

A Comparative Study of EFL Male and Female Students' L2 Self, Ideal Self and Ought-to Self in the Light of ELT Reform

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Abstract

There have been few representative studies investigating Iranian senior high school students' L2 selves shaped by the ELT reform. Thus, the current study was an attempt to ponder on the ideal-self, ought-to self, and L2 experience orientations of Iranian EFL high school students. Moreover, it intended to seek whether there was any relationship between three L2 motivational variables of Iranian EFL high school students across gender and residential background. To this end, 200 males and 184 females from Iranian senior high schools in South part of Iran were selected through purposive sampling. Based on a mixed methods design, the study was conducted to gain the breadth and depth of the issue under investigation. The results showed that there was no substantial gap between male and female learners in L2 motivational preference of English learning. In addition, there was a significant difference between female and male students' views on ought-to self. Moreover, it was observed that there was no marked difference between the L2 experience of female and male L2 learners. Regarding residential background, there was a significant difference among the mean ranks of the urban residential participants at three L2 motivational orientations but, there was not a significant difference among the mean ranks of the rural residential participants. The findings of the study recommend the incorporation of L2 motivation in teaching methods to improve the learning environment and learner investment in language learning.

Keywords: *ELT paradigm shift, motivation, L2 selves, gender, ELT reform*

Introduction

New technologies and the adoption of the Internet have resulted in a significant transformation in industry, schooling, scientific and technical advancement, both of which require a high degree of English proficiency. English as a link and dominant language in mass media, Internet and international trade has caused a feeling in Iranians to attribute a high status to those who have a good command of it and regard the ability to speak it fluently as a mark of an educated person. In Iran's 20-year vision strategy too, learning English has been referred to as a requirement for the achievement of the goals in the country.

According to Safari and Rashidi (2015), since Iran's ELT program has not been successful to improve student language learning for use in authentic communicative circumstances and has failed to enable high school graduates to communicate effectively in English prior to the educational reform, the recently designed English textbooks called, *English for School Series* seek to improve students' oral abilities, vocabulary use and communication skills in real-life

circumstances. But one of the most difficult yet important tasks facing L2 teachers is motivating second or foreign language (L2) learners in learning practices. Motivation is, in fact, a key to progress in L2 learning. The current research is thus aimed to examine the degree to which communicative language teaching (CLT) method influence Iranian L2 motivation suggested by Dornyei (2005, 2009). Actually, since communicative competence teaching appears to be the required guiding pedagogical principle for English teaching in environments such as Iran, the present study attempted to address this lack of attention by shedding light on Iranian EFL learners' L2 motivation shaped by ELT reform.

The overall aim of this research was to investigate Iranian high school students' L2 motivation. To be exact, the researcher aimed to explore the following aspects which remain under-researched: learners' L2 motivational orientations toward L2 within the context of English as a foreign language across CLT; and learners' gender differences and how they orient themselves to the L2 motivational variables. Specifically speaking, it aimed at achieving the following specific objectives:

1. To investigate and describe participants' ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self and L2 experience orientations across CLT approach.
2. To assess the L2 variables correlation between ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self and L2 experience.
3. To assess learners' ideal L2 self, ought-to self and L2 experience of male and female learners across residential background.
4. To gain a deeper understanding of learners' L2 selves through structured interview.

Literature Review

Evaluation of High School English Textbooks

The English textbooks and materials in Iran are all designed, developed and provided by the Ministry of Education, and all schools are compelled to use them for teaching purposes (Safari, 2015). Abbasian, Kouhpayehzadeh and Asgharpoor (2016) believe that language textbooks tend to have a vital role to play in the education system of each region. In Iran, ELT high school textbooks released by the Ministry of Education are commonly used and acted upon as syllabus and guidance for both teachers and students. According to Zarrabi and Brown (2015), school English textbooks have been changed four times in Iran, twice in the pre-revolutionary period and twice in the post-revolutionary time. In the former, the attention was on reading comprehension, grammar, translation, and vocabulary growth, with little focus on speech, writing, and listening, that was almost absent from the syllabus, but in the latter, attempts have been made to address some of such deficiencies (Abedini and Chalak, 2017).

The publishing of new textbooks is a liberal paradigm shift in the realm of TEFL. These textbooks consist of 6 books under the general name *English for Schools*, and are divided into two 3 volume series entitled *Prospect* (1 to 3) for junior high school and *Vision* (1 to 3) for senior high school (Kheirabadi and Alavi Moghaddam, 2014). Publishers of *Prospect* have argued that the series is Communicative Language Teaching or CLT-based, and that English teachers have been motivated to introduce CLT to help students improve their ability to use English in the proper context (Rajabi and Godazhdar, 2016).

Related Studies in Iran

A study by Azarnoosh and Birjandi in 2014 investigated the students' status of L2 motivation, the relationship between motivational factors, and the possibility of predicting their motivated learning behavior in light of Dornyei's (2005, 2009) theory of L2 Motivational Self

System. It was found that all students enjoyed positive attitudinal and motivational dispositions although to a different extent, that attitude towards learning English was the main predictor of their motivated learning behavior, and ideal L2 Self was particularly stronger in the institute goers, while Ought-to L2 Self was rather the same for both groups. Also, Haji Mohammadi (2017) explored the relationship between two facets of L2 selves (i.e. ideal L2 selves and ought-to L2 selves) and attitudes towards L2 culture and society, following the paradigm of Dornyi's second language (L2) motivational self-system. The findings suggested that both ideal and should be linked to L2 attitudes towards L2 culture and community; nevertheless, the degree of association of ideal L2 self appeared to be much greater than that of the L2 self. In the same line, Kiany, Mahdavy and Ghafar Samar (2013) investigated the cumulative impact of contextual features on the motivational transitions of students after four years of learning English at high schools. They concluded that changes in students' motivation were due to the effects of the traditional teaching and learning environment and conservative policies of foreign language teaching. In another research, Rajabpour Ghanizadeh and Ghonsooly (2015) investigated the ability to communicate in second language (WTC in L2) in combination with a variety of motivational factors: ideal L2 self, attitudes towards learning English, and L2 anxiety. The results showed that ideal L2 self and attitudes towards English learning were positive and significant predictors of WTC. Roshandel, Ghonsooly and Ghanizadeh (2017) too explored English as a foreign language (EFL) students' motivation and self-efficacy. The results estimated via correlation and regression analyses revealed that there was a significant relationship between L2 motivation and L2 self-efficacy. In other words, all the ten sub-factors predicted L2 self-efficacy positively and significantly among which criterion measures, attitudes towards learning English, instrumentality promotion, and ideal L2 self were the most powerful predictors of L2 self-efficacy. Finally, Marefat and Pakzadian (2017) probed 409 Iranian English as foreign language (EFL) learners' motivation and attitude toward English as an International Language (EIL) by investigating the causal relationships of their facets via Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The findings of the study revealed that students' motivational intensity positively predicted by other motivational and attitudinal factors with 'ideal self' and 'instrumentality promotion' having the highest influence.

Method

Participants

The participants employed in this study were selected on the basis of purposive sampling. They consisted of 384 male and female Iranian senior high school students, belonging to different residential areas. 200 students were males and 184 were females. The typical age of the participants was 17--a normal age for senior high school learners in Iran.

Instrument

To collect the needed data, a questionnaire with factual and attitude questions was distributed to the participants. The factual part of the questionnaire assesses who the respondents are. It usually covers demographic characteristics (age and gender), residential area, level of education, as well as any related useful details. The attitude section of the questionnaire is used to gather data on multiple clustered variables originating from the L2MSS. The appropriate categories for the current inquiry were: L2 experience, ideal L2 self, and ought-to L2 self. It should be mentioned that the questionnaire was translated from English into Persian, and in order for the participants to concentrate on learning English in the context of Iran, certain questions were slightly reworded and modified.

Interview

A structures interview was conducted to probe into the participants' perceptions on overall L2 motivational orientations, ideal L2 self-orientations and ought-to self-orientations, and to shed more light on the conditions essential for the L2 Motivational Self-System to exert its full potential.

Results

Results of the Questionnaire

In order to explore the overall L2 motivational orientations of Iranian EFL high school students, descriptive analysis of the responses to questionnaire questions for the whole sample was calculated. The results appear in Table 1 below:

Table 1

Descriptive Analysis of Overall L2 Motivational Orientations

No	M	SD
Ideal L2 Self		
1	2.11	1.22
2	2.64	1.54
3	2.09	1.12
4	2.28	1.87
5	2.59	1.15
6	2.11	1.07
7	2.89	1.28
8	2.22	1.92
9	2.15	1.44
10	2.08	1.77
11	2.25	1.65
12	2.66	1.42
13	2.53	1.08
Total	2.35	1.28
Ought-to-L2 Self		
1	2.55	1.23
2	2.69	1.58
3	2.12	1.98
4	2.11	1.22
5	2.64	1.54
6	2.09	1.12
7	2.28	1.87
8	2.59	1.15
9	2.11	1.07
8	2.22	1.92
9	2.15	1.44
10	2.06	1.45
11	2.35	1.84
12	2.09	1.54

	Total	2.83	1.62
L2 Experience			
1		2.66	1.42
2		2.11	1.22
3		2.64	1.54
4		2.09	1.12
5		2.28	1.87
6		2.59	1.15
7		2.11	1.07
8		2.89	1.28
9		2.22	1.92
	Total	2.43	1.56

As for investigating the possible relationship between the three L2 motivational variables of Iranian EFL high school students, i.e. ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self and L2 experience, multiple correlation was run. The results are reported in Table 2 below:

Table 2

Multiple Correlation of Iranian EFL High School Students' Ideal L2 self, Ought-to L2 self and L2 experience

Subscale	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.	Correlation Part
	β	Std. Error	Beta				
1 Constant	12.88	2.09	0.27		6.10	.000	
Ideal L2 self	0.11	0.02	0.43		0.57	.009	.43
Ought-to L2 self	0.09	0.08	0.11		0.87	.000	0.6
L2 experience	0.05	0.03	0.35		0.89	.38	.09

The R_2 value was found to be 0.57, 4.3.

To examine whether there was any significant difference between male and female learners in their ideal L2 selves, the participants' responses were descriptively analyzed. Table 3 presents the results of descriptive analysis.

Table 3

Iranian High School Female and Male Learners' Ideal L2 Self

No	Female		Male	
	M	SD	M	SD
1	2.11	1.22	2.35	1.35

2	2.64	1.54	2.65	1.39
3	2.09	1.12	2.05	1.32
4	2.28	1.87	2.12	1.11
5	2.59	1.15	2.36	1.24
6	2.11	1.07	2.14	1.25
7	2.89	1.28	2.09	1.01
8	2.22	1.92	2.22	1.34
9	2.15	1.44	2.34	1.47
10	2.08	1.77	2.64	1.25
11	2.25	1.65	2.99	1.48
12	2.66	1.42	2.57	1.46
13	2.53	1.08	2.33	1.34
Total	2.81	1.28	2.37	1.54

Also, independent samples *t*-test was conducted to find out whether there was any significant difference between male and female learners in their ideal L2 selves. Table 4 reports the results.

Table 4

Results of the independent-samples t-test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Ideal L2 Self	Equal variances assumed	1.14	.28	1.18	383	.23	.53	.45	-.35	1.43
	Equal variances not assumed			1.18	172.1	.23	.53	.45	-.35	1.43

To investigate the differences between male and female learners in their ought-to L2 selves, another independent samples *t*-test was run. The results are seen in Table 5 below:

Table 5
Iranian High School Female and Male Learners' Ought-to L2 Self

No	Female		Male	
	M	SD	M	SD
1	2.23	1.43	2.53	1.35
2	2.18	1.23	2.61	1.39
3	2.45	1.18	2.46	1.32
4	2.98	1.80	2.55	1.11
5	2.88	1.18	2.11	1.24
6	2.73	1.34	2.17	1.25
7	2.65	1.67	2.29	1.01
8	2.98	1.86	2.26	1.34
9	2.37	1.42	2.37	1.47
10	2.81	1.72	2.67	1.25
11	2.86	1.54	2.92	1.48
12	2.92	1.34	2.52	1.46
Total	2.67	1.32	2.45	1.51

As illustrated in Table 5, the female group mean is 2.67 ($SD=1.32$) for the ought-to L2 self, whereas the male group mean is 2.45 ($SD=1.51$). To find out the difference, Levene's Test was run, with the following results:

Table 6
Results of the Independent-samples t-test for Ought-to L2 self

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff.	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
<i>Ought-to L2 self</i>	Equal variances assumed	9.42	.00	-3.36	383	.00	-1.51	.45	-2.40	-.63
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.43	172.1	.00	-1.51	.44	-2.38	-.64

In order to check the possible significant differences between male and female learners in their L2 experience, both descriptive statistics and independent sample *t*-test for the two groups were conducted. Table 7 shows the results.

Table 7
Iranian High School Female and Male Learners' L2 Experience

No	Female		Male	
	M	SD	M	SD
1	2.28	1.35	2.39	1.32
2	2.02	1.14	2.56	1.33
3	2.23	1.25	2.98	1.45
4	2.58	1.74	2.23	1.19
5	2.11	1.26	2.64	1.22
6	2.54	1.98	2.36	1.27
7	2.23	1.64	2.54	1.33
8	2.65	1.58	2.47	1.64
9	2.64	1.23	2.63	1.47
Total	2.36	1.28	2.53	1.43

As seen in Table 7, in terms of *L2 Experience*, female learners show $M=2.36$, $SD=1.28$, whereas learners show $M=2.53$, $SD=1.43$). To find out the difference, an independent samples *t*-test was run. Table 8 presents the results.

Table 8
Results of the Independent-Samples T-test for Female and Male L2 Experience

		Independent Samples Test								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variance		<i>t</i> -test for Equality of Means						
		<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>Sig.</i> (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff.	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									L	U
<i>L2 Experience</i>	Equal variances assumed	2.07	.153	.43	383	.66	.57	1.32	-2.02	3.17
	Equal variances not assumed			.43	242.5	.66	.57	1.32	-2.03	3.18

As for the relationship between gender and Iranian EFL high school students' L2 motivation in learning English, Pearson Correlation was run. Table 9 displays the results.

Table 9

Pearson Correlation Coefficient for Iranian EFL High School Students' L2 Motivation

		Female	Male
Female	Pearson Correlation	1	.692**
	<i>Sig.</i> (2-tailed)		.000
	N	384	384
Male	Pearson Correlation	.692**	1
	<i>Sig.</i> (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	384	384

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

Additionally, to find out whether there is any relationship between gender and Ideal L2 self of EFL high school students in learning English, another Pearson Correlation was conducted.

Table 10

Pearson Correlation Coefficient for Iranian EFL High School Students' Ideal L2 Self

		Female	Male
Female	Pearson Correlation	1	.421**
	<i>Sig.</i> (2-tailed)		.000
	N	384	384
Male	Pearson Correlation	.421**	1
	<i>Sig.</i> (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	384	384

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

Moreover, to investigate the relationship between gender and ought-to self of Iranian EFL Iranian EFL high school students in learning English, another Pearson correlation was run (Table 11 below).

Table 11

Pearson Correlation Coefficient for Iranian EFL High School Students' Ought-to self

		Female	Male
Female	Pearson Correlation	1	-.054*
	<i>Sig.</i> (2-tailed)		.000
	N	384	384
Male	Pearson Correlation	-.054	1
	<i>Sig.</i> (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	384	384

** Correlation is not significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Finally, to investigate the relationship between gender and L2 experience of Iranian EFL Iranian EFL high school students in learning English, another Pearson correlation was run. Table 12 below reports the results.

Table 12

Pearson Correlation Coefficient for Iranian EFL High School Students' L2 Experience

		Female	Male
Female	Pearson Correlation	1	.692**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	384	60
Male	Pearson Correlation	.692**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	384	384

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

The last research question of this study probed into the relationship between Iranian EFL high school students' L2 motivation in learning English and residential background (i.e. urban or rural residence). Thus, first, the descriptive statistics of L2 motivational orientations of urban and rural residence of the participants were respectively were calculated (Tables 13 & 14).

Table 13

Descriptive Analysis of L2 Motivational Orientations of Urban Residence of the Participants

No	M	SD
Ideal L2 Self		
1	2.24	1.11
2	2.15	1.25
3	2.18	1.41
4	2.54	1.64
5	2.56	1.32
6	2.51	1.25
7	2.64	1.24
8	2.34	1.65
9	2.25	1.14
10	2.34	1.54
11	2.25	1.54
12	2.36	1.64
13	2.21	1.24
Total	2.94	1.64
Ought-to-L2 Self		
1	2.22	1.23
2	2.36	1.38
3	2.52	1.42
4	2.41	1.52
5	2.24	1.51
6	2.49	1.26

7	2.88	1.82
8	2.99	1.12
9	2.41	1.45
8	2.42	1.84
9	2.75	1.12
10	2.96	1.23
11	2.15	1.25
12	2.49	1.25
Total	2.63	1.34
L2 Experience		
1	2.25	1.25
2	2.54	1.41
3	2.12	1.22
4	2.14	1.35
5	2.45	1.45
6	2.22	1.12
7	2.66	1.44
8	2.45	1.33
9	2.31	1.26
Total	2.54	1.69

Table 14

Descriptive Analysis of L2 Motivational Orientations of Rural Residence of the Participants

No	M	SD
Ideal L2 Self		
1	2.33	1.41
2	2.25	1.55
3	2.48	1.61
4	2.12	1.74
5	2.10	1.82
6	2.54	1.15
7	2.23	1.84
8	2.74	1.35
9	2.66	1.24
10	2.54	1.14
11	2.21	1.24
12	2.32	1.34
13	2.25	1.64
Total	2.15	1.62
Ought-to-L2 Self		
1	2.43	1.36
2	2.67	1.39
3	2.32	1.72
4	2.78	1.12

5	2.87	1.21
6	2.23	1.16
7	2.11	1.32
8	2.02	1.22
9	2.43	1.45
8	2.67	1.64
9	2.21	1.22
10	2.56	1.33
11	2.12	1.15
12	2.34	1.55
Total	2.64	1.23
L2 Experience		
1	2.13	1.35
2	2.34	1.33
3	2.84	1.35
4	2.14	1.47
5	2.35	1.11
6	2.52	1.12
7	2.36	1.77
8	2.65	1.78
9	2.51	1.27
Total	2.05	1.35

Additionally, the study was set to explore whether there was any relationship between residential background and Ideal L2 self of Iranian EFL high school students in learning English. Table 15 below illustrates the results of the Pearson correlation.

Table 15

Pearson Correlation Coefficient for EFL High School Students' Ideal L2 Self and Residential Background

		Urban	Rural
Urban	Pearson Correlation	1	-.093
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.033
	N	384	384
Rural	Pearson Correlation	-.093	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.033	
	N	384	1

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

Moreover, there was an attempt to explore whether there was any relationship between residential background and ought-to self of Iranian EFL Iranian EFL High School students in learning English.

Table 16

Pearson Correlation Coefficient for EFL High School Students' Ought-to Self and Residential Background

		Urban	Rural
Urban	Pearson Correlation	1	-.470
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.012
	N	384	384
Rural	Pearson Correlation	-.470	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.012	
	N	384	1

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

Finally, the study investigated whether there was any relationship between residential background and L2 experience of Iranian EFL Iranian EFL high school students in learning English. The results were analysed via Pearson correlation.

Table 17

Pearson Correlation Coefficient for EFL High School Students' L2 Experience and Residential Background

		Urban	Rural
Urban	Pearson Correlation	1	.052
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.789
	N	384	384
Rural	Pearson Correlation	.052	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.789	
	N	384	1

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

Results of the Structured Interview

This interview comprised five major directions as follows:

A: Ideal L2 Self

1. Imagining studying at a university using only English language
2. Things to do in the future depending on learning English
3. Imagining using English in a future profession
4. Imagining living abroad in the future
5. Future dreams depending on learning English.

B: Ought-to Self

1. Learning English because of being expected to by others
2. Studying English to not be considered a weak student
3. Learning English to avoid ending up with a low-paying job
4. Learning English to get a good job

5. Learning English because being expected by society

C: L2 Experience

1. Ability to use English fluently in the environment
2. The experience of learning a foreign language and continuing it

Based on the above directions, the participants were asked about their reasons for learning English and the benefits that it could bring them. A small number of them said that being able to communicate with foreigners and travelling abroad to study or even live are among their biggest motivations for learning English. Few interviewees asserted that learning English was necessary for them to be able to continue their studies at universities. Some of them had profession related dreams. Just one participant expressed a great passion for music and described it as the reason for him to want to learn English. He explained that learning English will help him realize his lifelong dream of being a musician in future. A similar idea was expressed by another interviewee whose favorite academic major was not available in Iran, and so he wished to be able to travel abroad through learning English.

Few other participants had a different kind of motivation for learning English. Communication in English was in itself a future dream for a significant number of participants. They reported that being able to communicate and contact L2 speakers was their principal motivation to learn English, regardless of what their future profession might be. They explained that having a prestigious job was never the reason for wanting to learn English. Rather, it was their fascination to familiarize themselves with the L2 culture and its people

A few interviewees had a clear ought-to self-tendency. They had a very strong profession focus behind their learning English. Nevertheless, they did not have a very clear vision of what exactly they wanted to be, or even how to get there. Their focus tended to be on how a good job would enhance their social status and how the people will view them consequently. For example, they mentioned that learning English would create “reputable” job opportunities for them, but they did not specify what jobs could help them reach their goals. Conversely, they focused on the negative consequences associated with not being able to find a good job.

Majority of respondents asserted that they were not sure of speaking English and, even though they learned English deeply, they were afraid of talking to people from other nations. So, it did not make them so relaxed to speak flawless English. Other respondents complained that after six years of learning English, their ability to use English was quite disappointing. However, many of interviewees had a great motivation to achieve the point that they were able to create a future for themselves, but it seemed like, they said, their poor English marks discouraged them from imagining themselves successful individual. Many others said that by doing exercises, listening to English music and viewing English movies, they could not motivate themselves to learn English, because the school textbooks were not so rich to give them such opportunities.

Discussion

Discussion of Quantitative Results

Based on the obtained results, the differences among the three parts of the overall L2 motivational orientation of Iranian EFL high school students in learning English were not significant. This lends support to the findings the study by Rajabpour, Ghanizadeh and Ghonsooly (2015); whereas, it is not in line with the results of Haji Mohammadi’s study (2017), mentioned in the review section.

The second research question probed into whether there was any any relationship between three L2 motivational variables of Iranian EFL high school students: ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self and L2 experience. The results showed that the Ideal L2 self had a positively significantly relationship with the Ought-to L2 self. In addition, Ideal L2 self had no meaningful relationship with the students' L2 experience. Ought-to L2 had no meaningful relationship with Iranian EFL High School students' L2 experience either. This finding is line with Azarnoosh's (2014) research findings mentioned above.

The third research question investigated whether there was any significant difference between male and female learners in their ideal selves. The findings revealed that there was not any significant difference between gender in Ideal L2 self. This is opposed to the findings of Mahdavy (2013) who found the instrumental-promotion were significantly higher among the male high school English language learners. However, as the related literature shows, pervious research has shown that the role of gender has not been much conclusive.

The fourth research question examined whether there was any difference between male and female learners in their ought-to L2 selves. The results showed that there was a significant difference between female and male students' scores in the ought-to L2 self. This confirms Bacon and Fienmann's (1992), and Meece et al.'s study (2006) which indicated higher levels of motivational factors by females as compared to males.

The fifth research question explored whether there was any significant difference between male and female learners in their L2 experience. The results indicated that there was no significant difference.

The sixth research question investigated whether there was any relationship between gender and Iranian EFL high school students' L2 motivation in learning English. The results revealed that there was a positively significant relationship in this respect. Moreover, it was found that there is a positively significant relationship between the students' ideal L2 self across gender. Furthermore, it was found that there was relationship between the students' ought-to self between genders. Finally, there was a meaningful relationship between female and male students' L2 experience across gender. These the findings do not support those of Williams, Burden (1997).

Finally, the seventh research question probed into exploring the relationship between Iranian EFL high school students' L2 motivation in learning English and residential background. The following findings were found in this respect:

- a. There was a statistically significant difference among the mean ranks of the urban residential participants at three L2 Motivational orientations.
- b. There was no a statistically significant difference among the mean ranks of the rural residential participants at three L2 Motivational Orientations.
- c. There was no significant correlation between EFL high school students' L2 motivation in learning English and residential background.
- d. There was a moderate relationship between EFL high school students' ideal L2 self in learning English and residential background.
- e. There was a relationship between for EFL high school students' ought-to self in learning English and residential background.
- f. There was no significant relationship EFL high school students' L2 experience and residential background.

Discussion of Qualitative Results

The results of the qualitative phase of the study revealed generally that learners with high ideal selves place heavy emphasis on communication in English and travelling to English speaking countries, rather than on the mere utilitarian use of language which is usually related to work and profession. At the same time, one of the most important defining criteria of having ought-to self-tendencies is having job related goals and ambitions. It can be misleading, however, to assume that all occupational related motivators are part of the ought-to self. According to Lamb (2012, p. 10), “The cosmopolitanism associated with English blends both integrative and instrumental motives, making it difficult to maintain the traditional distinction between these two constructs.” This is in line with Taguchi et al.’s (2009) inclusion of profession related statements in both the ideal and ought-to self scales. Also, Oyserman et al. (2006) have argued that idealized and ought-to selves do not have to be in opposition, rather learners who have both ideal and ought-to selves can generate a combined effect larger than that made by learners who are motivated by either of the two self-guides separately.

Conclusion

The findings of the study showed that students with high motivation levels, especially on the Ideal L2 self-dimension, often have better achievement scores than those students with low motivation levels. A high scoring learner’s motivational trend consists of an influential Ideal L2 self, a pleasant learning experience and a less significant Ought-to-self dimension. This implies that these students see themselves as able speakers, appreciate their experience of language learning, and distance themselves from their obligations or expectations. They have an inner interest in understanding, and this has a positive effect on their success. On the other hand, low score learners often have low motivational levels and are not able to imagine themselves as professional English speakers. They cannot see the importance of learning English for their future either. In fact, for them learning English is just a school subject, and this mindset and lack of enthusiasm is what makes them low achievers.

The findings also revealed that in their ideal L2 selves, both male and female students displayed no significant differences. However, even in these classes, which all have a degree of vested interest in L2 expertise, dreams of using L2 in potential career or social contexts are less common. This indicates that students somehow reflect a more persistent willingness to participate in learning, possibly because they have recently encountered a new educational challenge, making their working memory more important for the need to learn English.

Based on these findings, the following suggestions can be provided for material developers, teachers and education program planners:

- Materials should be prepared to improve the vision of the ideal L2 self of L2 learners in order to increase their trust and enhance their attitudes within a broad range of cultural backgrounds.

- In order to enhance learners’ motivation, teachers and policy makers should take all three dimensions of L2 motivations (mentioned in this study) into account.

- Teachers consider other factors, such as self-confidence, cultural interest, and attitudes towards the English culture. The findings show that the students who enjoy their English classes seem to have higher achievement scores because of their teacher, community or program than students who find classes unsatisfying. Actually, the context of learning, especially in rural areas, is not satisfactory for learners; so, the teachers should create a safe and enjoyable atmosphere for them.

- Teachers should not rely on the textbooks as a sole source, but they can incorporate target language cultural products such as music to motivate students more.

-Content producers should create more fruitful content such as videos and authentic audio files to materialize the textbooks communicative claims and the community needs, and provide the learners with the capability of natural and actual language use.

-Teachers should gain an understanding of the views of demotivation variables and can thus create better learning opportunities for students. They can promote the students' positive attitudes towards the target language-speaking culture by presenting learners with a concrete image of the people who speak the language.

-Teachers need to emphasize the importance of learning English rather than getting high scores.

-Developers of educational materials should be urged to change learning contents and materials to satisfy the motivation of Iranian students. By improving the content of the coursebooks, students' negative beliefs about the second language can be modified. They can also develop materials and exciting activity topics for the texts of the coursebooks to increase the motivation of the students.

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