Identity, Motivation and Willingness to Communicate

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Although Willingness to Communicate (WTC) has been explored with various cognitive and affective constructs, Dörnyei’s (2005) hypothesis that “L2 WTC is the resultant of the interplay of linguistic self-confidence and the Ideal L2 Self,” has not been empirically tested. This presentation reports on an attempt to fill this gap by measuring those three concepts in a group of 243 Japanese university students and by testing their relationships among the concepts. Additionally, it examines the relationships among a wide variety of related concepts that affect WTC and frequency of communication: namely, anxiety, motivation, integrativeness, international posture, linguistic confidence, Ideal L2 Self (i.e., the idealized L2 speaking self, involving both proficiency in language and success in profession), Ought-to L2 Self (i.e., L2 specific facet of attributes that one believes that one ought to possess) and valuing of global English. The model was constructed based on the WTC model, the socioeducational model (Gardner, 1985), and Dörnyei’s (2005) Motivational Self System as a framework, and was tested with structural equation modeling. The results indicate that Ideal L2 Self and linguistic self-confidence predicted L2 WTC, supporting Dörnyei’s hypothesis. The structural relationships among variables presented the new perspectives, representing the psychological landscapes of EFL learners’ WTC in this transitional period of their identities and motivation in this globalizing world. Pedagogical implications of these research findings will be discussed, specifically how teachers can use the indicated relationships to best focus their efforts to develop students’ Ideal L2 Selves.

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