L2 Motivation and Its Effects on Motivated Behavior in Korean University Contexts*

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to validate Dörnyei’s (2005, 2009) L2 Motivational Self System (Ideal L2 self, Ought-to L2 self, and L2 learning experience) in Korean college contexts as a follow-up study of Kang (2014). This study examined the effects of L2 motivations on motivated behavior of Korean university students through stepwise regression analyses using questionnaires. The results showed that the L2 Motivational Self System explained motivated behavior better than Gardner’s (1985) integrativeness. However, the two components, L2 learning experience, and Ought-to L2 self, played more important roles than Ideal L2 self in L2 motivation. In addition, this study revealed some differences between high and low proficiency levels. Even though L2 learning experience strongly and equally explained the motivated behavior of both levels, the low levels were influenced by more affective sides such as integrative orientation and interests in foreign languages, while the high levels were influenced by pragmatic values of L2 learning. However, gender differences in L2 motivations did not appear in Korean contexts. The theoretic discussions will be made at the conclusion.

Keywords: motivation, self system, integrativeness, learning experience, motivated behavior

1. Introduction

Gardner and his colleagues have based L2 motivation on the traditional concept, integrativeness, in the social and cultural environment (Gardner, 1985; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1992, 1993; Gardner & Tremblay, 1994). They emphasized the social and emotional aspect, that is, the integration or identity with the specific target community for the success of the second language. However, recently many scholars argued that if no salient L2 community that students would like to make direct contacts with was not present in the imme-

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Dörnyei (1990). In addition, English has become an international language serving as a lingua franca in the globalized world, so it might be more appropriate to think about ‘World English Identity’ (Dörnyei, 2005) and ‘international posture’ (Yashima, 2002) rather than the specific target L2 community or language (Csizer & Kormos, 2009).

Dörnyei (2005, 2009) suggested reinterpreting Gardner’s (1985) original concept of integrativeness. In other words, the traditional concept of integrative motive was related to the attitudes toward the specific target community, while Dörnyei’s ‘Motivational Self System’ was more concerned with more broadly defined speakers of the second language. So L2 motivation could be better interpreted by L2 learners’ ideal self who would like to become a fluent speaker of the target language. Based on Higgins’s self-discrepancy theory (1987), Dörnyei (2005) proposed the possible selves of L2 motivation. In the framework of the L2 Motivational Self System, L2 motivation consisted of three main constructs: ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self and L2 learning experience (p. 106). The ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self refer to what people would like to become and what people are afraid of becoming respectively. The final concept, L2 learning experience, represents situation-specific motives related to the immediate learning environments.

Recent studies done by Csizer and Dörnyei (2005a, 2005b), Ryan (2009), and Yashima (2002) in EFL contexts showed some controversial findings. Csizer and Dörnyei’s (2005a) study with secondary school students in Hungarian EFL contexts showed that the traditional integrativeness, that is, positive attitudes towards the British/American culture or community, still played a key role in the motivated behavior, while Yashima (2002) found a new concept of L2 motivation in Japan, international posture, which was defined as ‘complex attributes of interest in international affairs, willingness to go study abroad, and non-ethnocentric openness toward different cultures’. On the other hand, the study by Ryan (2009) showed that the ideal L2 self explained the motivated behavior more than the integrativeness in college level students in Japan, and Kang (2014) found the important role of L2 learning experience in Korean college contexts. Therefore, the purpose of the research was to validate the traditional integrativeness (Gardner, 1985) and L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009) with Korean university students by conducting re-