

Exploring the L2 Motivational Self-system of the Senior High School Students in the Philippine Context

Maver S. Dalapo

Bukidnon State University, Bukidnon National High School - Division of Malaybalay City

maver.dalapo@deped.gov.ph

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Corresponding Email:

maver.dalapo@deped.gov.ph

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L2 motivational self-system (L2MSS), ideal self, ought-to-self, learning to experience, english language learning, senior high school students, Philippine context, language motivation second language acquisition (SLA), mixed-method research, purposive sampling, high-achieving learners, future self-image

Abstract. This study explored the L2 Motivational Self-System (L2MSS) among Senior High School students in the Philippine context, with a particular focus on academically high-achieving learners. While prior research has examined L2MSS in other Southeast Asian settings, limited attention has been given to the Philippines despite its ethnolinguistic diversity and strong emphasis on English as a lingua franca. Employing a mixed-method design, the study collected both quantitative and qualitative data through a 30-item survey questionnaire adapted from Dörnyei et al. (2006) and Taguchi et al. (2009). Twenty purposively selected high-achieving students participated, responding to items categorized under Ideal Self, Ought-to-Self, and Learning to Experience. Results revealed that the Ideal Self component emerged as the most dominant motivational factor, with students aspiring to achieve fluency in English for future career opportunities, global communication, and personal identity formation. Learning to Experience ranked second, underscoring the importance of engaging classroom environments, interactive activities, and teacher encouragement in sustaining motivation. Conversely, Ought-to-Self was least influential, reflecting weaker external pressures from family, peers, or societal expectations. These findings corroborate earlier studies in comparable contexts, confirming the centrality of Ideal Self in L2 motivation. The study highlights the need for educators to design instructional strategies that activate learners' future self-images while simultaneously enhancing classroom experiences. Implications suggest that teacher training and curriculum development should integrate motivational approaches, such as goal-setting activities, role model exposure, and supportive classroom atmospheres, to sustain learners' engagement and success in English language acquisition.

Introduction

English Language learning has always been a great factor in the Philippine educational system. It is being considered as one of the major subjects that the Philippine school curriculum has long been emphasized especially that English as a language is the so called "Lingua Franca" or in layman's term is the Universal language. As a result, countries from all around the world are trying their best to organize English classes saliently and harmoniously as this plays an impact not just for them to grow personally but to cater the needs of being globally competitive individuals.

With all these being emphasized, it is noticeable that the Philippine Educational curriculum is with concern about giving importance to the language learning of the curriculum as it is truly impactful to the life of every individual. According to the recent revitalization of the interest and role status of language in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), language is a crucial component to the work of nation-building — for most Southeast Asian countries, colonization entailed bringing together many disparate ethnic groups that spoke different languages, with the language of the colonizer serving as a lingua franca. The colonial language also served as the language of government and the primary medium of instruction. Mentioning all these, it can be inferred how important language learning is in the lives of the students as it both affect the economic and social aspect of every human qualifying every person's existence.

In brief history, several studies have been conducted about L2 Motivational self-system to prove that its role is vital in the language learning. Howard Gardner, a well-known proponent of theories about the foundation of education. This proponent's theory about "integrativeness" contributes to factors motivates behavior and success in language learning and central in most models of L2 motivation. In fact, this concept was applied by Dörnyei, (2011) in his developed L2 motivational self-system (L2MSS) based on his large-scale research on motivation in Hungary. The application of integrativeness in the contexts different from those studied by Gardner and a whole person perspective contributed so much to in the newly created concept about this L2 motivational self-system. Later then, the concepts about these three components were strengthen namely, Ideal self, ought-to-self, and learning to experience.

Though these studies have proven so much factual evidence about the L2 role in language learning, the L2MSS has been relatively less explored especially in the context of South-East Asian countries. There maybe one study about it in Cambodia but it was referred in a comparative context. The study was entitled "The L2 Motivational Self System of Low and High Achievers in a Cambodian context" which was conducted by Helene, (2019). This study explored the different levels of motivation of students in the country. It was proven that Ideal self was the component that students dominantly demonstrate. This was followed by the Learning to experience and next to it is the Ought-to-self component.

In relation to the previously mentioned study, the present study explored the almost similar topic but this time, the focus will only be on the academic achievers. Since the previous study mentioned gave conclusions that it has similar results, this study investigated if there would be similar results in case applied in the Philippine context.

Methodology

The study employed a qualitative research design. Both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered during the same time, from the same group of participants. A survey questionnaire was used to collect data regarding students' language motivation towards English language learning. This study also employed purposive sampling as it purposively done selection of students who are academically achievers in the school.

This study used five-point Likert scales questionnaire (1=strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree) was used. It consisted of three parts with 30 items, which were adopted and adapted from Dörnyei et al. (2006); Taguchi et al. (2009) and some were newly designed by the researchers. The questionnaire aimed at determining the levels of motivation of the three components of L2MSS. Items were purposively categorized in three specifying Ideal self with the code of IS items number 1-11, Ought-to-self (OS) numbers from 1-10 and learning to experience (LTE) numbers from 1-9. The total questions were thirty (30) and were already used by the researchers in the previous studies.

The researcher of the study connected to the school principal's office to ask permission of the Senior High School twenty (20) identified High Achiever students as respondents. These students were purposively chosen as hereby been declared by the school and advisers. The records were scrutinized by the researcher in securing the validity and reliability of the data.

The researcher of the study ask permit to the school's office in making use the 30 Minute close door response. The students were given fair time to answer the survey questionnaire.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the analysis of and interpretation of the collected responses of the twenty (20) respondents.

Motivation is generally accepted as leading to the success or failure of the learner when learning a foreign language Dörnyei, (2001). In addition, it strongly influences the degree to which learners take opportunities to use the language (Gardner, 1985, cited in Scarcella & Oxford, 1992). Based on its crucial role in language learning, language researchers have been attracted to investigate the effects of different types of motivation on language learning and to find new ways to develop greater motivation. The L2 Motivation self-system is one of the major motivational components of students towards learning the English language and has been noted effective especially on the end of the teacher to know about in making the learning inside the classroom more effective.

Having been previously stated, this study focuses on this L2 Motivational Self-system and its components and presented the data below which were scrutinized to come up with an accurate and reliable result.

Components	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Ideal Self	20	2.36	4.82	4.1535	0.54566
Ought-to-self	20	1.60	4.60	2.8400	0.64596
Learning to Experience Experience	20	2.67	4.56	3.8395	0.52359
Valid N (Listwise)	20				

Table 1. Descriptive Analysis on the Responses of the Participants

Table 1 shows that, among the three Motivational self-system components, Ideal Self (IS) were noted as the one garnered the highest agreement in the survey questions given to the participants. It was followed by Ought-to-self (OS) and next it is the Learning to Experience (LTE).

The Ideal L2 self-type of motivation were considered as the most important factor in the Motivational self-system. The studies of Ghapanchi et al. (2011), Islam et al. (2013) and Rajab et al. (2012). Ghapanchi et al. (2011) and Rajab et al. (2012) found that it was the most significant predictor of L2 language acquisition, while Islam et al. (2013) discovered a significant correlation between IS and attitudes to learning English and instrumentality.

On the table, Ideal self collected dominantly the highest mean from the respondents which is 4.1535 and with an SD of 54566. This can be inferred that among these three (3) L2 components, the Senior High School student's preference belongs to it as a motivational factor. As for definition in the framework, ideal self refers to an image representation of oneself in the future. These examples of future images can be associated with the result. For these reasons, the students learn English simply because they want to speak English fluently, which influence made by the fluent speaker of English language.

This kind of motivational factor in ideal self were supported by the study of Papi, (2010), who made mentioned about the students' reasons for learning English is the impact of someone who greatly influence them as a student. The kind of consideration similarly impacted the study of Gapanchi (2011) that the students study English to become fluent and travel abroad and have a good communication skill to establish good rapport in the workplace, a future self-image.

Secondly, the learning to experience (LTE) component which placed third in the calculation in the SPSS. This component is merely about the immediate learning environment and experience (Dörnyei, 2009). On the table presented above, it has a mean of 3.8395 and the SD of .52359. This indicates according to Dornyei's claims that students L2 motivational system were categorized are as follows; the students would like to have more activities in schools, more English lessons, find topics in English interesting, volunteer answering in English class, teacher motivation inside classroom, and good atmosphere during English classes.

Having stated all these factors in the motivational system of students, it can be noted that the idea of Dornyei matched with the incidental situations mainly for both learning experiences and environments. Since the component being as a second dominant motivational factor of students, teachers must secure that for most of the time, the learning experience and learning environment must be engaging and suitable for the students to learn best.

Another component that followed learning to experience, based on the survey is the Ought-to-self component which has 2.8400 and a standard deviation of .64596. This refers to the obligation to meet external expectations and to avoid possible undesirable outcomes. In layman's term is that it is associated with the cause outside of individuals in environmental factors, such as family, friends, and teachers. This statement is according Dörnyei, (2009). In this context, the students' motivational factor is derived from the following reasons. Students study English because friends or classmates says it is important. Another one is, students study English for the parents not to get disappointed. Next is, students study English because of the thought of being respected when able to speak fluently. All these were linked to the ideas and reasons provided by the Dornyei, (2009) which are external factor perspective in nature.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The result of the study has proven to have agreement with the previous study conducted in Cambodian context. It was inferred that Ideal self usually dominates in all studies about L2 Motivational self-system. It is mainly because the students spend time to study language for future jobs purposes. It was being followed by the Learning to experience. It simply indicates that the students' perceptions towards language learning vary on the learning environment and so with the teacher. Lastly, the ought to self. This means that the perspectives of the people surround them affects their behavior and decision in learning English language.

In light of the findings of the current study, teachers should try to encourage students, especially low achievers, to be able to view their own future self-image through activities that can stimulate them to construct their future self, for example, by teachers and students working together on how to set personal goals. Inviting role models to English class is one effective way to help activate their future vision (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009). At the school or administrative level, the importance of motivation (L2MSS) for learning English should be instructive for teachers, who should take these factors into consideration when designing English language instructions or training courses. Finally, regular teacher training should be offered so that teachers can keep abreast with new teaching methodology, such as how to use L1 and technology effectively in EFL class. Motivational strategies can also be included in the training, for example, creating a comfortable and safe atmosphere in the classroom and formulating group rules as well as giving positive feedback and awards to learners.

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Data Availability Statement

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analyzed in this study; all data used were obtained from previously published sources as cited in the reference list.

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Appendices

No appendices are attached to this study.