



Castledown

 OPEN ACCESS

Australian Journal of Applied Linguistics

ISSN 2209-0959

<https://journals.castledown-publishers.com/ajal/>

Australian Journal of Applied Linguistics, 2 (1), 1-16 (2019)
<https://dx.doi.org/10.29140/ajal.v2n1.113>

L2 Motivation in ESP and EGP Courses: An Investigation of L2 Motivational Selves Among Learners of English in Saudi Arabia



Aser Altalib ^{a,b}

^a *Australian National University, Australia*

^b *Jouf University, Saudi Arabia*

Email: aaltalib@ju.edu.sa

Abstract

This paper investigates the L2 motivation of Saudi university students in ESP (English for Specific Purposes) and EGP (English for General Purposes) courses. One of the common arguments about ESP courses suggests that they are more likely to generate higher levels of motivation than other types of English courses (i.e., EGP courses). Some scholars (e.g., Basturkmen, 2010; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987) hold this view, asserting that ESP courses are more relevant to learners' needs and interests, which increases their motivation. However, none of these claims are based on empirical research; the present study aims to fill this gap. Using Dörnyei's (2005, 2009) L2 Motivational Self System, 4,043 students enrolled in ESP and EGP courses at four Saudi universities completed an online survey. The analysis showed a significant relationship between learners' motivation and their attended English course. The ESP group had higher ideal L2 selves and more positive attitudes towards the L2 learning experience than the EGP group, whereas the ought-to L2 selves were not significantly different. In addition, a multiple regression model was designed, and indicated that the two self-constructs had an impact on participants' L2 achievements, either positively or negatively.

Keywords: L2 motivational self system; Ideal L2 self; Ought-to L2 self; ESP; EGP; Saudi university students

Introduction

There is no doubt that ESP courses have played, and are still playing, a crucial role in English language teaching. Indeed, ESP courses have been an important element of English language teaching since the 1960s (Paltridge & Starfield, 2013). In an attempt to define ESP, Hutchinson and Waters (1987)

Copyright: © 2019 Aser Altalib. This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

Data Availability Statement: All relevant data are within this paper.

mention that ESP “must be seen as an approach not as a product” (p. 19). In other words, ESP is not a type of teaching methodology nor a teaching material. Therefore, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) assert that ESP is one of the approaches that is related to language learning and is designed and based on the needs and interests of L2 learners. This means that the foundation of such approaches is related to why learners need the language. Thus, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) came up with a general definition of ESP, stating that ESP “is an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and methods are based on the learner’s reason for learning” (p. 19). Similarly, Dudley-Evans (1998) asserts that ESP is mainly concerned with learners’ needs and reasons for learning a language.

This, however, raises a question: What makes ESP courses different from EGP courses? As mentioned above, ESP courses focus on the needs of a group of learners in distinct disciplines. This means that ESP courses are narrower in focus than EGP courses are. The content of ESP courses is concerned with the demands of a particular discipline or department (Hyland, 2006). One example of the items covered in the content of a course targeting health science majors – and particularly learners of English specialising in nursing – is provided by Basturkmen (2010), who notes that “course content might involve items such as medical terminology, patterns of nurse–patient interaction, written genres such as patient records, items that are not in the communicative realm of those outside nursing fields” (p. 8). Teachers in EGP courses, by contrast, cover course contents and activities that are common to all disciplines (Hyland, 2006). In EGP, materials may be more general when it comes to topics and themes. As a result, the teaching materials in EGP courses are usually selected not for the well-defined needs of all students but for more general pedagogical and educational values (Long & Crookes, 1992).

In terms of the effectiveness of ESP courses, Strevens (1988) identifies some of the advantages of ESP courses that affect learners in many different ways. One, for example, is that ESP courses do not waste learners’ time nor effort because ESP courses are based on learners’ needs and are relevant to their interests and goals. In addition, Strevens (1988) adds that ESP courses are more cost-effective than EGP courses. In this regard, Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) claim that due to these advantages, “ESP teaching is more motivating for learners than General English” (p. 10). They also add that “the focused nature of the teaching, its relevance and cost-effectiveness ensure that its aims are widely accepted by learners” (p. 10). This may mean that such courses are far more efficient for learners than those in general courses, not only because they seek to address specific needs (e.g. a group of first-year medical students studying English for medical purposes), but also because they are more cost-effective than studying a course that covers more general topics and themes. Furthermore, they conclude that “the main conclusion is that motivation on ESP has a profound effect on the question of how specific the course is” (p. 10). Similarly, Basturkmen (2010) in her book concludes that “It can be argued that because ESP courses cater to students’ interests and needs, they are more likely to engender high levels of motivation. It can be assumed that students will be more interested in topics and texts related to their work or study areas.” (p. 11).

Despite the fact that Dudley-Evans and St John (1998), as well as Basturkmen (2010), did not support their claims with any empirical studies that examine learners’ motivation in ESP, one could only assume that the relevance of any language course to learners’ needs might impact their motivation. Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) argue this point, as do Hutchinson and Waters (1987). They claim that “the clear relevance of the English course to their needs would improve the learners’ motivation and thereby make learning better and faster” (p. 8). Again, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) did not elaborate on learners’ motivations nor the relevance of course, nor did they refer to any studies that are based on empirical data to support such claims. As a result, these claims raise several questions: Do ESP learners show different levels or types of motivation than those who study English for a general purpose? And do learners who study English for general purposes show similar motivations as those of ESP learners – or are their motivations different than those of ESP learners?

Literature Review

There is no doubt that motivation is a fundamental determinant of success that impacts a student's ability to learn a language (Dörnyei, 1998; Gardner, 2010; Oxford & Shearin, 1994). Learners with high levels of motivation and a positive attitude regarding the learning environment are often willing to communicate and thus more effectively and successfully learn the language. However, to bridge the gap between the previous conceptualisations of motivation and the actual learning contexts, Dörnyei (2005, 2009) proposed a new framework known as the L2 motivational self system. The uniqueness of this system lies in shifting the focus of motivation to the internal domain of the self-concept of L2 learners. The foundation of the L2 motivational self system was based on major empirical research in the field of psychology (e.g., theories of possible selves and self-discrepancy) and language learning motivation (see Dörnyei, 2009, p. 25).

Based on the above theories and on empirical research, Dörnyei (2005, 2009) proposed his L2 motivational self system model. According to Dörnyei (2009), the model consists of three components that are the primary sources of L2 motivation: the ideal L2 self, the ought-to L2 self and the L2 learning experience.

The ideal L2 self is one's internal vision of an ideal self-image of an L2 user that one would like to become with regard to L2 learning. Dörnyei (2009) states that this component shares some features of the classical notion of intrinsic and integrative motivation because powerful imagery can help L2 learners become their desired future ideal L2 selves. However, a major problem with the concept of integrative motivation in Gardner's work is that it is neither applicable nor relevant to contexts where English is taught as, for instance, a foreign language. In addition, Gardner's integrative focus cannot be generalised in the current climate of English, which has become a global language and now belongs to a range of different communities. Nonetheless, much empirical research (e.g., Al-Shehri, 2009; Csizér & Kormos, 2009; Dörnyei & Chan, 2013; Kormos & Csizér, 2013; Papi, 2010; Ryan, 2008, 2009; Taguchi, Magid, & Papi, 2009) has revealed that a strong ideal L2 self can result in a powerful motivation and subsequent successful L2 learning because learners with ideal L2 selves have a strong tendency to reduce the gap between their current (actual) self and their desired ideal L2 selves.

The ought-to L2 self, on the other hand, is to some extent a less-internalised future vision of what one should become; it involves, for example, fulfilling external wishes (e.g., family wishes), expectations (e.g., family expectations) and responsibilities while avoiding negative outcomes of not learning the L2 (e.g., the failure of not passing the course). Thus, it could be argued that an aspect of the ought-to L2 self is imported from others' (e.g., parents') visions of the L2 learner. That is why some researchers (Kormos, Kiddle, & Csizér, 2011; Taguchi, et al., 2009) were encouraged to investigate whether the ought-to L2 self can operate differently in environments and cultures where the expectations of family members can influence learners' motivations (e.g., some Asian countries), particularly in terms of their ought-to L2 selves. Interestingly, in some Asian countries, the learners were affected by their families' expectations, and these expectations or obligations motivated learners to put more effort into learning the L2 (see Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014; Magid & Chan, 2012).

The final component, the L2 learning experience, is related to learners' experiences and attitudes towards the entire learning environment, which includes the curricula and interactions with teachers and other learners. As Dörnyei (2005) explains, this component involves "situation specific motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience" (p. 106).

Certain conditions are needed for the ideal L2 self and future self-images to be generated and realised

and thus make them likely to motivate learners (see Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014, p. 9). These conditions are (a) the existence of a vivid future self-image, (b) realistic possible selves, (c) harmony between the ideal and the ought-to selves, (d) regularly activating and priming the ideal and ought, and (e) having an accompanying plan of action. In addition, Dörnyei and Kubanyiova (2014) mentioned five facets that can be used and taken into consideration by L2 instructors to generate L2 learners' visions and enhance their desire to build their successful ideal L2 selves: instructors should (a) take learners' current identities into consideration, (b) provide learners with "tasters" of desired future states, (c) use guided imagery to generate desired self-images, (d) use guided narratives (e.g., asking learners to write about their future as if it were in the past), and (e) expose learners to role models (e.g., inviting successful L2 learners to the classroom). Thus, having a vision of a desired future self or state is a prerequisite for generating an ideal L2 self. In addition, creating an environment where learners can envision desired future selves can help them generate and create more potent ideal L2 selves, which leads to a powerful motivational construct to learn the L2. For this reason, researchers have proposed a number of conditions and techniques to construct, generate and enhance learners' ideal L2 selves and their motivational capacity. Furthermore, some researchers have conducted motivational intervention programmes (Chan, 2014; Magid & Chan, 2012; Sampson, 2012), lessons and activities (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014; Hadfield & Dörnyei, 2013; Magid, 2011; Magid & Chan, 2012) focusing on developing and enhancing learners' ideal L2 selves.

It seems that researchers—even Dörnyei and Kubanyiova (2014) and their conditions for generating the ideal L2 self—have not yet considered the self-concept of L2 learners who study ESP courses, especially the ideal L2 selves of such learners. As mentioned above, creating an environment where learners can envision their desired future selves is crucial to generating an ideal L2 self. In other words, can an ESP course be an environment that plays a fundamental role in generating learners' ideal L2 selves? ESP courses are based and designed on learners' future professional selves, hopes, aspirations and majors. This, in turn, may indicate that ESP learners are likely to exhibit a stronger capacity for imagery as the nature of the course relates to what they would like to become. However, these are only claims which are not supported and validated by any scientific and empirical studies. Similarly, some scholars and researchers (e.g., Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Basturkmen, 2010; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987) in the field of English learning as a second and/or foreign language assume that because of the relevance of ESP courses to learners' needs, these courses have a profound effect on learners' motivation. However, these claims have not been proven with empirical studies.

With regard to the Saudi context, few studies have examined the L2 motivational self system in Saudi Arabia. In this regard, Assulaimani (2015) states that most of the studies that examined L2 motivation in the Saudi context "have been interpreted from the perspective of the Gardner's Socio-educational Model" (p. 54). In addition, it appears that no current studies have used Dörnyei's model to examine the relationship between learners' L2 motivational selves in different types of English courses (i.e., ESP courses).

One of the few studies that used Dörnyei's model was conducted by Al-Shehri (2009), who targeted learners' visual learning styles and their impact on their ideal L2 selves. Al-Shehri (2009) found a strong correlation between learners' ideal L2 selves and their intended efforts to learn the L2. He also found a significant relationship between learners' visual learning styles and their ideal L2 selves. Al-Shehri (2009) concluded that learners "with more developed visual/imaginative capacity can develop a more potent ideal language self" (p. 168). It is worth noting that Al-Shehri (2009) did not provide any information with regard to the participants' gender as well as the participants of the study were a mix of Saudi students studying English (some of whom were high school students and undergraduate students) in Saudi Arabia and Arab students studying in the United Kingdom.

Another study conducted by Al-Otaibi (2013) who investigated the impact of self-regulated learning behaviours and learners' ideal L2 selves. In her mixed methods study, 33 female participants participated in a questionnaire, and she interviewed 8 females. Despite the fact that Al-Otaibi (2013) did not include male students in her study and the limited number of participants, her findings claimed that learners' visions of their ideal L2 selves motivated them to become self-regulated. This means that learners with ideal L2 selves invest more time and actively devote more effort to learn the target language. Taking the L2 motivational selves and L2 achievement into consideration, Khan's (2015) study aimed at examining this relationship between L2 motivational selves and L2 achievement. In her study, only Saudi female participants were involved in the study. The findings showed a highly significant relationship between the ideal L2 selves and participants' L2 achievement. The ought-to L2 self, on the other hand, revealed no statistical relationship with the participants' L2 achievement. Moskovsky, Racheva, Assulaimani, and Harkins (2016) recently conducted a study that aimed to examine the relationship between learners' L2 motivational selves and their L2 proficiency among English majors using Dörnyei's theoretical framework. The findings revealed that participants' L2 proficiency correlated weakly with the components of Dörnyei's model. One significant relationship was found between participants' writing scores and their ought-to L2 selves.

The Study

Using the L2 motivational self system as a theoretical framework, the present review of the literature shows that researchers have not targeted the effects of ESP courses on constructing and enhancing learners' desired future selves and ideal language selves. In other words, they have not investigated the effects of the course type on learners' ideal/ought-to L2 selves and whether ESP courses can construct and enhance learners' ideal language selves. More importantly, scholars and researcher in the field of ESP courses repeatedly assume that these courses are very effective in motivating L2 learners to learn English. In addition, it seems that no previous studies have investigated the ideal/ought-to L2 selves of ESP learners in Saudi universities. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the relationships between L2 learners' motivational selves (the ideal and ought-to L2 selves) and the type of English language program (ESP and EGP). The study also seeks to explore if any relationship exists between learners' L2 motivational selves and their gender, academic majors, and L2 achievement. More importantly, the study attempts to identify how these language-related future selves can function in learners' current learning processes by linking learners' actual course achievements with their ideal and ought-to language selves.

The study sets out to address the following research questions:

1. Are there any significant differences between ESP and EGP participants in terms of their ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, and L2 learning experience?
2. Are there any significant differences among participants of different academic majors and gender in terms of their L2 motivational selves (ideal/ought-to L2 selves) and L2 learning experience?
3. Can the ideal and ought-to L2 selves predict ESP and EGP participants' L2 achievement? If so, what is the model?

Method

Research Design and Instrument

This study seeks to gain an understanding of learners' L2 motivation by examining the relationship

between L2 motivational selves (i.e. the ideal and ought-to L2 selves) and the type of English course by using a quantitative design.

This study aims to investigate L2 motivational selves (ideal and ought-to selves, as well as L2 learning experience) by using an online survey. The survey was adapted from Taguchi, et al. (2009), and it consisted of two main sections. The first section included questions related to the participants' gender, major, type of English course and their mid-term marks out of 50 marks. In terms of marks, the participants were asked to provide their overall marks out of a possible high of 50, which they were informed about either through their university's online services or through their English teachers. Their marks were grouped into five categories: (a) between 1–9, (b) between 10–19, (c) between 20–29, (d) between 30–39, and (e) between 40–50. The second section consisted of a number of motivational items (measured on a six-point Likert-type scale; ranged from 1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree) related to the participants' ideal L2 selves (6 items), ought-to L2 selves (6 items) and their current L2 learning experience (4 items) (see Appendix A for the specific items of each scale). L2 learning experience was added to measure the participants' perceptions of their current English learning experience. The questionnaire was translated into Arabic, which was the mother tongue of the participants. The Arabic version was used to avoid any misunderstandings. A forward-backward translation process was used because the quality of the translation was critical to ensuring functional equivalence between the English and Arabic versions.

Participants and Data Collection

Four public universities were selected from three different Saudi provinces to participate in the study. Two of the selected universities (i.e., University 1 & University 2) are both located in Riyadh, the capital city of Riyadh province. These two universities were established between 1950s and 1970s, making them among the oldest and most reputable universities in Saudi Arabia. The other two universities, (i.e., University 3 & University 4) both were recently established and located in Al Jouf province and Hail province respectively.

With regard to the participants, male and female foundation-year undergraduates from the four aforementioned universities were selected to participate in the study. Students at all four universities are required to complete a compulsory one-year foundation course, also known as the Preparatory Year Programme, before starting their chosen undergraduate studies. These programmes aim to improve not only the academic skills of the attending students but also their often limited English before they enrol in undergraduate courses that are often conducted in English. For instance, English is used as the medium of instruction in medical schools and in departments of engineering and some of the natural sciences. During their first semester, all students are required to take EGP courses at 18 to 20 hours (depending on the university) per week. Students must pass these elementary-level English courses to be able to start their second semester of the foundation year. In the second semester, ESP courses are offered in addition to EGP courses. Students who want to study the humanities and non-scientific majors are required to take additional EGP courses at the intermediate level. Prospective scientific, engineering and medical majors are required to take intermediate ESP courses. The nature and content of the ESP courses are not identical across majors. For example, the course taken by medical and health majors is different from that taken by scientific and engineering majors. Medical and health majors are required to take English for Medical Purposes (EMP), while scientific and engineering majors are required to take English for Engineering and Scientific Purposes (EEMP). The participants of the study were divided into those taking ESP courses and those enrolled in EGP courses as follows:

- Group 1 (ESP students): Medicine, applied medical, engineering, computer sciences and basic sciences students participating in ESP courses. These students were required to take an ESP course, based on their chosen undergraduate studies, before they start their chosen undergraduate studies. The aim of choosing this group is to capture and identify the effect of ESP courses on the students' L2 motivational selves.
- Group 2 (EGP students): Humanities (English, Arabic and Islamic Studies majors), law and education students participating in EGP courses. These students were required to take an EGP course before they start their chosen undergraduate studies. The aim of choosing this group is to capture and identify the effect of EGP courses on the students' L2 motivational selves.

The online version of the survey was sent via e-mail to all students who were taking ESP and EGP courses at the four universities. Data were collected during the second semester before the students started their chosen undergraduate studies. After sending the online survey, with the help of teachers and the English departments' directors at the four universities, 4,043 participants participated in the study (1,990 male and 2,053 female participants; see Table 1). Of these 4,043 participants, 2,326 were taking an ESP course, and 1,717 students were taking an EGP course (see Table 2). With regard to the participants' age, 98% of them were between 18 and 21 years of age.

Table 1 *Distribution of participants by gender across universities*

	University 1	University 2	University 3	University 4	Total
Male	418	355	387	830	1,990 (49.2%)
Female	413	302	298	1,040	2,053 (50.8%)
Total	831	657	685	1,870	4,043 (100%)

Table 2 *Distribution of participants in ESP and EGP courses*

Type of English Course	Frequency	Percentage
ESP	2,326	57.5%
EGP	1,717	42.5%
Total	4,043	100%

Data Analysis Procedures

Descriptive and inferential statistical tests were used to analyse the data using SPSS. To address question 1, which examines the difference between learners' L2 motivational selves, L2 learning experience, and the type of English course, a one-way ANOVA test was used to determine if differences exist between students' L2 motivational selves (dependent variable) and the type of English course (two-level independent variable, ESP and EGP groups). The same statistical test was used for question 2, which examines the differences between participants' L2 motivational selves (dependent variable), and gender (independent variable). In terms of participants' academic majors, multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was employed to determine any potential differences the three variables and participants' academic majors. Question 3 aims to assess the predictive value of learners' L2 motivational selves on their L2 achievement. To answer this question, a multiple linear regression was performed. Before conducting the analyses, however, all the accompanying assumptions; normality, linearity, absence of outliers, homogeneity of variance, and multicollinearity were checked and no serious violations were noted.

Results

RQ1: Are there any significant differences between ESP and EGP participants in terms of their ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, and L2 learning experience?

A one-way ANOVA (Table 3) was conducted to determine the differences between ESP and EGP participants across three dependent variables (i.e., ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, and L2 learning experience). The results indicated that there were significant differences between ESP and EGP in terms of the ideal L2 self, $F(1, 4041) = 353.265, p < .0005$, and L2 learning experience, $F(1, 4041) = 11.033, p < .0005$. In terms of the ideal L2 self, this means that the ESP participants (mean = 5.16) had a stronger ideal L2 self than the EGP participants (mean = 4.59) with a medium effect size ($d = 0.58$). Similarly, ESP participants (mean = 4.54) had a more positive L2 learning experience than the EGP participants (mean = 4.12) with a small-medium effect size ($d = 0.35$). In contrast, no statistically significant differences were found between ESP and EGP participants for the ought-to L2 self, $F(1, 4041) = 1.290, p = .256$. Looking at the mean scores for the ought-to L2 self, the two groups had very close scores ranging between 4.24 to 4.28; ESP participants (mean = 4.28) and EGP participants (mean = 4.24).

Table 3 ANOVA results for ESP and EGP groups

	ESP (n = 2,326)		EGP (n = 1,717)		ANOVA Results			
	M	SD	M	SD	df	F	p	d
Ideal L2 Self	5.16	0.82	4.59	1.10	4,041	353.265	.000	0.58
Ought-to L2 Self	4.28	1.11	4.24	1.01	4,041	1.290	.256	0.03
L2 Learning Experience	4.54	1.12	4.12	1.26	4,041	11.033	.000	0.35

Note: Cohen's d effect size: .20 small effect size, .50 medium effect size, and .80 large.

RQ2: Are there any significant differences among participants of different academic majors and gender in terms of their L2 motivational selves (ideal/ought-to L2 selves) and L2 learning experience?

To determine the difference between male and female participants, a one-way ANOVA (Table 4) was conducted across three dependent variables (i.e., ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, and L2 learning experience). The results showed that there were significant differences between male and female in terms of the ideal L2 self, $F(1, 4041) = 26.187, p < .0005$, and the ought-to L2 self, $F(1, 4041) = 29.369, p < .0005$. This means that female participants (mean = 5.00) had a higher ideal L2 self than male participants (mean = 4.84). On the other hand, male participants (mean = 4.36) had a higher ought-to L2 self than female participants (mean = 4.18). Although significant statistical differences between male and female participants were found in both the ideal and ought-to L2 selves, it should be noted that the effect size values were small ($d = 0.16$). However, no statistical differences were found between male and female participants in terms of the L2 learning experience.

In terms of participants' academic majors, multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) (Table 5) was employed to determine any potential differences between the three variables and participants' academic majors. Overall, the results showed that there were significant differences between the participants' academic majors and the three variables, $F(15, 11139) = 36.664, p < .0005$; Wilks' $\Lambda = .875$; partial $\eta^2 = .043$.

Table 4 ANOVA results for male and female participants

	Male (n = 1,990)		Female (n = 2,053)		ANOVA Results			
	M	SD	M	SD	df	F	p	d
Ideal L2 Self	4.84	1.05	5.00	0.92	4,041	26.187	.000	0.16
Ought-to L2 Self	4.36	1.09	4.18	1.05	4,041	29.369	.000	0.16
L2 Learning Experience	4.34	1.20	4.38	1.20	4,041	1.142	.285	0.03

Note: Cohen's *d* effect size: .20 small effect size, .50 medium effect size, and .80 large.

The MANOVA was followed by univariate ANOVAs for each of the three variables to ascertain the specific differences for each of the three variables. The results of the ANOVAs revealed that all three variables were statistically significant differences. In terms of the ideal L2 self, statistically significant differences were found in the ideal L2 self between participants from different academic majors, $F(5, 4037) = 89.576, p < .0005$; partial $\eta^2 = .100$. The ought-to L2 self, statistically significant differences were also found between participants from different academic majors, $F(5, 4037) = 10.309, p < .0005$; partial $\eta^2 = .013$. Participants L2 learning experiences were also found to be statistically different, $F(5, 4037) = 33.418, p < .0005$; partial $\eta^2 = .040$. Taking the effect sizes of the three variables and their interpretations into consideration, the ideal L2 self had an effect size of $\eta^2 = .100$ which is above the medium effect size mark, (i.e., eta squared values of 0.06 were regarded as medium effect size, Cohen, 1988), the ought-to L2 self had a small effect size of $\eta^2 = .01$, and L2 learning experience had an effect size of $\eta^2 = .04$ which is just below the medium effect size mark.

Table 5 MANOVA results for participants' academic majors

	GRP 1	GRP 2	GRP 3	GRP 4	GRP 5	GRP 6	MANOVA Results		
	(n = 636)	(n = 883)	(n = 321)	(n = 413)	(n = 435)	(n = 1,355)	F	p	η^2
	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)			
Ideal L2 Self	5.40 (0.62)	5.17 (0.79)	4.98 (0.95)	4.99 (0.86)	4.64 (1.06)	4.58 (1.12)	89.576	.000	.100
Ought-to L2 Self	4.28 (1.11)	4.47 (1.09)	4.09 (1.12)	4.11 (1.11)	4.24 (0.99)	4.23 (1.02)	10.309	.000	.013
L2 Learning Experience	4.71 (1.02)	4.59 (1.08)	4.41 (1.20)	4.39 (1.16)	4.18 (1.21)	4.09 (1.28)	33.418	.000	.040

Note: GRP 1: Medicine, Applied Medicine, Health Care, GRP 2: Engineering, GRP 3: Sciences, GRP 4: Computer Sciences, GRP 5: Business, GRP 6: Arts, Social Sciences, and Humanities.

Eta squared effect size: .01 small effect size, .06 medium effect size, and .14 large.

Then, multiple comparisons using LSD post-hoc tests were conducted to locate the differences (Table 6). Fifteen comparisons were conducted for each variable between participants' scores across all academic majors. The purpose of these multiple comparisons was not only to locate the differences between participants' scores but also to identify whether these differences were statistically significant. Overall, the analysis revealed that the majority of these multiple comparisons were statistically significant. As seen in Table 6, the comparisons across and between all academic majors for the scores of the ideal L2 self revealed that most of the comparisons were statistically significant, with the exceptions of the comparisons between the sciences and computer sciences groups (see GRP 3 – GRP 4 in Table 6), and those between the business and the arts, social sciences, and humanities

groups (see GRP 5 – GRP 6 in Table 6). As an example of the comparisons that were statistically different, significant statistical differences were found in the comparisons between the medicine, applied medicine, and health care majors and the engineering majors (see GRP 1 – GRP 2 in Table 6). These results mean that the medicine, applied medicine, and health care majors had higher and statistically significant levels of the ideal L2 selves than the engineering majors did. When comparing the scores of the ideal L2 selves for these two academic majors groups with the arts, social sciences, and humanities majors, the analysis revealed that the medicine, applied medicine, and health care majors had higher and statistically significant levels of the ideal L2 selves than those in the arts, social sciences, and humanities majors, as did the engineering majors.

The multiple comparisons for the L2 learning experience revealed similar results to those comparisons for the ideal L2 self in terms of statistically significant differences. One difference between the results for these two variables is that no significant statistical differences were found in the comparisons between the medicine, applied medicine, and health care majors and the engineering majors in their scores for the L2 learning experience. This indicates that the L2 learning experience, as well as ideal L2 self, varies markedly according to the participants' future major.

However, the ought-to L2 self showed results and trends that differed from those obtained from the multiple comparisons for the ideal L2 self and L2 learning experience. Almost half of the multiple comparisons for the ought-to L2 self were not statistically different. For instance, no statistical differences were found in the comparisons between the medicine, applied medicine, and health care majors and the arts, social sciences and, humanities majors. The other half of the multiple comparisons showed statistical differences. For instance, when comparing the scores for the engineering majors group (GRP 2) with all the other academic majors groups, all comparisons were statistically significant. This is because the engineering majors had the highest levels of ought-to L2 selves.

Table 6 Post-hoc analysis for the MANOVA

Post-hoc Comparisons	Mean Differences		
	Ideal L2 Self	Ought-to L2 Self	L2 Learning Experience
GRP 1 – GRP 2	.22***	-.19***	.11
GRP 1 – GRP 3	.41***	.18*	.29***
GRP 1 – GRP 4	.41***	.16*	.31***
GRP 1 – GRP 5	.75***	.03	.52***
GRP 1 – GRP 6	.82***	.05	.61***
GRP 2 – GRP 3	.19**	.37***	.17*
GRP 2 – GRP 4	.18**	.35***	.20**
GRP 2 – GRP 5	.53***	.23***	.40***
GRP 2 – GRP 6	.59***	.24***	.49***
GRP 3 – GRP 4	.00	-.02	.02
GRP 3 – GRP 5	.33***	-.14	.23**
GRP 3 – GRP 6	.40***	-.13*	.31***
GRP 4 – GRP 5	.34***	-.12	.20*
GRP 4 – GRP 6	.41***	-.11	.29***
GRP 5 – GRP 6	.06	.01	.08

Note: GRP 1: Medicine, Applied Medicine, Health Care, GRP 2: Engineering, GRP 3: Sciences, GRP 4: Computer Sciences, GRP 5: Business, GRP 6: Arts, Social Sciences, and Humanities.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

RQ3: Can the ideal and ought-to L2 selves predict ESP and EGP participants' L2 achievement? If so, what is the model?

To predict the value of participants' ideal and ought-to L2 selves on L2 achievement, a multiple regression was conducted (Table 7). Participants English achievement scores were the criterion variable that is being predicted, while the scores of the participants' ideal and ought-to L2 selves were the explanatory factors that were used to predict their L2 achievement.

Table 7 Multiple regression of participants L2 achievement and the two L2 selves

Predictor	B	SE B	Beta (β)	<i>p</i>
Ideal L2 Self	.471	.015	.503*	.000
Ought-to L2 Self	-.112	.014	-.130*	.000
R ²	.21			

The model summary indicated that the multiple regression analysis was significant ($p < .001$) and all the three explanatory variables explained 21% of the variance when predicting the participants' English scores, $F(2, 4040) = 536.726$, $p < .001$. The most powerful predictor was the ideal L2 self, followed by the ought-to L2 self. However, the ought-to L2 self had a negative effect, which means that the higher the ought-to L2 self the lower the L2 achievement. Unlike the ideal L2 self scores which had a positive effect on L2 achievement, and this means the higher the ideal L2 self the higher the L2 achievement.

Discussion

Taking question 1, which investigated differences between ESP and EGP groups, into consideration, the analysis shows that participants in ESP courses have higher and statistically significant levels of the ideal L2 selves than those in EGP courses. In addition, ESP participants have a more positive attitude towards the L2 learning experience. The ought-to L2 self, on the other hand, is not statistically significant, which means that both groups have almost similar levels of ought-to L2 selves (see Table 3). These results could indicate that the nature of ESP courses, to some extent, may serve as a powerful motivational construct to learn L2. This could be because ESP courses offer learners a relevant language in a context that is related to learners' interests, and are different in nature than EGP courses, where the language and content tend to be general and not necessarily based on learners' needs and interests. Based on the results of this study, it can be argued that by fulfilling learners' needs and by providing content that is based on their needs and interests, learners may become actively engaged in the learning process, which may lead to more positive attitudes towards the L2 learning experience. All of this may produce higher levels of motivation, or at least have a measurable effect on learners' motivation. Since learners in ESP classes have needs that are presumably fulfilled by the nature of these courses, it appears that these courses have a positive effect on their learning motivation. As Crookes and Schmidt (1991, p. 492) state, "a programme that appears to meet the students' own expressed needs will be more motivating, more effective, and thus more successful." Moreover, Gardner (2010, p. 10) believes that motivation is "affected by the environment in the class, the nature of the course and the curriculum." Dörnyei and Kubanyiova (2014) assert that creating an environment where learners can envision desired future selves will not only providing them with "tasters" of desired future states, but will help them create more potent ideal L2 selves. These conditions appear to exist in ESP courses because the nature and purpose of these courses is to meet learners' needs and future goals. It can thus be concluded that ESP courses play a major role in stimulating and enhancing learners' ideal L2 selves.

Question 2 investigated the differences among participants of different academic majors and gender. In terms of gender, gender differences are found among the participants of the study for the ideal L2 self and the ought-to L2 self-constructs, but no differences are found for the L2 learning experience construct. Female participants have higher and statistically significant ideal L2 selves compared to male participants, while male participants have higher and statistically significant ought-to L2 selves (see Table 4). The effect sizes, however, for these two factors among male and female participants were small, and these findings should be interpreted with caution, though they are in line with previous studies (e.g., Liu & Thompson, 2018; Öz, Demirezen, & Pourfeiz, 2015; Yashima, Nishida, & Mizumoto, 2017; You & Dörnyei, 2016; You, Dörnyei, & Csizér, 2016). These findings may be explained by the common perception that language learning is a “feminine” subject (Ryan, 2009) and many studies have found that female learners repeatedly show higher motivation towards L2 learning than do male learners. Female participants in this study have higher levels of ideal L2 selves than their male counterparts do. This particular finding may be explained not only by the fact that women are more likely to envision themselves in future L2 communication situations more easily than men are – thanks to their greater capacity to develop and nurture their visualisation skills and experiences (Henry & Cliffordson, 2013; You, et al., 2016) – but also by the fact that females are more positively engaged in language learning (Liu & Thompson, 2018). This, in turn, enables them to develop and expand more vivid and more robust idealised motivational future self-images. Male participants, by contrast, have higher levels of ought-to L2 selves than female participants do, possibly because Saudi men are socially and culturally expected to meet certain external obligations and expectations. For instance, men in Saudi Arabia have traditionally been expected to be the family breadwinner and tend to have greater social and career expectations, putting them under considerable pressure to satisfy these expectations. More importantly, the nature of the ought-to L2 self is associated with fulfilling external/social expectations and overall social pressure. Since Saudi men have greater social and career expectations, this could explain why male participants in this study have higher levels of ought-to L2 selves than women do.

Taking participants’ academic majors into account, the results confirm that significant differences are found between the participants’ academic majors and the three variables. In terms of the effect sizes, the results indicate that the ideal L2 self has the largest effect size among the three variables, with an above medium effect size, which indicates that the ideal L2 self is dynamic rather than stable across academic majors. For the ideal L2 self, these findings mean that participants who study medicine have the highest levels of ideal L2 selves, followed by participants who study engineering. Conversely, participants from the humanities and social sciences have the lowest levels of ideal L2 selves. The L2 learning experience results show that participants who major in medicine and engineering have more positive attitudes towards the L2 learning experience, whereas participants who major in the humanities and social sciences have a less positive attitude towards the L2 learning experience. Regarding the ought-to L2 self, the results show that statistical differences are found among participants from different majors, but the effect size of these differences are small. Looking at the multiple comparisons for the ought-to L2 selves among participants from different majors, almost half of these comparisons were not statistically significant (see Table 5). For instance, there were no differences between medical majors participating in this study and participants from the humanities and social sciences, as well as business majors. Engineering majors, on the other hand, had the highest level of the ought-to L2 self among the six groups of majors. The findings of the ought-to L2 self in this study are in line with the findings of previous studies (e.g., Liu & Thompson, 2018; You & Dörnyei, 2016), particularly in terms of the ought-to L2 self. These studies have found very small variations between English and non-English majors (which includes all other majors) in the ought-to L2 self. Taking previous research and this finding into account, there appear to be a limited number of studies that identify and target the relationship between motivation and students’ academic majors (e.g., Liu & Thompson, 2018; Ryan, 2009; You & Dörnyei, 2016). One possible limitation of the existing

studies is that students' academic majors are grouped into only two categories: English majors and non-English majors. For example, in Liu & Thompson's 2018 study, participants are divided into English majors and non-English majors, with the group of non-English majors containing participants from 13 different fields of study (e.g., Education, Civil Engineering, Management, Chemistry, Accounting, etc.). As a result, all of the aforementioned studies conclude that English majors have a higher level of motivation, and higher levels of ideal L2 self in particular. One could argue that such a method of categorising these groups is problematic and biased because English majors are generally more likely to display higher levels of motivation due to the nature of their chosen field of study. One interpretation of the English majors' results and their higher levels of motivation is that the language for English majors "is regarded as a means of personal fulfilment and engagement with others, as opposed to a purely academic pursuit" (Ryan, 2009, p.135). This could mean that students in other majors (i.e. non-English majors) are only studying English as an academic pursuit or for instrumental purposes. However, given that English is a global language and essential to their future careers, non-English majors may also regard English language as a means of personal fulfilment and engagement with others (in their future careers, for instance).

Question 3 examined the ideal and ought-to L2 selves across different levels of L2 achievements. The multiple regression model indicates that the two self-constructs have an impact on participants' L2 achievements, either positively or negatively. The ideal L2 self has a positive influence on participants' L2 achievements, whereas the ought-to L2 self has a negative influence on their L2 achievements (see Table 7). Essentially, ought-to L2 self has an inverse relationship to participants' L2 achievements, which means that stronger external pressures to meet expectations will lead to lower L2 achievement. Unlike the ought-to L2 self, the ideal L2 self is more internal and designed to meet learners' desires, which is found to have a positive contribution to participants' L2 achievements. These findings could mean that having a stronger ideal L2 self may encourage L2 learners to attain a higher L2 achievement compared to learners with an ought-to self. One possible explanation for this positive influence of the ideal L2 self is that, while a learner with a stronger ought-to L2 self could be affected by pressure from external authorities and expectations, a learner with a stronger ideal L2 self is motivated to learn and achieve by images and desires of their future self that are more internal and idealised; that is, simply because of the nature of the ideal L2 self, which represents one's personal hopes, aspirations and wishes and is strongly linked to one's L2 vision in the future (Dörnyei, 2009). For a learner with an ought-to L2 self, on the other hand, external expectations must be fulfilled, and not fulfilling these expectations may lead to stress, which can have a negative effect on learners' L2 achievement.

Conclusion

This study offers some contributions that can further enhance our understanding of L2 motivation, especially within the Saudi context. One of these contributions is exploring the L2 motivational selves by conducting a large-scale study in four different Saudi universities. Another important contribution is exploring L2 motivational selves and their levels in two different types of English classes by identifying and measuring the motivational selves of learners who study English for different purposes. A final contribution is exploring the association between these motivational selves and L2 achievement by predicting the value of learners' L2 motivational selves on L2 achievement.

The current study lends support to the validity of Dörnyei's tripartite model for two different English learning contexts (i.e., ESP and EGP) at four Saudi universities. Among the two self-constructs, the ideal L2 self was virtually certain to yield group differences to varying degrees when combined with independent variables, including the type of English course taken, students' genders, academic majors, and L2 achievements. The ideal L2 self appeared to be the most salient motivator with a positive contribution when predicting learners' L2 achievements. Because the ideal L2 self positively predicted

students' L2 achievements, one pedagogical implication for both ESP and EGP courses is that L2 instructors should work on developing and regularly enhancing students' ideal L2 selves. One possible suggestion to enhance students' ideal L2 selves is for L2 instructors to provide students with materials and content that is linked to their interests and future professional goals. It is also recommended that universities not currently offering ESP courses should offer these courses to their students, if possible. As previously mentioned, ESP courses provide learners with content that is based on their future goals, which may play an instrumental role in engaging learners in the learning process. By doing so, students may begin to visualise mental images of their ideal future selves, and because of the imagery content of the ideal self, this may ultimately lead students to generate ideal L2 selves.

The ought-to L2 self, on the other hand, interacted differently with the aforementioned independent variables. As shown in the study findings, unlike the ideal L2 self, the ought-to L2 self did not yield any significant differences between ESP and EGP groups. In terms of academic majors and gender differences, the ought-to L2 self yielded fewer, yet significant, group differences than the ideal L2 self, with smaller effect sizes. The analysis also shows that the ought-to L2 self had a negative relationship with participants' L2 achievements as a contrary relationship was found between the ought-to L2 self and students' L2 achievements. Therefore, it is recommended that L2 instructors attempt to minimise and eliminate any academic pressures in the learning environment. As this study found that Saudi male students had higher ought-to L2 selves, L2 instructors within the Saudi education system should employ strategies to further enhance students' ideal L2 selves. For instance, extreme competition for grades, obsession with success, and fear of failure in the classroom should be reduced to minimal levels. This, in turn, may reduce academic pressure and create opportunities for students to enhance their ideal L2 selves and focus on clear, vivid L2 learning goals.

References

- Al-Otaibi, S. M. (2013). Investigating Saudi EFL Learners' Vision of Future-self and its Relationship to their Self-regulated Learning Behaviour. *Arab World English Journal*, 4(4), 112-127.
- Al-Shehri, A. S. (2009). Motivation and vision: The relation between the ideal L2 self, imagination and visual style. In Z. Dörnyei & E. Ushioda (Eds.), *Motivation, language identity and the L2 self* (pp. 164-171). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Assulaimani, T. (2015). *The L2 Motivational Self System among Saudi Learners of English*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation), University of Newcastle, Australia.
- Basturkmen, H. (2010). *Developing Courses in English for Specific Purposes*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Chan, H. Y. L. (2014). *Possible selves, vision, and dynamic systems theory in second language learning and teaching*. PhD Thesis, University of Nottingham, Nottingham. Retrieved from <http://eprints.nottingham.ac.uk/id/eprint/14301>
- Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences*. New York: Academic Press
- Crookes, G., & Schmidt, R. W. (1991). Motivation: Reopening the research agenda. *Language Learning*, 41(4), 469-512. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-1770.1991.tb00690.x>
- Csizér, K., & Kormos, J. (2009). Learning experiences, selves and motivated learning behaviour: A comparative analysis of structural models for Hungarian secondary and university learners of English. In Z. Dörnyei & E. Ushioda (Eds.), *Motivation, language identity and the L2 self* (pp. 98-119). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Dörnyei, Z. (1998). Motivation in second and foreign language learning. *Language teaching*, 31(03), 117-135. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S026144480001315X>
- Dörnyei, Z. (2005). *The Psychology of the Language Learner: Individual Differences in Second Language Acquisition*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

- Dörnyei, Z. (2009). The L2 Motivational Self System. In Z. Dörnyei & E. Ushioda (Eds.), *Motivation, Language Identity and the L2 Self* (pp. 9-42). Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Dörnyei, Z., & Chan, L. (2013). Motivation and vision: An analysis of future L2 self images, sensory styles, and imagery capacity across two target languages. *Language Learning*, 63(3), 437-462. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lang.12005>
- Dörnyei, Z., & Kubanyiova, M. (2014). *Motivating learners, motivating teachers: Building vision in the language classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dudley-Evans, T. (1998). *An Overview of ESP in the 1990s*. Paper presented at the The Japan Conference on English for Specific Purposes Proceedings, Aizu-Wakamatsu City, Japan: Aizu University.
- Dudley-Evans, T., & St John, M. J. (1998). *Developments in English for Specific Purposes: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gardner, R. C. (2010). *Motivation and second language acquisition: The socio-educational model*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Hadfield, J., & Dörnyei, Z. (2013). *Motivating learning*. London: Longman.
- Henry, A., & Cliffordson, C. (2013). Motivation, Gender, and Possible Selves. *Language Learning*, 63(2), 271-295. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lang.12009>
- Hutchinson, T., & Waters, A. (1987). *English for Specific Purposes: A learning-centred approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hyland, K. (2006). *English for Academic Purposes: An advanced resource book*. London: Routledge.
- Khan, M. R. (2015). Analyzing the relationship between L2 motivational selves and L2 achievement: A Saudi perspective. *International Journal of English Language Teaching*, 2(1), 68-75. <https://doi.org/10.5430/ijelt.v2n1p68>
- Kormos, J., & Csizér, K. (2013). The Interaction of Motivation, Self-Regulatory Strategies, and Autonomous Learning Behavior in Different Learner Groups. *TESOL Quarterly*, 48(2), 275-299. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.129>
- Kormos, J., Kiddle, T., & Csizér, K. (2011). Systems of Goals, Attitudes, and Self-related Beliefs in Second-Language-Learning Motivation. *Applied Linguistics*, 32(5), 495-516. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amr019>
- Liu, Y., & Thompson, A. S. (2018). Language learning motivation in China: An exploration of the L2MSS and psychological reactance. *System*, 72, 37-48. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2017.09.025>
- Long, M. H., & Crookes, G. (1992). Three Approaches to Task-Based Syllabus Design. *TESOL Quarterly*, 26(1), 27-56. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3587368>
- Magid, M. (2011). *A validation and application of the L2 motivational self system among Chinese learners of English*. PhD Thesis, University of Nottingham, Nottingham. Retrieved from <http://eprints.nottingham.ac.uk/id/eprint/11971>
- Magid, M., & Chan, L. (2012). Motivating English learners by helping them visualise their Ideal L2 Self: Lessons from two motivational programmes. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 6(2), 113-125. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17501229.2011.614693>
- Moskovsky, C., Racheva, S., Assulaimani, T., & Harkins, J. (2016). The L2 Motivational Self System and L2 Achievement: A Study of Saudi EFL Learners. *The Modern Language Journal*, 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12340>
- Oxford, R., & Shearin, J. (1994). Language learning motivation: Expanding the theoretical framework. *The Modern Language Journal*, 78(1), 12-28. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1994.tb02011.x>
- Öz, H., Demirezen, M., & Pourfeiz, J. (2015). Willingness to communicate of EFL learners in Turkish context. *Learning and Individual Differences*, 37, 269-275. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2014.12.009>

- Paltridge, B., & Starfield, S. (2013). *The Handbook of English for Specific Purposes*. UK: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Papi, M. (2010). The L2 motivational self system, L2 anxiety, and motivated behavior: A structural equation modeling approach. *System*, 38(3), 467-479. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2010.06.011>
- Ryan, S. (2008). *The ideal selves of Japanese learners of English*. PhD Thesis, University of Nottingham, Nottingham. Retrieved from <http://eprints.nottingham.ac.uk/id/eprint/10550>
- Ryan, S. (2009). Self and identity in L2 motivation in Japan: The ideal L2 self and Japanese learners of English. In Z. Dörnyei & E. Ushioda (Eds.), *Motivation, language identity and the L2 self* (pp. 120-143). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Sampson, R. (2012). The language-learning self, self-enhancement activities, and self perceptual change. *Language Teaching Research*, 16(3), 317-335. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168812436898>
- Strevens, P. (1988). ESP after twenty years: a re-appraisal. In M. L. Tickoo (Ed.), *ESP: State of the Art* (pp. 1-13): SEAMEO Regional Language Centre.
- Taguchi, T., Magid, M., & Papi, M. (2009). The L2 motivational self system among Japanese, Chinese and Iranian learners of English: A comparative study. In Z. Dörnyei & E. Ushioda (Eds.), *Motivation, language identity and the L2 self* (pp. 66-97). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Yashima, T., Nishida, R., & Mizumoto, A. (2017). Influence of Learner Beliefs and Gender on the Motivating Power of L2 Selves. *The Modern Language Journal*, 101(4), 691-711. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12430>
- You, C., & Dörnyei, Z. (2016). Language Learning Motivation in China: Results of a Large-Scale Stratified Survey. *Applied Linguistics*, 37(4), 495-519. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amu046>
- You, C., Dörnyei, Z., & Csizér, K. (2016). Motivation, Vision, and Gender: A Survey of Learners of English in China. *Language Learning*, 66(1), 94-123. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lang.12140>

Author Biodata

Aser Altalib is currently a PhD candidate in the School of Literature, Languages and Linguistics, at the Australian National University, Canberra. He is a lecturer at Jouf University, Saudi Arabia. His research interests include language teaching and learning in higher education and language learning motivation.