L2 Motivation, Self and Identity: Current Theoretical Perspectives

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Overview of talk
- Traditional concepts of L2 motivation
- Retheorizing L2 motivation in relation to self and identity
- Implications for classroom practice
- Implications for exploiting digital technologies

Integrative motivation: What does it mean today?
- Gardner & Lambert 1959, 1972
- Instrumental and integrative motivation
- How L2 learners identify with and position themselves in relation to L1 community and TL community
- Critiques (e.g. Pavlenko 2002; Coetzee-Van Rooy 2006)
- English as global language
- Globalized digital world of cyberspace
- From external to internal processes of identification
- Reconceptualizing integrativeness as internal process of identification within self-concept (Dörnyei & Csizér 2002)

Motivation and possible selves
- Theory of possible selves (Markus & Nurius 1986) – future self-guides which channel motivation
- Self-discrepancy theory of motivation and self-regulation (Higgins 1987) – psychological desire to reduce discrepancy between current and ideal self

L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei 2005, 2009)
- Ideal L2 self – attributes one would ideally like to possess to fulfil own hopes and aspirations (promotion focus)
- Ought-to L2 self – attributes one believes one ought to possess to meet social expectations or avoid negative consequences (prevention focus)
- L2 Learning Experience – ongoing situated processes shaping motivation
- Empirical support (Csizér & Kormos 2009; Ryan 2009; Taguchi et al. 2009)

Concepts of identity
- Identity as growing issue in applied linguistics (e.g. Block 2007; Lin 2007)
- Identity-oriented theories of motivation in mainstream educational psychology (Kaplan & Flum 2009)
- Concepts of ethnolinguistic identity in social psychological theories of SLA and second language communication – e.g. intergroup model (Giles & Byrne 1982); situated identity theory (Clément & Noels 1992)

L2 motivation and current concepts of identity
- Global, bicultural, multicultural identities (Lamb 2004, 2009)
- Desired social or professional identities in imagined L2 communities (Kanno & Norton 2003; Norton 2001)
- Identities as ways of relating self to world (van Lier 2007)
- Identities as personally valued constructions that are socially forged and negotiated; can be contested, resisted, denied (Norton 2000, 2001; Menard-Warwick 2009)

Linking identity perspectives with possible future selves
- Current identities as well as future identity goals
- Identity perspectives may help explain how long-term personal motivational trajectories (channelled by possible future selves) are shaped by current situated motivational processes and experiences (evolving identities)
- Importance of engaging students’ current social identities in their L2 interactions, to enable them to engage directly with their possible future selves as L2 users (Ushioda 2009)

Motivating the person rather than the L2 learner
- L2 as personalized tool that enables us to expand and express our identity in new and different ways
- Promoting continuity between what students learn and do in the L2 classroom, and who they are and what they do in their lives outside the classroom
- L2 learners as ‘people’ with uniquely individual personalities, histories, motives, identities (Ushioda 2009)
- Limitations of L2 motivation theory to date: focus on abstract models and learner types

Motivating the person: looking beyond L2 motivation literature
- Learner-centred teaching; personalisation; authentic communication; humanistic approaches; classroom management and dynamics; learner autonomy
- Dogme approach in ELT (Thornbury 2000; Meddings & Thornbury 2009) – focus on conversational interaction among teacher and students, driven by students’ own personal interests, motivation, identities
- Motivational importance of engaging students’ own transportable identities in classroom talk (Richards 2006)

Engaging students’ transportable identities in digital age
- ‘Dogme 2.0’ (Vickers 2009), or fusing use of Web 2.0 with Dogme language teaching principles
- Students’ transportable identities are grounded not only in physical world but also virtual world of cyberspace, social networking, mobile communication technologies
- Students as ‘digital natives’ (Prensky 2001)
- Connecting students’ personal use of Internet and digital technologies with use of same technologies to develop L2 skills in service of own needs and interests (Thomas 2009)
- Shift in identity roles: students as technology ‘experts’, teacher as ‘learner’ (cf. Ushioda et al. in press)
- Reshaping psychological relation to content and process of learning (Little 1991)
- New situated identities ⇒ new possible future L2 selves
REFERENCES


