

LEXICAL AVAILABILITY AND THE L2 MOTIVATIONAL SELF SYSTEM

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INTRODUCTION

Languages belong to a person's whole social being, therefore when we learn a foreign language our self-image is altered. The L2 learner is willing to identify with members of another ethnolinguistic group; yet, nowadays, with the spread of global English, does the ownership of this language rest with a specific community of speakers? Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System answers this question.

OBJECTIVES

This research study was conducted in order to explore the manifestation of the L2 Motivational Self System within a group of English Major students at the ULPGC and determine whether this has an impact on their lexical availability in cue words 'body parts', 'food and drink', 'health and medicine' and 'social issues'.

METHOD

- Participants: 79 English Major students in their second year of Modern Languages at the ULPGC
- Students completed two types of questionnaires: a six-point Likert scale motivation questionnaire designed by You et al (2016) and a lexical availability questionnaire.
- Data were edited according to specific lexical availability criteria.
- The IBM SPSS programme and the formula developed by Gallego (2014) were used to analyse the data.

Ideal L2 Self

Ideal L2 self is the strongest motivational variable (5.29) and it shows a strong correlation with Effort (.447**). Ideal L2 Self correlates with results for cue words from 'body parts', 'food and drinks' and 'social issues'.

Ought-to L2 Self

Ought-to L2 Self shows an average of answers of 2.42, with almost 90% of our statements rejecting statements such as "I consider learning English important because the people I respect think that I should do it". Moreover, there is a lack of relation between this variable and the effort our students expend in learning English L2. Nevertheless, Instrumentality (prevention) seems to play a certain role in the effort our students put into language learning. The Ought-to L2 self shows no correlation with lexical availability.

L2 Learning Experience

L2 learning experience, Cultural interest, Ideal L2 Self and Effort show very high intercorrelations. L2 learning experience is the factor that has the highest impact on our university students' effort in learning English as a foreign language. This factor also correlates with 'body parts' and 'social issues'.

RESULTS

| | Ideal L2 Self | Cultural interest | L2 learning exp. | Instr. (prom.) | Instr. (prev.) | Ought-to L2 Self | Family influence |
|------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|
| Effort | .447** | .412* | .614** | .287* | .352* | .143 | .104 |
| Ideal L2 Self | | .569** | .583** | .458** | .082 | .094 | .019 |
| Cultural interest | | | .573** | .376* | .031 | .059 | .076 |
| L2 learning experience | | | | .399** | .216 | .111 | .030 |
| Instrumentality (promotion) | | | | | .372* | .274 | .142 |
| Instrumentality (prevention) | | | | | | .519** | .261 |
| Ought-to L2 Self | | | | | | | .476** |

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

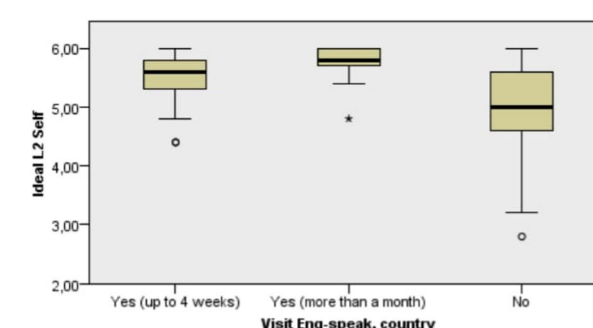
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

| | 'Body parts' | Food & Drinks | Health & Medicine | Social Issues |
|------------------------|--------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Ideal L2 Self | .334** | .293** | .145 | .227* |
| Ought-to L2 Self | .194 | .110 | .032 | .047 |
| L2 learning experience | .287* | .058 | -.022 | .236* |
| 'Body parts' | | .568** | .481** | .590** |
| Food & Drinks | | | .415** | .437** |
| Health and Medicine | | | | .625** |

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

One-way non-parametric ANOVA shows the null hypothesis is rejected when analysing the relation between the Ideal L2 Self and 'having visited an English-speaking country'. None of the students with overseas experience go below the agreeing line.



Graph 1. Kruskal-Wallis test: Ideal L2 Self and 'having visited an English-speaking country'

CONCLUSIONS

- Our participants' Ideal L2 Self is the strongest motivational variable analysed; a very high percentage of our students agree or strongly agree with its statements; despite the homogeneity which characterises our sample, this variable does have an impact on lexical availability in tree cue words.
- The analysis of the Ought-to Self shows the marginal relevance this factor bears concerning the effort our students devote to learning English. Its strong significant correlation (.519**) with Instrumentality (prevention) and the significant correlation of Instrumentality (prevention) with Effort might mean that in our case a better factor to take into account when studying this motivational theory might be Instrumentality (prevention) rather than the Ought-to L2 Self.
- L2 Learning Experience shows a correlation of .583** with the Ideal L2 Self and of .614** with effort, which according to Dörnyei, means they measure more or less the same.
- Our students' overseas experience in an English-speaking country reflects their interest in the culture of people who speak English L1 and this has a positive effect on their Ideal L2 Self. Our findings show a significant relation between the Ideal L2 Self and the variable 'having visited an English-speaking country'.

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