

The impact of positive views on language learning and pupils' construction of L2: Imagined communities, possible selves, and investment in language learning

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Abstract

This paper is based on data drawn from PhD research investigating the relationship between language learning, identity, culture, and motivation. It specifically describes how a group of Arab Muslim female English as second language (ESL) pupils are motivated by their imaginings of the English language speaking community. In Saudi Arabia the education system concentrates on teaching, while identity and social aspects have only been given little attention. I seek to redress this balance by exploring the impact of pupils' positive imaginings of the linguistic communities and of themselves in the future as members of those communities. I show how this investment works to promote their language learning. I use the concepts of imagined communities, possible selves and investment to illustrate the relationship between language and identity and how they impact each other. Further, I utilise sociocultural theory to explore how participants negotiate their identities as female Muslim Arabs who desire to be members of the imagined linguistic communities. In this presentation I illustrate my arguments using data drawn from focus group and one to one interviews, and students' text messages, photos and drawings.

Keywords: second language; motivation; sociolinguistics; identity; imagined communities, possible selves and investment.