Reconceptualizing the language motivation of Timorese ELLs in the Philippines

Edward Jay Mansarate Quinto
ejmquinto@mapua.edu.ph
Mapúa Institute of Technology
Manila, The Philippines

John Christopher Dimasaka Castillo
jcdcastillo@mapua.edu.ph
Mapúa Institute of Technology
Manila, The Philippines

ABSTRACT

Second language (henceforth L2) motivation has been traditionally studied from the lens of integrative motivation. However, this framework presents problems in that it is limiting and lacks insights from emerging cognitive motivational research. This paper investigated the L2 motivation of Timorese English language learners (henceforth ELLs) using Dörnyei's (2009) L2 Motivational Self System and Markus and Nurius's (1986) possible-selves theory. Ten Timorese ELLs studying in a school of higher learning in the Philippines participated in a free writing task and a follow-up focus group discussion. These activities aimed to examine the content and functions of the students' two most important types of possible selves: 'ideal L2 self' and 'ought-to L2 self.' The results revealed that the students' 'ideal L2 self' coincides with the original theoretical construct, which includes a promotion-focused function for studying English, i.e., to achieve personal goals and to communicate with other people. Interestingly, however, the present study corroborated Chen's (2012) findings in the Taiwanese context that the 'ought-to L2 self' is not simply prevention-focused, but a mixture of prevention- and promotion-focused functions of learning English. The findings pointed to necessary research, curriculum design and pedagogical implications, which are discussed as this paper closes.

Keywords: language learning motivation; Timorese ELLs; Possible Selves; 'ideal L2 self'; 'ought-to L2 self'

INTRODUCTION

Language learning motivation has been traditionally viewed as the integration of language learners with others (Gardner, 1985). Integrativeness or integrative motivation in learning a second language (henceforth L2) was first introduced by Gardner and Lambert (1959). The extant literature on language learning motivation would suggest that a considerable body of work along this line focused on identifying various groups of learners in various levels and contexts according to whether their L2 motivation was instrumental (Al-Haq, 2000; Al-Tamimi & Shuib, 2009; Hohenthal, 2003; Lai, 2005, 2009; Majumder, 2005; Shirbagi, 2010; Ofori &Albakry, 2012; Quinto, 2015), i.e., language learning is utilitarian in nature and language is acquired as a linguistic tool and not as an instrument of cultural integration (Kachru, 1992); or integrative (Benson, 1991; El-Dash & Busnardo, 2001; Hogan-Brun & Ramoniene, 2004, 2005), i.e., language learning towards linguistic cultural integration with a specific group of speakers (Prator, 1968 in Kachru, 1992).

However, during the last 30 years, there has been a growing concern with the theoretical content of the integrativeness concept, because of two reasons succinctly described in Dörnyei (2009): first, it lacked insights into its connection with emerging cognitive motivational concepts such as goal theories and self-determination theory and, second, the term 'integrative' was rather limiting. Interestingly, around the same time when the theoretical foundation of the integrativeness concept was being questioned, the notion of future-oriented self-guides was introduced (Markus & Nurius, 1986) and the direction of L2 motivation research shifted.

Consequently, after the introduction of Markus and Nurius' (1986) possible-selves theory, research shifted focus from one that viewed the L2 motivation as the identification of language learners' with others to one that views it as the identification of L2 learners with their future selves, as seen in the emergence of motivation studies made along lines of the possible-selves theory (Chen, 2012; Huang, Hsu & Chen, 2015; Papi & Abdollahzadeh, 2012; Sampson, 2013).

Future-oriented self-guides, or simply possible selves (henceforth PSs) representing an individual's notions of what they *might* become, what they *would like to become,* and what they are *afraid of* becoming, denote a unique dimension of the self since the focus is on future rather than current states (Carver, Reynolds & Scheier, 1994). Indeed, it is more theoretically sound to frame L2 motivation from the lens of possible selves in that these serve as 'behavioral blueprints' (Robinson & Davis, 2005, p. 5) and may also exert a motivational force (Stahan & Wilson, 2006).

In the seminal work on possible selves, Markus and Nurius (1986) contended that an individual's PSs are further divided into a number of selves related to both their potential and the future. In the context of L2 motivation research, L2 selves have been traditionally categorized according to the ideal self, the ought-to self, and the feared self.

Since the possible-selves theory was first advanced, one major breakthrough in the area of L2 motivation research had been the introduction of the L2 motivational self-system (henceforth, L2MSS) (Dörnyei, 2009) The L2MSS 'represents a major reformation of previous motivational thinking by its explicit utilization of psychological theories,' primarily the possible-selves theory, (p.9) in conceptualizing L2 motivation. It has since been a widely used theoretical framework in investigating different areas of L2 motivation (Cho, 2015; Huang, Hsu & Chen, 2015; Peng, 2015; Thompson & Vásquez, 2015; Walker, 2015).

Because of the usefulness of the L2MSS in informing teachers and researchers of English language learners' (henceforth, ELLs) L2 selves, what was previously viewed from the integrativeness lens had been reinvigorated to reflect trends in L2 motivation research. To this end, Chen (2012) not only outlined the L2MSS of Taiwanese ELLs, but also provided new insights into the content of the ELLs' ideal and ought-to selves. Needless to say, this paper was inspired by the work of Chen (2012) among Taiwanese learners and aims to reconceptualize the L2 motivation of Timorese ELLs previously investigated from the integrativeness lens (Quinto, 2015).

It is the aim of this paper to address these questions:
1. What are the contents of the possible selves of the Timorese ELLs?
2. What are the functions of the most common possible selves of the Timorese ELLs?

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This section reviews previous studies along the lines of this present paper's scope. The review begins with a quick glance at some of the initial studies that utilized the possible selves as theoretical underpinning. Then, it proceeds with a more detailed discussion of how the theory aids in understanding language learning motivation of different groups of English

language learners, by reviewing some of the studies done on language learning possible selves. Finally, the section closes with a review of two previous studies, which have specific relevance to the aims of the present study.

The possible-selves theory carries a compelling explanatory power in understanding why individuals act the way they do towards the future. Since its introduction, there had been a spate of research that utilized the notion of PSs in various areas.

The theory had been used to study various areas, including academic outcomes (Oyserman et al., 2004; Oyserman, Bybee & Terry, 2006), school persistence (Oyserman, Gant & Ager, 1995), school involvement (Oyserman, Terry & Bybee, 2002), school success and parent school involvement (Oyserman et al., 2007), teacher professional development choices (Hiver, 2013), and teacher identity development (Hamman et al., 2010).

One recurring theme among these previous studies on possible selves is the centrality of social and personal factors that gave rise to certain PSs. Hence, the content of PSs of different groups of individuals and in different contents had always been central in possible-selves research, although more recently the manner in which PSs influence the regulation of behavior (Hamman et al., 2010) became more apparent.

Similarly, the L2MSS proved useful in examining a number of issues on language learning. Among the more recent L2MSS studies include those on language-learning self, self enhancement activities, and self-perceptual change (Sampson, 2012), predictive effects of L2 self-images and social identities on their L2 learning behavior (Huang, Hsu & Chen, 2015), L2 willingness to communicate (Peng, 2015), L2 learners' motivational behaviors of persistence and effort (Cho, 2015), nature and changes in second or foreign language reading self-concepts (Walker, 2015), language learning narratives of nonnative foreign language teachers (Thomson & Vásquez, 2015), and the motivational role of possible selves in fostering language learning identities in field-specific classrooms (Macayan & Quinto, 2015).

Another recurring theme among these L2MSS studies is why and how ELLs act the way they do towards the future in learning a second or foreign language. Just like previous studies which exploited the notion of possible selves outside L2 motivation contexts, these studies on L2 motivation encompass the 'what' and the 'how' of learning a second language.

One study that has particular relation to the present study is that of Chen (2012), which made use of the L2MSS to conceptualize Taiwanese EFL learners' motivation in learning English. Based on an interview study of 26 senior high school students, the study inquired into how the L2 Motivational Self System could be applied in the Taiwanese context. It was found that the 'ideal L2 self' of the Taiwanese respondents, illustrated with empirical evidence, coincided with its theoretical construct as proposed by Dörnyei (2009), particularly in its promotional function. However, the 'ought-to L2 self' found among the student interviewees seemed to have inconsistencies with the original theoretical concept as it appeared to encompass a mixture of prevention- and promotion-focused functions in studying English.

Chen's (2012) study of the L2MSS in the Taiwanese context warranted further investigation to determine the extent to which the system applies in other contexts. In line with this, it is the aim of this paper to extend the inquiry that started in Chen (2012). In particular, the constructs of ideal and ought-to selves were explored in the context of Timorese ELLs to determine the extent of applicability of the L2MSS among these group of ELLs.

Through this, the paper also aims to shed some light into the L2 motivation of Timorese ELLs previously studied (Quinto, 2015) from the lens of Gardner and Lambert's (1959) integrative motivation. In Quinto (2015), it was revealed that learners were motivated by a favorable attitude towards English as a linguistic tool, an instrument in the achievement of personal and career goals, and a utilitarian language. Although the previous study provided

an initial basis of the phenomenon under question, it was earlier criticized that the framework it used is relatively dated, that of Gardner and Lambert (1959), and therefore warranted further investigation – one that frames L2 motivation as the identification of learners with their future selves.

The present study aimed to provide a more theoretically sound analysis of the language motivation of Timorese ELLs. The theoretical framework is discussed in detail in the succeeding section.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework on which the present study was anchored was primarily informed by Dörnyei's (2009) L2 Motivational Self System, which was built upon Markus and Nurius' (1986) possible-selves theory.

The L2MSS argues for the facilitation of conceptual shifts through the concept of possible selves by Markus and Nurius (1986). Dörnyei (2009) specifically cited two important future self-guides, which pave the way to bridging the gap between present and end states, namely *ideal self* and *ought-to self.* More importantly, the use of L2MSS as the framework of the present investigation allows for more theoretical grounding in understanding the L2 motivation of this group of ELLs, since it brings to light insights from emerging cognitive motivational concepts, particularly that of self-discrepancy theory (Higgins, 1987).

Higgins (1987) differentiated the ideal self and the ought-to self as follows. On one hand, the ideal self contains a promotion-focused function, which includes advancement, growth and accomplishments. It involves internally-driven motivation and self-regulation to achieve positive outcomes as the valued reference point. On the other hand, the ought-to self serves a prevention-focused function, which includes safety and security. It aims at avoiding undesired results through more externally-regulated duties, obligations, or necessities. Moreover, Higgins (1987) explained that the ideal self is the mere reflection of one's own future self- image, whereas the ought-to self represents the hoped for end-states others have for the individual.

Building upon Higgins' (1987) self-discrepancy theory, Dörnyei (2009) advances two important selves, which have an impact on learning a second language: the 'ideal L2 self' and the 'ought-to L2 self'. On one hand, the ideal self covers the desire to reduce the discrepancy between one's actual and ideal self. On the other hand, the ought-to self encompasses the attributes that one believes one ought to possess to meet expectations and avoid negative outcomes (Dörnyei, 2009).

The L2MSS, however, is not without any theoretical concern. For example, Chen's (2012) study among Taiwanese ELLs suggested that there seemed some inconsistency between the L2MSS and how this was applied among the participants of the study. Following up on Chen (2012), this paper investigated the content of Timorese ELLs' ideal and ought-to selves and conceptualized these against Dörnyei's (2009) original theoretical constructs. Specifically, the present study intended to qualitatively explore the PSs content and the functions of the ideal and ought-to selves of Timorese ELLs.

METHODOLOGY

The present investigation is a qualitative content study. As an exploratory study using the possible-selves theory, the qualitative tools used in the study are aimed to provide a preliminary understanding of Timorese learners' future-oriented language learning motivation. Hence, it is necessary to reveal that the researchers were particularly interested in looking for contextual information, which could explain what motivates Timorese language

learners to study the language. The researchers used a free writing activity and a focus-group discussion as data gathering tools.

The study took place in a 90-year old school of higher learning in Manila, Philippines. The school is a premiere engineering school in the Philippines and offers largely engineering, architecture and technical programs. Also, the school distinguishes itself as the only school in the Philippines that follows the 'Quarterm' system, a school year of four quarters, attracting many local and international students. One of the groups of foreign students who enrolled in the university were Timorese students from the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste who, upon their arrival in the Philippines, needed to use the English language to communicate with their classmates, professors and other school employees.

Among these students, ten (male = 5; female = 5) who were enrolled during the first quarter (July – September) of the school year 2014-2015 served as the participants in the study. Their ages ranged from 18 to 20 years at the time of data gathering. They have been in the Philippines for three months and were on their first academic year at the time of data gathering.

Initially, all ten participants took part in a free writing task. The participants were asked to write about their future-self guides. This method of data collection was particularly useful in the gathering of data because, first, it allowed the participants enough thinking time and reflection, which was necessary given that the conception of one's possible self usually requires introspection; second, it allowed them to focus on the content rather than on form, which is important because many of the participants still struggled in the use of English.

The free writing activity took place in the Filipino for Foreign Students (FIL10-1) class. Their professor in the course was a colleague of the researchers. Permission was sought prior to conducting the activity. It lasted for one hour and a half. The prompt, which encompasses important concepts embodied in the possible-selves theory, was adapted from Sampson (2012) as follows:

> Please write about your ideal life in the future after studying English. Imagine yourself in the future after everything has gone as well as it possibly could with studying English. You have worked hard and succeeded in all your goals for studying English. What are you doing and what can you do? What do you imagine yourself doing or not able to do if you did not achieve the goals you have set?

Before the free writing task, the participants were oriented as to the nature and purpose of the activity. Further, they were encouraged to right as freely as they can about the prompt. The participants were reminded that the focus was on the content and not the form of their essay. All essays were retrieved after the allotted time. Content analysis of the written data followed.

Based on the preliminary findings on the content of the essays, issues that needed further elaboration and explication from the participants served as the bases of the FGD guide generated before the focus group discussion.

In the FGD, six of ten participants in the free writing activity were chosen to participate, based on their commitment and availability during the designated FGD date. The FGD took place at the testing room of the Institute. Tokens of appreciation were given after the FGD.

After the FGD, the audiotape was transcribed. The transcript was subjected to content analysis to enrich the findings from the free writing activity and ultimately serve the purpose of unravelling the Timorese ELLs' ideal and ought-to L2 selves. The content analysis was guided by the research questions on the content and functions of possible L2 selves of Timorese ELLs, which were also the bases of the presentation and discussion of the results.

RESULTS

Based on the qualitative content analysis of the free writing and FGD data, insights into the content and functions of the Timorese ELLs ideal and ought-to L2 selves took shape. These are presented in this section, which divides the results according to the purpose of the study.

This section presents findings on the content of the Timorese ELLs' PSs first and then the functions of the ideal and ought-to L2 selves. Data in this section are coded as FW1 to FW10 for the free writing activity data and FGD 1 to FGD 6 for the focus group discussion data.

CONTENT OF TIMORESE ELLS' POSSIBLE SELVES

The qualitative content of the free writing and FGD data suggested that both the ideal and ought-to L2 selves serve what Stahan and Wilson (2006) calls motivational force of PSs. Of the two, however, the participants' 'ought-to L2 self' seemed to exert more motivational force.

As Dörnyei (2009) posited, the 'ought-to L2 self' includes information about what one thinks they ought to possess to meet expectations and avoid negative outcomes. In terms of the participants' 'ought-to L2 self', it appeared that their L2 motivation was driven by a desire to achieve some future, personal goals, as exemplified in (1) to (5).

(1) I need to learn the English because it is an international language which will **easily help me in finding a job**. (FW3)
(2) English is **helpful**. If in my future life I could speak English fluently I can do everything to **achieve my goal especially for my future job**. (FGD1)
(3) English also helps me to **apply international scholarship**. Maybe it can help to **continue my studies abroad**.(FGD3)
(4) English will **help me succeed in all my goals**.(FW5)
(5) I need to learn English so that I can **go to the different parts of the globe and be successful**. (FW8)

In excerpts (1) and (2), the participants clearly indicated that English can 'easily help' them in finding a job, which is a common theme across language motivation studies (Hohenthal, 2003; Majumder, 2005). Meanwhile, excerpts (3), (4) and (5) reflected the participants' view of English as a tool for social mobility (Lai, 2009). Whether English is learned to find a job or for upward and outward social mobility, it is important to stress that the participants' 'ought-to L2 self' drove them to achieve some personal, future-oriented goals. In addition, data suggested that the 'ought-to L2 self' was influenced by the communicative function of English as shown in (6) to (10):

(6) Knowing how to speak English helps me in **communicating with other people**. (FW6)
(7) One of the advantages in knowing English is to be able to **communicate with others**. (FW9)
(8) English language can also help to **communicate with my other friends (non-Timorese)** so we could know each other. (FW10)
(9) As we know English has **an important role in communication** so that I can be understood. (FGD2)
(10) I am a man who is really shy and if I would be able to speak English, I would probably **be good in communicating with others**. (FGD4)

The results indicated that, in terms of the'ought-to L2 self', the participants were motivated to learn English because of its usefulness in achieving some future, personal goals and, second, a recognition of its value for communication.

Meanwhile, in terms of the less underscored 'ideal L2 self', which according to Dörnyei (2009) includes the desire to reduce the discrepancy between one's actual current self and best possible future self, the Timorese ELLs' motivation was influenced by their desire to give back to their country in a number of ways. This is exemplified in (11) to (15).

(11) I will **help my brothers to speak, write and so on** free of cost so that they can also learn the language. (FW5)
(12) Through English, I can **help my country to be developed by teaching the language to the non- speakers**(FW7)
(13) If I would be successful in the English language, I would go back to my country and **share what I have learnt**. (FW8)
(14) I will **share my knowledge** to the people who didn't know how to speak English fluently, especially for the children in our country.(FGD5)
(15) In the future, I'll try my best to **share or to teach other people to speak the English** so as to help them in their future life. (FGD6)

While the ideal L2 self was indeed the less emphasized future self, interestingly, the context within which it was framed hinged on nation-building sentiments and the role that L2 proficiency plays in helping Timor Leste, which continues to build human and non-human capital since it gained independence from Indonesia in 2002.

FUNCTIONS OF TIMORESE ELLS' POSSIBLE SELVES

In the L2MSS, the 'ideal L2 self' was conceived as a promotional future self- guide. Based on the data, the ideal self of the participants also possessed this promotional function, as can be seen in (16) and (17).

(16) My ideal life in the future after studying English **could be easier than before**. (FW2)
(17) I think that if I master English, I can **enjoy a more successful life and career in the future**. (FGD6)

In (16) and (17), the promotional function of the ideal self was realized in the participants' expression of the role of English in achieving better future state. As Dörnyei (2009) suggested, the ideal self serves promotional value for speaking English. In consonance with the original construct, the participants viewed use of English important in advancement, growth and accomplishments.

On the other hand, the L2MSS posits that the 'ought-to L2 self' contains a preventional feature for learning a L2. However, based on the data, it appeared that the 'ought-to L2 self' of the Timorese ELLs possessed not only preventional function, but also the 'ideal L2 self'-related promotional function, as can be seen in (18) to (22).

(18) My failure in studying English is a good chance for me to **improve something that I failed**. (FW2)
(19) For me, **failure in studying English is normal but I will try it again** because if I quit, it is the end of my goal in life. (FW7)
(20) If I don't master English while I'm in school, I think it will be more difficult for me to work in the future, so **I need to work harder**. (FW9)

(21) It will be really unfortunate if I don't take this chance in this prestigious school to learn English better, that's why I need to make sure that I take every opportunity given to me so **I can be better in this language**. (FGD3)

(22) **I will just try and try again** until I become good in speaking English. (FGD6)

Excerpts (18) to (22) suggested that the 'ought-to L2 self' of the participants had a mixture of prevention- and promotion-focused functions in learning English. In these excerpts, the participants manifested their desire to overcome failure, which in relation to Dörnyei (2009) is preventive in nature. However, the Timorese ELLs' view to achieve a goal or an accomplishment after overcoming failure was akin to the promotional function of the 'ideal L2 self'. Hence, the 'ought-to L2 self' seemed to be a combination of prevention- and promotion-focused functions of learning English among these Timorese ELLs like what Chen (2012) explained in the Taiwanese context.

DISCUSSION

This paper aimed to reconceptualize the language learning motivation of Timorese ELLs within the more theoretically sound framework of L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2009) and possible-selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986). The results of the study are discussed in relation to four related issues.

First, the results extended findings of a previous study on Timorese ELLs' L2 motivation (Quinto, 2015). It found some similar social and personal factors, which drove ELLs to study the language. Specifically, these factors included L2 as a vehicle for communication, a global/international status marker, and an important language of business and workplace. These factors primarily reflected the Timorese ELLs ideal and ought-to L2 selves.

Second, the paper addressed the need to reconceptualize L2 motivation in the light of the changes and trends in cognitive motivational research. For this reason, the paper utilized the widely used framework of L2MSS advanced by Dornyeir (2009) to throw some light into the content and functions of the Timorese ELLs' ideal and ought-to L2 selves. Although there had been a recent attempt to understand the nature of Timorese ELL's L2 motivation (Quinto, 2015), this study utilized a more current framework of L2MSS and possible selves, compared with the integrative motivation framework (Gardner & Lambert, 1959) that is not only dated but also rather limiting and lacks necessary insights from trends in cognitive motivational research (Dörnyei, 2009).

Third, the paper found that the participants' possible selves exhibited Dörnyei's (2009) notions of 'ideal L2 self' and 'ought-to L2 self'. However, the 'ought-to L2 self' emerged as the more dominant future self-guide. Particularly, the 'ought-to L2 self' revolved around the instrumentality of learning English in achieving personal goals and communicating with others. Also, the participants' 'ideal L2 self' was less dominant and was focused on the desire to give back to their country and others using English. These findings point to the compatibility of L2MSS in studying L2 motivation of Timorese ELLs. Caution, however, has to be exercised in using the framework, especially because of a final and important finding in relation to L2MSS and this group of ELLs.

Findings corroborated Chen's (2012) results on the conception of the 'ought-to L2 self'. Just as Chen (2012) found that the 'ideal L2 self' is promotion focused and the 'ought-to self' is a mixture of prevention- and promotion- focused functions in studying English, the Timorese ELLs' 'ought-to L2 self' seemed to warrant further rethinking given some inconsistency with Dörnyei's (2009) original construct of the 'ought-to L2 self' among this specific group of ELLs. While the findings of this study shed some light on issues

surrounding L2 motivation and Timorese ELLs, it had also encouraged more questions that need to be addressed empirically especially because of the methodological limitations, so that broader understanding of Timorese ELLs L2 motivation will soon be revealed.

CONCLUSION

The present study added to the understanding of a well-researched phenomenon, language learning motivation, using a theoretical framework that is becoming more common in the literature of cognitive motivational research.

Based on the results, it was found that, among the Timorese participants, both 'ideal' and 'ought-to selves' were potent future self-guides, which drove the participants to study English. Although it was found that the 'ought-to L2 self' was the more dominant future self-guide, several personal and social factors explaining language learning possible selves emerged.

Findings indicated that the dated framework of integrative motivation falls short of accounting for the nature of L2 motivation of the Timorese ELLs given that the former framework already lacks insights taken from emerging trends in L2 motivation research. However, as an initial attempt to explicate Timorese ELLs' L2 motivation, the present study was limited only to investigating the content and functions of the participants' ideal and ought-to L2 selves.

Based on the findings, implications for both curriculum design and language pedagogy may prove practical and useful in the attempt to close the gap between motivation research, theory, and practice.

In terms of curriculum design, language planners may benefit from some of the insights presented in this paper. Language motivation, being an essential element of any successful language teaching and learning program, must always have a place in the design of language learning objectives, programs, and activities. Hence, what language planners and curriculum designers know and apply in the design of program and activities must be constantly updated to encompass trends and issues in cognitive motivational research. While the possible-selves theory is indeed just one of the many emerging trends in the area of motivation research, it could provide stakeholders some inputs in enriching language learning curricula with insights about how future selves of language learners explain why learners act the way they do in the present towards the future. This is one strength of the possible-selves theory: although it is about the future-oriented identities, it considers the inextricable connection between the present and future selves. Programs and activities, which do not only foster but also challenge these language learning self-guides, must be incorporated in the language curricula. Fostering resilient possible selves, those which stand the test of challenge especially among learners who struggle in English language learning, could empower second and foreign language learners.

In terms of pedagogical implications, how the L2MSS was developed could inform teachers of English for students of other languages as to how L2 motivation is conceived in language teaching. Teachers should not rest on convenient options in understanding students' L2 motivation. The L2MSS is a L2 motivation framework, which took shape because of the need to incorporate insights from cognitive motivational research. Language teachers could exploit available research results and insights from other tangent areas to better understand their students' language learning motivation. Indeed, if a teachers' view of L2 motivation is still either integrative or instrumental, this is limiting. Teachers must reconceptualize L2 motivation, because what they think motivates their students might not actually do so. Both the L2MSS and possible-selves theory are good starting points, as they address not only the

'why,' but also the 'how' of language learning using current and sound theoretical underpinnings.

Through the use of this theory, and probably other emerging theories in cognitive motivational research, language teachers can close the gap between theory and practice, which had traditionally been one of the criticisms of language motivation research. The application of emerging research trends in language teaching could provide the language teacher with rich insights about what makes language learners want and act towards learning the English language. In this case, since 'ideal' and 'ought-to possible selves' had been found to be both potent and unique in the Timorese context, language teachers could use these information in the design of lessons and choice of activity. Particular attention has to be paid on how lessons and activities foster these potent and unique future selves that language learners claim.

REFERENCES

Al-Haq, F. A. A. (2000). Changes in the Attitudes of Jordanian University Students to the Hebrew Language. *Journal of Sociolinguistics. 4*(2), 263-273.

Al-Tamimi, A., & Shuib, M. (2009). Motivation and Attitudes towards Learning English: A Study of Petroleum Engineering Undergraduates at Hadhramout University of Sciences and Technology. *GEMA Online® Journal of Language Studies. 9*(2), 29-55.

Benson, M. J. (1991). Attitudes and Motivation toward English: A Survey of Japanese Freshmen. *RELC Journal. 22*(1), 34-48.

Carver, C.C., Reynolds, S.L., & Scheier, M.F. (1994). The Possible Selves of Optimists and Pessimists. *Journal of Research in Personality. 28,* 133-141.

Chen, S.A. (2012). Motivation and Possible Selves: An Interview Study of Taiwanese EFL Learners. *Language Education in Asia. 3*(1), 50-59. http://dx.doi.org/10.5746/LEu/12/V3/l1/A05/Chen

Cho, M. (2015). The Effects of Working Possible Selves on Second Language Performance. *Reading and Writing. 28*(8), 1099-1118.

Dörnyei, Z. (2009). The L2 motivational self system. In Z. Dörnyei, & E. Ushioda (Eds.). *Motivation, Language Identity and the L2 Self* (pp. 9-42). Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters.

El-Dash, L. G., & Busnardo, J. (2001).Brazilian Attitudes toward English: Dimensions of Status and Solidarity. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics. 11*(1), 57-74.

Gardner, R. C. (1985) *Social Psychology and Second Language Learning: The Role of Attitudes and Motivation.* London: Edward Arnold.

Gardner, R.C., & Lambert, W. E. (1959) Motivational Variables in Second Language Acquisition. *Canadian Journal of Psychology. 13*, 266-272.

Higgins, E.T. (1987). Self-discrepancy: A Theory Relating Self and Affect. *Psychological Review. 94*(3), 319-340. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.41.9.954

Hiver, P. (2013). The Interplay of Possible Teacher Selves in Professional Development Choices. *Language Teaching Research. 17*(2), 210-227.

Hogan-Brun, G., & Ramoniene, M. (2004). Changing Levels of Bilingualism across the Baltic. *The International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism. 7*(1), 62-77.

Hogan-Brun, G., & Ramoniene, M. (2005). Perspectives on Language Attitudes and Use in Lithuania's Multilingual Setting. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development. 26*(5), 425-441.

Hohenthal, A. (2003). English in India: Loyalty and Attitudes. *Language in India. 3,* 1-107.

Huang, H., Hsu, C., & Chen, S. (2015). Identification with Social Role Obligations, Possible Selves, and L2 Motivation in Foreign Language Learning. *System. 51*, 28-38.

Kachru, B.B. (1992). Models for non-native Englishes. In B.B. Kachru (Ed.), *The other Tongue: English across Cultures* (pp. 48-73). Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Lai, M. L. (2005). Language Attitudes of the First Postcolonial Generation in Hong Kong Secondary Schools. *Language in Society. 34*(3), 363-388.

Lai, M.L. (2009). I love Cantonese but I want English-A Qualitative Account of Hong Kong Students' Language Attitudes. *The Asia Pacific Education Research. 18*(1), 79- 92.

Macayan, J. V., & Quinto, E. J. M. (2015). *Fortifying identities in the engineering classroom: The motivational role of possible selves.* Proceedings from the International Conference on Engineering Teaching and Learning Innovation ICEE-PHIL2015. Manila, PH: PATE.

Majumder, S. (2005). Language attitude of the Oriya Migrant Population in Kolkata. *Language in India. 5,* 1-16.

Markus, H., & Nurius, P. (1986). Possible Selves. *American Psychologist. 41*(9), 954-969.

Ofori, D.M., & Albakry, M. (2012). I Own this Language that Everybody Speaks – Ghanaians' Attitude toward the English Language. *English World-Wide. 33*(2), 165-184.

Oyserman, D. (2007). Social identity and self-regulation. In A. W. Kruglanski, & E.T. Higgins (Eds.), *Social Psychology: Handbook of Basic Principles* (2nd ed., pp. 432e453) New York: Guilford Press.

Oyserman, D., Bybee, D., Terry, K., & Hart-Johnson, T. (2004). Possible Selves as Roadmaps. *Journal of Research in Personality. 38*, 130-149.

Oyserman, D., Bybee, D., & Terry, K. (2006). Possible Selves and Academic Outcomes: How and When Possible Selves Impel Action. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology. 91*, 188-204.

Oyserman, D., Gant, L., & Ager, J. (1995). A Socially Contextualize Model of African-American Identity: Possible Selves and School Persistence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology. 69,* 1216–1232.

Oyserman, D., Terry, K., & Bybee, D. (2002). A Possible Selves Intervention to Enhance School Involvement. *Journal of Adolescence. 24,* 313-326.

Papi,M., & Abdollahzadeh, E. (2012). Teacher Motivational Practice, Student Motivation, and Possible L2 Selves: An Examination in the Iranian EFL Context. *Language Learning. 62*(2), 571-594.

Peng, J. (2015). L2 Motivational Self System, Attitudes, and Affect as Predictors of L2 WTC: An Imagined Community perspective. *Asia-Pacific Education Researcher. 24*(2), 433-443.

Quinto, E. J. M. (2015). Attitude and Motivation Toward a Working Language: Case of East Timorese Students in the Philippines. *3L: Language Linguistics Literature®, Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies. 21*(1), 1-12.

Robinson, B.S., & Davis, K.L. (2001). *The occupational possible selves of low-income women.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, San Francisco, CA.

Sampson, R. (2012). The Language-learning Self, Self-enhancement Activities and Self Perceptual Change. *Language Teaching Research. 16*(3), 317-335.

Shirbagi, N. (2010). An Exploration of Undergraduate Students' Motivation and Attitudes toward English Language Acquisition. *Journal of Behavioural Sciences. 20*(2), 1-14.

Stahan, E. J., & Wilson, A. E. (2006). Temporal comparisons, identity, and motivation: the relation between past, present, and future selves. In C. Dunkel, & J. Kerpelman

(Eds.). *Possible Selves: Theory, Research and Applications* (pp. 1-15). New York: Nova Science Publishers, Inc.

Thompson, A. S., & Vásquez, C. (2015). Exploring Motivational Profiles through Language Learning Narratives. *Modern Language Journal. 99*(1), 158-174.

Walker, C. (2015). A Study of Self-concept in Reading in a Second or Foreign Language in an Academic Context. *System. 49*, 73-85.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Edward Jay M. Quinto is Assistant professor of English, educational technology, and research at Mapúa Institute of Technology, Manila, Philippines. He currently writes his dissertation for the degree PhD Applied Linguistics at De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines. He is vice president of the Speech Communication Organization of the Philippines.

John Christopher D. Castillo is Assistant professor of psychology at Mapúa Institute of Technology, Manila, Philippines. He currently pursues PhD in Educational Psychology major in Human Learning and Development at De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines.