

The Relationships Between Ideal and Ought-to L2 Selves, Experience Abroad, and Perceived Linguistic Competence of Korean EFL Students Majoring in English Related Disciplines

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Ideal and ought-to L2 selves have been recognized as a powerful guide for future learning behavior. However, the literature still appears in need of more information regarding its relationship with other important variables. There is a specific need regarding Korean students—particularly those who have been exposed to English learning environments more regularly and intensely than regular Korean students. Therefore, this study used 61 Korean students who were majoring in English related studies and invited them to participate in the background research and the questionnaires. One major aim was to explore how the ideal and ought-to L2 selves are related to experience abroad and perception of linguistic competence. Another aim was to investigate the associations of ideal and ought-to L2 selves with motivated actions such as behavior and effort. The results revealed that experience abroad did not correlate with either of ideal and ought-to L2 selves and that the two kinds of selves were shown to have relationships with motivated behavior and effort. Lastly, ideal L2 self was correlated with four areas of perceived linguistic competence—listening, speaking, writing, and vocabulary, whereas ought-to L2 self was with only one area. Pedagogical implications are discussed.

[ideal L2 self/ought-to L2 self/experience abroad/motivated L2 behavior/
/ / /]

I. INTRODUCTION

With the current trend of globalization, English competence is becoming a basic requirement in Korea with regards to self-fulfillment (e.g., a communicative tool in order to become a part of international community) or in meeting high societal demands (e.g., job-related demands). For a more comprehensive understanding of second language (L2) acquisition based on these trends, researchers have focused on exploring the underlying motives that help learners pursue and persist in L2 learning outside of just linguistic areas. Crucial for understanding learning, one of the essential conditions for learners to reach a higher level of language proficiency is learner motivation. In the domain of L2 learning, motivation is viewed as a complex and multi-faceted construct (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011) which has encouraged recent research to attempt to view motivation from different perspectives—this can especially be seen in the concepts of the L2 motivational self-system proposed by Dörnyei (2005). This model has helped researchers and educators see L2 learners as the principal agents in their own learning paths and highlighted the important role of self-concept in motivation.

This new approach by Dörnyei triggered several studies which have investigated various interacting variables with the L2 motivational self-system, and were aimed at developing a better understanding for induced learner behaviors (e.g., Csizér & Kormos, 2009; Taguchi, Magid, & Papi, 2009; Ueki & Takeuchi, 2012). In the study by Csizér and Kormos (2009), they called for further investigation into the possible determinants and potential contributing factors of this self-system. In response to this call for further investigation, this study aims to examine how *experience abroad*—which may help students imagine themselves as successful users of L2 more vividly, *perception of linguistic competence*—which appears to be a driving force for motivation, and *motivated L2 behaviors* are related to ideal and ought-to L2 self-motivation in the L2 motivational-self system.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Ideal L2 Self and Ought-to L2 Self

When examining L2 learning motivation, most of the research has been directed toward the theoretical concept of integrative and instrumental orientations offered by Gardner and Lambert (1972). Recently, however, it is more accepted that this concept is limited in its view of L2 learners as active and primary agents in their own learning as it tends to focus attention on L2 learner attitudes toward a certain specific community of speakers (Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2009).

Further to this limitation, Dörnyei's (2005) L2 motivational self-system provides insight as it shifts its conceptual focus onto the internal structure of the L2 self and identity based on integrativeness and instrumentalism. Dörnyei (2009) reinterpreted the integrative and instrumental orientations in the frame of the *ideal L2 self* and *ought-to L2 self* based on the notions of 'possible selves'—conceptualizations of the future-oriented selves—proposed by Markus and Nurius (1986). His theory of self-system has been highly regarded in explaining an internal process of identification within the frame of the person's self-concept, rather than in the identification of certain specific external reference groups (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2002; Dörnyei, 2005). Notably, this theory is likely to enable researchers to identify possible variables with which it correlates, and to explore the relationships with those variables for a more comprehensive understanding of L2 learner motivation.

A tripartite model of Dörnyei's (2005, 2009) L2 motivational system includes ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, and L2 learning experience. *Ideal L2 self* involves integrative and internalized instrumental motives and is considered to be a strong motivator in the learning of a language as this represents the desire to reduce the gaps between ideal selves and actual selves that L2 learners themselves recognize. *Ought-to L2 self* is seen as a less internalized form of instrumental motives that drives learners to work hard to meet expectations from their peers, friends, or family to avoid conceivable negative consequences. *L2 learning experience* includes executive motives that are related to L2 learners' direct learning situation and experience (e.g., the impact of the experience success, the curriculum, peer groups, the teacher). The key concept of L2 motivational self-system lies in that a learner's drive to reduce gaps between actual self and future self is likely to result in motivated learning behaviors. Therefore, this study focused on these two self-concepts.

Many studies have attempted to identify the roles of ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self in L2 acquisition (Csizér & Kormos, 2009; Dörnyei, 2005, 2009; T. Y. Kim, 2009; Kormos, Kiddle, & Csizér, 2011; Lamb, 2009; Taguchi et al., 2009; Yashima, 2009). These studies, as mentioned, recognized ideal L2 self as a central component of L2 motivational self-system with the role of being a powerful future guide in the L2 motivational self-system rather than the ought-to L2 self. For example, in the study by Boyatzis and Akrivou (2006), they considered the ideal self as the highest form of motivation for intentional change. They argued that, when the 'ideal self' becomes active, it facilitates the development of an individuals' learning scheme which produces clearer and more articulated learning plans which encourages the trying out and practice of new forms of behavior, emotions, and perceptions. Csizér and Kormos (2009) examined the interplay of learners' self-concept, learning experiences, and motivated behavior with two groups of Hungarian L2 learners—secondary and university level—using multiple-group structural equation modeling. They

found their questionnaire data supported the L2 motivational self-system and identified that their university participants showed a much stronger relationship between their ideal L2 self and motivated learning behavior (.49) than between the ought-to L2 self and motivated learning behavior (.13) based on structural equating model. Similar findings were also found in a study by Kormos et al. (2011).

Several attempts have been also made to examine the relationship of L2 motivational self-system with L2 learning behaviors in Korean (e.g., M. Cho, 2016; Y. Jang, 2015; S. Kim, 2015; H. Park & H. J. Lee, 2013; J. S. Yang, 2013, etc.). The findings found that the Korean context was somewhat different from that of the study by Csizér and Kormos (2009) and Kormos et al. (2011). For example, H. Park & H. J. Lee (2013) investigated the roles of ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self in L2 learning behavior, especially willingness to communicate with the sample of 137 Korean university students, using structural equating model. They found that ideal L2 self, but not ought-to L2 self, significantly affected willingness to communicate. This finding was supported by M. Cho (2016). According to H. Park and H. J. Lee (2013), their participants' ought-to L2 self appears to be in the state of just recognizing the vague need for language learning. Therefore, they may have not set concrete language learning goals and not created their learning environment meaningful, which resulted in their failing to internalize ought-to L2 self. Hence, their participants may have failed to yield motivated language learning behaviors in conjunction with ought-to L2 self.

Examining the constituents of the two sets of L2 selves helps in understanding such results—the ideal L2 self is framed based on intrinsic and internalized instrumental motives, whereas the ought-to L2 self is built on external or a less internalized instrumental concept. In other words, intrinsically motivated individuals find a related task interesting and enjoyable, while extrinsically motivated individuals work for a reward or the prevention of punishment (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Such different approaches are manifested in their motivated learning behaviors and effort.

2. Experience Abroad and Perceived Linguistic Competence

As previously mentioned, it is not uncommon to find a high demand for English ability in Korea either for societal needs or for personal fulfillment. It is partly revealed in the number of university learners who join either language programs or degree programs abroad—a number which reached 214,696 in 2015, showing a slightly declining trend from the peak of 262,465 in 2011 (Statistics Korea, 2016). Despite the recent decline in the number of students who participated in official language programs in a target language context, for many, studying abroad is still seen as one of the best investments to improve target language skills (Wilkinson, 2002) and serves as a significant factor influencing L2

acquisition (Sasaki, 2011). Aside from studying abroad in formal programs, L2 learners may also have communication experience abroad using an L2 via traveling, working, visiting an acquaintance, etc., which might influence L2 learning. Therefore, in this study, the term 'experience abroad' includes various forms of foreign sojourns—either in formal study programs or in informal stays abroad in the target language context.

There have been various studies attempting to identify the influencing factors regarding ideal and ought-to L2 self-motivation. However, findings still appear uncertain. In addition, although experience may possibly enable L2 students to view themselves as competent L2 users more vividly, only a few studies have indicated a link between experience abroad and ideal and ought-to self-motivation (e.g., Yashima, 2009; Villalobos-Buehner, 2009). Villalobos-Buehner (2009) examined the effects of study abroad programs on the development of possible L2 selves in the framework of Markus and Nurius (1986). Her interview study examined data collected from 20 university students who studied French or Spanish as an L2. These students had a range of experiences abroad, ranging from one month to approximately three months. Although her main focus was on the changes of participants' motivated learning behaviors gained after participating in the study abroad programs, the results still showed that their experience with native speakers abroad helped them develop their identity as L2 speakers and helped them to visualize their L2 self-motivation more vividly. In addition, Yashima (2009) claimed that study abroad, or any kind of related experience, may enhance an L2 learner's ideal L2 self. According to her, such L2 learning experience in the real world facilitates L2 learners to imagine or envision themselves as confident L2 users more easily, often with a vision of themselves participating in an international English speaking community—not necessarily as a part of any specific target culture or context as English serves as a lingua franca (e.g., Jenkins, 2007). However, more evidence is needed to identify the specific roles experience abroad plays in ideal and ought-to L2 self-motivation.

Learner perception has been one of the key words when examining self-concept as perception has been considered to affect motivated actions or behaviors. For example, Baker and McIntyre (2000) revealed that students' perception of competence was found to be highly related with motivated actions, despite their study only being limited to an investigation of speaking (e.g., willingness to communicate). Du (2015) argued that students will feel accepted by others if they feel their linguistic competence is adequate to meet perceived social demands. Therefore, irrespective of what the reality is, perception is truth for students and often works as the driving force for their actions. However, it is not known how students' perception of linguistic competence is related to ideal and ought-to L2 self-motivation. Hence, it will be informative to investigate such relationship, and it is expected to shed light on the complex nature of L2 motivational self-system with motivated outcomes. Therefore, this study will first examine how experience abroad is

related to ideal and ought-to L2 self-motivation. Second, it will examine the relationships between such motivation and motivated behavior and effort. Lastly, the relationships between ideal and ought-to L2 self-motivation and perceived linguistic competence will be investigated.

III. METHOD

1. Setting and Participants

The study was conducted at two universities located in Seoul, Korea. 61 university students (female $n = 47$, male $n = 14$) who were studying in English-related major courses such as English education, English linguistics, or English translation studies voluntarily participated in this study. This group of participants was targeted through purposeful sampling as they had been exposed to English learning environments more intensely and were likely to have more opportunities for experience abroad than those in other majors. The data were gathered in the first semester in 2016. The participants' ages ranged between 19 and 29 years old ($M = 22.7$, $SD = 1.82$).

2. Instruments

To accomplish the research objectives, this study gauged experience abroad using a Likert scale, and employed two kinds of questionnaires to measure the ideal and ought-to L2 self-motivation and motivated learning behavior and effort. The participants responded to the questionnaire items based on a six-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). All of the questionnaire items were presented in both English and Korean in order to avoid any lapses of intended meanings since most participants might not have been proficient enough to understand English items.

1) Experience Abroad

The length of experience abroad held by each participant was self-rated using a six-point Likert scale: 1 (never), 2 (from several days to six months), 3 (from seven months to a year), and 4 (more than a year). This variable was considered as a continuous variable in this study since it has an inherent numerical value and the marked numbers show an upward, consistent trend unlike a categorical variable such as gender (Larson-Hall, 2010). This means that as the number increases, the length of experience abroad that the participants also increases (e.g., see Thompson & Lee, 2014). The mean of the experience

abroad of the participants was 2.10 ($SD = 1.09$, $Min. = 1$, $Max = 4$), and it was found that the number of students who had never experienced abroad was 22, with the same number having experienced between 0 and 6 months abroad. Further, 6 students had stayed abroad between seven months and a year while 11 students had experienced more than a year abroad.

2) Ideal and Ought-to L2 Self-Motivation

In order to examine Korean university learners' ideal and ought-to L2 self-motivation, this study used two related sections from a questionnaire employed in the study by Taguchi et al. (2009). In their comparative study, they examined the differences in the L2 motivational self-system among Japanese, Chinese, and Iranian students, across various age groups including university students. They reported a relatively high Cronbach's alpha with the Japanese participants—0.89 for ideal L2 self; 0.76 for ought-to L2 self—and with the Chinese participants—0.83 for ideal L2 self; 0.78 for ought-to L2 self—and the questionnaire used in their study thus appears to be a reliable measure to use for Korean participants who have a similar Asian culture and background.

According to their results, 10 of the questionnaire items were found to be related to ideal L2 self and 10 were related to ought-to self. The 10 that were related to ideal-self indicated an "L2 specific facet of one's ideal self" (Dörnyei, 2005, p.106) based on the central focus of L2 learners' imagination. The 10 that were found to be related to ought-to L2 self were used to measure the L2 learners' beliefs that participants used to avoid conceivable negative outcomes—a defining characteristic of the ought-to self. Further, and in consideration of the societal demands for English present in the current Korean context, a further item was added to the questionnaire used in this study as the 11th item: "Studying English is important to me because I can get better job opportunities."

3) Motivated Behavior and Effort

In order to measure learners' motivated learning behavior and effort, a section from the questionnaire developed by Al-Sheri (2009) was employed. His questionnaire was used for Arab university learners of English and reported a high reliability ($\alpha = 0.89$).

4) Perceived Linguistic Competence

According to Du (2015), perceived competence is identified as a driving force for motivated actions. Therefore, the participants were asked to grade their linguistic competence in six areas—listening, reading, speaking, writing, grammar, and

vocabulary—using a six-point Likert scale—from 1 (never learned) to six (advanced). The descriptive statistics are illustrated in Table 1.

TABLE 1
Descriptive Statistics for the Perceived Competence in the Six Linguistic Areas

	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>
Listening	61	4.50	0.81	2.50	6.00
Speaking	61	3.43	1.06	1.00	6.00
Reading	61	4.34	0.88	2.00	6.00
Writing	61	3.81	0.94	2.00	6.00
Grammar	61	3.84	1.19	1.00	6.00
Vocabulary	61	3.76	0.96	2.00	6.00

3. Data Collection Process

Prior to the collection of the data, the participants were given the purpose of this study and instructed on how to respond to the questionnaires in the middle of the first semester in 2016. After answering a few open-ended questions addressing their background information (e.g., length of English- learning experience, gender, major etc.), the participants were asked to answer the questionnaires and rate their subjective feelings toward linguistic competence on a six-point Likert scale.

IV. RESULTS

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of the participants' scores indicating experience abroad, ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, and motivated learning behavior. The mean score of experience abroad was 2.10. The participants exhibited a much stronger ideal L2 self than their ought-to L2 self (4.93 vs. 3.13). The mean score of motivated learning behavior was as high as 4.27 and ranged between 1.83 and 5.78. Such scores are likely to reflect the special EFL setting of the current study. The participants had been studying English for the degree programs related to English majors such as English education, English literature and language, and English interpretation studies. They have often been exposed to the learning environment where they need to use English and they were quite motivated in language use and learning. The Cronbach's alpha for the questionnaires used in this study was calculated and the reliabilities of each dimension were found to be much higher than the usual acceptable level of 0.7 (e.g., ideal L2 self $r = 0.95$; ought-to L2 self $r = 0.92$; motivated learning behavior; $r = 0.94$).

TABLE 2
Descriptive Statistics

	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>
Experience abroad	61	2.10	1.09	1.00	4.00
Ideal L2 self	61	4.93	0.78	2.89	6.00
Ought-to L2 self	61	3.13	1.17	1.18	5.55
Motivated learning behavior	61	4.27	0.91	1.83	5.78

Concerning the first research question, investigating the relationship between experience abroad and ideal and ought-to L2 self-motivation, the correlation between experience and ideal L2 self were tested. Interestingly, it was found to exhibit no statistical correlation between experience abroad and ideal L2 self ($r = 0.14$, $p = .29$), nor was the correlation between experience abroad and ought-to L2 self found to be significant. The failure of identifying significant relationships between experience abroad and such L2 self-motivation, especially with ideal L2 self, might be partially caused by a specific trait of the participants as they were studying in programs related to English. This result possibly indicates that the students' English learning experience may have influenced the formation of their ideal and ought-to L2 self-motivation rather than experience abroad.

TABLE 3
Three Groups of Ideal L2 Self and Ought-to L2 Self

Ideal L2 self	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Ought-to L2 self	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
High-I	19	5.77	0.18	High-O	13	4.77	0.43
Middle-I	32	4.87	0.27	Middle-O	18	3.68	0.35
Low-I	10	3.57	0.46	Low-O	30	2.10	0.47

Note. High-I refers to the group of the high ideal L2 self; Middle-I to the middle ideal L2 self; Low-I to the low ideal L2 self; High-O to the high ought-to L2 self; Middle-O to the middle ought-to L2 group; Low-O to the low ought-to L2 group

Concerning the relationship between ideal and ought-to L2 self-motivation and motivated learning behaviors, the result of this study was in line with previous studies in that ideal L2 self plays a more important role as a key component in the L2 motivational self-system in functioning as a future guide than ought-to L2 self (Csizér & Kormos, 2009; Dörnyei, 2005, 2009; T. Y. Kim, 2009; Kormos, Kiddle, & Csizér, 2011; Lamb, 2009; Taguchi et al., 2009; Yashima, 2009). In order to examine such relationship, correlations between ideal L2 self and motivated behavior and effort were tested, with the results indicating a substantial relationship between them ($r = .66$, $p = .0001$). This means that students with a high level of ideal L2 self are likely to display more motivated behavior and effort in language development. Ought-to L2 self was also found to be significantly related to motivated behavior and effort with a lower correlation than that between ideal L2 self and motivated behavior and effort ($r = .46$, $p = .0001$). These results are supported by

Csizér and Kormos (2009) who also reported similar findings. However, these correlation tests do not necessarily indicate whether ideal L2 self or ought-to L2 self is more influential for high, middle, or low groups of ideal L2 self or ought-to L2 self. Therefore, a K-means analysis was also used to classify the participants into three groups of ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self and the ranges of the three groups and respective mean scores are shown in Table 3.

TABLE 4

The Mean Scores of Motivated Behavior and Effort of Three Ideal L2 Self Groups

Ideal L2 self	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>
High-I	19	4.80	0.68	3.72	5.78
Middle-I	32	4.33	0.75	2.56	5.61
Low-I	10	3.10	0.73	1.83	3.89

Note. High-I refers to the group of high ideal L2 self; Middle-I to middle ideal L2 self; Low-I to low ideal L2 self

First, an ANOVA analysis was run to test whether the mean scores of motivated behavior and effort differed significantly among the three ideal L2 self-groups. A significant main effect was revealed, $F(2, 58) = 18.29, p = .0001$. A Bonferroni post hoc analysis further indicated significant differences between High-I and Low-I ($p = .0001$) with the largest effect size ($d = 2.4$) and between Middle-I and Low-I ($p = .0001$) with a quite large effect size ($d = 1.7$). In other words, the students in the High-I and the Middle-I groups were identified as having significantly higher scores in motivated behavior and effort than that of the Low-I group. Another ANOVA analysis was conducted to investigate the significance of the mean discrepancies in motivated behavior and effort among the three groups of ought-to L2 self and found a significant main effect, $F(2, 58) = 8.65, p = .001$. The Bonferroni post-hoc analysis showed significant differences between High-O and Middle-O and between High-O and Low-O, and the effect sizes for the two sets of mean differences were found to be large ($d = 1.3; d = 1.4$, respectively). This means that the students in the High-O exhibited a higher score for motivated behavior and effort than those in the Middle-O and the Low-O groups. Tables 4 and 5 illustrate the ranges for the three groups for ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self as well as the respective mean scores for motivated behavior and effort.

TABLE 5

The Mean Scores of Motivated Behavior and Effort of the Three Ought-to L2 Self Groups

Ought-to L2 self	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>
High-O	13	5.09	0.61	3.72	5.78
Middle-O	18	4.18	0.74	2.44	5.56
Low-O	30	3.98	0.92	1.83	5.61

Note. High-O refers to the group of a high level of ought-to L2 self; Middle-O to a middle level of ought-to L2 self; Low-I to a low level of ought-to L2 self

When examining the descriptive statistics in Tables 4 and 5, a majority of the students ($n = 51$) were found to belong to the high and middle group of ideal L2 self and they also displayed significantly higher scores for motivated behavior and effort than those of the low group ($n = 10$). On the other hand, only a few students ($n = 13$) belonged to the high group of ought-to L2 self and they also showed a higher score for motivated behavior and effort than those in the middle and low group ($n = 51$). It is worth noting that the mean scores of the three ought-to L2 groups were higher than those of the three ideal L2 self groups. This particular result can be possibly related to a few findings which reported that ought-to L2 self also plays an important role in Asian learning environments (e.g., Lockwood, Marshall, & Sadler, 2005; Taguchi et al., 2009), although students' motivated learning behavior and effort were found to be less correlated with ought-to L2 self than ideal L2 self in this study ($r = .46$ vs. $r = .66$, respectively).

TABLE 6
The Means and Standard Deviations of Perceived Competence and the Correlations
Between Ideal L2 Self and Perceived Competence

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Ideal L2 self	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Listening	4.50	0.81	.39**	1					
2. Reading	4.34	0.88	.24	.29*	1				
3. Speaking	3.43	1.06	.45**	.63**	.42**	1			
4. Writing	3.81	0.94	.33**	.30*	.46**	.59**	1		
5. Grammar	3.84	1.19	.00	.03	.61**	.06	.26*	1	
6. Vocabulary	3.76	0.96	.34**	.30*	.47**	.30*	.35**	.48**	1

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Concerning the relationship between ideal and ought-to L2 self-motivation and perceived linguistic competence, it was found that ideal L2 self was significantly correlated with their perceived competence in the four-skill areas such as listening, speaking, writing, and vocabulary as shown in Table 6. In particular, the correlation between ideal L2 self and perceived speaking competence was the highest ($r = .45$, $p = .0001$). On the other hand, ought-to L2 self was found to have a significant correlation only with reading which was a negative relationship ($r = -.27$, $p = .04$). This result indicates that students with a high level of ought-to L2 self tended to feel that their reading competence is low. It is worth noting that perceived grammatical competence was not correlated with self-motivation.

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The current study attempts to answer research questions regarding the relationships between ideal and ought-to L2 self-motivation with experience abroad, motivated behavior

and effort, and perceived linguistic competence. To address the questions, this study examined the relationship between experience abroad and ideal and ought-to L2 motivation. For ideal L2 self, the degree to which the students imagine themselves as a successful L2 user was gauged and their perceptions of how significant studying English is in the opinion of important others was measured for ought-to L2 self. According to Higgins (1987, 1996), ideal and ought-to L2 self guide is susceptible to how elaborate and vivid students' visions of their future self are. Experience abroad was hypothesized to have a relationship with ideal and ought-to L2 self-motivation since living emerged in a target language context may help develop students' mental image or imagination as successful L2 speakers more vivid and specific. However, the result of this study revealed that experience abroad did not have a significant relationship to ideal and ought-to L2 self-motivation in the participants. In the study by Yashima (2009), he claims that study abroad experience or similar kinds of experience is likely to help students situate their possible selves in English speaking environments more easily. Whether the participants in this study had experience abroad or not, many may have had similar kinds of experience through having continuous opportunities to interact with native speakers in their degree courses (e.g., with English native speaking instructors of in their degree courses), studying and using English relatively frequently and this may have affected the data.

Second, this study investigated how ideal and ought-to L2 self-motivation is related to motivated behavior and effort in language learning. According to the results, ideal L2 self showed a more substantial relationship with motivational behavior and effort than ought-to L2 self. However, it needs to be noted that ought-to L2 self was not only significantly associated with motivated learning behavior and effort, but it also displayed higher mean scores of motivated behavior and effort as illustrated in Tables 4 and 5, revealing its significant role in inducing motivated learning behavior and investment. This result can be explained, using the findings of the study by Taguchi et al. (2009) which reported a strong correlation between ought-to L2 self and instrumentality promotion—this shows personal learning goals, such as better job opportunities in their societies. In their study, Chinese and Iranian students displayed high ought-to L2 self. The authors elaborated that such particular Asian cultures—those which emphasize strong family influence and job-related issues—tend to be associated with a high level of ought-to L2 self in English learning. In other words, at least for the students in China and Iran, English competence is considered as a means of getting a better job or a higher status. This argument is likely to correspond to the findings in the current study as a majority of Korean university students learn English with similar goals—especially the participants in this study who were majoring in English-related degrees. It is probable that the participants may believe that developing their English language competence is their responsibility or obligation in order to avoid possible negative consequences or receive better future opportunities.

Third, the current study examined the relationship between ideal and ought-to L2 self-motivation and perceived competence. This study found that students' perceived competence played a role as the motivation for their motivated learning behavior and investments. A few studies have indicated *perception* is the key word when examining students' self-concept (e.g., Du, 2015; Jackson, 2008). For example, Du (2015) argues that if students perceived their language competence is adequate enough to the social demands, they will feel accepted by others. No matter what the reality is, perception is at least relevant for students and often plays a role as the driving force for their actions.

The results in the study show that ideal L2 self was correlated with four out of six linguistic areas—listening, speaking, writing, and vocabulary—based on the participants' self-perceived competence, whereas ought-to L2 self had a negative correlation with only reading (see Table 6). As mentioned earlier, a lot of research indicates a stronger connection of ideal L2 self to motivated outcomes than ought-to L2 self. The results of the current study can possibly explain the stronger link for ideal L2 self to motivated actions than with ought-to L2 self. The students' perceived linguistic competence could have been a driving force in their motivated actions, which supports a stronger link between ideal L2 self and motivated learning behavior and effort than was found in previous studies.

This study examined the data collected from Korean students majoring in English related studies. This sample is unique in that the students would have spent more time using and learning English and have been exposed to an environment that uses more English compared to those who major in studies that are not related to languages. Although the findings shed light on some relationships between the factors with ideal and ought-to L2 self-motivation, it will be necessary to explore the data from students who do not major in language. This will help us understand such relationships more thoroughly.

The findings of the current study offer implications for English pedagogy. It appears essential that students have opportunities to have various kinds of experience with a focus on practical English use in their learning courses, other than limiting their focus to grammar. Notably, as one of the findings revealed, perceived grammatical competence did not have any association with ideal and ought-to L2 self. This indicates a call for a change in a paradigm shift in English teaching and learning from examination-oriented which focuses on English grammar and syntax, to communication-oriented model. This will strengthen students' ideal L2 self, allowing them to imagine themselves more vividly as successful users of English, which has a strong link to student motivation. In addition, students' perception of their linguistic competence may result in motivated actions. Hence, instructors need to regulate the level of difficulties according to the students they teach so that students can build a positive self-image as a user of the target language.

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Examples in: English

Applicable Languages: English

Applicable Levels: Tertiary

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