The Relationship between Learning Experiences, Selves, and Motivated Learning Behavior in Iranian EFL Learners

Jaberi, Reihaneh

Mansour Koosha: استاد راهنمای

Akbar Afghari: استاد مشاور

پژوهشی

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This thesis attempts to reinterpret language learning motivation through applying the new theory termed as the L2 Motivational Self System by Dörnyei (2005, 2009). The overriding aim of this thesis was to empirically examine if three main components of the mentioned theory, the ideal L2 self, the ought-to L2 self, and the L2 learning experiences, are related to the motivated learning behavior among Iranian EFL learners. The subjects were 150 EFL learners studying at Pooyesh and Gooyesh English Language Teaching Centers, ranging from 15-30 years of age. They were divided into elementary and advanced-level groups which were determined by an OPT (Oxford Placement Test). From these, 82 elementary-level and 60 advanced-level learners received a five-point scale Likert-type questionnaire designed by Taguchi et al. (2009), as the main quantitative instrument of the study. The qualitative data came from a set of interviews with 4 elementary-level and 4 advanced-level students, based on the latent variables of the 3 investigated components. The principal statistical procedures used for analyses of the quantitative and qualitative data were Correlation and Content Analyses respectively. Analysis of the achieved data provided convincing support for four claims. First, the findings confirmed that the Dörnyei’s (2005, 2009) L2 Motivational Self System can be validated in the Iranian context. Second, all 3 components had a significant relation with motivated learning behavior in both groups, except for the ought-to L2 self in case of the advanced learners. Third, the research found that among the three dependent variables, the L2 learning experiences had the most significant relationship with L2 motivation than the other
two. Finally, it was shown that the L2 learning experiences and the ought-to L2 self were considerably higher for elementary students, whereas the ideal L2 self was the same for both groups. It can be implied that although all three components are related to motivated learning behavior in both groups, teachers must preferably start attending them from the primary levels. Keywords: Ideal L2 self, Ought-to L2 self, L2 learning experiences, Motivated learning behavior, Iranian EFL learner