The relationship between L2 motivation and willingness to communicate

Mutahar Al-Murtadha
University of Otago, New Zealand

The relationship between the recently proposed theory of L2 motivational self system (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009) and L2 willingness to communicate (WTC) remains largely under-researched. The present study explored the relationships among the three components of the L2 motivational self system (ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, and L2 learning experience), traditional social-psychological L2 motivation constructs, L2 WTC (inside and outside the classroom), national development (Islam, Lamb & Chambers, 2013), and a proposed new construct, technological interest. The study also explored which of these constructs predicted L2 intended learning effort.

A comprehensive questionnaire data were collected from over 900 high school and university EFL learners in the Yemeni under-researched context. Data were entered into SPSS and analyzed using regression analysis.

The results showed that ideal L2 self was strongly predicted by intended learning effort, L2 learning experience, technological interest, and L2 WTC outside the classroom. Ought-to L2 self was predicted by national development, technological interest, and L2 anxiety. L2 learning experience was predicted by intended learning effort, ideal L2 self and L2 WTC outside the classroom. With respect to the WTC constructs, L2 WTC inside the classroom was predicted by L2 WTC outside the classroom, L2 anxiety, and L2 learning experience while L2 WTC outside the classroom was predicted by ideal L2 self and technological interest. However, both L2 WTC inside the classroom and L2 WTC outside the classroom were predicted by imagination. Finally, intended learning effort was predicted by ideal L2 self, L2 learning experience, L2 WTC inside the classroom and national development. These results will be discussed based on the socio-educational context of Yemen and will be compared with results of previous studies.

Keywords: L2 motivational self system, willingness to communicate.