

# **The L2 Motivational Self System among Saudi Learners of English**

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## **DECLARATION**

*I hereby certify that this thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University of Newcastle Library, being made available for loan and photocopying subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.*

*(Signed):*

*Turki Assulaimani*

*Date: 20 /03/2015*

## Dedication

*All praise is due to Allah and may his blessings be upon his messenger*  
who taught me the true meaning of hard work, dedication and devotion.

*I would like to humbly dedicate this thesis firstly to Allah Almighty*  
my lord, creator and sustainer who has always showered me with his love,  
guidance and blessings.

*This thesis is also dedicated to the loving memory of my father, Abdulmajeed*  
*Assulaimani and my grandmother, Khadijah Samargandi*  
who have always loved me, believed in me and encouraged me to be  
the best man I can be.

*It is also dedicated to my sisters, my uncles and aunts*  
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# *Abstract*

Dörnyei's (2005, 2006) groundbreaking L2 Motivational Self System Theory has been developed to explain the relationship between motivation and L2 learning through three components: ideal self, ought-to self, and L2 learning experience. He proposed that these three factors correlate with the self-reported intended learning efforts of the learners, which he viewed as an indicative of the learners' proficiency levels. However, the effect of these three factors on L2 achievement was not sufficiently established either by Dörnyei or other advocates of his theory. This study was conducted to determine if the three factors have an actual effect on the learners' L2 achievement or not.

A mixed approach was used, with a primary quantitative research instrument being supported by secondary qualitative data. A total of 360 male and female participants were asked to complete a questionnaire containing statements representing the three theorized components. The participants were, then, asked to do an English proficiency test (reading and writing tasks; excerpts from IELTS). This was followed by a set of semi structured interviews in which 21 participants of the larger sample were asked questions about their goals and orientations related to their English learning as well as their future selves and imaginations.

Descriptive and referential statistical procedures were used to analyse the quantitative part of the data. The results reinforce the validity of Dörnyei's key constructs: ideal self and ought-to self, and uncover two underlying dimensions within the L2 learning experience scale and the intended learning efforts scale. Both types of selves and both types of experience were good predictors of the learners' intended learning efforts. However, none of the above were good predictors of either the reading or the writing scores of the participants. On the other hand, the qualitative data analysis findings revealed that both self-guides motivate Saudi learners to learn English. Most importantly, the findings highlighted the role played by role models and action plans in the development of the L2 learners' future selves.