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Zoltán Dörnyei (University of Nottingham) consistently delivers highly readable texts for psycholinguists and those being interested in or taking up research programs on second language acquisition (SLA). His new book *Motivation, Language Identity and the L2 Self*, co-edited by Ema Ushioda (University of Warwick), is no exception. This anthology is their first direct cooperation based on their common interest: self and identity. Their views have been echoed by leading scholars in the field such as Richard Clément, Kata Csizér, Kimberly Noels and Tomoko Yashima. This combination of internationally acknowledgeable contributors makes this book a unique collection of global thought on L2 motivation in the new era.

The book begins with a question ‘Why a new book on L2 motivation now?’ (Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2009, p.1). The answer seems to be closely related to the change of the world effected by L2 learners. Modern globalization has facilitated the emergence of ‘global English’, making the classic concept of integrativeness (Gardner, 1985, 2001) less applicable to situations where there is no specific target reference group of speakers. Dörnyei and his fellows believe that the reconceptualization of L2 motivation in the context of contemporary concepts of self and identity in social psychology is much needed in the light of this development of SLA.

The book consists of 18 chapters. Chapter 1 is a brief introduction of the whole anthology. Chapter 2, a very important one, provides a key theoretical background for the remaining chapters, and Dörnyei proposes the L2 Motivational Self System in this chapter. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 offer readers extensive empirical evidence of the L2 Motivational Self System, collected from a range of countries (Japan, China, Iran and Hungary) and levels of education (secondary, university and adult education). Chapters 8, 9 and 10 enrich specific theoretical and empirical perspectives concerning the model. They discuss the role of imagination and visual learning style in constructing ideal selves, links between ethnolinguistic affiliation, self-related motivation and second language fluency, and the development of a scale to measure possible selves.

Chapters 7, 12, and 13 discuss the integration of possible self with related theoretical constructs such as ‘international posture’, ‘identity’ and ‘Bourdieuian habitus’. Chapters 3, 14 and 15 explore the connections between Dörnyei’s self approach and other major motivational frameworks, such as activity theory, self-determination theory, autonomy theory, and integrative motivation theory. It is suggested that these major motivational frameworks are not contradictory but complementary to each other.
Chapter 11, written by Ushioda, illuminates an alternative relational view of emergent motivation, self and identity, which is the second main strand of motivational thinking presented in the book. Ushioda challenges the linear approach to motivation which dominates the field and believes that motivation at the level of an individual learner emerges organically through the interrelations among multiple contextual elements.

Chapters 16 and 17 apply the self approach to the analysis of language teacher motivation and teacher development. Chapter 16 illustrates the mediation of possible selves in the process of EFL teachers’ conceptual change in response to an in-service teacher development course. Chapter 17 employs the concepts of ideal and ought-to-self to explain how teachers experience e-language teaching. The book ends with a discussion of further research directions in the field of L2 motivation in Chapter 18. The two editors predict that the two strands of motivational thinking, ‘the L2 Motivational Self System’ and ‘person-in-context relational view’, will potentially integrate with each other within a dynamic systems framework.

From the psycholinguistic perspective, this book has made significant contribution by proposing some enlightening views of L2 motivation against the background of globalization. More importantly, the book records different voices about self and identity so as to advance readers’ understanding of this paradigmatic shift in the field of L2 motivation. Among other aspects, it contains a series of empirical studies which give substantial evidence to support the self approach and offers the potential for great synergy between L2 motivation research and mainstream SLA. However, the book is not organized in a themed manner. This may cause difficulties in delivering the intentions of the editors. It would have been much better if the editors had categorized 18 chapters into four or five parts with theme-identifying headings, thus enabling readers to understand the relationships among chapters at first sight. Despite this, Motivation, Language Identity and the L2 Self is surely a good and thought-provoking book for anyone who is involved in a serious L2 motivation exploration especially in the contexts where the community of the speakers of the target language is absent.

References

