "If I could speak English well, I would....."

#### **Synthesis of Findings**

##### **Materials help learners build up desired future selves**

The data from learners' vision form show that students were motivated by the materials to envisage their future selves. This can include their future careers, goals for future careers, goals for lifestyle, goals for learning English, their L2 positive and negative role models, and recognition in English use by others. This indicates that students tended to have future self-images related to future careers. These future self-images could be seen as a

powerful motivator to learn English. Students agreed that English was a tool to lead to possible successful careers. In their views, English was a channel for stable and successful future careers. The data show that twenty-three students learned English to achieve the communicative goals, whereas three students would like to go abroad and 2 for career development. Some excerpts of communicative goals are shown below.

#### **Communicative goals**

*I want to speak and write fluently.*

*I want to write well.*

*I want to communicate with other people.*

*I can communicate with foreigners.*

*I want to speak English fluently.*

*I want to understand the text I read.*

*I want to have a high standard of writing.*

*I will use English with people who speak English*

Apart from the data from learners' vision form, the future history writing task tended to help students construct their future visions. The data show that a large majority of students positioned themselves as doing a profession. For

example, seventeen students positioned themselves as doing a profession such as a lawyer and a judge. Four students mentioned that they wanted to pursue their higher study in which three of them did their Masters, and one planned to continue the Doctoral Degree after finishing a Master Degree. Three students wanted to be restaurant owners in the United Kingdom and New York. One student mentioned that he/she would like to be a detective. Their writings show that they tended to have different future expectations regarding their English proficiency. Some expected to achieve native-like fluency; however, others did not try to conform to the native English. Some students did not mention anything about English proficiency level, but it could be assumed that they all expected to acquire good English skills as a means of communication with foreigners. The data from future history writing task also reveal that the task tended to help students better perceive the high importance of communication with both native and non-native speakers of English. They perceived that L2 learning would enable them to have effective

communication and the consequences should help them have successful careers in the future and travel all over the world without any hindrance.

The data from reflective writing after the L2 positive role model session also reveal that the activity help learners raise their hopes for the desired future selves. Based on the findings, it shows that some students wanted to pursue the guest speaker's similar language learning strategies. Students learned how to improve their English that involved watching movies, listening to music, talking to foreigners, and reading books. They well realized that the positive consequences of L2 learning strategies would lead them to a more effective use of English and the final product or outcome would be useful in finding a good job, further study and international communication. Some excerpts are shown below.

*Excerpt 1: "After I listened to her presentation, I can learn something from her. I should have more confidence to talk with foreigners. Her talk inspires me to use English more and more. I have some tricks from her to help me improve*

*my English skills. For example, I should practice a lot from watching movies in English or reading a lot of passages or trying to talk with foreigners”.*

*Excerpt 2: “Everything she said is useful. English now is important for our lives. When we get a job interview, English will be part of it. Many companies need the person who can communicate well or can use English. Am I motivated? Yes, of course”.*

It is also important to note that students had a positive vision towards their ideal L2 self. They appreciated the guest speaker’s use of English, and this motivated them to use English more effectively regardless of native English accents. Some just realized that an effective language user can be a non-native speaker of English. With this regard, students were more motivated to maximize their learning after the talk.

The data from L2 related desires task (Five wishes) also reveal that the task tended to strengthen the students’ language vision. According to the data, it could be interpreted that the desires to have good jobs inside and outside the country had inspired them to possess

good English skills. They were likely to be aware of the needs and benefits of having good English language skills. They also knew that if they wanted to be successful in their study and the future, mastering English was important. It is noteworthy saying that students’ most dominant desire if they could speak English very well was job-related. This shows that they would like to have a bright future and this could be achieved through having good English language. They would like to speak English well for entertainment, communication with foreigners, and having more confidence or pride. This could be said that students knew the needs of English in every aspect of their life if they wanted to fulfill their desires. To conclude, students seemed to have future self-related to future careers. These future self-images could be a powerful motivator to learn English. Students agreed that English was a tool to lead to a possible successful career. In their views, English was a channel for stable and successful future careers.

**Materials build up students’ own desired language selves**

The students were asked to choose five people whom they admired as successful L2 learners or users. Then they had to write an individual summary of the biographies. The following Table shows the frequency of L2 nationalities students chose.

**Table 1 Frequency of L2 Nationalities**

Nationalities	Frequency
Thai	47
Chinese	23
South Korean	15
Others	35 (13 Asians and 22 non-Asians)

According to Table 1, the most frequent choice goes to Thai and the second is Chinese, and the third is South Korean. All of the top three choices are Asians.

**Table 2 Frequency of L2 Speakers**

L2 Speakers	Nationalities	Careers	Frequency
Jackie Chan	Chinese	Actor	9
Jack Ma	Chinese	Businessman	7
Tony Jaa	Thai	Actor	7

Kanathip Soonthonrak	Thai	English tutor	4
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It is found that the highest and the second highest frequency fall on Chinese who is a famous actor and a businessman accordingly.

**Table 3 Frequency of Professions of L2 Speakers**

Professions of L2 Speakers	Frequency
Actor/actress	19
Businessperson	18
Singer	18
Teacher	14
Political figure	12
Sports figure	11

According to Table 3, most of the students were inspired by actor/actress, businessperson, singer, teacher, political figure, and sports figure. Below are some interesting data.

#### Jackie Chan

- Jackie Chan is a Hollywood superstar, so he needs to speak English with foreigners and remember dialogues of movies.

- Jackie Chan is one of the most famous Chinese actors who has played a

*lot of movies in Hollywood. He can play a lot of films because he can speak English.*

*- The main reason for Jackie Chan's success in the world is to communicate in English. It is very challenging for Chinese to show the film, one of which requires American English throughout the film. But he has done well.*

*- Jackie Chan has to study English to be convenient in his work. His English and his work are acceptable to people around the world.*

#### **Jack Ma**

*- Jack Ma studied English since his childhood. At an early age, he developed a desire to learn English. He rode his bicycle each morning to a nearby hotel to converse with foreigners. He was a guide and gave free service to practice and improve his English.*

*- Jack Ma is professional in English because he always rode a bicycle to offer a free guide. He did it every day because he wanted to learn English from foreigners. Now he is perfect in English.*

#### **Tony Jaa**

*- He had a little skill of English when he was invited to join Hollywood. He*

*practiced every day. Finally, he can speak English well. This is the pride of Thailand.*

*- He had the dream to show the film around the world. He tried to practice talking with foreigners while working. He says "It is important to motivate and encourage Thais to learn English. English is essential to everyone on earth. If we know the English language, we will have more opportunities to open the world".*

The data from L 2 biographies task also reveal that the task helped the students see their own desired language selves. Based on the L2 biographies they collected, it is found that students mentioned "Thai" as their model to motivate them to learn English. The models they selected were successful non-native English users. Students agreed that one of the main factors that they chose was English skills/abilities or performance. Based on this activity, students had a good opportunity to connect themselves strongly with the ideal persons beyond the classroom. It could be said that the persons they chose were the ones who excel in their areas of interest and all of them were close to



their racial and geographical background. They found that effective English skills were one of the factors that led people to success. Students chose “Tony Ja”, a martial artist and actor, who used to perform in Hollywood movie called “Fast and Furious 7” because of his acceptable communication in English. It could be inferred that students wanted to be a successful user of English. For them, English is not an end, but a means to success.

### Conclusion

As we have seen, the findings indicate that the teaching materials should be designed for particular students’ needs to learn English. The materials should involve students’ contextual dimensions to help them see themselves and their community as sources. In this study, the implementation of the teaching materials helps the teacher better understand what and how students see themselves in the future. This also reveals that English has played a vital role in students’ future life dimensions such as career aspects, personal advantages (traveling, communication, self-development), and

financial stability. English is also perceived as a powerful tool to help reinforce their future careers and lifestyles. Since English is a means for communication in the globalized world, many students well perceive that they want to be competent in communication, not as a native speaker of English. Based on the findings, it is suggested that language teachers should design classroom materials to invoke students to express their interests and identities. Teachers should allow students to share their views on what and how they want to do and use English as a means to do what they want through classroom materials.

### Appendix A: Learner’s Vision Form

#### Part I: Personal Information

Name: .....

Nationality: .....

Age: .....

Major: .....Faculty: .....

How long have you been studying English?  
.....

#### Part II:

Instructions: This objective of this form is to create your English language vision.

Complete all the questions below.

1. Your future job (s)

1.1 .....

1.2 .....

2. Your goals for future jobs

2.1 .....

2.2 .....

2.3 .....

3. Your goals for lifestyle

3.1.....

3.2 .....

3.3 .....

4. Your goals for learning English

4.1.....

4.2 .....

4.3 .....

5. Your L2 positive role model

5.1 .....

5.2 .....

5.3 .....

6. How/what you envision yourselves in

English use in the future

6.1 .....

6.2 .....

6.3 .....

7. Your L2 negative role model

7.1 .....

7.2 .....

7.3 .....

8. In the next future, you would like

others to recognize you in English use as

.....

☐ Native speakers of English

State the reasons:

.....

.....

☐ Yourself who is a non-native speaker of English

State the reasons:

.....

.....

☐ Others:

.....

.....

9. Describe or write your confidence

towards using English

.....

.....

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