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The role of ideal L2 self in predicting L2 willingness to communicate inside and outside the classroom

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Abstract

This study reports on findings of an investigation into the relationship between ideal L2 self as a motivational variable and willingness to communicate in English (L2 WTC) in and outside the classroom. Participants were a total of 90 university students majoring in English as a foreign language (ELF) at a foundation university in Ankara, Turkey. Data were collected using the Ideal L2 Self measure and the Willingness to Communicate questionnaire. Findings showed that 28% of the participants had high L2 WTC outside the classroom whereas 24% had high L2 WTC inside the classroom. The findings also indicated that there was a significant link between the ideal L2 self and L2 WTC both inside and outside the classroom and that the ideal L2 accounted for 13% of the variance in total L2 WTC scores. Based on the findings obtained, the study concludes by outlining pedagogical implications and recommendations in relation to instructional practices in L2 classrooms.

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Keywords: motivation; L2 motivational self system; willingness to communicate, EFL learners.

1. Introduction

The role of motivational orientations in second/foreign learning (L2) has long been at the center of much research attention and we have seen the introduction of a diverse range of L2 motivation frameworks over decades (for a recent overview, see Dörnyei, 2020). Cohen and Dörnyei (2002) noted that as nothing much is likely to happen without it, motivation is widely acknowledged as a central learner variable which may predict success in the study of an L2. Notably, the study of L2 motivational orientations has evolved over time through historical phases in response to particular paradigm shifts in thought (for an overview, see Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Such a robust research agenda has recently gained a new momentum following the attempts made to bring insights into L2 motivation from existing constructs in personality psychology. The notion of "self", a major theoretical construct which has dominated the field of

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psychology (MacIntyre, Mackinnon, & Clément, 2009), has come into prominence as one such useful avenue and self-related discussions are now at the core of the mainstream thinking on L2 motivation.

Linking self-related constructs with the behavioral patterns of people allowed for an interaction between motivational psychology and personality psychology, which set the stage for a novel research area: *possible selves* (Dörnyei, 2009). Proposed by Markus and Nurius (1986), the notion of "possible selves" aims to account for how a person's current view of his/her potential, conceived of as *self*, can determine the emergence of intended behaviors in the future. Possible selves represent what an individual would like to become, what they might become and what they fear of becoming (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Rooted in the possible selves theory, "L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS)" proposed by Dörnyei (2005, 2009) outlines three central components: *ideal L2 self*, *ought to L2 self,* and *L2 learning experience*. This novel framework not only locates motivation within a self-related framework, but also assumes that the driving force for L2 learning attainment is directly connected to one's current view of self and future-oriented ideal L2 self (Dörnyei & Chan, 2013; Williams, Mercer, & Ryan, 2016). The idea is that the gradual progression from the current state to a more desirable higher-up position chiefly depends on one's willingness to reach the imagined standards of his/her ideal selves. If individuals raise their awareness towards gaining new skills and strategies necessary to fill this gap, this self-awareness turns into a motivational tool that provides incentive to put more effort into developing intended behaviors.

The abovementioned potential of possible selves to act as a spur to encourage future motivational investments seems to suggest that one's ideal L2 self, representing the "characteristics that someone would ideally like to possess" (Dörnyei, 2014, p. 521), might enhance *willingness to communicate (WTC)*, a much studied learner variable referring to one's general propensity to take part in discourse in different communication settings with free will. The significance of WTC as a construct is based on the premise that avoidance of spoken discourse will likely result in distorted learning performance in L2 contexts (Öz, 2016). WTC stands for "a composite ID variable that draws together a host of learner variables that have been well established as influences on second language acquisition and use, resulting in a construct in which psychological and linguistic factors are integrated in an organic manner" (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 210). Indeed, WTC represents the degree of psychological readiness to be able to initiate and keep on L2 communication and is widely considered as the primary factor that lies behind L2 learning success (Maclntyre & Doucette, 2010).

The comprehensive L2 WTC model (MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1998) given below in Figure 1 explicates that the processes underlying the development of L2 WTC rely on intergroup variables and these processes are rooted in a set of individual characteristics hypothesized to influence L2 learning and communication. This theoretical model captures a proximodistal multifaceted construct that encapsulates linguistic, psychological, and communicative dimensions of language which are anticipated to exert influence on L2 WTC (MacIntyre et al., 1998). Pyramid-shaped

model with six layers presents situation-specific influences in the first three layers while the last three layers at the bottom refer to stable properties of individuals. Situated antecedents, behavioral intention and communication behavior build up the upper part of the pyramid and considered as location-sensitive parameters which show variance among individuals at a particular time in a particular place while engaging in the communication act. On the other hand, as we look downwards, a transition from context-specific influences to long-term properties is visible. Addressed in layer VI, the most outlying elements, intergroup climate and personality, are highly constant in nature and encompass innate hereditary characteristics. The fifth layer reflects affective-cognitive state of individuals and is mainly concerned with personal attitudes and motives. Similarly, Layer IV brings together self-oriented tendencies towards communication which exert a highly consistent influence across situations. Overall, sections are mutually dependent on each other since each layer is built upon the previous one. As long as both enduring and temporal parameters specified in the diagram operates effectively at a desired state, individuals are gradually inclined to reaching their ultimate goal located at the top of the model: Communication in L2. Prior to the introduction of this construct, studies suffered from a restricted range of the potential influencers of L2 WTC by largely treating it as a personality trait, and therefore failed to offer a comprehensive measure concerning the emergence of WTC in the L2 context (Peng, 2012).

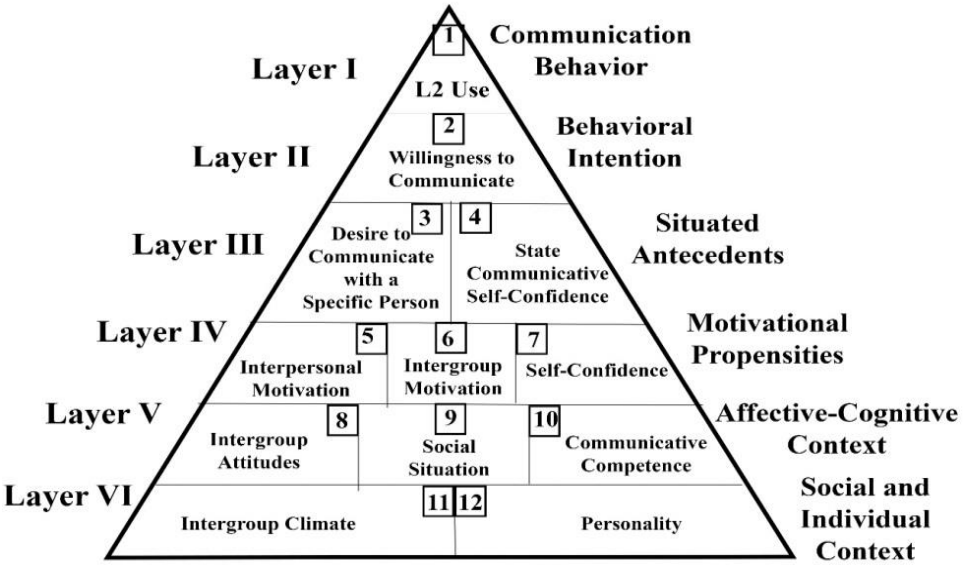

Figure 1. Heuristic model of L2 WTC (Maclntyre et al., 1998).

The last two decades have seen a growing focus on exploring the potential predictors of L2 WTC such as extraversion/introversion, self-confidence, anxiety, integrativeness, international posture, and motivation (Yashima, 2012). Of particular relevance for the current study is that inasmuch as one of the correlates of WTC in the EFL settings might be an individual's perceived communicative competence (Kim, 2004; Peng &

Woodrow, 2010; Yashima, 2012; Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide, & Shimizu, 2004). It seems fair to posit that there might exist a potential parallelism between one's ideal L2 self and L2 WTC. Indeed, there is evidence that ideal L2 self accounts for much of the intended effort which facilitates the achievement of L2 communication skills (Noels, 2009). With these considerations in mind, this study aims at providing further insights into the potential correlation that appears to exist between the aforementioned ideal L2 self and willingness to communicate in the Turkish EFL context.

2. Background

2.1. Willingness to Communicate (WTC)

A common phenomenon that occurs in L2 communication settings is to find out some people who display timidity towards actively participating in the discourse in spite of their already existing competence which may enable an effective language production (Dörnyei, 2005). It is, therefore, reasonable to assume that intention to start and sustain communication with interlocutors in a particular setting depends on various underlying factors, one of which is psychological variables. Among these psychological dimensions, the notion of WTC, firstly originated in L1 (McCroskey & Baer, 1985), generated much interest among scholars and a growing body of research provided analysis of WTC in the L2 contexts (e.g., Baker & Maclntyre, 2000; Maclntyre et al., 1998; MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, & Donovan, 2002). Maclntyre et al. (2003) postulated that WTC goes through a formulation process over time in one's first language (L1) development and ends up with a fixed model that remains stable over time in different communication settings. However, the situation is not that straightforward for L2 performance because the degree of one's communicative competence is another mediator which directly influences the rate of L2 WTC, which shows the complexity of L2 WTC.

There is a large volume of studies addressing the relation of L2 WTC with some variables such as perceived competence and anxiety (Baker & Maclntyre, 2000), motivation (Peng, 2007), identity styles (Zarrinabadi & Haidary, 2014), age and sex (Donovan & Maclntyre, 2004), and attitude (Yashima, 2002). Along with these proliferations of studies, there was also a particular focus on the notion of "perceived communicative competence". In accordance with the hypothesis generated by Maclntyre, Babin, and Clement (1999) and consistent with the findings of Baker and Maclntyre (2000), some studies addressing the predictors of L2 WTC (e.g., Peng & Woodrow, 2010; Yashima, 2002; Yashima, 2012; Yashima et al., 2004, Yu, 2008) produced arguments that an individual's perceived communicative competence can be regarded as a strong predictive of L2 WTC (for a recent meta-analysis on the predictors of L2 WTC including perceived communicative competence, see Shirvan, Khajavy,

MacIntyre, & Taherian, 2019). In this relation, there emerged a set of studies addressing the predictive value of the ideal L2 self on WTC in the L2 contexts.

In such a study, Peng (2015) set out to show the interrelation of such variables as L2 motivational self system, international posture, L2 anxiety, and L2 WTC. Peng's report did not offer any significant correlation between the ideal L2 self and L2 WTC, while Munezane (2013) found a direct path from ideal L2 self to L2 WTC. His findings revealed that ideal L2 self is highly predictive of L2 WTC, which is in accord with the subsequent findings of Munezane (2015). In the same vein, Kanat-Mutluoğlu (2016) illustrated a predestined path from ideal L2 self to L2 WTC.

2.2. The Ideal L2 Self

Although debates over the roots of motivation as well as its implications on SLA processes have remained unabated for nearly sixty years now, it was not until the beginning of the new millennium that the issue gained a fresh momentum around the notion of "self" (Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2009). Having its roots in the "possible selves" (Markus & Nurius, 1986, 1987) and "self-discrepancy theory" (Higgins, 1987), L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009) is a multi-pronged construct established on a tripartite amalgam which constitutes ideal L2 self, ought to L2 self, and L2 learning experience. Recognizing the premise that there is an obvious discrepancy between existing selves and envisioned future selves and that motivational impetus arises from the endeavor to bridge the distance between these two metaphorical zones (Hadfield & Dörnyei, 2013; Williams et. al., 2016), the first two components in the framework *ideal L2 self* and *ought to L2 self* represent forward-pointing conceptions. The former one refers to "characteristics that someone would ideally like to possess" (Dörnyei, 2014, p. 521). The latter, on the other hand, stands for "the future identity one feels one should have" in order to avoid negative outcomes (Lamb, 2011, p. 178). The third element of the model, *L2 learning experience*, defines the degree of influence of the social milieu on the current state of individuals.

The last decade has witnessed a proliferation of studies seeking validation for the L2MSS model in various settings (e.g., Csizér & Kormos, 2009; Taguchi, Magid, & Papi, 2009; Ueki & Takeuchi, 2013). It is worth noting that the ideal L2 self exhibits greater eminence in comparison with the other dimensions of the model and idealized image of the future is considered as a powerful motivator to initiate and sustain learning. Higgins (1987, 1998) speculated that the ideal self is the most notable one among possible selves, playing a major role in determining academic attainment. In this regard, several recent attempts have been made to scrutinize the link between the ideal L2 self and L2 WTC (e.g., Bursalı & Öz, 2017; Kanat-Mutluoğlu, 2016; Khajavy & Ghonsooly, 2017; Munezane, 2013, 2015; Öz, 2016; Peng, 2015). However, Shirvan et al. (2019) noted in their recent meta-analysis on the correlates of L2 WTC that while perceived communicative competence, lack of language anxiety, and motivation constitute the most studied correlates of L2 WTC, there are some other variables which received much less attention including the ideal L2 self. This led the authors to label

the ideal L2 self as a low-evidence predictor of L2 WTC, which indicates a need for further research. Besides, most of such work carried out so far has largely concentrated on either WTC in class or WTC outside the class. Thus, a systematic understanding of how ideal L2 self may contribute to both in- and out WTC of the same study sample is still lacking. With this in mind and given the lack of research on the potential relation of ideal L2 self and L2 WTC constructs, this study seeks to explore whether ideal L2 self may predict L2 WTC inside and outside the class in the Turkish EFL context.

3. The Study

3.1. Research Questions

This study aims at exploring the extent to which Turkish EFL learners' ideal L2 self predicts their L2 WTC inside and outside the classroom. The study also examines if the predictive power of ideal L2 self on in-class WTC and out-of-class WTC in English shows a statistically significant difference. The questions which drive the study are as follows:

1. What is the perceived level of willingness to communicate (WTC) and the ideal L2 self among the participants?
2. Is there a relationship between the participants' perceived level of the ideal L2 self and their WTC in and outside of the classroom?
3. To what extent can the variability in participants' perceptions of WTC be predicted by the ideal L2 self?

3.2. Setting and Participants

The study was conducted in a pre-service EFL teacher education program at a foundation university in Turkey. The students ($N = 90$; female: 70, 78%; male: 20, 22%) participated voluntarily and gave consent for data collection. They ranged in age from 18 to 24 years. They were freshman, sophomore, and junior students.

3.3. Instruments

3.3.1. Willingness to Communicate

Students' perceived level of WTC inside and outside the classroom was measured based on the WTC questionnaire adopted from MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, and Conrod (2001). The questionnaire is composed of two sections: WTC in class and WTC outside the class, each of which has 27 items based on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "*almost never willing*" on one end to "*almost always willing*" on the other. The participants were asked to specify how willing they are to engage in those specific situations. The internal consistency of the questionnaire calculated using Cronbach

alpha (α) coefficients was found to be high (α = .84) based on the commonly agreed .70 threshold value for Cronbach alpha (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010).

3.3.2. The Ideal L2 Self

Students' views of their ideal L2 self was assessed using Dörnyei and Taguchi's (2010) 10-item the ideal L2 self measure on the basis of a 6-point Likert scale with "*strongly disagree"* anchoring the right end and "*strongly agree"* anchoring the left end. The aim was to examine how students visualize themselves as successful learners in the future. To this end, the students were asked to choose how much they agree or disagree with the statements given, all of which refer to imagined future standards regarding the use of English in different situations. The questionnaire was found to have a strong internal consistency (α = .87).

3.4. Data Collection and Analysis

Quantitative data for the current study were obtained to address the formulated research questions based on a convenience sampling method. After the written consent was taken, questionnaires containing measures of the aforementioned WTC and ideal L2 self constructs were administered to the participants, which required 15 minutes on average.

The quantitative data gathered were analyzed via IBM SPSS 21. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages and means) were used to demonstrate participants' perceived levels of WTC and ideal L2 self. First, the raw scores were computed to obtain the perfect scores of the respondents. Next, their mean scores were obtained in order to measure the participants' perceived level of the ideal L2 self and WTC. Finally, the mean scores one standard deviation above and below the average mean score were considered as high and low scores, respectively. The scores fallen between the two extremes were dealt with as moderate or medium scores.

After the related assumptions (absence of outliers, linearity, and normality) were confirmed in the dataset, Pearson correlation analysis was carried out to discover the possible correlation between the participants' perceived level of the ideal L2 self and their WTC. As there was only one independent variable in the study, namely the ideal L2 self, standard regression analysis was conducted to discover whether the participants' perceived level of the ideal L2 self can predict their WTC in and outside of the classroom. Likewise, the assumptions of standard regression analysis (linearity, normality, independence, and homoscedasticity of residuals as well as multicollinearity and multivariate outlier) were met in the dataset.

4. Findings

The findings, as presented in table 1, revealed that 81% of the participants had high, 15.5% had moderate, and 3.5% had low levels of the ideal L2 self, indicating a high perception of the ideal L2 self among the participants. As for L2 WTC, the results indicated that 28% of the participants reported high perception of L2 WTC outside the

classroom whereas 24% had high level of L2 WTC inside the classroom. The scrutiny of the results further revealed that 60% of the participants had moderate tendency to communicate inside the classroom, slightly (6%) more than willingness to communicate outside the classroom. Taken together, the participants reported positive ratings toward WTC both in and outside the classroom and only a small proportion (17%) had lower levels of L2 WTC.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for participants' perceived levels of the ideal L2 self and L2 WTC

Variables	Rank	Number of participants (N)	Percentage of participants (%)
	High	21	24
WTC inside the classroom	Moderate	54	60
	Low	15	16
	High	25	28
WTC outside the classroom	Moderate	50	54
	Low	15	16
	High	73	81
Ideal L2 Self	Moderate	14	15.5
	Low	3	3.5

Pearson correlation coefficients revealed that the ideal L2 self correlated positively at a statistically significant level with L2 WTC inside the classroom, $r(90) = .33$, $p < .01$. The strongest correlations were found to be with speaking inside the classroom, ($r = .32$, $p < .01$); reading inside the classroom ($r = .30$, $p < .01$); and writing inside the classroom ($r = .25$, $p < .05$). In the same vein, as presented in Table 2, the ideal L2 self was found to be correlated positively and significantly with L2 WTC outside the classroom and its all components. The strongest correlations were with writing outside the classroom ($r = .31$, $p < .01$); speaking outside the classroom ($r = .28$, $p < .01$); reading outside the classroom ($r = .26$, $p < .05$); and comprehension outside the classroom ($r = .21$, $p < .05$). The findings documented evidence for the significant and meaningful interaction between the ideal L2 self and L2 WTC.

Table 2. Pearson correlation coefficients between the ideal L2 self and L2 WTC

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1	SIC	1										
2	RIC	.404**	1									
3	WIC	.381**	.671**	1								
4	CIC	.414**	.468**	.313**	1							
5	SOC	.641**	.400**	.378**	.458**	1						
6	ROC	.282**	.756**	.527**	.453**	.390**	1					
7	WOC	.379**	.566**	.736**	.384**	.612**	.609**	1				
8	COC	.337**	.439**	.274**	.662**	.436**	.554**	.406**	1			
9	TWIC	.715**	.844**	.835**	.632**	.601**	.659**	.703**	.510**	1		
10	TWOC	.528**	.679**	.639**	.579**	.800**	.787**	.878**	.675**	.790**	1	

11	ILS	.316**	.297**	.246*	.119	.282**	.264*	.316**	.218*	.338**	.349**	1

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

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

Note: SIC= speaking inside the classroom; *RIC*= reading inside the classroom; *WIC*= writing inside the classroom; *CIC*= Comprehension inside the classroom; *SOC*= speaking outside the classroom; *ROC*= reading outside the classroom; *WOC*= writing outside the classroom; *COC*= comprehension outside the classroom; *ILS*= the ideal L2 self; *TWIC*= total WTC inside the classroom; *TWOC*= total WTC outside the classroom.

To find out if the ideal L2 self predicts L2 WTC inside and outside the classroom, a standard regression analysis was conducted, entering the overall score of the ideal L2 self as the independent or predictor variable and L2 WTC scores as the dependent variables. The ideal L2 self emerged as a significant predictor of L2 WTC outside of the classroom, accounting for 13% of the total variance (R^2 = .13). The ideal L2 self also significantly predicted all the components of L2 WTC outside the classroom, explaining 10% of the variance in writing outside the classroom (R^2 = .10); 8% in speaking outside the classroom (R^2 = .8); 7% in reading outside the classroom (R^2 = .7); and 5% in comprehension outside the classroom (R^2 = .5).

The regression analysis also revealed that the ideal L2 self was the significant predictor of L2 WTC inside the classroom, accounting for 12% of the total variance (R^2 =.12). A careful scrutiny of the findings, however, indicated that the ideal L2 self significantly predicted three components of L2 WTC inside the classroom, explaining 10% of the variance in speaking inside the classroom (R^2 = .10); 9% in reading inside the classroom (R^2 = .9); and 6% in writing inside the classroom (R^2 = .6). However, the ideal L2 self did not significantly predict comprehension inside the classroom component of L2 WTC. On the whole, the ideal L2 self explained 13% (R^2 =.13) of the variance in total L2 WTC.

Table 3. Standard regression analysis

Predictor Variable	Dependent Variables	Standardized coefficients β	t	Sig.
The Ideal L2 Self	Speaking inside the classroom	.32	3.12	.002
	Reading inside the classroom	.30	2.91	.005
	Writing inside the classroom	.25	2.38	.020
	Comprehension inside the classroom	.12	1.08	.283
	Speaking outside the classroom	.28	2.75	.007
	Reading outside the classroom	.26	2.57	.012
	Writing outside the classroom	.32	3.12	.002
	Comprehension outside the classroom	.22	2.04	.044
	Total L2 WTC inside the classroom	.34	3.29	.001
	Total L2 WTC outside the classroom	.35	3.45	.000

5. Discussion

With respect to the first research question, most of the participants (81%) were found to have a high perception of the ideal L2 self, which implies that participants have a clear image of what standards they would like to possess in the following phases of their language learning experience. This finding seemingly contradicts with that of Bursalı and Öz (2016) who reported only 25% of the participants had high scores on the ideal L2 self. This contradiction seems interesting on the grounds that while both the study of Bursalı and Öz (2016) and the current study were conducted in the Turkish EFL context drawing on samples from the same target population, the findings revealed significantly different levels of ideal L2 self. Such a disparity may be possibly attributed to the use of non-random samples, which may lead to elusive results at times. Furthermore, the study revealed that participants have a positive approach to communication since just a minority (17%) was found to have low WTC while over half of those surveyed (55% outside the class WTC and 60% in-class WTC) were found to have moderate level WTC. In addition to Ghonsooly, Hosseini, and Khajavy (2013) and Nagy (2007), these findings mirror those of the previous studies conducted with Turkish students such as Başöz and Erten (2018), Öz (2014, 2016), and Öz et al. (2015) where participants' perceived levels of WTC in English was reported to be moderate. Such parallelism across studies indicates that Turkish students tend to display an average predisposition to engage in communicative practices. On the other hand, the slight (approximately 5%) difference between high-WTC scores regarding inside and outside the class WTC appears to suggest that participants are more inclined to communicating outside the class. Several reports (e.g., Nagy, 2007; Peng, 2015) similarly showed that learners have a higher level of WTC outside the class than they do inside the class. A possible explanation for this finding may be that some learners prefer to remain silent due to the effect of anxiety or fear of making mistakes (Başöz, 2018).

The second research question sought to determine the possible link between ideal L2 self and WTC inside and outside the class. The findings indicated a significant and meaningful correlation between these constructs. Based on this finding, it could be argued that one's awareness of ideal L2 self may contribute to the development of WTC in a foreign language. This finding also draws our attention to the importance of having a positive self-image in the study of an L2. Any learner, irrespective of their existing language proficiency, could feel motivated to engage readily in language-related practices thanks to the imagined idealized standards they would like to master. In other words, language learners with a strong sense of ideal L2 self may eventually improve their L2 WTC profile. Such a progress may be associated with the motivating power of an imagined L2 self which feeds the enthusiasm to advance to a better position in the study of an L2.

In order to find out the predictive value of ideal L2 self on L2 WTC, a standard regression analysis was conducted. As mentioned before, prior work, albeit limited, revealed that ideal L2 self has the potential to predict L2 WTC. Expectably, the results of the current study agree with those of previous research which identified a direct path

from the ideal L2 Self to L2 WTC (Kanat-Mutluoğlu, 2016; Munezane 2013, 2015; Öz, 2016; Öz et al., 2015). This finding implicates that EFL learners may take advantage of an increased awareness regarding their idealized L2 learning standards. It might be claimed that visionary language learning expectations may nurture individuals' willingness to put more effort to improve their L2 proficiency. Arguably, displaying an encouraging attitude towards learners and leading them to set new goals may prove valuable even if they currently suffer from a lack of proficiency or willingness. As noted by Öz (2016), ideal-self images pave the way for creating L2-specific visions that may potentially inhold a motivating power to canalize learners towards success in the study of an L2. However, it is somewhat surprising and intriguing to see that ideal L2 self was not found to predict inside WTC and outside WTC to the same degree. While ideal L2 self was reported to predict all components of WTC outside the class, it was found to be predictive of just three components of in-class WTC. This implies the need for examining inside-class and outside-class settings individually while discussing the predictive role of ideal L2 self on communication orientations in these setting.

As noted before, a majority of the previous work overgeneralized the predictive value of ideal L2 self on all WTC settings without looking at whether there is a statistical difference between in class WTC and outside class WTC regarding the predictive value of ideal L2 self. It became evident in the current study that the ideal L2 self did not satisfactorily predict L2 WTC in all communication settings and it seems to prove more useful in the prediction of outside the class WTC. Thus, it is possible to speculate that the ideal L2 self as a construct does not equally correlate with the characteristics of inside-outside classroom communication settings. All in all, these results add to a growing body of evidence that L2 WTC does not lend itself to straightforward interpretations, but rather it is a multi-faceted phenomenon that entails keeping in mind complex interrelations so as to develop a more precise understanding of its structural characteristics (Peng, 2015).

6. Conclusions

The outcomes from the present study point towards a close link between the ideal L2 self and WTC, suggesting that it could be of benefit if teachers place emphasis on encouraging learners to create L2-related visions, which in turn may help students canalize their efforts towards that visionary end goal. This process may act as a drive for promoting motivation and gradually direct learners to develop their L2 communication skills. With this in mind, it seems potentially useful to carry out specifically tailored vision-related activities in the class, which may facilitate creating and pursuing vision. On the other hand, the observed limited capacity of ideal L2 self for predicting in-class WTC not only casts doubt on the proposed primacy of L2-related imagery to enhance overall communication tendencies, but also indicates a need to undertake further research to fully understand the links between the concepts under inquiry. It is implied that a word of caution must be added when suggesting

implications for L2 communication practices based on the insights offered by the ideal L2 self construct.

The participants appeared to have a more positive attitude towards L2 communication outside the class. The reason could be that outside the class offers a more stress-free, safe, comfortable environment to engage in L2 communication and in-class dynamics hinder language production of the learners. Using real-life activities in the teaching process such as role plays, dramatization, interviews or small talks rather than structured activities that fail to reflect authentic nature of the communication could prove more useful. In so doing, learners can not only become familiar with the norms of the spoken discourse that occurs naturally in daily life, but they can also apply what they practiced in the classroom to the outside world. It goes without saying that it is the teachers who will decide on which strategies to advocate in order to foster communication-related skills of EFL learners. The crucial point to emphasize here is to take into consideration context-sensitive and location-specific dimensions that reflect the dynamics of different classroom settings. Rather than following a predetermined agenda, it could be better to make adjustments and arrangements based on group-related dynamics given the multi-directional nature of communication orientations and its ongoing interaction with motivational processes.

Finally, it is necessary to approach the findings with some caution because of the limitations of the current study. First of all, it is important to bear in mind the possible bias in the responses. Another source of limitation is about the sample size. With a small sample size like the one in this study, caution must be applied as the findings may not necessarily be generalizable to the other EFL settings. Additional uncertainty also arises from the premise that findings may be influenced by extraneous variables such as abroad experience, years of study in English or parental issues. Notwithstanding its limitations, this study still contributes to the growing body of research seeking to increase our overall understanding of the relationship between the ideal L2 self and WTC constructs.

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The Conflict of Interest Statement

In line with the statement of Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), I hereby declare that we had no conflicting interests regarding any parties of this study.

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