Ideal L2 Self, Ought-to L2 Self, and EFL Learners' L2 Functional Use

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Abstract

Despite the well-established importance and effectiveness of pragmatic instruction in expediting ESL and EFL learners' pragmatic development as frequently corroborated by many scholars, the cognitive and psychological dimensions of learners in pragmatic learning and the way those might impact their pragmatic learning has so far received insufficient attention. Therefore, the present study has made every possible effort to delve into the possible impact of ideal L2 self, and ought-to L2 self on EFL Learners' L2 functional use. Fifty-two Iranian English students took part in this research project. First, the two questionnaires (i.e. ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self) adopted from Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010) were distributed among the participants. Moreover, the participants went through a six-week instructional period and received pragmatic instruction at the end of their regular class hour for thirty minutes. Finally, all the participants were required to complete two discourse completion tests containing eight scenarios borrowed from both Schauer's (2009), and Jalilifar's

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(2009) as pretest and posttest. This would enable the researchers to as-sess the participants' pre- and post-instructional pragmatic knowledge. Descriptive statistics and independent samples t-tests were run to ana-lyze the data. The findings indicate that high ideal L2 self group signifi-cantly outperformed the high ought-to L2 self group with regard to their pragmatic performances on discourse completion tests. The study further implies that factors such as the individuals' ideal L2 self can be regarded as determining and pivotal when it comes to the amount of learning that takes place in learners with either high ideal L2 self or those with high ought-to L2 self.

Introduction

Definitely among various personal factors influencing second or foreign lan-guage learning, motivation is of paramount importance. From Dörnyei's (2005) stand point, the main stimulus to commence and aid the lengthy and tiresome L2 (Second Language) learning process is motivation. He believes that language learners with the most noticeable capabilities fail to attain L2 learning long-run objectives if they lack proper incentive and motivation.

For several decades, research on L2 motivation pivoted around the integra-tive motivation concept introduced by Gardner and Lambert (1959). However, since there exists no obvious link between this theoretical concept and the new cognitive motivational concepts emerging from motivational psychology like self-determination theory in many language learning environments, the term 'integrative' didn't just strike the right note (Dörnyei, 2009).

To create a link between personality and motivational psychology and drawing upon the self-psychology insights (Boyatzis & Akrivou, 2006; Higgins, 1998), Dörnyei (2005) put forward the L2 Motivational Self System. According-ly, pupils will be highly motivated if they enjoy a clear vision for their prospect as second language users '*the ideal L2 self*'; thereby, they will try strongly to mitigate the disparity and incongruity between their prospective vision and their existing condition. The second concept of this framework is the *'ought- to L2 self'* that may bear the same results except for the fact that learners might be exposed to quite different feelings that can arise due to the obligations imposed by others or the society. Such obligations could stir and prompt the individuals to put their main focus on preventing failure rather than trying for more achievement (Lamb, 2009).

The crucial importance of pragmatic competence or functional use of the language for effective communication is a matter of record. As Trosborg (2010) puts it, effective and appropriate communication implies the knowledge of pragmatic rules as well as the knowledge of linguistic system. The necessity of pragmatic instruction in order to facilitate and speed up learners' pragmatic development has been confirmed and reiterated by many scholars (e.g., Alcón &

Martínez-Flor, 2008; Eslami-Rasekh, 2005; Kasper & Roever 2005; Kite & Tatsuki 2005; Schauer, 2009). Eslami-Rasekh (2005) maintains that teachers are responsible for providing pragmatic instruction. However, the extent to which language learners with varying degrees of ideal L2 self and ought to L2 self will benefit from pragmatic instruction is yet unclear.

Since the theoretical paradigms and underpinnings of second language Motivational Self-System have been proposed by Dörnyei (2005), quite a few investigations have been conducted to probe into the possible influence of learners' ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self on their language learning (Azarnoosh, 2014; Boyatzis & Akrivou, 2006; Dörnyei & Chan, 2013; Ueki & Takeuchi, 2013a, 2013b). Nevertheless, the extent to which the individuals' ideal L2 self or ought-to L2 self could have any possible bearing on their L2 functional use after being exposed to pragmatic instruction remains an underexplored topic which needs further attention, analysis and investigation. Hence, the present study has made every possible attempt to delve into the probable effect of ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self on EFL students' L2 functional use.

Review of Literature
Motivational Self-system

L2 motivational studies have witnessed constant developments in various phases for more than 50 years (Dörnyei & Chan, 2013). Gardner and Lambert (1959), pioneers of such research, introduced the concepts of instrumental and integrative motivation. Later, the notion of self-confidence was added to the paradigm of motivational research by Clement (1980).

The second language Motivational Self-System is the latest motivational construct introduced by Dörnyei (2005) in order to create a link between the two major manifestations of L2 motivation (Noels, 2003; Ushioda, 2001) and to apply the Possible Selves theory to the field of second language acquisition (Dörnyei & Chan, 2013). In this theory, he drew upon the Possible Selves Theory (Markus & Nurius, 1986) that refers to the "individuals' idea of what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming" in the future (p. 954), and Self-Discrepancy Theory (Higgins, 1987) which stipulates that the individuals' motivation pushes them to decrease the mismatch between their real self-state and their ideal and ought-to self-states. Second language Motivational Self-System is comprised of three fundamental elements: Ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self and second language learning experience.

Ideal L2 Self

Ideal L2 self is primarily concerned with the role of imagination in L2 learning. The role of imagination in language learning and its impact on the outcomes of learning tasks and activities have been pinpointed by several researchers (e.g., Higgins, 1998; Markus & Nurius, 1986; Markus & Ruvolo, 1989; Noels, 2003; Ushioda, 2001; Wenger, 1998). Markus and Ruvolo (1989) endorsed the effec-

tiveness of imagination and claimed that individuals' imagination of their actions may facilitate the attainment of the desired outcomes. In the same vein, Wenger (1998) construed the imagination of our goal as looking at the seed of an apple and envisioning a tree or playing a piano and having the imagination of a concert hall.

Drawing upon the findings of the psychological research of Ushioda (2001) and Noels (2003), Dörnyei (2005) described the ideal L2 self as those desirable features that L2 speakers would like to possess and endeavor to mitigate the incongruity between their genuine abilities and their ideal selves. Therefore, according to Dörnyei and Chan (2013), the L2 learners' ideal L2 self would be a well-built incentive to master a second language. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) regard learners' ideal L2 self as an 'instrumentality-promotion', if the focus of L2 learning is placed on and associated with professional or career development.

Ought-to L2 Self

Markus and Nurius (1986) defined the ought-selves as "an image of self, held by another" (p. 958). Ought-to-self, according to Higgins (1987), is the attributes, such as duty, obligation, or the responsibility that you or other people think that you have to possess. Not withstanding the similarities between the ideal and ought-to selves, he also emphasized the discrepancy between these two concepts. He stated that the ideal self leads to promotion and concerns "hopes, aspirations, advancements, growth and accomplishments," while the focus of ought-to self is on preventing and regulating, "the absence or presence of negative outcomes associated with failing to live up to various responsibilities and obligations" (p. 18). Consistent with the Higgins' definition of ought-to self, Dörnyei (2005, p. 105) defined ought-to L2 self as "the attributes that one believes one ought to possess i.e., various duties, obligations, or responsibilities in order to avoid possible negative outcomes". In sharp contrast with ideal L2 self, Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) argued that ought-to L2 self pertains to instrumental motivation with a preventative focus.

L2 Functional Use

In addition to other constituents of communicative competence such as linguistic competence, sociolinguistics, discourse and strategic competence, ESL and EFL learners are required to master the functions of language or speech acts through acquiring pragmatic competence (Cenoz, 2007). Studies have generally endorsed the teachability of inter-language pragmatics and it has been demonstrated that pragmatic instruction can both facilitate and expedite learners' pragmatic development (e.g., Alcón-Soler, 2012; Mansoorian et al. 2016; Mohammad Hosseinpur & Bagheri Nevisi, 2018; Tujuba & Davidson, 2017). They all argue that explicit and L1-based pragmatic instruction can lead to more effective pragmatic development in language learners.

Relevant Studies on L2 Pragmatic Instruction Provision

To delve into the potential impact of explicit teaching of meta-pragmatics on the mastery of speech acts, Eslami- Rasekh et al. (2004) carried out a research in which a total number of 66 Iranian EFL undergraduate students and 30 American English speakers took part in the study. A set of programmed instructional materials was used to explain the pattern rules and strategies of three speech act under the study (i.e., requesting, apologizing, and complaining). Moreover, to determine the impact of pragmatic teaching, the researchers developed and employed a multiple-choice pragmatic comprehension-check measure used as pretest and posttest. The results revealed that the participants' pragmatic comprehension significantly improved as a result. Liu (2007) examined the usefulness of explicit teaching of pragmatics in leaning and mastering the speech act of request. To this end, one hundred and eighteen Taiwanese college-level EFL learners participated in the study. To determine whether or not explicit teaching of pragmatics positively affected the learners' pragmatic competence, the researchers utilized both qualitative and quantitative data analysis approaches. Furthermore, usefulness of pragmatic instruction through inside-the-class pedagogic tasks and e-mail-based communicative tasks were compared and contrasted. A general English comprehension-check test as well as an open-ended Discourse Completion Test (DCT) were utilized as instruments. The results demonstrated that explicit teaching of pragmatics positively influenced EFL learners' pragmatic competence development. Furthermore, the results revealed that teaching pragmatics through computer-based communicative tasks can be considered a helpful pedagogic instrument.

In the same vein, Chalak and Abbasi (2015) investigated the effectiveness of explicit, implicit, and explicit-implicit models of teaching on EFL students' performances on the speech act of suggestion. To this end, 60 EFL learners attended the study and were further subdivided into three groups of 20. The first group was instructed explicitly, the second group was taught implicitly, and the third group received both implicit and explicit instruction. The three groups were instructed through pdfs and Emails to appropriately take the course. The findings of the study demonstrated that the third group, i.e., those who received both explicit and implicit instructions, outperformed the other two groups with regard to appropriate and accurate use of this speech act.

Elsewhere, Mohammad Hosseinpur and Bagheri Nevisi (2018) attempted to compare and contrast the relative effectiveness of explicit/deductive and L1-based pragmatic instruction during a ten-week instructional period. To this end, 96 Iranian EFL learners were instructed on three speech acts: request, apology, and compliment. The findings revealed that the participants in the L1-based instruction group significantly outperformed their counterparts in the explicit instruction group. The results imply that principled and judicious L1 use can serve as an effective means of teaching L2 pragmatics.

Empirical Studies on Ideal L2 Self, Ought-To L2 Self

After the proposal of second language motivational self-system, the ideal L2 self, and the ought-to L2 self, many researchers have conducted relevant studies by using the Dörnyei 's (2005) triple theory as the theoretical basis and framework (e.g., Csizer & Lukacs, 2010; Henry, 2010; Kormos et al. 2011; Magid, 2012; Papi, 2010; Ueki & Takeuchi, 2012, 2013a, 2013b). According to findings of the above-mentioned system, Dörnyei (2013) asserted that there is an explanatory strength inherent in the model, particularly in ideal L2 self, to forecast t various criteria pertinent to L2 learning. In the same vein, Papi (2010) found reverse results regarding the impacts of L2 learners' ideal L2 self and their ought-to L2 self. He maintained that the ideal L2 self alleviates learners' debilitative stress, while the ought-to L2 self makes them remarkably more stressful.

To make Dörnyei (2005)'s motivational theory more valid and reliable, Taguchi et al. (2009) implemented a research in China, Japan, and Iran with five thousand participants. They aimed at determining whether or not the ideal L2 self and integrativeness were equivalent. Three versions of a questionnaire were adapted and employed for Japanese, Chinese, and Iranian students with the same procedure in all three contexts. The findings indicated that the ideal L2 self and integrativeness for each group correlated with one another considerably. Therefore, the two variables were deemed as equated.

Examining the accuracy of the claim that the learner's mental imagery intensifies their motivation, Dörnyei and Chan (2013) carried out a study focusing on 13 to15-year-old Chinese learners who had learnt both English and Mandarin. Furthermore, the learners' ought-to L2 self was assessed to compare the enforced vision on the learners with their own self-generated ideal image. The findings were indicative of the fact that the participants' effort to master a second language and their ideal self-image correlated positively. Needless to say, with regard to ought-to L2 self, it was revealed that a positive link existed for both target languages between the learners' effort and their ought-to L2 self, however; no direct connection was observed between their ought-to self and their scores.

To delve into the link between the pupils' ideal L2 self and their overall autonomy, Ueki and Takeuchi (2013a) carried out a questionnaire-based research in which a total number of three hundred and two Japanese students participated. From among that number, one hundred and fifty-one majored in the English language and the rest majored in non-English disciplines. Assuming that students of English would have sufficient exposure and opportunities to practice English and the fact that they were supposed to study abroad, it was predicted that this group might have enjoyed a clearer second language ideal image compared to the second group. The results indicated that L2 motivation was higher in students of English than in the other group. Moreover, the ideal second language image in students learning was better than the non-English studying students. However, the first group held fewer second language self-imposed obligations compared with the second one.

Nevertheless, it has to be noted that none of the aforementioned studies have paid due attention to the fact that the L2 learners' self-imagination or the cognitive and psychological factors such as obligations, responsibilities, and various duties in their language learning might impact their inclination to learn L2 functions after being exposed to pragmatic instruction.

Despite the well-established significance and effectiveness of pragmatic instruction in expediting ESL and EFL learners' pragmatic development as frequently stated and corroborated by many researchers, the cognitive and psychological dimensions of learners in pragmatic learning and the way those might impact their pragmatic learning has not so far received sufficient attention. Therefore, the present study has made every possible effort to delve into the possible effects of ideal L2 self, and ought-to L2 self on Iranian EFL Learners' L2 functional use. To attain the above-stated objective, the researchers formulated these questions:

1. Does L2 self (ideal or ought-to) have any impact on EFL learners' L2 functional use after being exposed to pragmatic instruction?
2. Does the high 'ideal L2 self' group have any advantage over the high 'ought-to L2 self' group regarding L2 functional use?

Method
Participants

Because of the administrative challenges inherent in randomization, convenience sampling was utilized. Fifty-two English language learners (26 males and 26 females) were selected from available classes at Kish Language Institute in Tehran. To determine their language proficiency, the researchers administered the Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency (MTELP). The results of MTELP administered at the beginning of the study indicated that their overall language proficiency was intermediate. The participants' ages ranged from 14 to 38.

Instruments
Ideal L2 Self Questionnaire

To identify the participants with a successful L2 prospective image of themselves, the researchers adopted and employed a 10-item-questionnaire from Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010). The responses were to be selected from a 6-point Likert scale that ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree).

Ought-To L2 Self Questionnaire

The ought-to L2 self questionnaire was employed to determine language learners who were involved in English learning out of force and obligation to avoid the negative outcomes or, as Ueki and Takeuchi (2012) expressed, to meet the

expectations of relatives. A 10-item questionnaire was adopted from Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010) in which the responses were to be chosen on a 6-point Likert scale that varied from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree).

Discourse Completion Tests as Pretest and Posttest

Two discourse completion tests were adopted from Schauer (2009) and Jalilifar (2009) and employed to measure the participants' L2 functional use before and after the pragmatic instruction. To assess the participants' pre- and post-instructional pragmatic knowledge, the researchers used the discourse completion tests before and after the instruction. The tests consisted of eight scenarios borrowed from both Schauer and Jalilifar. The scenarios were related to the interlocutors' discrepancy regarding three elements: Speakers' power difference, social distance, and the imposition size (Taguchi, 2006).

Data Collection Procedures

The following methodological stages were completed to achieve the already-stated goals of the research project. At the outset, to determine the proficiency level of all the students and to guarantee their homogeneity, the researchers administered MTELP. First, the two above-mentioned questionnaires were distributed among the students. Next, all the students were requested to fill out a discourse completion test containing eight scenarios borrowed from both Schauer (2009), and Jalilifar (2009) as the pretest. The students were kindly requested to meticulously go through the scenarios and jot down their answers in the blank right below them. This would enable the researchers to assess the participants' pre-instructional pragmatic knowledge. The participants then went through a six-week instructional period and received pragmatic instruction at the end of their regular class hour for thirty minutes. Furthermore, they were again required to complete another discourse completion test including eight scenarios borrowed from both Schauer and Jalilifar as the posttest. The posttest resembled the pretest concerning the number of items and the situations of scenarios.

The discourse completion tests were scored based on the Taguchi's (2006) rating scale. According to this rating scale, the complete score (5) is assigned to excellent or fully appropriate expressions that are written completely or approximately without any grammatical or discourse errors. Score (4) is assignable to good statements that are mainly suitable with few grammar and discoursal errors. Score (3) is assigned to fair statements that are relatively proper and their grammatical errors don't interfere with or impede their appropriateness. Score (2) is allocated to poor expressions in which determining the appropriateness is hard because of grammar and discoursal errors. Score (1) is for very poor expressions without any speech act performance. Finally, score (0) is considered for the items that are left unanswered. The two researchers of the study scored the DCTs based on the above-mentioned rating scale adopted

from Taghuchi (2006). Cronbach 's Alpha Formula was run to ensure and estimate the inter-rater reliability of the two scorers of the DCTs. It stood at .82 which is indicative of a high inter-reliability.

Treatment

At the beginning of the instructional course during the first week, the participants were provided with brief explanations of different speech acts and language functions such as apologies, requests, and refusals along with a number of concrete and relevant examples to further elucidate and elaborate on them. The instructor made every possible attempt to highlight and emphasize the importance and necessity of both knowing and mastering L2 pragmatic knowledge and L2 functions to avoid communication breakdowns in various contexts. In the second week, the participants were familiarized with and taught how to make both formal and informal requests as indicated in these instances:

Formal Requests: *Would you mind opening the door?*
Less Formal Requests: *Can you open the door?*

During the third and fourth weeks, the participants were instructed as how to make both formal and informal requests taking into account the social status and imposition size as shown in the following examples:

Lower status (Colonel/Sergeant)   Imperatives   *Open the door, please.*

Equal status (Friends)   Informal   *Can I borrow your pen?*

Higher status (student/ professor*)*

   Low imposition   Formal   *Do you mind returning my term paper?*

   High imposition   Formal   *I was wondering if you could teach me this lesson again.*

During the fifth and sixth weeks, the participants were familiarized with external and internal request modification devices. Schauer (2009) further subclassified internal modification devices into lexical modifiers (downtoners, politeness markers, understaters, past tense modals, consultative devices, hedges, aspect, and marked modalities) and syntactic modifiers (conditional clauses, appreciative embeddings, tentative embeddings, tag questions, and negations). She also subcategorized external modifiers into alerters, preparators, grounders, disarmers, imposition minimizers, sweeteners, promises of reward, small talks, appreciators, and considerators. They were also taught how to modify their request both internally and externally through various examples.

Modification: Internal   *Do you think you could open the door?*
                External   *May I ask you a favor? Would you....?*

Data Analysis

To analyze the data, the researchers utilized the latest version of SPSS. First, an independent samples t-test was run to compare and contrast the scores gained

by the high ideal L2 self and high ought-to L2 self groups on the pretest. Second, another independent samples t-test was run to compare these two groups' gained means on the posttest as well.

Results
Testing Normality Assumption

Table 1 illustrates the descriptive statistics and indicates the scores were normally distributed. Skewness and kurtosis ratios over their standard errors were lower than +/- 1.96. Therefore, the conclusion is that the data did not display any significant deviation from a normal distribution.

Table 1.
Descriptive Statistics; Testing Normality of Data

		N	Skewness			Kurtosis		
Higher		Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Ratio	Statistic	Std. Error	Ratio
Ideal L2	Gain	42	.224	.365	.613	-1.156	.717	-1.61
Ought-to L2	Gain	10	.046	.687	.066	-.484	1.334	-.362

Comparing Higher Ideal L2 Self with Higher Ought-to L2 Self in the Pretest

The first question intended to probe into the influence of ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self on the EFL learners' performance on L2 functions after being exposed to request speech act instruction. Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics for the high ideal L2 self and high ought-to self groups on the pre-test. The findings indicated that the mean of the high ideal L2 self group on the L2 functional use pre-test (M = 11.24) is approximately equal to that of ought to L2 self group (M = 11.40).

Table 2.
Descriptive Statistics of High (Ideal and Ought-to L2 Selves) on the Pretest

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pretest	High Ideal L2 self	42	11.24	2.801	.432
	High Ought-to L2 self	10	11.40	3.921	1.240

As can be discerned from Table 3, independent-samples t-test were conducted to compare and contrast the two groups' gained means on the pretest. The results [t (50) = .152, p < .05, 95 % CI (.198, 2.30), r = .002 representing a weak effect size] demonstrated that the high ideal L2 self group enjoyed approximately the same gained mean as that of the high ought-to L2 self group.

Table 3.
Independent Samples T-test; Ideal and Ought-to L2 Selves on the Pretest

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Differ-ence	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Pretest	Equal vari-ances as-sumed	.282	.598	.152	50	.880	.162	1.067	-1.982	2.306
	Equal vari-ances not assumed			.123	11.282	.904	.162	1.313	-2.720	3.043

As it can be observed from Table 3, the results of the Levene's test (F = .282, p > .05) showed that the two groups' variances did not significantly differ from one another on the pretest.

Comparing Higher Ideal L2 Self with Higher Ought-to L2 Self in the Post-test

To find out whether the high ideal L2 self group had any advantage over the high ought-to L2 self group with regard to L2 functional use, an independent samples t-test was conducted to compare and contrast the means of the two groups. Table 4 displays the descriptive statistics for the two groups. The results revealed that the first group, i.e., the high ideal L2 self, (M = 6.04, SD = 2.82) had a higher mean than the second group, i.e., the high ought-to L2 self, (M = 3.60, SD = 2.11).

Table 4.
Descriptive Statistics of High (Ideal and Ought-to L2 Selves)

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Gain Score	High Ideal	42	6.04	2.828	.436
	High Ought-to	10	3.60	2.119	.670

Table 5 below summarizes the results of the independent-samples t-test conducted to compare and contrast the two groups' gained means on the post-test in relation to their pretest to discern how much progress they made in terms of L2 functional use. The results [t (50) = 2.51, p < .05, 95 % CI (.482, 4.31), r = .335 representing a moderate effect size] indicated that the high ideal L2 self group obtained a significantly higher mean than the high ought-to L2 self group.

Table 5.
Independent-Samples T-test; Ideal and Ought-to L2 Selves on the Posttest

| | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	1.752	.192	2.513	50	.015	2.400	.955	.482	4.318
Equal variances not assumed			3.001	17.564	.008	2.400	.800	.717	4.083

Discussion

The role of instruction, be it implicit or explicit, on different aspects of language learning, mainly L2 functional use, is incontrovertible. But the mainspring of the current research was to corroborate the individuals' cognitive role like their ideal L2 self in the development of their learning process.

The result of this study was a testimony of the fact that even the same instruction may not have the same consequences amongst the EFL learners. One of the factors that can be effective in the enhancement of the learning is the learners' positive prospective imagination or their ideal L2 self. On the contrary, learners benefited less from pragmatic instruction when L2 learning bore little resemblance to their own wishes or desires and they were merely learning English language to shun potential negative outcomes (Dörnyei & Chan, 2013).

One possible explanation for the superiority of the ideal L2 self group over the ought-to L2 self group with regard to their L2 functional use stems from the fact that students with a higher ideal L2 self might have held a better self-image of themselves in L2. This positive and better self-image accompanied with pragmatic instruction might have positively impacted their L2 functional performances. This is in line with the observations of Moulton and Kosslyn (2009). They believed that by imagery, the likely consequences of being in a particular situation or performing a special action would be explicit and accessible. Using the conception of imagery, these authors argued that all imagery is a specific type of simulation in which individuals' mental process emulates those that would actually be operated in the simulated scenarios.

Another probable justification for the more successful pragmatic performance on the part of the ideal L2 self group over the ought-to L2 self can be presented considering the fact that such learners were more intrinsically-motivated than the other group and this might have had a positive bearing on their L2 functional use. This is congruent with the self-determination theory proposed by Deci and Ryan (2004) and the study of Boyatzis and Akrivou

(2006). They argued that the ideal self that is the core mechanism for intrinsic motivation and self-regulation can lead to intentional change.

Yet another likely argument that can be put forward to account for the advantage of the ideal L2 self group over the ought to L2 self group is that pupils with higher ideal L2 self might have held a more positive attitude toward learning L2 functions, the teacher, the learning process, and their own peers. This might have facilitated the learning process and mitigated or removed the ambiguities involved in such ways that the inherent complexities of learning L2 functions are lessened to a considerable degree. This is in accordance with Dörnyei's (2009) statement that "the more positive our disposition toward these L2 speakers, the more attractive our idealized L2 self; or, to turn this equation around, it is difficult to imagine that we can have a vivid and attractive ideal L2 self if the L2 is spoken by a community that we despise" (p. 24). Furthermore, it is in line with the research conducted by Csizer and Lukacs (2010) who investigated the effect of language learners' attitude in their successful language learning.

Yet, the findings of the present study can be ascribed to the fact that the pupils with higher ideal L2 self might have enjoyed a higher self-confidence and self-esteem as they most typically deal with inherent challenges in the most appropriate way according to their self-held ideals that are less likely to be compromised. This is in agreement with what Brown (2000) has proposed, in that self-esteem can be viewed as the most pervading dimension of human behavior. Valentine et al. (2004) also believed that self-esteem and self-confidence are highly correlated with each other and emphasize the individual's beliefs and abilities as a person.

In the same vein, the inferior performance of the ought-to L2 self-group in comparison with the ideal L2 self-group can be ascribed to the fact that they were most probably inundated with obligations, necessities and requirements to study L2. This might have adversely impacted their L2 functional performance as well (Dörnyei, 2009). Therefore, under such situations, the learners' ought-to L2 selves may serve a preventative function that can result in demotivation (MacIntyre et al., 2009).

Dörnyei (2005, 2009) attributed the learners' ought-to L2 self to extrinsic motivation with a focus on prevention that, in many linguistic settings, lacks enough revitalizing force to create a genuine motivated behavior. In such situations, the learners can be amotivated so that they neither engage in the activity, nor do it passively (Dörnyei, 2009). Relatively, the second probable reason behind the unsuccessful L2 functional performances of the ought-to L2 self-group compared to the ideal L2 self-group may be that they were probably more extrinsically-motivated. This instrumental outlook towards learning L2 function might have adversely affected their L2 functional use.

The third possible justification for the less successful L2 functional performance of the ought-to L2 self group can be their negative views and attitudes towards the L2 teacher, their peers, the L2 functional learning process and the

learning milieu. This is in line with the third constituent of second language motivational system, that is, the second language learning experience. This component is concerned with the motivation that is pertinent to the learning environment, the educator, the curriculum, one's peers, and the experience of accomplishment and success (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009). Furthermore, the results of previous research (e.g. Csizer & Kormos, 2009; Magid, 2012; Papi, 2010; Papi & Teimouri, 2012) have confirmed that the L2 learners' favorable attitude toward the learning process does have a positive influence on the successful attainment of the learning objectives.

Also, the inferior L2 functional performance of the ought-to L2 self-group compared with the ideal L2 self-group can spring from the many dos and don'ts that are involved in learning L2 functions, which make learners less inclined and less intrinsically-motivated to learn. In other words, such dos and don'ts can be another possible justification for the kind of motivation that is not different from active resistance demonstrated by some learners when they think that some external authority want to impose an obligation upon them. Under such circumstances, instead of engaging in the activity, they rather act passively. Accordingly, they initiate an activity without being interested in it, looking for a way to avoid doing it (Dörnyei, 2009). Dornyei and Chan (2013) asserted that some studies have discovered a marginal and insignificant correlation between the ought-to L2 self and motivated L2 behavior (Csizer & Kormos, 2009; Csizer & Luk'acs, 2010), and Kim (2009), for example, suggested that pupils will have to optimally and autonomously build in and establish their self-held and self-imposed obligations to properly bring to bear the motivational impact.

One last probable explanation that can be put forward is mainly concerned with language learners' identity formation in L2 and whether they feel at ease with that newly-formed identity in L2. In this respect, Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) believed that foreign language learning is associated with one's identity and personal core; therefore, it is beyond learning just some communicative code, and thus cannot be treated the same as other academic subjects. As with the ideal L2 self-group, seemingly, they have related much better to this new identity and have successfully bridged the gap between their already-established L1 identity and their newly-shaped one in L2. This is quite the reverse in the case of the ought-to L2 self-learners, as they are most probably engaged in dos and don'ts of learning L2 functions and fail to adapt themselves to a new identity in L2. In other words, there may be a mismatch between their personal identity and the L2 identity. As Csizer and Kormos (2009) expressed, language and identity are hardly separable and by learning a novel language, one's self would undergo a change.

Conclusion

This study was an examination of two components of Dörnyei's motivational self-system. Fundamentally, it was concerned with the impact of EFL learners' ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self on their pragmatic gain in general, and their

learning of requests in particular, after being exposed to a 6-week instructional period. Consistent with the previous research relevant to second language motivational self-system (e.g., Al-Shehri, 2009; Dörnyei, 2013; Papi, 2010; Ueki & Takeuchi, 2013), the results of this study were another confirmation to the power of the L2 learners' ideal L2 self as a predictor of their success. The findings of the research revealed that, although the impact of explicit teaching on L2 pragmatic mastery has been advocated by many researchers (e.g., Alcon-Soler, 2008; Ishihara & Cohen, 2010), factors such as the individuals' ideal L2 self should be regarded as determining and pivotal when it comes to the amount of learning that takes place in learners with either a high ideal L2 self or those with a high ought-to L2 self.

Realizing the impact of the EFL learners' ideal or ought-to L2 self on their L2 functional use is beneficial for teachers and practitioners. Language learners, teachers, and practitioners would gain insights into the way pragmatic and communicative tasks and activities can be designed to accommodate EFL learners' ideal and ought-to L2 self. Moreover, it is anticipated that the way pragmatic competence or functional L2 use is impacted by learners' ideal or ought-to L2 self will shed more light on the future enhancement and utilization of pragmatic tasks in classroom environments. Therefore, both teachers and learners will be more cognizant of the way such links can be established or even promoted.

Undoubtedly, this study suffers from some inherent limitations. The fact that EFL learners' ideal second language image of themselves and their self-imposed obligations in L2 self might have been affected by the way the participants in both groups had either underrated or overrated themselves on the questionnaire items can be regarded as a major limitation of the study. As Dörnyei (2014) maintained, learners' motivation is a dynamic or nonlinear system in which the behavioral outcomes rely on the way the overall relevant factors work together. Therefore, in this system, a huge amount of input can often leave very little or no impact on some learners, whereas diminutive input can result in something like an explosion (Dörnyei, 2014). Accordingly, the participants' overall feeling and temper at the time of the pretest, the posttest and even during the instruction might have influenced the final outcomes of the study as well. Another limitation that can be referred to is the fact that EFL learners' pragmatic knowledge was delimited to their performances in terms of the speech act of request on the eight scenarios borrowed from Schauer (2009), and Jalilifar (2009) due to time constraints and feasibility problems inherent in a quasi-experimental research. Although the inclusion of all diverse sets of cultural, social, and educational factors will certainly add to the richness and enhancement of pragmatic understanding in general and mastering L2 function in particular, the feasibility and practicality issues like time and manpower made the task at hand so challenging and daunting to be actualized.

The present study has focused on the way L2 learners' prospective imagination or ideal second language image of themselves and their second language self-imposed obligations could be influenced by pragmatic instruction. In other words, the study highlights how L2 functions can be performed by learners

with a high ideal L2 self or a high ought-to L2 self . Future studies will have to be done to examine the effect of the third element of the model, i.e., the second language learning experience, on EFL learners' pragmatic gains since the current research took into account only the first two components.

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