

Iranian EFL Learners' L2 Motivational Self System: A Study of Selves and Attitudes Towards L2 Culture and Community

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Abstract

Adopting the framework of Dörnyei's second language (L2) motivational self system, the main purpose of the present study was to investigate the relationship between two aspects of L2 selves (i.e., ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self) and attitudes towards L2 culture and community. To this end, a large scale attitudinal questionnaire by Taguchi et al. (2009) were employed among 120 Iranian EFL learners and correlation and regression analyses were implemented on the data. The results of correlation confirmed that both ideal and ought-to L2 selves associated to attitudes towards L2 culture and community; however, the degree of association of ideal L2 self seemed to be much stronger than that of ought-to L2 self. Also, regression analyses showed that in Iran, L2 learners had stronger link with L2 culture and their selves, especially their idealized self-image, was affected and shaped by values of L2 culture. However, their obliged self-image was affected by values of their own society.

Key words: L2 motivational self system; Selves; Attitudes towards L2 culture and community

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INTRODUCTION

The complexity and multi-faceted nature of second language (L2) motivation have made a large number of

debates on this issue in second language acquisition (SLA). The most recent approach to L2 motivation has been proposed by Zoltan Dörnyei, as a new way to overcome shortcomings of the classical traditions on language identity set by Robert Gardner (Taguchi et al., 2009). Dörnyei's (2005, 2009) L2 motivational self system offers a synthesis of two recent conceptualizations of L2 motivation proposed by Noel (2003) and Ushioda (2001) as well as research in personality psychology on self-discrepancy theory, self-regulatory processes, identity, and possible selves (Taguchi, et al., 2009). According to Dörnyei (2009), L2 motivational self system, as the new approach of conceptualizing L2 learning within a self framework, broadens the scope of L2 motivation research and provides considerable applications that open up novel avenues for motivating language learners. This new framework, by adopting paradigms that link L2 to the individual's personal core, contradicts the notion that a foreign language (FL) is just more than a communication code which can be learnt similarly to other academic subjects but assumes that L2 forms an important part of one's identity.

Attitudes, on the other hand, are important in SLA, especially L2 learning. It has been confirmed that individuals with higher level of attitudes are more favorable to spend time and effort toward learning English, on the contrary, L2 learners with lower level of attitudes are viewed as less successful in process of L2 learning. In the study of attitudes, selves are of high importance, that is, individuals with stronger actualization of their ideal selves have positive attitudes and they are more motivated to learn. Also, the role that self-images play in attitudes towards L2 culture and community is unavoidable, that is, individuals with more refined ideal selves have positive attitudes towards the L2 and L2 community. In this regard, the main purpose of the present study was to investigate the association between L2 selves and attitudes towards L2 culture and community,

therefore, on the following paragraphs, the review of literature related to these issues are discussed.

1. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

1.1 L2 Motivational Self System

L2 motivation is a primary driving force for long-term process of learning an L2 (Dörnyei, 2005). Cohen and Dörnyei (2002, p.172) proposed that “motivation is often seen as the key variable because without it, nothing much happens.” The first ever studies on L2 motivation was initiated by Gardner (1985). Considering motivation as the most influential factor in L2 learning, he proposed the theory of L2 motivation which consisted of three main parts: His theory of L2 acquisition, his conceptualization of integrative motivation, and a test battery that Gardner developed with his associates which provides a scientific measurement of a wide range of motivational factors. Despite the power of this theory, it had been the notion of debates over decades. One of the critical discussions on this model has been the inconsistency of Integrativeness. Dörnyei (2005) refers to the vagueness found in Gardner’s integrative notion since this term appeared in three separate levels of integrative orientation, integrativeness, and integrative motive/motivation.

The other criticism arises from the lack of generalizability of integrativeness to current English leaning contexts—what Dörnyei (2005) refers to as the potential limitation to our understanding of L2 motivation. Although Gardner carried out studies in other contexts such as Philippines and French-speaking communities such as Maine and Louisiana (Gardner & Lambert, 1972), his work was highly associated with Canadian socio-educational context. In the similar vein, Irie (2003) showed that Japanese university students’ positive attitude toward the target language did not oblige them to be assimilated in the target community. Also, Lamb (2004, 2009) identified integrativeness as a pursuit of identity. This claim made Integration as an “unauthentic concept” for many English as foreign language (EFL) learners who rarely have contact with native speakers of the L2 (Suzuki, 2011, p.332).

The controversies over Gardner’s notion of integrativeness continued. Rejecting the static dimension of his instrumentality/integrativeness, Zoltan Dörnyei initiated a new path, stating that L2 motivation by itself is something dynamic. This new view on L2 motivation made Dörnyei propose a new framework which consisted of three main components: the ideal L2 self (ILS), ought-to L2 self (OLS), and L2 learning experience. The ILS, as the central component, is defined by Dörnyei (2009, p. 29) as “the L2 specific facets of one’s ideal self,” the second component, the OLS involves

the attributes that one believes one ought to possess to meet expectations and to avoid possible negative outcomes,” and the

last component, the L2 learning experience is defined as “situated executive motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience (e.g., the impact of the teacher, the curriculum, the peer group, and experience of success).

As Dörnyei and Chen (2013, p.439) state,

the L2 motivational self system suggests that there are primary sources of motivation to learn an L2: a) the learner’s internal desire to become an L2 user; b) social pressures coming from the learner’s environment to master the L2; and c) the actual experience of being engaged in the L2 learning process.

The third component of L2 motivational self system is beyond the scope of this study, so the main focus of the present study is on the two main components of L2 motivational self system, i.e., ILS and OLS.

The impetus for Dörnyei’s (2005, 2009) L2 motivational self system came from his research with Kata Csizér in which they examined the motivation of 13,391 middle school students in Hungary toward studying five target languages (e.g., English, French, German, Italian, and Russian) between 1993 and 2004. The main finding was that integrativeness was determined by two antecedent variables, one of which was attitudes towards L2 community. Dörnyei (2005) proposed that integrativeness could be interpreted as being an L2 specific facet of an L2 learner’s ideal self. Furthermore, Dörnyei (2009) concluded the strong correlations between integrativeness and the two antecedent variables. He explained that our attitudes towards L2 community are concerned with our ideal language self-image in the sense that “the more positive our disposition toward these L2 speakers, the more attractive our idealized L2 self” (p.28). According to Dörnyei and Chen (2013), a large number of studies have been done using L2 motivational self system as their theoretical basis since the development of Dörnyei (2005, 2009) tripartite model (e.g., Csizér & Luk’acs, 2010; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009; Kormos, Kiddle, & Csizér, 2011; Magid, 2012; Papi, 2010). The findings of these studies showed the overall explanatory power of the model in which ILS was seen as the strongest contributor of different criterion measures related to language learning.

1.2 Attitudes Towards L2 Culture and Community

Generally, attitude is defined as an individual’s favorable feeling towards some object or behavior or one’s tendency to show a behavioral intention toward something (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977). In SLA, attitude is one’s tendency to show favorable feeling towards learning. Stern (1983) proposes three types of attitudes in learning an L2: a) attitudes towards L2 community and people who speak L2, that is, group specific attitudes; b) attitudes towards learning the language concerned; and c) attitudes towards languages and language learning in general. These three types of attitudes are influenced by learners’ personality as well as their social milieu within which language learning takes place. The focus of

the present study is on the first type of attitudes. In this regard, the constructs relating positively or negatively to these types of attitudes are discussed flowingly: a) Cultural interest (CI) which is one's attitude to cultural aspects of English speaking world. In the context of Iran where there is no direct contact with L2 community, indirect contact through one's inclination to L2 communication devices such as books, films, or media is of high importance in helping learners not only to get familiar with L2 culture but also to improve their L2; b) Attitude toward L2 community (ATLC) concerned attitudes towards L2 speakers which has been the main concept in Gardner's motivational theory. Clement et al. (1994) proposed that in multi-ethnic contexts, positive attitudes would orient individuals to look for contact with members of L2 community. Moreover, Ryan (2008) proposed that in communities where direct contact with L2 speakers does not play any significant role in their lives, attitudes to L2 community involve both opportunities for direct contact with people and attitudes towards ethno-linguistic vitality of English-speaking communities; c) Integrativeness is related to integrative orientation, interest in FLs, and most importantly, attitudes toward the L2 community, reflecting the "individual's willingness and interest in social interaction with members of other groups" (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993, cited in Dörnyei, 2005, p.68). As Ryan (2008, p.83) states, "conventional interpretations of integrativeness holds that certain communities are associated with certain values and when individuals are positively disposed towards the values of a community, the more likely they are to want to participate in the activities of that community," that is, "individuals with positive attitudes toward a given community are more likely to be motivated to learn the language of that community"; d) Travel orientation (TO) involves one's attitude to travelling overseas as a reason for learning English. In contexts where there is little opportunity to use English, overseas travel is considered as the most immediate use of English for many learners. As Ryan (2008) states, in these contexts, overseas travel may come to represent as something more than a mere recreational pursuit encompassing personal development and engagement with people of L2 community.

In contrast to the above-mentioned constructs which refer to a sense of identification and connection to L2 community—what Ryan (2008) calls international empathy—the last two constructs, refers to a sense of distance or separation from L2 community. They include: (a) Ethnocentrism which is a sense of uniqueness of one's own culture. This sense of detachment from L2 culture acts as an obstacle to deny or minimize cultural differences or to be less open towards cultural differences which leads to less desire to interact with L2 speakers; (b) Fear of assimilation (FA) which is a sense of threat to one's own culture imposed by L2 values and

its speakers. FA is assumed to be in the opposed direction of integrativeness within the individual disrupting L2 communication (MacIntyre et al., 1998). In the other word, both ethnocentrism and fear of assimilation act as strong prejudices towards the host culture which can affect willingness to participate in cultural activities and close social relationships with L2 speakers.

Like L2 motivation, attitude has been treated as a dynamic construct which is subject to external and internal influences, that is, a number of external influences—such as instructional setting and material, language teacher and social environment like family and friends—as well as internal forces such as learner's cognitive abilities, internalized learning goals, self-esteem and self-perceptions (i.e., learners' view of themselves)—exert their effect on language learning attitude (Csizér et al., 2010). Accordingly, studies by Cerqueira and Badger (2015) and Alaga (2016) showed that individuals with well-defined ILS indicated a positive attitude towards the L2 and L2 community. Also, Islam et al. (2013), by supporting the validity and relevance of L2 motivational self system in Pakistan, showed that learners' attitudes and ILS were the strongest contributors to their learning efforts. Thus, the role of identity and self on attitudes towards L2 culture and community has been noticeable. In this regard, the present study was an attempt to investigate the contribution of L2 selves and attitudes towards L2 culture and community in an Asian context. So, the following research questions were formulated:

- (a) What is the relationship between Iranian EFL learners' ILS and attitudes towards L2 culture and community (CI, ATLC, integrativeness, TO, Ethnocentrism, and FA)?
- (b) Among CI, ATLC, integrativeness, TO, Ethnocentrism, and FA, which one(s) can be predicted from Iranian EFL learners' ILS?
- (c) What is the relationship between Iranian EFL learners' OLS and attitudes towards L2 culture and community (CI, ATLC, integrativeness, TO, Ethnocentrism, and FA)?
- (d) Among CI, ATLC, integrativeness, TO, Ethnocentrism, and FA, which one(s) can be predicted from Iranian EFL learners' OLS?

2. METHOD

2.1 Participants

To obtain homogeneous data in terms of learners' language proficiency, Oxford Placement test (OPT; Edwards, 2007) with considerable reliability measures was used among 210 Iranian EFL learners. For the main purpose of this study, a total of 120 Iranian EFL learners representing several universities in the Southeast of Iran were selected randomly. The main reason for the choice

of universities was accessibility. The participants' average age was 20 (range 18-25) and they had intermediate level of L2 proficiency.

2.2 Instrumentations

2.2.1 OPT

To ensure the participants' homogeneity in terms of their proficiency, OPT was employed among 210 Iranian EFL learners. With the Cronbach's alpha value of .85, OPT showed to have a very good internal consistency and was reliable. According to the scoring guidelines by Edwards (2007), 120 participants were labeled as intermediate learners and were supposed to make the sample of this study.

2.2.2 The English Learner Questionnaire

In order to investigate Iranian EFL learners' ILS, OLS, and their attitudes towards L2 culture and community, a large-scale attitudinal questionnaire by Taguchi, Magid, and Papi (2009), which is originally based on Dörnyei Hungarian study was employed. The English Learner Questionnaire (2009) comprises 76 items. This questionnaire evaluates learners on a 6-point Likert scale (ranges from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*) and it takes nearly 30 minutes to be filled out. While the questionnaire contains a large number of items measuring many latent variables, the present study used the following constructs with the reliability index of:

- (a) ILS ($\alpha = .80$): Six statements were concerned with the L2-specific facet of one's ideal self, for example, "I can imagine myself speaking English with international friends or colleagues."
- (b) OLS ($\alpha = .71$): Six statements measured the L2-specific facet of one's ought-to self, for example, "studying English is important to me in order to gain the approval of my peers/teachers/ family/ boss."
- (c) CI ($\alpha = .86$): There were four statements regarding interests in cultural aspects of L2 such

as prints, videos, and music. Sample statement includes "do you like English films?"

- (d) ATLC ($\alpha = .73$): Four statements were related to one's attitude toward L2 community, such as "do you like meeting people from English-speaking countries?"
- (e) Integrativeness ($\alpha = .60$): There were three statements reporting ones' desire to integrate into L2 community. Samples were "how much would you like to become similar to the people who speak English?" and "how important do you think learning English is in order to learn more about the culture and art of its speakers?"
- (f) TO ($\alpha = .65$): Three statements were concerned with TO, for example, "learning English is important to me because I would like to travel internationally."
- (g) Ethnocentrism ($\alpha = .79$): There were seven statements under ethnocentrism. Sample such as "I would be happy if other cultures were more similar to Iranian" was related to this construct.
- (h) FA ($\alpha = .81$): There were five statements under this variable. Statement such as "I think the cultural and artistic values of English are going at the expense of Iranian values" was concerned with this construct.

3. RESULTS

On the following paragraphs the results of the statistical analyses of the data obtained through the SPSS (version 17) will be presented.

3.1 Correlation Between the ILS and Attitudes Towards L2 Culture and Community

In order to examine the relationship between Iranian EFL learners' ILS and their attitudes towards L2 culture and community, Pearson product-moment correlation was computed. The results are shown in Tables 1:

Table 1
Correlation Between the ILS and Attitudes Towards L2 Culture and Community

	CI	ATLC	Integrativeness	TO	Ethnocentrism	FA
ILS	.652**	.512**	.411**	.361**	-.156	-.175
	.000	.000	.000	.000	.088	.055

Note. ** $p < .01$ (2-tailed)

As Table 1 displays, a number of positive correlations were observed. These correlations ranged in strength from medium to large, that is, there were two large positive correlations between ILS and CI ($r = .652$) and ILS and ATLC ($r = .512$), and two medium positive correlations between ILS and integrativeness ($r = .411$) as well as ILS and TO ($r = .361$). The results indicated that higher levels of ILS on the part of participants were associated with higher levels of CA, ATLC,

integrativeness, and TA.

3.2 Predictor/s of the ILS

To deal with the second research question regarding the amount of prediction of attitudes towards L2 culture and community on ILS, a standard multiple regression analysis was carried out. Initially, the assumptions of multicollinearity, linearity, and normality were tested to ensure that none of the assumptions were violated. The

model of the best predictors for the ILS produced the R^2 value of .46, indicating that the model explained 46% of

the variance in the ILS of the participants. Table 2 shows the results of the regression analysis:

Table 2
The Amount of Prediction of Attitudes Towards L2 Culture and Community on ILS

Model	Unstandardized coefficient		Standardized coefficient	T	Sig.
	B	Std. error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.685	.477		3.534	.001
CI	.488	.085	.547*	5.706	.000
ATLC	.131	.113	.128	1.161	.248
Integrativeness	-.075	.101	-.075	-.740	.461
TO	.138	.062	.170*	2.212	.029
Ethnocentrism	-.046	.071	-.054	-.644	.521
FA	.002	.069	.002	.023	.981

Note. * $p < .05$

As Table 2 depicts, among the variables, at the first place, CI with the largest Beta value of .547, and at the second place, TO with the Beta value of .170 made unique and statistically significant contributions to the prediction of ILS. It indicated that EFL learners who were more interested in L2 cultural products and had higher desire to travel abroad might be more prone to

actualize their ILS.

3.3 Correlation Between the OLS and Attitudes Towards L2 Culture and Community

Regarding the relationship between the OLS and attitudes towards L2 culture and community, Pearson product-moment correlation was run. The results are displayed in Tables 3:

Table 3
Correlation Between the OLS and Attitudes Towards L2 Culture and Community

	CI	ATLC	Integrativeness	TO	Ethnocentrism	FA
OLS	.062 .503	.098 .283	.209* .021	.106 .246	.376** .000	.329** .000

Note. ** $p < .01$ (2-tailed)
 $p < .05$ (1-tailed)

As Table 3 displays, opposed to the ILS, few positive correlations were observed. The correlations ranged in strength from small to medium, that is, there were two medium positive correlations between OLS and ethnocentrism ($r = .376$) as well as OLS and FA ($r = .329$) and a small positive correlation between OLS and integrativeness ($r = .209$). It indicated that higher levels of OLS on the part of participants were associated with higher levels of ethnocentrism, FA, and integrativeness.

3.4 Predictor/s of the OLS

To answer the last research question regarding the amounts of prediction of attitudes towards L2 culture and community on OLS, a standard multiple regression analysis was ran (Table 4). Preliminary analyses were conducted to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, and multicollinearity. The model of the best predictors for the OLS had the R^2 value of .23, meaning that the model explained 23% of the variance in the OLS of the participants.

Table 4
The Amount of Prediction of Attitudes Towards L2 Culture and Community on OLS

Model	Unstandardized coefficient		Standardized coefficient	T	Sig.
	B	Std. error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.287	.612		.469	.640
CI	-.001	.110	-.001	-.012	.990
ATLC	.010	.145	.009	.070	.944
Integrativeness	.284	.129	.267*	2.194	.030
TO	.012	.080	-.014	-.148	.883
Ethnocentrism	.265	.091	.296*	2.922	.004
FA	.172	.088	.198	1.942	.055

Note. * $p < .05$

As Table 4 displays, among the variables, at the first place, ethnocentrism with the largest Beta value of .296, and at the second place, Integrativeness with the Beta value of .267 made unique and statistically significant contributions to the prediction of OLS. It indicated that EFL learners who were more interested in their own culture and had higher desire to integrate into L2 community might have more inclination to actualize their OLS.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

ILS seemed to be associated strongly with attitudes towards L2 culture and community. ILS was most closely related to CI followed by ATLC, integrativeness, and TO. It confirmed that learners with higher ILS were most interested in cultural products of the L2 and they had stronger ATLC, stronger desire to integrate into L2 community, and stronger desire to travel abroad. On the other hand, these learners showed no level of ethnocentrism and FA. The similar results were reported by Madkhali (2016) who found strong positive relationships between ILS and CI, ATLC, integrativeness, and TO. However, he showed strong positive association between ILS and ethnocentrism as well as ILS and FA. The contrary result in the case of ILS and ethnocentrism as well as ILS and FA will be due to the different contexts of the two countries. In Iran, the strength of ILS seemed to be higher than that of OLS (Rahimi Domakani, et al., 2016), that is, ELF learners were more related to their idealized self-image than to their external self-image. In this case, EFL learners with stronger visualization of their ILS seemed to be stronger at integrating and associating with L2 community, therefore, they showed no fear of assimilation as well as no interest in their own culture. In the context of Saudi Arabia, learners with stronger ILS showed interest in both L2 community as well as their own culture, however, Iranian learners with stronger ILS seemed to devalue their own culture at the expense of L2 culture. The strong association between ILS and attitudes towards L2 culture and community has been mirrored in the other studies. Xie (2011) found strong association between ILS and international posture—"interest in foreign or international affairs, willingness to go overseas to stay or work, readiness to interact with intercultural partners, and, one hopes, openness or a non-ethnocentric attitude toward different cultures" (Yashima, 2002, p.57)—as well as willingness to communicate. Also Ryan (2008) reported strong association between ILS and integrativeness.

The results revealed that OLS seemed to be associated strongly with ethnocentrism, followed by FA and integrativeness. The higher correlation of OLS and ethnocentrism as well as OLS and FA confirmed that learner with stronger OLS had high interest in their own culture and higher avoidance to assimilate fully in L2

culture; however, to the lesser degree than ethnocentrism and FA, these learners were also interested to integrate in L2 community. The similar results were reported by Madkhali (2016) who found positive relationships between OLS and ethnocentrism as well as OLS and FA. The correlational results revealed that OLS was more closely related to ethnocentrism and FA than to integrativeness. Going back to above considerations, the association between ILS and integrativeness was stronger than that of OLS and integrativeness. The strong association between ILS and integrativeness has been supported in several studies (Taguchi et al., 2009; Xie, 2011; Rahimi Domakani et al., 2016). Also, the results lends credence to Ryan's (2008) view that this strong association can be interpreted as a reinterpretation of what has been known as integrativeness from the perspective of ILS. The findings seemed to indicate that in an Asian context such as Iran, learners with stronger idealized image of future are influenced the most by attitudes towards L2 culture and community but they ignored their own culture. However, learners with stronger ought-to selves are less influenced by attitudes towards L2 culture, that is, since they have stronger link with their own society, their OLS are derived from the values of the society. So, the results in the case of OLS align with that of Prasangani (2014) who concluded the importance of social goals on learner's selves.

The findings of regression analysis revealed that CI was the strongest predictor of the ILS followed by TO, indicating that higher interest in L2 cultural products and traveling overseas might be concluded as the strongest factors contributing to one's image of the successful L2 user in the future. Also, it can be concluded from the findings that despite the high correlation between the ILS and integrativeness, integrativeness was not present in the regression model. The importance of CI and TO may be explained by the enormous interest of Iranian EFL learners with stronger actualization of the proficient user of English in future in L2 cultural products such as films and magazines as well as in traveling abroad in order to improve their L2. The findings are in line with Csizér and Kormos (2008) who concluded that the best predictor of ILS was international posture—attitude to an international language and community—and not integrativeness.

However, the only predictors of OLS were ethnocentrism and integrativeness, indicating that learners with higher degree of devotion to their own culture might seek for opportunities to actualize their OLS. On the other hand, the contribution of integrativeness to OLS was slightly less than that of ethnocentrism, indicating that to lesser degree than ethnocentrism, those who had stronger desire to integrate with L2 community might have higher desire to internalize their OLS. Besides, the findings revealed that OLS did not show any association with CI, ATLC, and TO. It confirmed that Iranian

EFL learners with stronger OLS, despite their level of integrativeness, had no interest in L2 community. This result contradicts that of Madkhali (2016) who showed that, in Asian context such as Saudi Arabia, learners with stronger OLS had high interest in L2 community. To put it in the nutshell, from the findings of correlation of ILS and OLS, it can be concluded that both ideal and OLSs were associated to attitudes towards L2 culture and community; however, the degree of association of one's image as a successful user of L2 in the future seemed to be much stronger than that of an obliged self-image shaped by external factors. Besides, the results of regression analyses showed that in Iran, L2 learners had stronger link with L2 culture and their selves, especially their idealized self-image was affected and shaped by values of L2 culture. However, their obliged self-image was affected by values of their own society.

IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

A key aspect to future self-guides (i.e., ILS and OLS) is that they involve images and senses. "Possible selves are represented in the same imaginary and semantic way as the here-and-now self, that is, they are a reality for the individual: People can see and hear their possible future self" (Markus & Nurius, 1986, cited in Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015, p.96). In this case, vision has been viewed as one of the most important factors in L2 learning. The desired vision of oneself, that is, ILS—as a key component in Dörnyei's L2 motivational self-system—has been considered as one of the most influential factors which can predict success in an L2, especially in contexts such as Iran, where both in society and within English classrooms, there is a paucity of successful models of English speakers. As seen in the present study, the association between ILS and attitudes towards L2 culture and community was higher than that of OLS, in this regard, the implication for L2 teachers can be formulated in this message that they must be aware to enhance learners' vision of their ILS. It can be simply done through enhancing learners' motivation, confidence, and attitude toward learning. Enhancing the so-called factors will help improve EFL learners' L2 proficiency, which in turn enhances learners' vision of their ideal selves. Also, promoting one's ILS can be done through specific techniques such as creative or guided imagery. Other activities, such as warmers and icebreakers as well as various communicative tasks, powerful role models, and films can all serve as strengthening learners' vision and creating a powerful ILS.

Besides, in the present study, the contribution of attitudes towards L2 culture and community on ILS was more noticeable than that on OLS. In this regards, a great burden can be felt on educational system as well as on

families. It is not only the responsibility of teachers to help students get familiar and interested in some aspects of L2 culture but that of parents. L2 teachers, as a role model for children in class, can use different techniques in order to communicate L2 culture. Providing learners with films, making students familiar with L2 music, and using topics on different aspects of L2 culture for discussions or writings can all be done in the way that more attitude to L2 culture emerges which in turn can help stronger internalization of the ILS and more learning. Besides, parents as a role model for children at home, can play vital role in communicating the worth of L2 culture to children. By having positive views towards L2 community and being more interested in L2 culture, they can not only help children have more attitudes towards L2 community but also support teachers in this process.

The present study was an attempt to provide new information and findings to the world of human psychology, especially L2 selves and attitudes towards L2 culture and community; however, some limitations and delimitations were observed. The major limitation in the present study is concerned with the design of the study. As it had been confirmed, using both quantitative and qualitative approaches are the most effective way to investigate L2 motivational self-system, the design of the study needs to be revised. Using longitudinal studies and in-depth interviews can give us better picture of the issues under study. The other limitation is related to the different age groups of the sample. As it had been concluded, L2 motivational self-system can represent the L2 motivation of different age groups because of certain differences between them, so the age-related variations in the model of L2 motivational self-system provide evidence that L2 motivation theories need to consider learners' age. In the present study just university students were chosen. So, deriving a wide spread sample from both university and non-university students with different age groups could make the study be more outspoken in the generalization of the results.

Although the present study could not reflect all the possible aspects of the issue under investigation, it opens up new territories for further research. Future SLA researchers whose area of interest is L2 motivational self-system can use the following insights for upcoming studies. The first suggestion can be echoed in terms of material development and syllabus design. More attention must be given to the presentation of English that locates young learners as an active participant in the atmosphere of an inclusive English-speaking world. Course materials must be designed in the way that learners' sense of alienation from English speaking countries decreases, that is, teachers must be aware of course materials which merely magnify cultural differences between Iran and the world outside. By debilitating cultural differences and making learners show more tendency and interest in the culture of English-speaking countries, it is hoped that

more positive image of ones' ideal self will emerge. The other suggestion can be related to gender differences. Gender differences can be included in future studies in order to give us a more vivid picture of L2 motivational self-system between male and female learners. Last but not the least, in order to broaden the scope of this study, future studies can compare learners in other non-English speaking countries. Taking these suggestions into account, it is hoped that new insights in the field of SLA will emerge.

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