

## **A Mixed-Method Approach on the Role of Self-Constructs in Self-Regulation\***

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### **Abstract**

The current mixed-method research aimed to investigate the effects of self-constructs on self-regulation. To this end, a number of 127 Iranian EFL learners were chosen randomly as the sample of the study. To collect data, semi-structured interviews were designed. Also, correlation analysis and regression analysis were run on the data. The results of interview data suggested that motivated learners who reported self-regulation tended to display positive visualization of their ideal L2 self and self-efficacy beliefs. Besides, the result of correlation analysis indicated that ideal L2 self had stronger association with self-efficacy beliefs than with self-regulation, suggesting that it is necessary to hold positive beliefs towards language learning in order to visualize oneself as a proficient and successful language user. Of the two self-constructs, self-regulation turned out to be most strongly associated with self-efficacy followed by ideal L2 self indicating that what characterizes self-regulated learners is that their levels of self-efficacy is higher compared to those who are not. Finally, the result of regression analysis revealed that self-efficacy and, to the lesser extent, ideal L2 self were found as direct predictors of self-regulation. It seems unlikely to be a motivated learner without the actual beliefs in ones' ability and a strong actualization of one's image as a successful language user.

**Key words:** self-constructs, ideal L2 self, self-efficacy beliefs, self-regulation.

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### Introduction

During the years, L2 motivation has been the main focus of attention for second language acquisition (SLA) researchers. Gardner and Lambert (1959) were pioneer of studying on L2 motivation. They viewed integrativeness as the main issue in L2 learning and motivation. However, Gardner's model has been casted doubt upon due to the new view on English as a universal language. Some attempts to expand the L2 motivation construct were made during 1990s (e.g., Crooks & Schmidt, 1991; Dörnyei, 1994; Oxford & Sherin, 1994). Furthermore, Dörnyei and Csizér (2002) attempted to unravel the ambiguity of integrativeness, explaining that the identification process underling integrativeness may be better expounded as "an internal process of identification within the person's self-concept, rather than identification within an external reference group" (p. 453).

Zoltán Dörnyei initiated a new path of research into L2 motivation. His L2 motivational self-system is the association of two future self-guides (L2 selves) pertained to "imagined experience" and another component originated in "actual experience" (Dörnyei, 2014, p. 9). This tripartite construct consisted of ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, and L2 learning experience. The central component of L2 motivational self system, ideal L2 self, is defined as "the L2 specific facets of one's ideal self" Dörnyei (2009, p. 29). The second component, ought-to L2 self, includes "the attributes that one believes one ought to possess" in order to meet the expectations of parents, friends, or significant others. Finally the last component, L2 learning experience, is defined as "situated executive motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience" such as the impact of the teacher, curriculum, peer groups, and one's experience of success.

This new path in L2 motivation instigated a plethora of research to confirm the motivational properties of the L2 motivational self system (Csizér & Kormos, 2008, 2009; Csizér & Lukács, 2010; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009; Kim, 2009; Kim & Kim, 2014; Kormos, Kiddle, & Csizér, 2011; Magid, 2012, Papi, 2010; Rahimi Domakani, Jaafar Pour, & Haji Mohammadi, 2016; Taguchi, Magid, & Papi 2009). In

particular, the ideal L2 self, has been viewed as a strong predictor of a number of different criterion measures related to language learning. It was also known as a strong factor which can determine and exert motivated behavior in L2 learners (Dörnyei & Chan, 2013). However, there has been relatively little investigation into how the other self-construct i.e., self-efficacy beliefs influence self-regulatory behaviors of Iranian EFL learners. Neither has been enough examination of the extent to which these constructs are associated with the ideal L2 self.

### **Objective of the study**

The present study follows three main objectives. Firstly, it sought to uncover the influence of self-constructs i.e., ideal L2 self and self-efficacy beliefs on self-regulation among Iranian MA students of TEFL. Secondly, it attempted to examine the interaction of the two self-constructs and self-regulation. Thirdly, it sought to uncover the predictor/s of self-regulation. Accordingly the following research questions were developed:

1. What is the influence of ideal L2 self and self-efficacy beliefs on self-regulation of Iranian EFL learners?
2. Is there any significant relationship between the ideal L2 self, self-efficacy beliefs, and self-regulation of Iranian EFL learners?
3. Which - self-efficacy or ideal L2 self - is the better predictor of self-regulation?

### **Literature Review**

The present research attempts to investigate three issues: ideal L2 self, self-efficacy, and self-regulation. Our review of literature is organized in two sections: a theoretical overview of the concepts and a brief explanation of the previous studies.

#### **Ideal L2 Self**

According to Dörnyei (2005), ideal L2 self represents an ideal image of the kind of L2 user one desires to be in the future, that is, it refers to “a learner’s desired L2 user attributes” that is absolutely essential in creating a broader self-imagery of one’s successful future. Ideal L2 self subsumes learners’ attitudes towards L2 community groups and

encompasses some aspects of instrumentality concerning job promotion (Dörnyei, 2009). As Iwaniec (2014, p. 2) states, in line with Markus and Nurius (1986), “the ideal L2 self is self-representing possible positive outcomes” referring to the future, that is, language learners strive to create their own vision as successful language users. Magid (2011) states that with reference to Dörnyei (2009) L2 motivational self-system, the ideal L2 self is supposed to be teleological since it reflects imagined and end states of the future. Also, from a self-perspective, Csizér and Dörnyei (2005) concluded that the actual power of the ideal L2 self is due to one’s desire to eliminate the discrepancies between his/her actual self and future self. Therefore, ideal L2 self, as a desired end state, is the key component of self-discrepancy theory proposed by Higgins which has been further promoted within Dörnyei’s (2009) model of L2 motivational self-system (Magid, 2011).

Studies have been done on the influential impact of ideal L2 self in motivating L2 learners. Dörnyei and Chan (2013) asserted that learners with more vivid and sustained idealized L2 self-image are undoubtedly more motivated to be engaged in their language studying goals than those learners who have not hold a strong visualization of their ideal L2 self. Also, a number of researches (Al-Shehri, (2009); Csizér and Kormos, (2008, 2009); Kim (2009); Kormos, Kiddle, and Csizér (2011); Ryan (2009); Taguchi et al., (2009) emphasized the positive influence of the ideal L2 self on language learning motivation, the powerful factor that can efficiently elicit self-regulatory behavior in EFL learners. Furthermore, Taguchi et al. (2009) concluded motivation and the effort that learners invest in learning a language as the strong predictors of the learners’ idealized L2 self-image.

Also, the possible association between the ideal L2 self and self-regulation has been a noticeable issue for SLA researchers. Borkowski and Thorpe (1941) asserted that possible selves are pertained to self-regulatory behavior. They explained that future self-guides subsumes goals, the factor that plays an essential role in SRL, that is, when a learner develops a future goal to reach positive possible selves or to avoid negative possible selves,” the effort that the learner invested in

achieving that goal will be considered as the first step toward SRL process (cited in Kim and Kim, 2014, p. 78). Furthermore, Chan (2014) stated that possible selves can exert efficacious self-regulatory behavior in learners since these self-guides “increase the end accessibility and desirability of behavioral responses” (p. 25-26). Some empirical studies have been done on the association between idealized future self and self-regulation. Csizér and Kormos (2014) confirmed powerful future self-guides as precondition of SRL strategies. Also, Kim and Kim (2014) showed significant relationships between ideal L2 self and three phases of self-regulatory behavior among Korean junior high school students, asserting this association to be due to the relation of these two concepts with the notions of the self. Also, they found desired L2 self-image as the strongest predictor of self-regulatory behavior. Similar findings found by Rahimi Domakani et al. (2016) that confirmed the same association among Iranian EFL learners.

### **Self-Efficacy**

Another self-construct, which is frequently used in educational psychology, is self-efficacy. Bandura (1997) defines self-efficacy as individuals' perception about their abilities to perform a task successfully. Self-efficacy has been viewed as an influential factor in L2 achievement (Bandura, 1977, 1997; Schunk, 2005, 2008). Research findings show that learners with higher levels of self-efficacy act better and participate more eagerly in a task (Alexander & Winne, 2012). Also, these learners are more prone in order to implement self-regulatory strategies (i.e. cognitive and metacognitive strategies) (Schunk, 1985; Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons, 1990). Moreover, learners with higher self-efficacy beliefs has higher motivation in learning, which in turn affect their effort and persistence at a task and eventually promote their learning (Alexander & Winne, 2012).

The substantial role that self-efficacy plays language learning domain has been investigated empirically. For example, Hsieh and Kang (2010) reported a positive association between self-efficacy and language learning proficiency. Also, the role of self-efficacy in shaping learners' ideal L2 self had been noticeable. For example, Ueki and

Takeuchi (2013), by performing structural equation modeling on Japanese first-year university students, they confirmed the influential impact of self-efficacy on participants' visualization of a stronger and more vivid ideal L2 self. Also, Iwaniec (2014) found noticeable relationship between self-efficacy and ideal L2 self.

The high impact of self-efficacy in regulating learners had been the focus of attention in recent studies. Gaskill and Hoy (2002) explained that the association between self-efficacy and self-regulation is due to the nature of these two constructs since self-efficacy and self-regulation both require the presence of specific cognitive capacities such as goal setting, monitoring, reflecting, and making judgments. Accordingly, the relationship between these two concepts have been investigated so far. Erlich (2011) indicated a strong association between self-regulation and self-efficacy of L2 learners in academic planning. Furthermore, Wang, Schwab, Fenn, and Chang (2013) indicated a strong association between self-efficacy, English language test scores, and self-regulatory strategies. Furthermore, they revealed that the female students' level of self-efficacy were higher than that of the male students. On the table below, the characteristics of self-constructs (ideal L2 self and self-efficacy beliefs) are discussed.

Table 1  
*Characteristics of Self-Constructs*

|   | Ideal L2 Self                        | Self-Efficacy Beliefs                      |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|
| Time orientation                            | Future-oriented<br>(Dörnyei, 2005)   | Future-oriented<br>(Bong & Shaalvik, 1993) |
| Temporal Stability                          | Malleable<br>(Markus & Nurius, 1986) | Malleable<br>(Bong & Shaalvik, 1993)       |
| Judgment specificity<br>(within the domain) | General                              | Specific<br>(Bong & Shaalvik, 1993)        |

|                 |  |   |
|-----------------|--|---|
| Key antecedents | Aspirations (Ruvolo & Markus, 1992)<br>Real-life experiences of L2 community members (Dörnyei, 2005)<br>Personal goals (Dörnyei, 2005) | Mastery experience<br>Verbal experience<br>Vicarious experience<br>Affective and psychological states (Bandura, 1997) |
|-----------------|--|---|

Adopted from Iwaniec (2014, p. 4).

### **Self-Regulation**

Regarding its Latin root, self-regulation involves both self-management and self-adjustment in the case that “something goes off track” or needs some improvement (Oxford, 2013, p. 12). SRL or self-regulation subsumes processes in which learners activate and sustain their cognitions, affects, and behaviors oriented toward fulfillment of their goals (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2011). According to Zimmerman and Schunk (2011, p. 1), self-regulated learners are supposed to be “proactive in order to set goals and engage in a self-regulatory cycle”, the essential part of which is motivational beliefs. Also, individuals are viewed as “self-organizing, proactive, self-reflecting, and self-regulating rather than reactive organisms” shaped by environmental forces or inner impulses (Bandura, 1977, p. 194). What characterizes self-regulated learners is that these learners are high-capacity students who show higher performance (Montalvo & Toress, 2004).

Some empirical studies have been done on the significant role that self-constructs play in self-regulation. For example, Iwaniec (2014), in a mixed-method study, examined the association between three concepts of self-constructs (self-efficacy beliefs, ideal L2 self, and English self-concept) and self-regulation among Polish students. She found that the ideal L2 self was strongly associated with self-efficacy beliefs than with English self-concept. However, by considering self-regulation, researchers found strong positive correlations this construct and the ideal L2 self followed by self-efficacy beliefs. Accordingly, the

current research aims to give us a more vivid picture of the issues under investigation.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

Seven EFL learners (four females and three males) aged 21-25, characterized by their teachers as motivated learners, comprised the sample of the study. They were more successful language learners in that they had higher levels of motivation and self-efficacy. Besides, they had higher goals to study a second language and their grade was very good or excellent. The reason to choose only motivated learners for the interviews was that these learners were better to identify the rationale under their motivation to study an L2. Besides, they were better at expressing themselves and were able to talk at length about their language experience. In addition, 122 Iranian EFL students (MA students of TEFL) were chosen randomly from several universities in the southeast of Iran. The mean age of the participants were 23.

### **Instrumentations**

#### ***Interview***

For the main purpose of the study, semi-structured interviews were designed. Topics for the interviews were based on the results of the quantitative study and asked in open format in order that the interviewees would be able to freely express their thoughts and opinions. The interview questions elicited data about a number of topics confirmed to be relevant in the L2 motivation literature; namely, L2 learning goals, learner's beliefs about their ability to study English, effort invested in learning the L2 and, attitudes and experience toward learning a language and self-regulatory strategies that students implement in their process of learning English.

#### ***Motivation questionnaire***

The quantitative survey was piloted among 60 EFL students and after assuring the reliability and validity of the questions (Table 2), the survey assessed learners on a six-point Likert-scale with values ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. The internal consistency of the survey was adequate ( $\alpha = .82$ ). Also, examining the internal



consistency of scores by the three subscales, we noticed that all subscales had acceptable reliability. Accordingly, the following three constructs comprised the survey:

- Ideal L2 self (6 items): student's vision of themselves as proficient users of language in the future. For instance, *I imagine myself speaking English as a native speaker*. Items for this scale were taken from Taguchi et al. (2009).
- Self-efficacy beliefs (10 items): individuals' beliefs in their skills in order to accomplish a task, or the ability to speak English successfully in the future. For instance, *I am confident that I will do well in my English course*. The items targeted reading, writing, speaking, and listening comprehension skills. Some items were adopted from MSLQ (Pintrich et al., 1991).
- Self-regulation (13 items): According to Zimmerman (1989), the extent to which students are metacognitively, motivationally, and behaviorally active in their language learning process. Self-regulation entails taking the responsibility for your own learning and at the same time developing the most effective learning strategies (Iwaniec, 2014). For example, *I have my own techniques that help me focus on studying English*. The items for this scale were adopted from Barnard et al. (2009).

**Questionnaire data.** The factor analysis revealed that the items measured three separate concepts. Regarding self-efficacy and self-regulation, some items were dropped in order to accurately measure the intended variables. As Table 2 displays, the final scale consisted of six items regarding the ideal L2 self, eight items (self-efficacy beliefs), and eleven items (self-regulation). The reliability of the scales were acceptable with all values above 0.8.

Table 2

*The Composition, Reliability, and the Mean Score of the Final Scale*

| Variable | No.   | Reliability | Eigenvalue | % of variance | Mean | Standard |
|----------|-------|-------------|------------|---------------|------|----------|
| s        | of    | ty          | ue         |               | n    | d        |
|          | final |             |            |               |      |          |

|                 | item |     |      | explained | Score | Deviation |
|-----------------|------|-----|------|-----------|-------|-----------|
| Ideal L2 self   | 6    | .82 | 2.52 | 42.20     | 4.88  | .90       |
| Self-efficacy   | 8    | .86 | 4.66 | 55.45     | 5.05  | 1.09      |
| Self-regulation | 11   | .91 | 3.25 | 34.68     | 4.54  | .78       |

Another statistical figure in Table 2 which is worth noticing is the mean score. As seen in Table 2, students scored highest on self-efficacy followed by idealized L2 self-image and self-regulation. Bandura (1997) defines self-efficacy as individuals' beliefs about their capabilities in order to complete a given task successfully. Regarding language learning, self-efficacy is viewed as learners' perception of their capabilities in order to complete target tasks related to language learning. As mentioned previously, self-efficacy beliefs is an influential factor in L2 learning and achievement (Schunk, 2005; 2008). So, it is worthy to notice that the highest score of the self-efficacy implied that participants possessed high level of confidence to accomplish a task, which is a beneficial factor in their L2 process. Overall, the scores on the above three variables suggest that the participants tended to have positive view of their language learning skills, their self-image of the proficient L2 user, and self-regulatory strategies.

### Procedures

All the interviews were done in second language. Explaining that the privacy of data will be kept and is just for the purpose of study, the researcher asked the participants to freely express their ideas at length. Subsequently, on the basis of interviews' results, the motivational questionnaire was prepared. First, the questionnaire was administered to 60 students of TEFL. Considering the factor and reliability analysis of the questionnaire data, we eliminated and reworded the items that were found to be problematic. Finally, the last version of the

questionnaire was administered to 122 students of TEFL during the time of the class. Being present at the time of administration the researcher explained that the learner's participation was highly intentional and that the whole data was strictly confidential and anonymous. This was done in order to ensure that the students felt free to answer the items truthfully.

### **Data Analysis**

First, semi-structured interviews were transcribed and coded thematically, from which a range of key terms contributed to learners' self-constructs and self-regulation emerged. That is, in the first step, utterances concerning similar topics were grouped together. The themes that emerged in this way were then defined into categories and subcategories and ascribed an appropriate code. Subsequently, all utterances were coded appropriately bearing in mind the definitions of the categories. The process was repeated until all definitions were precise and all utterances were coded accurately.

In addition, factor analysis was carried out on the quantitative data to ensure that the items measured the intended variables. Furthermore, to identify the relationships among variables, a correlation coefficient was run. Finally, regression analysis was conducted to find out how well self-constructs (ideal L2 self and self-efficacy) predict self-regulation as well as how much was the amount of their contribution.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Interview data**

Regarding the analysis of the interviews data, it seemed to provide support for the following claims. The participants were strong at their visualization of their ideal L2 self. All seven students reported that their idealized L2 self-image was a strong motivator for their L2 learning. They mentioned their personal interest and enjoyment were the key components that made them go forward in L2 learning. For example, Samira claimed: "first and foremost, I think the most important issue in learning English is my own interest in learning foreign languages." Also, Mona stated: "I'm interested in learning English since I really enjoy it, I mean, it is really fun for me to learn a foreign language."

Besides the intrinsic value of learning, it seemed that for the other students (five), ideal L2 self was a vision of what they will be when they achieve their language learning goals. As Sara stated: “First of all, I started learning English since I was interested in it, but nowadays I study English in order to achieve my professional goals.”

When the students were asked about their belief in language abilities, all of them reported that they have strong beliefs. As Sara noted: “I don’t have any trouble in language learning; I learn it easily.” The other students went into more details when they talked about their language abilities. Zohre claimed: “I find learning English easy. I have no trouble at learning grammar; however, I find learning abstruse vocabulary a bit difficult. Regarding other language abilities, she mentioned: “I don’t have any trouble at reading. When reading at the highest speed, I can go well. I’m also good at speaking. It is easy for me to express my opinions in discussions.” However, other students had different views regarding learning grammar and vocabularies. As Samira and Mona both noted that they find learning vocabularies easy; however, the most difficult part of language learning was grammar for them. Samira mentioned that she had difficulty in learning tenses as well as different parts of speech. She stated: “I find tenses such as present perfect, present perfect continuous a bit difficult. I really can’t distinguish between them.” In addition, Mona reported: “the most difficult part in learning grammar is passive sentences. Sometimes, I really get confused.”

In order to successfully influence students’ positive thinking about their language abilities, it is essential to know how their self-efficacy beliefs are constructed on which interview data provided us with useful insights. When the participants were asked about the sources of belief in their language abilities, the interviewees named a number of processors of their self-efficacy beliefs such as grades and examinations, comparison with the peers, improving their language learning and emotional cues such as their interest and enjoyment.

It is worth noticing that in all cases participants mentioned more than one antecedent of their self-efficacy beliefs. For instance, Sara reported:

Comparing myself with other students, I find that the level of my self-efficacy is inherently high. It must be because of my huge inner interest in language learning. At the second place, I always try my best at the examinations to get an A since it gives me a sense of appraisal, not only from my teacher, parents, and my friends but also from myself. I mean, getting an A in the examinations gives me a desirable sense that I had been great.

Also Mona stated: “I am really interested in learning English. I see it as a new experience that I have never had. I think that not only being interested in learning an L2 but also showing myself how well I am at it makes me study more and more.”

Finally, the results of the interviews revealed that Iranian EFL learners were highly self-regulative. All of the students mentioned that they were investing their time and effort in order to highly implement self-regulatory strategies during their studying time. For instance, Sara stated that she always sets standards for her studying method. She explained: “setting standards previously delineate my studying path and makes me get the most out of my studying time.” She also mentioned that for her, note-taking is the most efficient way to establish her learning. “Although, it may take me a lot of time, I enjoy it so much since it makes the connection between the learned materials stronger in my mind.” Furthermore, other students explained that the most efficient technique to evaluate their learning was communication with other peers or the teacher. One of them was Mona who reported: “At times I confront any trouble in my learning, I ask help from a knowledgeable source like professors or even my friends. It gives me a sense of motivation and self-confidence.” In addition, Sara mentioned:

I always feel easy to ask help from my friends when I find understanding the learned material difficult. I like to share my ideas with other students since it not only makes me solve my problems but also it makes our relationship stronger.

### Correlational Analysis

The result of correlation analysis revealed a number of positive relationships between variables ranged from medium to large. As shown in Table 3, the ideal L2 self had stronger association with self-efficacy than with self-regulation. This close proximity could be explained in this way that both concepts (ideal L2 self and self-efficacy beliefs) pertain to the future (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003). When self-efficacy was taken into account, it correlated strongly with self-regulation followed by the ideal L2 self, which supports Pintrich and De Groot (1990) findings. Similar results were reported by Erlich (2011), Lavasani, Mirhosseini, Hejazi, and Davoodi (2011), and Wang, et al. (2013) who observed strong association between self-efficacy and self-regulation.

Table 3

#### *Correlational Analysis of the Self-Constructs and Self-Regulation*

| Variable        | Self-regulation  | Ideal L2 self    | Self-efficacy    |
|-----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Self-regulation |                  |                  |                  |
| Ideal L2 self   | 0.499**<br>0.000 |                  | 0.507**<br>0.000 |
| Self-efficacy   | 0.672**<br>0.000 | 0.507**<br>0.000 |                  |

Of the two self-constructs, self-regulation turned out to have the strongest association with self-efficacy followed by ideal L2 self. In the case of the association between ideal L2 self and self-regulation, the result is similar to that of Csizér and Dörnyei (2014) who found significant relationships between ideal L2 self and two aspects of self-regulation (commitment control and satiation control) in three students' populations of secondary school learners, colleges and universities students, and adult learners. However, the finding is contrary to that of Iwaniec (2014) who found that self-regulation is most closely related to the ideal L2 self than to self-efficacy among Polish students of English. These contrary results in the context of Iran confirm that EFL learners' level of self-efficacy is higher than their visualization of a desired future self-image. It seemed that they had clearer and stronger vision of their

self-efficacy beliefs than their desired self-image, which is in line with Rahimi Domakani et.al. (2016). Another reason that self-regulation had stronger association with self-efficacy than with ideal L2 self in this context is in line with Zimmerman (1986) who confirmed higher levels of self-efficacy as the key characteristics of learners who are self-regulated.

### Regression Analysis

To find out the extent that ideal L2 self and self-efficacy contribute to self-regulation, regression analysis was run. As the result of correlation analysis, regression analysis revealed that both ideal L2 self and self-efficacy beliefs significantly and directly contribute to self-regulation. However, the degree of the contribution of self-efficacy was found to be more noticeable than that of the ideal L2 self (Table 4).

Table 4

#### *Regression Analysis of Self-Regulation*

| Model           | Unstandardized Coefficient |            | Standardized Coefficient | <i>T</i> | Sig.  |
|-----------------|----------------------------|------------|--------------------------|----------|-------|
|                 | <i>B</i>                   | Std. Error | Beta                     |          |       |
| 1<br>(Constant) | 1.399                      | 0.338      |                          | 4.137    | 0.000 |
| Ideal L2 self   | 0.203                      | 0.073      | 0.212                    | 2.770    | 0.007 |
| Self-efficacy   | 0.448                      | 0.061      | 0.565                    | 7.371    | 0.000 |

The stronger contribution of self-efficacy to self-regulation confirms the influential impact of self-efficacy in L2 learning. The result is in line with Pintrich and De Groot (1990) who confirmed self-efficacy as the strongest predictor of learning which can exert self-regulation in learners.

### Conclusion and Implication

In this mixed-method study, we attempted to investigate the role of ideal L2 self and self-efficacy beliefs in self-regulation. First, the results

of interviews suggest that motivated learners who reported self-regulation were more willing to display positive visualization of their idealized L2 self-image and self-efficacy beliefs. Besides, the results of correlational analysis indicated that ideal L2 self had stronger association with self-efficacy beliefs than with self-regulation, suggesting that it is necessary to hold positive beliefs towards language learning in order to visualize oneself as a proficient and successful language user (Iwaniec, 2014). A strong positive association was also found between self-efficacy and self-regulation, which confirms Zimmerman's (1989) findings. As the result of correlational analysis, the regression analysis revealed this proposition as self-efficacy and, to a lesser extent, ideal L2 self were observed as direct predictors of self-regulation in population of Iranian EFL learners, suggesting that it appears unlikely for the learners to be motivated without the actual beliefs in ones' ability and a strong actualization of one's image as a successful language user.

This research shed light to the fact that self-regulated learning emerges when learners have high level of self-efficacy and strong visualization of a proficient and successful language users. Accordingly, the message for L2 instructors can be echoed in that they should try to offer an environment for language learning that not only stimulate positive self-efficacy beliefs but also enhance the opportunity to visualize stronger and more vivid ideal L2 self. In this case, teachers need to adjust their classroom activities to the abilities of learners to create successful language learning experiences (Iwaniec, 2014). Also, constructive feedback is essential, as "focusing on the negative aspects only might affect students' self-beliefs" (Iwaniec, 2014, p. 17). Furthermore, the role of families in educational system cannot be ignored. As a role model for children at home, parents can have a major role in nurturing self-efficacy as well as positive visualization of the ideal L2 self in the early stages of language learning. By being aware of their potential role, they can boost learners' achievement.



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