

Investigating Saudi EFL Learners' Vision of Future-self and its Relationship to their Self-regulated Learning Behaviour

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is twofold. Firstly, based on the assumption that the imagery component of the vision of future-self, particularly the ideal L2 self, has a powerful motivational influence on the learning behavior of learners, the paper aims to investigate the relationship between the learners' vision of ideal L2 self (V- ideal L2 self) and their self-regulated learning (SRL) behavior. The second purpose was to explore the concepts of vision of future-self and self-regulated learning from the learners own experience in order to present a comprehensive picture of how Saudi EFL learners may envision their future-self and what factors have contributed in constructing their visions. In this study, data were collected by means of questionnaire and interview. Both quantitative and qualitative data indicated that learners' self-regulated learning behavior are motivated by their V-ideal L2 self which highlights its motivational power in L2 learning. Furthermore, the qualitative data suggested that learners' visions of future-self are varied due to the contribution of several factors that influence shaping their vision including learners' self-efficacy, significant others, and learning experiences.

Keywords: Ideal L2 self, motivation, Saudi EFL Learners, self regulated learning (SRL), vision of future self.

Introduction

In the field of second language learning and teaching, the concept of self-regulation has attracted research interest recently, particularly in relationship to their motivation. Therefore, several studies have been conducted to identify the role of motivation in promoting learners self-regulation in different: leaning contexts (Lamb, 2011) cultures (e.g., Arab students by Malcolm, 2011) learning settings (e.g., the independent learning setting of SAC by Murray, 2011) and distance language learning by Murphy, 2011).

Dörnyei's (2005) framework of 'L2 Motivational Self System' has inspired several investigations on learners' SRL. According to this framework, "if the person would like to speak an L2, the 'ideal L2 self' is a powerful motivator to learn the L2 because of the desire to reduce the discrepancy between our actual self and ideal selves" (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 105). In other words, learners who envision themselves as L2 users (i.e., image of ideal L2 self) will be strongly motivated to attain this vision in order to reduce the discrepancy between their current and their possible L2 self as compared with other learners who may possess similar goals of L2 proficiency, but are driven by such motivators as obligation to others' aspirations or merely out of fear of failure (i.e., ought to L2 self) (Lamb, 2009).

Among the studies that have employed this framework to interpret learners' SRL in the light of the concept of the vision of future-self is Lamb's (2011) study which investigated the future-self of Indonesian EFL learners and their motivation to learn. Murray (2011) also investigated the role of imagination in learning English in an independent learning context, but with Japanese EFL learners. Moreover, Malcolm (2011) considered the concept among Arab learners. Of these various studies which have been conducted in different learning settings and among different learners' cultures, the concept of the visions of future-self has been highlighted to be a crucial source that can motivate learners' learning behaviour and promote autonomy or SRL.

Aim and Significance of the Study

As "It is individuals' motivation that explains their (learners) behavior. Why people decide to do something, how hard they are going to pursue it and how long they are willing to sustain the activity" (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 7), this study was motivated to investigate the visions of future-self as a motivational source for SRL to identify whether learners' active and persistence to learn the language is related to the learners' L2 self. In addition, Lamb (2011) noted that motivation, autonomy and identity are key elements of L2 learning and teaching, but there has been little attempt to fully identify the relationships between them because they are seen as different fields and each is considered separately with their own individual ontological approach. In the context of education in Arab gulf region, for example, only a few studies such as Malcolm (2011) have discussed learners' future-self and SRL. Others have investigated the concept of self-regulation or imagination among Arab EFL learners but from different dimensions, such as the study on the relationship between visual learning style, imagination, ideal language selves and motivated behaviour by Alshehri (2009), and a study on the relationship between Saudi EFL Students' writing competence in their L1 and L2 and their Self-regulation ability by Alsamadani (2010). Therefore, this paper is an attempt to address this gap by investigating Saudi learners' vision of future-self and its relationship to their self-regulated learning behavior.

Literature Review

In research of individual learner differences, learning strategy has been one of the most investigated areas in an attempt to identify why some learners are more successful than others (Dörnyei, 2006). Findings have shown that in addition to learner aptitude and motivation, learners' own creative effort in the learning process is important (Dörnyei, 2005), which in turn has attracted researchers to investigate learning strategies. However, because of theoretical issues regarding learning strategies, particularly the definitional problem and ambiguity, this area has been the centre of heated debate. For example, Dörnyei (2005, 2006) argues that the theoretical definitions on learning strategies are "fuzzy" and do not clearly differentiate between "normal learning activities" and "strategies". Consequently, this has led researchers in the field of educational psychology to shift their focus to the new concept of "Self regulation".

Self-regulation

Regarding the term of "self regulation", the continuum of the interest in investigation of "learning strategies", as highlighted by Dörnyei (2005, p. 191) is from a new dimension which focuses on the 'process' (self regulation) instead of the 'product' (strategies), was one reason for the emergence of this concept. Accordingly, the main difference between self-regulation and learning strategies is that the "proactive strategic learner is not necessarily the exact nature of strategies, tactics or techniques they (learners) apply, but rather the fact that they do apply them" (Dörnyei 2005, p. 190). Although the concept of self-regulation has attracted the attention of several researchers, it is still vaguely defined. In this regard, Tseng et al (2006), point out that the shift of focus from learning strategies to self-regulation has not provided solutions to the issues over learning strategies. In fact it has merely resulted in the development of a broader perspective to include goal setting, strategic planning, action plans, monitoring, control, self motivational beliefs, evaluation, etc (ibid).

Given the multifaceted interpretations of SRL, it has been defined in more general ways as follows. According to Pintrich (2000, p. 453) self-regulation has been defined as "an active, constructive process whereby learners set goals for their learning and then attempt to monitor, regulate, and control their cognition, motivation, and behavior, guided and constrained by their goals and the contextual features of the environment". Schunk (2001, p. 125) adds that Self-regulation refers to "learning that results from students' self-generated thoughts and behaviors that are systematically oriented toward the attainment of their learning goals". In addition, Dörnyei (2005), more generally, defines self-regulation as "the degree to which individuals are active participants in their own learning" (p. 191).

From these definitions, it can be agreed that the learners' proactiveness is a main component of self-regulated learners which is manifested by their creative engagement in setting goals, initiating actions, regulating these actions through controlling their meta-cognition, behavior and motivation with mentoring, and evaluating the outcomes of this engagement.

Who are Self-regulated Learners?

Zimmerman (1994, p. 5) gave an example of self-regulated student: "A Hispanic girl staying after class pleading to practice her word processing 'just a little longer.'"

It is suggested that self-regulated students have certain characteristics that can distinguish them from other passive students, and in this vein, Zimmerman (1990) distinguishes self-regulated learners as those who "proactively seek out information when needed and take the necessary steps to master it" (p. 5). Zimmerman (1990) has also indicated that self-regulated learners seek

their goals by applying appropriate strategies, have high self efficacy beliefs towards their capabilities, and these have an impact on their goal setting and their degree of commitment to achieve them. In addition, Wolters (2003, p. 189) gave another description of self regulated learners which highlights the psychological side of self-regulated learners. He points out that “self-regulated learners are thought to hold a collection of adaptive beliefs and attitudes that drive their willingness to engage in and persist at academic tasks”

While various different characteristics have been presented of self-regulated learners, one common conceptualization of self-regulated learners is that they are motivationally, meta-cognitively and behaviourally active in their learning process (Zimmerman, 1990). From Motivational perspective, self-regulated learners perceive themselves as self-efficacious and have positive attitudes towards the target language. From the behavioral side, self regulated learners select and structure action for learning purposes.

Motivation and SRL

The relationship between self-regulation and motivation has been widely investigated. There is a general consensus that they are positively correlated. In this view, Zimmerman (1990) contends that self-regulated learners are “not only self-directed in a meta-cognitive sense but are self-motivated as well. Their skill and will are integrated components of self-regulated” (p. 6). Pintrich (2000, p. 467) points out that some cognitive and self-regulatory learning strategies are more demanding for learners, and thus require a higher level of engagement with their studies than might usually be expected. Therefore, to invest the extra time and effort required in self regulated learning, learners must be motivated.

Accordingly, ample research has been conducted to identify what level of motivation students need to have to be successful self-regulated learners. As highlighted by Zimmerman (1990) researchers' view about the motivational dimension of SRL are differ as behavioral theorists claim that it is the external rewards which motivate self-regulation, whereas phenomenologists claim that individuals' positive sense of self-confidence and self image are the primary motivates. Other such as Zimmerman (2002) suggests that achievements, goal attainment and self-efficacy are powerful motivators.

The L2 Selves and SRL

As noted by Dörnyei (2005, 2009b), based on the theoretical literature of Markus and Nurius' of 'Possible Selves' (1986), Higgins' (1987) 'Self-Discrepancy' theory, and the empirical findings of the longitudinal study by Dörnyei (2009b) on Hungarian teenagers' language learning attitudes and motivation, the model of 'L2 Motivational Self System' was drawn. According to this model, there are three motivational sources for language learning (see below) which, particularly the first two sources, result from the powerful impact of imagery on learners' motivation.

- Ideal L2 self, which is the L2- specific facet of one's 'ideal self': if the person we would like to become speaks an L2, 'the ideal L2 self' is a powerful motivator to learn the L2 because of the desire to reduce the discrepancy between our actual and ideal selves.
- Ought-to L2 self, which concerns the attributes that one believes one ought to possess to meet expectations and to avoid possible negative outcomes.

L2 Learning Experience, which concerns situated, 'executive' motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience.

Dörnyei (2009b, p. 29)

An important point that needs to be highlighted is the fact that the ideal L2 self can be instrumentality motivated. Dörnyei (2009b, p. 28) points out that ideal L2 self component in his model can reinterpret the integrative motive as “it is difficult to imagine that we can have a vivid and attractive ideal L2 self if the L2 is spoken by a community that we despise”. Yet drawing on Higgins’ (1987) distinction between the ‘promotion’ focus of the ideal self and ‘prevention’ focus of ought self, Dörnyei (2009b, p. 28) points out that instrumental motivation can be involved in the ideal self when “our idealized image is associated with being professionally successful” (e.g. to learn English for the of professorial/career advancement). It has instrumental motives with a promotion focus whereas when an individual want to learn English so he does not fail or disappoint his parents, it reflects his ought-to L2 self which has instrumental motives with prevention focus.

The Vision of Future-self and SRL

Here, we might start questioning how these possible selves can lead to self-regulation. Dörnyei (2009b) noted that one main advantage of the concept of possible selves is the imagery component, particularly of the ideal L2 self, which can be a motivational tool through creating and enhancing language learners’ vision. In this vein, Dörnyei (2005, p. 102) points out that:

Our idealized L2-speaking self can be seen as a member of an imagined L2 community whose mental construction is partly based on our real-life experiences of members of the community/communities speaking the particular L2 in question and partly on our imagination.

Therefore as Higgins (1987) claims that the discrepancy between ones’ current self and the ideal or ought selves can create discomfort which in turn can serve as a motivator for the individual behaviour to reduce this feeling. Markus and Nurius (1986) also contend that possible selves are important as they can act as a tool of motivation: “they function as incentives for future behaviour” (p.954). Accordingly, when an EFL learner envisions himself as a person who can speak the language fluently, for example, this vision which reflects a desired possible self that is different to the learners’ current self can influence the L2 learning process positively by shaping learners’ behaviour to become this desired future self.

This new concept of investigating learners’ motivation has attracted a number of researchers. For example, a study by Murray (2011) was conducted to explore the role of imagination in learning English among a group of Japanese EFL learners in their first year of university who were enrolled on a self directed learning course (independent learning setting) which mixed self-access language learning and classroom-based instruction. Students were required to take responsibility for determining their goals, choose the materials, decide the way of using the materials, and monitor and asses their progress which means that there were no teacher-based language lessons except short lessons at the beginning of the course on learning strategies. Both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection were employed in this study of 296 students of whom 27 were interviewed. Findings showed that the learning context has contributed to the development of the learners’ future vision and enabled them to identify goals and actions needed in order to fulfill their future self. He also noted that a number of participants indicated that they envisioned themselves as international individuals which corresponds with Yoshima’s (2009) findings of ‘*international posture*’ in her study of how students in a FL setting such as Japan relate to the community of the target language. Yashima

et al. (2004, p. 125) describe the “international posture” as “the interest in foreign or international affairs, willingness to go overseas to stay or work, readiness to interact with intercultural partner...”

Another study, which investigates learners' vision and autonomy but in a traditional classroom context, was the longitudinal study by Lamb (2011). He investigated the presence of ‘future-oriented components of the self’ among Indonesian adolescents learners motivation to learn English. Twelve junior high school Indonesian students, who were selected based on the results of a previous study, were interviewed over two years. Using learning resources outside school such as online chatting and private English courses were presented as evidence of learners' autonomy. Results of the qualitative data showed that motivated learners have a high level of motivation to learn English, clear future vision of their selves and autonomous learning whereas the unmotivated learner showed less clear and vague vision and absence in autonomous learning. For the latter group of learners, the vagueness of their future vision was demonstrated through their frequent use of headings during describing their vision. He also noted that some learners were still motivated by a sense of obligating (i.e. to avoid failure) than by a real clear vision of future speaking self. Accordingly, Lamb agreed that ought to-L2 self as a source of motivation has a weaker motivational power and no link to autonomy compared to the ideal self. Therefore, He concluded that that there is a link between a clear future-self, the L2 identity of the learners and their motivation to learn and their level of autonomy.

Furthermore, studies highlighting the concept of learners' future-self and self-regulation, particularly Arabic EFL learners, are still rare. One of the few is Malcolm's (2011) small scale explanatory study on how the experience of failure can be a source of motivation to learner autonomy. A semi-structured interview was conducted with four Arabic students studying medicine. All of them were Arabic speaker from the Arab gulf countries including Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Also, they all experienced failure in the beginning of their study year which was attributed to deficiency in English ability, as the medium of instruction and learning materials and textbooks all in English for medical students. Findings showed that learners have taken actions to overcome failure and to reach their ‘desired future identity’. They manifested a degree of autonomy which was demonstrated by their own efforts to learn English such as reading stories, study grammar book and enrolled in English courses abroad. He noted that their vision of future self as competent doctors where English is an essential element for them has motivated them to become autonomous language learners. He added that learners' motivation to learn English changed from studying merely to pass (extrinsic) to studying whilst recognising its value and contribution towards their success (identified regulation). From the results, Malcolm also noted that that the educational and cultural contexts as well as learners' self-efficacy were influential factors in developing learners' identity from unsuccessful to autonomous learners and competent user of English.

Research Paper Questions and Hypothesis

From the discussed literature above, it is clear that the way in which learners envision themselves in the future is connected with their motivation to engage in the learning process. Lamb (2011), for example, maintains that “the self-identity we wish for in the future can be a source of motivation to engage in self-regulated, or autonomous, learning, which will help us

achieve that identity" (p. 177). Therefore, this paper aims to; firstly, investigate the relationship of the ideal L2 self image to students' self-regulated behaviour in order to identify whether learners' SRL behaviour are motivated by their ideal L2 self image.

In addition, as clarified earlier, the investigation of the two concepts of learners' vision of future-self and SRL have been conducted in relationship to the learning context and the learners' cultural-context; therefore, the visions of future-self of Saudi students majoring in English, are worthy of exploration in order to gain insight from the learners' real life experience. To achieve this aim, this paper will address the questions:

- Is learners' self-regulated learning behaviour related to the motivation of their vision of ideal L2 self?
- What kind of vision of future-self do Saudi EFL learners have?
- What are the factors that have influenced its development?

Methodology

Participants

A purposeful sample of eight undergraduate students majoring in English from different academic years were chosen to take part in an interview based on their response to the questionnaire.

Initially, 39 Saudi female EFL students filled out the questionnaire but as 6 indicated their unwillingness to take part in a later interview these were excluded from the sample leaving only 33 participants. Then, the quantitative data collected from the remaining 33 participants were used to select the interviewees. Eight participants who reported different levels of motivation and SRL were selected for a subsequent interview so the vision of future-self could be investigated from a richer and more interesting dimension.

Instruments

Data were collected by means of questionnaire and interview. Several researchers who investigated learners' motivation and SRL employed mixed methods so they could select suitable learners for the pursuant interview (e.g., Gillies, 2010) or based on the responses, can develop further questions for the investigation. In this study the use of mixed methods was employed for, firstly, validating some of the quantitative findings and to help in selecting the interviewees based on their responses to the previous questionnaire.

Questionnaire

To collect quantitative data of the learners' motivation intensity, SRL and their V- ideal L2 self, a questionnaire was developed. In the questionnaire, three multi-item scales that were measured by a five-point likert scale were included. The three multi-item scales were as follows:

- Learners' motivation intensity: includes (5) items.
- Learners' self-regulated learning: includes (6) items.
- Learners' vision of ideal L2 self: includes (6) items.

Interview

The qualitative data of learners' visions of future-self were obtained by means of a semi-structured interview. By adopting a semi-structured interview, the interviewer can have a guide for the questions to ask and at the same time the interviewees are allowed and encouraged to

elaborate on certain topics (Dörnyei, 2005). Therefore, an interview guide was developed to include warm up questions, main questions that are related to the research aim of investigations.

Results and Discussion

1. The Relationship between Learners' Visions of Ideal L2 self and their Self-regulated Learning

As discussed earlier, according to 'L2 Motivational Self System,' the power of imagination of future-self which creates discrepancy between a person's current self and an ideal L2 self can be a great motivational tool in L2 learning process. Specifically, it is claimed that the motivational power of the image of ideal L2 self is greater than the ought to L2 self as the motive of the latter is derived from other people and not from the one own self, thus it less likely to promote autonomous learning. Accordingly, it is hypothesized that learners with a V- ideal L2 self would be motivated to self-regulate their learning in order to achieve this vision.

The quantitative data obtained from the Pearsons' correlation analysis supports that learners' self-regulated learning behaviour is related to the motivation of their V-ideal L2 self as a significant positive correlation between learners V-ideal L2 self and self-regulated learning ($r = .403^*$, $P < .05$) was obtained. This in turn supports that the ideal L2 self, in particular, is a powerful motivational source on learners' learning behaviour; "if the person we would like to become speaks an L2, the Ideal L2 Self is a powerful motivator to learn the L2" (Dörnyei, 2005: 106).

The qualitative data obtained from the interview, when learners were asked about the relationship between their vision of future-self and their effort of SRL, most of learners who have a V- ideal L2 self demonstrated that the effort they make to learn L2 is in order to achieve their visions. P3 and p4, for example, indicated that their visions of ideal L2 self has played a primarily role for motivating them to become self-regulated learners.

P3: Honestly, very much because people without goals cannot do anything. But because I have it (vision of becoming influential figure working at the UNICEF) in my mind I have to learn more to reach it.

P4: Definitely becoming a successful language teacher is my dream. And I knew that improving my language and especially my speaking skill is very important and this (self-regulated learning) is the only way to achieve it.

One possible reason that may explain why learners with a future vision of their ideal L2 self are self regulated learners is the fact the motivational power of ideal L2 self stems from the learner's own aspiration and desire to learn the language which in turn makes investing the time and effort to learn L2 more worthwhile and convincing whereas another motivational source such as the ought to L2 self, as noted by Dörnyei (2009a), is drawn from other external factors such as obligations and duties that are imposed by authoritative figures (e.g., parents and friends) which makes it a less interesting task.

This also can be more clearly interpreted according to the degree of internalization. As all learners, even those with a V-ideal L2 self (i.e. promotion-focused), demonstrated that their SRL

is embraced in order to achieve their visions, which are either based on career objectives or wanting to become excellent students, and not because they genuinely enjoy spending more time learning the language, their self-determined behaviour is instrumentality-motivated. Yet, according to the self-determination theory, it seems that when the learner's actions are motivated by their V-ideal L2 self, the importance and personal value of SRL are more likely to be acknowledged 'identified regulation', since the motive is related to the individual's own aspiration, than when the actions are motivated by the learners' ought to L2 self (i.e. out of obligation to be similar to other people and thus improve their pride e.g. p7 & p.8) 'interjected regulation'. Accordingly, when the extrinsic motive is internalised and the value of the actions are realized, this can positively influence the learners' motivation to SRL.

Therefore, learners' self-regulated learning behaviour is related to the motivation resulted from their V-ideal L2 self which in turn supports that the ideal L2 self plays an important role in motivating L2 learning, and accordingly learners' SRL. Learners who envision their future selves as L2 users and realized the importance of English for their personal or professional success are greatly motivated to invest their time to learn the language.

2. Learners' V- Ideal L2 and Ought-to L2 selves

In Murray's (2011) study, learners' visions were noted to represent examples of an ideal L2 self-image with an L2 community focus (e.g., learners who have a vision of their future English-speaking self; becoming international individuals) as well as other examples of visions that reflect the learners' ought-to L2 selves (career-oriented focus). Similarly, in the semi-structured interview when learners were asked about the person they would like to become, their answers (in table 1 below) manifested various visions of future selves reflecting ideal L2 self and ought to L2 self.

Table 1: *Example of the Types of Learners' Visions of Future-Self*

Learners' Visions of Future-self
P1 "I did use to think that someday I'll be out there autographing the books that I wrote. Visiting bookstores and, during the launch of the book and, talking to other young novelists to encourage them"
P2 " I imagined, I wanted to be an ambassador working in the embassy as a big figure in the society"
P3 "A beautiful image. I have an image that I will do something in the future, most importantly, my name to be known in any fields, to work at the UNCIF, the united nation, because I like to help and I want to make change in the world I see" "my image is to be an influential person in the world and if I couldn't influence people, at least help them"
P4 "the idea of teaching used to come to my mind so I imagined myself teaching beginners and not advanced learners at the university"
P5 "I used to dream of becoming an English language teacher. Though I used to dream of becoming a lecturer at the university, but I always thought it is difficult. So that made me see myself as a teacher and not a lecture"
P6 " I envisioned myself as a teacher at any school teaching either secondary or high school

students with different teaching methods, different to what I used to be taught”
 P7 “I used to imagine myself finishing top of my class and with a high grade and GPA”

P8 “I see myself travelling abroad or going to a restaurant, or a hospital, and I want to speak fluently and effortlessly”.

Based on their answers, learners possess different visions of their future-self from an image that reflects the ideal L2 self (promotion focus) to others that reflect ought-to L2 self (prevention focus). Interestingly, most of the learners' visions (n=6) reflect future career objectives which generally can be attributed to the fact that in a country like Saudi Arabia where English is not widely spoken by the majority, people who speak English are perceived to be privileged and always considered as special, clever people, therefore, EFL learners are aware of the importance of English on their professional level.

Starting with the V-ideal L2 self, it was mentioned earlier that the ideal L2 self can be instrumentality motivated when learning the target language is associated with success or advancement in profession or career, for example. Accordingly, the Learners' image of future-self as a novelist, an ambassador, an influential figure working at UNCIEF, and as an English language teacher reflects an ideal L2 self with a promotion focus as they want to learn and improve their language level to be successful in their future career. Yet, p2's and p3's visions seem to slightly differ as they represent a desire for working in a foreign country and interacting and dealing with L2 speakers along with promotion focus. Therefore, these visions, which combine learners ideal L2 self (promotion focus) with a degree on willingness to integrate with L2, reflect the concept of 'international posture' proposed by Yoshima (2009). His view is that EFL learners with a high level of international posture may envision themselves as an individual communicating in English, "pursuing an international career, working in a foreign country". In addition, among of the eight learners, three (p4, p5, p6) had a similar image of future-self as English language teacher. This actually seems to represent the common visions that would be imagined by several female Saudi learners as it is a generally more plausible and favoured future career especially for woman in Saudi Arabia.

The other examples of learners' vision such as to graduate at the top of their class and to be a fluent speaker present images of future-self that reflect the learners' ought-to L2 selves (prevention focus). A sense of obligation is noted in these images as they seem to be not resulted from their own wish to improve their language ability level but to be similar to people around them (e.g. P7) or to meet others' expectations (e.g., p8). For example, P7 and P8 who imagined gaining high grades and able to speak the language fluently, indicated that they want to be similar to her cousins, please their family, and meet the expectations of people around them (see the quote below)

P7: Even my family will be happy with me when I have a better GPA than my cousins because all of them graduated with a GPA higher than 4 so I wish to become like them and even better.

P8: Because people look at me as a student majoring in English language so I should be fluent to meet their expectations.

Accordingly, these different types of visions can represent three examples of how female Saudi EFL learners may envision their future selves. A challenging vision (e.g., P1, P2 & P3) that combines a promotion focus with a degree of interest in the L2 community, hence, English seems to be perceived as the path for such different and unique goals where Saudi Arabian speakers of English are always privileged. The other example represents a common future-self of Saudi female EFL learners as three learners revealed similar images of becoming a teacher; and this career is perceived as being the best for women as well as more available. Finally, there is another image of future-self which can usually be possessed by learners who are externally motivated to learn the language in order to satisfy certain demands or obligations created by others around them. Clearly, several factors should have contributed to the development of learners' visions of future-self which will be discussed next.

3. Factors Influencing Learners' Visions of Future-self Development

The various visions of future selves presented earlier, reflecting ideal L2 self and ought to L2 self, introduce us to some examples of what Saudi EFL learners' may envision their future-self and most importantly, raises an important question about the possible factors that had influenced the development of their visions. Throughout the interview learners highlight a number of factors including self-efficacy, significant others and learning experience which are discussed below.

Learners' self-efficacy

In Malcolm's (2011) study, learner's positive self-efficacy was found to have contributed in the transformation of their identity from unsuccessful to successful learners as a result of the example of people around them who succeeded to learn the language after initially failing, as well as the support from their family members that helped them to regain their confidence. In line with this, results in this study have shown that self-efficacy influences the development of learners' visions of their future selves.

The best example of the influence of self-efficacy on learners' visions is the contradiction between how some learners, particularly P4 and P5, who because of their lack of confidence, they envision their future selves as what they might become (more plausible and suitable image) instead of what they would actually like to become (to teach a certain level of learners and at certain places). For example, P4's low self-efficacy made her to envision herself as a teacher though she would like to become a lecturer. This is illustrated in the following construct as P4 illustrates that her lack of confidence in her ability to deliver the lessons and about her general proficiency level made her to see herself as a teacher and not a lecturer:

I know the subjects but am not sure if I will be able to deliver them correctly and clearly or not. This has always been the thing that I keep thinking about.

According to Bandura (1994), social modelling is one source of self-efficacy which can help to create and strengthen people's sense of capabilities. Therefore, individuals who are surrounded by successful people who are similar to themselves can help to raise their confidence in their capabilities and increase their efforts, whereas models perceived to be different do not

influence their beliefs and efforts (ibid). P5 in this study shows an example of this as she described having models (lecturers) with different levels of knowledge and proficiency, which has lowered her confidence.

Yes possibly my level is not perfect and not bad at the same time. But there are lots of difficulties in the learning process. And when I see them (Lecturers) I say NO because there are other students better than me.

On the other hand, learners with a strong sense of self-efficacy have considerable confidence in their ability, which in turn can facilitate envisioning the person that they would like to become. To illustrate, one learner who envisioned herself as an influential person working at UNICEF indicated that she is quite positive and confident about her ability to achieve her vision and added that only external factors can hinder her from achieving that. When she, for example, was asked about the possibility of achieving her vision, P3 indicated:

Yes I think it is possible. For me, if there are no obstacles, illness for example. I also take into consideration other circumstances like getting married, and so if I don't face such obstacles I will achieve it (her vision).

Learning experience

As discussed earlier, the L2 learning experience is a component of Dörnyei's (2005, 2009b) L2 motivational self system. With regard to the learning experience and the development of a learner's vision of his/her future self and autonomy, Kim (2009) argues that although an L2 learner may create an ideal or ought-to L2 self in the early stages of learning, that self image can easily change without later appropriate L2 learning experiences. In this study learners highlighted that teachers and friends have influenced the development of their future selves. For example, the experience of P2 and P3 with their teachers has provided them with support and encouragement to perceive their visions as achievable. For example, P2 attended a session at the university held by a psychologist (a teacher from the psychology department) and this promoted her vision as she indicated:

When she (the psychologist) came and read it (her vision) I was really proud. She is a successful person and she sees my dream and said yes why not? Since that time I believed in that idea more.

Likewise P3 said:

My teacher at high school, her name was x. she used to say x (P3) is American so that made the idea easy and possible for me.

In addition, the unsatisfied learning experience has led two of the learners to envision what kind of teacher they want to become in order to be different and better than the teachers who taught them. The first one envisioned herself teaching English grammar and using different materials and a lot of exercises and the second one developed her vision with a condition to be fluent, the reasons for that were clarified as follows:

P5: Sometimes I don't like how teacher gives the lessons so if I were in her position, I would explain certain grammatical rules differently, and I will follow them with practice and explain why this is like this whereas the other is like this. I would give more than one examples.

P6: But I always associate this image with having a very high level of proficiency at speaking, to be the best skill I have.

Significant others

In Malcolm's (2011) study, significant others, including the learners' family members and friends have contributed to changing learners' identities from unsuccessful to successful learners. In Lamb's (2011) study, the role of significant others was also highlighted as it was noted that parental encouragement and the available examples of successful models of Indonesian EFL learners were instrumental for learners to create their future selves with confidence. In this study, throughout the interview, some learners kept raising the role of significant others in the development of their vision, both in constructive and deconstructive ways. For example, it was noted that a certain vision was developed as a result of the support or pressure created from people around them. One learner indicated that she was able to develop her vision due to the encouragement of her father:

P3: And what has supported it (her vision) is my father who keeps saying yes you can do it. It is easy just finish your study.

Accordingly, learners' different types of visions indicates that different factors such as self-efficacy, learning experience and significant others can contribute and influence constructing learners' images of future-self. Learners' self-efficacy seems to be the tool to define the boundaries of their future self images, as those with strong self-efficacy manifested more challenging and diverse images than those with a weak sense of self-efficacy. In addition, learning experiences including teachers and significant others seem to be significant sources for encouragement or hindrance to the development of learners' visions. Therefore, a learner's vision is not only the individual aspiration of what that person would like to become, but it is the result of a dynamic process that can be influenced by different factors. Internal factors such as perceived self-efficacy as well as other external factors such as significant others and the learning experience, overlap to determine images for learners to possess.

Conclusion

This study focused on, firstly, identifying the relationship between learners' V- ideal L2 self and SRL under the assumption that the image of ideal L2 self has a powerful motivational influence on learners' behaviour to become self-regulated learners. Findings of the quantitative data supported this assumption as a significant correlation between learners V-ideal L2 self and SRL was obtained. This was also validated by the qualitative data as most of the learners with V-ideal L2 self indicated that their desire to achieve these visions motivated them to become self-regulated learners which in turn highlights its major contributor and motivator role in learners' SRL.

The second focus was to deeply investigate both concepts of learner' vision of future self and SRL among Saudi female students majoring in English, the qualitative data showed that that learners' visions are varied, and include images of an ideal L2 self that reflects a promotion focus with a degree of willingness to integrate with the L2 community, images of an ideal L2 self that reflect only promotion focus and lastly, images of a future self that reflect the ought-to L2

self. Interestingly, It was noted that some of the females seem to consider English language to be the path towards their ambitious and unique future self (e.g. a novelist, an ambassador, an influential figure working at UNICEF) while other female learners shaped their visions more realistically in that they envisioned a more plausible and common self with regard to their culture (e.g. a language teacher).

A deeper analysis of the reasons behind the different visions revealed that there are a number of factors including learners' self-efficacy, significant others, and learning experiences that have influenced the development of learners' images of their future selves. Accordingly, it was indicated that a learner's vision of his/her future self does not only represent the learner's aspiration of what he/she would like to become, but it is also the result of a dynamic process where a number of factors overlap together and can accordingly determine and shape an individual's vision.

Implications

As the findings revealed that the learners' SRL behaviour is related to the motivation of their vision of ideal L2 self, which in turn highlights its major contributor and motivator role in learners' self-regulation. This study, therefore, highlights the importance of promoting learners' vision and particularly the ideal L2 self and suggests this would have a powerful motivational influence on EFL learners' motivation to become self-regulated learners. In this vein, Dörnyei (2009b, p. 32) points out that the L2 motivational self system offers "new avenues for motivating language learners" which suggests that "an effective way of motivating learners is to create in them an attractive vision of their ideal language self" (Dörnyei, 2009b, p. 19). How can we then promote learners vision of ideal self?

The answer has been proposed by Dörnyei's (2009b) motivational program which consists of six practical implications as motivational teaching methods and strategies for a language classroom as follows:

- Constructing of the ideal L2 self: Creating the vision.
- Imagery enhancement: Strengthening the vision.
- Making the ideal L2 self plausible: Substantiating the vision.
- Activating the ideal L2 self: Keeping the vision alive.
- Developing an action plan: Operationalising the vision.
- Considering failure: Counterbalancing the vision.

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