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Thai and Serbian Student L2 Motivational Selves: A Contrastive Study

Abstract: Applying L2 Motivational Self-System, the aim of this paper is to investigate how Thai and Serbian students construct their L2 motivational self-systems. A total of 543 students from Thailand and Serbia completed an 18-item questionnaire aimed at sampling relevant motivational factors. Although the students from both universities reported medium levels of motivated behaviour and a strong influence of their L2 learning experience, the most influential factors in the construction of self-systems were fundamentally different. While Serbian students construct their motivational self-systems on the basis of their ideal L2 selves, Thai students shape their motivational self-systems on the basis of ought-to L2 self. This difference points to the overall teaching approaches adopted in the investigated settings, where in Serbia learning experience is guided by the communicative approach to language teaching, while the Thai learning experience rests on a teacher-centred approach shaped by the collectivist cultural orientation.

Key words: L2 Motivational Self-System, individualism/collectivism, student-centred/teacher-centred approach, Thailand, Serbia, English as a foreign language

Introduction

The rationale for this research arises from the needs of the countries in which English is taught as a foreign language, i.e. the Expanding Circle countries (Kachru 1985), to increase their populations' competence and fluency in English, which as a lingua franca of the twenty-first century is used in business, education and communication on the global level. The countries of the Expanding Circle, Serbia and Thailand among them, are diverse in terms of their languages, cultures, histories and economies, but due to this strong need for high competence in English, most of them have included English in formal education from

an early age (Bruner, Sinwongsuwat and Shimray 2014, 14). This trend continues throughout primary and secondary education and is often extended into tertiary education either in the form of ESP courses or general English classes.

When comparing Thailand and Serbia, we could say that they have quite a few things in common. Thailand, as a member of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), has a pronounced need for English for the purposes of "academic advancement, social and economic growth, tourism industry, science and technology, the Internet, international businesses, and international legal contexts" (Radić-Bojanić, Topalov and Sinwongsuwat 2015, 11), while CEO's of large Asian companies require a certain level of English language competence from their workers so companies can benefit from increased foreign investment (Byrne 2010). For that reason, "many companies have adopted recruitment policies requiring employees to have essential English language skills for the workplace" (Bruner, Sinwongsuwat and Radić-Bojanić 2015, 12) and it is up to the educational system of the country to prepare future employees for this. An English Proficiency Survey from 2012 (EF EPI 2012) ranked Thailand as 53rd with low proficiency, which is why the Thai government undertook a comprehensive educational reform, starting with the kindergarten level (Wilang and Sinwongsuwat 2012) and ending with university education. Despite these efforts, there are still issues that need to be resolved and solutions for the increase in fluency among Thai speakers of English are actively sought (cf. Bruner, Sinwongsuwat and Shimray 2014; Radić-Bojanić, Topalov and Sinwongsuwat 2015; Bruner, Sinwongsuwat and Radić-Bojanić 2015; Topalov, Radić-Bojanić and Bruner 2016). The English Proficiency Index from 2020 ranks Thailand again in the low proficiency band at the 89th place.

In a similar manner, in the context of the accession to the EU and as a country with an increasing number of outsourced employees, especially in the field of information communication technologies, Serbia has a great need for high competence in English. Relying on the Common European Framework of Reference (Council of Europe 2001) in its reform of foreign language education, this country has introduced English as a first foreign language in its educational system since the first grade of primary school until the end of secondary education, with a broad pool of options for students at the tertiary level (cf. Jakovljević and Halas 2015, and Topalov, Bjelica Andonov and Krombholc 2015 for general English, and Dabić 2013 and Jerković 2016 for English for Specific Purposes). In terms of the global ranking of countries, Serbia was included in the survey of English proficiency in 2016 and since then it has ranked as a country of high proficiency in English. In the 2020 survey it occupies the 15th place, at the very top of the high proficiency group (EF EPI 2020).

While there are factors that offer a common ground for a comparative analysis between the two cohorts of English learners analysed (e.g., both countries

are part of the Expanding Circle, both belong or strive to belong to an economic association/union in their region which imposes a nation-wide need for communicative competence in English as a *lingua franca*, they have conducted a thorough reform of the educational system, they teach English throughout primary, secondary and tertiary education), in this paper we will rather focus on a contrastive analysis based on Hofstede's dimension of individualism/collectivism (1980; 2001). By adopting this framework as a starting point, this paper will consider the learners' motivational self-system (Dörnyei 2005; 2009b), which views L2 motivation as a critically important factor in L2 learner success, and consider its relationship with individualism/collectivism that has tentatively been established in research so far (Lamb 2012; Markus and Kitayama 1998; McEown et al. 2017; Noels et al. 2014; Taguchi, Magid and Papi 2009). Since learning another language involves both an instructional and a cultural experience (Papi 2010), this paper will present the results of a research study that included 543 students from two universities, one in Thailand and one in Serbia, with the aim to discover how the students' conceptualization of their future selves, mediated by their respective cultural orientation on the dimension of individualism/collectivism, influences their L2 learning behaviour.

Hofstede's Individualism/Collectivism Dimension of Culture

Among different theoretical approaches to the study of culture in context, Hofstede's (1980; 2001) model of six dimensions of national culture is one of the best known and most empirically tested (Brewer and Venaik 2011). The model comprises the dimensions of Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, Individualism/Collectivism, Masculinity/Femininity, Long/Short Term Orientation, and Indulgence/Restraint, offering a paradigm for describing and comparing national cultures. Of particular interest for the research reported in this paper is the dimension of individualism/collectivism, envisioned as a pole describing societal, rather than individual characteristics related to the degree to which people are integrated into groups, with individualism on the one side and collectivism on its opposite side (Hofstede 2001). In individualist cultures, the fundamental characteristic that guides behaviour and the formation of societal norms and attitudes is based on the belief that the ties between members of community are, and should be, loose. This implies that individuals are supposed to take care of themselves and their immediate family only, that they have the right to privacy and are emotionally independent from groups and organizations. Collectivism, on the other hand, is present in cultures in which individuals are "from birth onwards [...] integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, often extended families

(with uncles, aunts and grandparents) that continue protecting them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty" (Hofstede 2011, 11). Focus in collectivist cultures is on the "we"-consciousness and on belonging to one's in-group.

Turning to the relationship between individualism/collectivism and a culture's philosophy of education and educational practices, the cultures occupying two opposite poles of this dimension also view the purpose of education in terms of polar opposites – while for individualist cultures education is meant to train learners how to learn, collectivist cultures focus on teaching learners how to do (Hofstede 2011). In relation to language learning, both views of education are not necessarily congruent with the general trend towards learner-centredness (Kojima 2006), which promotes language learning as the active production of knowledge, with the learner in the centre of the process as an agent in knowledge construction, where the ultimate aim is to aid in the progress of learner's developmental and individual capacities (Bonk and Cunnigham 1998). The call for more active student involvement underlying the learner-centred approach is particularly relevant in foreign language learning contexts where emphasis is placed on developing communicative competence, which is in no small part achieved by students interacting in the foreign language, jointly negotiating meaning and helping each other (Emaliana 2017). Unlike the less visible role of facilitators that the teachers assume in a learner-centred approach, in a teacher-centred approach the teacher acts as the authority figure who transmits knowledge and information, actively managing every aspect of classroom experience, while students passively receive the information (Brown 2014; Lightweis, 2013). In such an instructional setup, the learners have fewer opportunities to interact amongst themselves and practice using the foreign language (Murphy et al. 2021), with some authors even suggesting that this approach in fact prevents students' educational development (Duckworth 2009).

The principal characteristics of individualist cultures, as put forth by Hofstede (2011), are recognizable in the learner-centred approach to language learning: learners are expected to have personal opinions and to individually process the input; speaking one's mind is encouraged, with educational tasks taking precedence over relationships. On the other hand, individual active processing of input and the construction of knowledge are hindered in contexts which value the maintenance of intergroup harmony and relationships over tasks and in which one's opinions are predetermined by in-groups, as is the case with collectivist cultures (Hofstede 2001).

Research evidence related to the cultures under scrutiny in this paper seems to suggest that the members of Thai culture are collectivistic, place high value on maintaining harmony in interpersonal relationships and have an external lo-

cus of control (Hofstede 1980; Hughes 2011; Pornpitakpan 2000). The implication of this is that the approval and compliance with others is more important for Thais than their own attitude toward a certain issue (Kini, Ramakrishna and Vijayaraman 2004). Knutson and associates (Knutson et al. 2003) report that young people remain quiet in the presence of old people rarely disagreeing with them; this is also reflected in the reported classroom behaviour where students seldom express their opinions and quietness is highly valued, which is in line with the teacher-centred approach previous research has observed in Thailand (Chayakonvikom et al. 2016; Gorowara and Lynch 2019; Meissonier, Houze and Bessiere, 2013; Wilang and Sinwongsuwat 2012). In terms of their learning goals, it is further possible to presume that a Thai student's perception of social pressures coming from the environment is likely to be a factor of particular relevance for the way he or she forms goals and directs their classroom behaviour in a culture that is based on "the assumption that groups bind and mutually obligate individuals" (Neuliep 2017, 98). On the other hand, it is unclear how precisely Serbian culture is to be classified with respect to the individualism/collectivism dichotomy. While, according to its low index on the individualism measure in Hofstede's (2001) investigation of the dimensions of national culture, Serbia is considered a collectivist society, in a cross-cultural comparison of five countries (United States, South Korea, Mexico, Russia and Serbia-Montenegro), the results place Serbia higher towards the individualism end, second only to United States (Rodriguez and Brown 2014). A possible explanation for this ambivalence in its cultural orientation is offered by Lazić (2004), who points to the historical conditions which situated Serbia at the border between the East and West, resulting in the impossibility of making the usual distinction between two cultural cores.

L2 Motivational Self-System through the Lens of Individualism/Collectivism

Over the last several decades research into learner motivation has undeniably shown, regardless of the theoretical underpinnings and research methods employed, that motivation is one of the most important factors in determining the success of foreign language learning, with researchers going as far as to claim that motivation is the key variable in achieving L2 success (e.g., Csizér 2017; Dörnyei and Ushioda 2013). Drawing on Higgins's (1987) Self-Discrepancy Theory, and Markus and Nurius's (1986) Possible Selves Theory, Dörnyei's (2005; 2009b) L2 Motivational Self-System conceptualizes L2 motivation in relation to self and identity. According to the theory, the motivational construct comprises the following three constituents:

1. Ideal self, which denotes the representation of characteristics a person would ideally like to possess, i.e., a person's conceptualization of their hopes, wishes or aspirations. In relation to L2, if the person we would like to become speaks L2, then the desire to decrease the discrepancy between our actual and ideal selves will be a powerful incentive in our efforts to learn the L2. Therefore, as a motivational force, the ideal self both instigates action towards the desired goal and facilitates self-regulatory behaviour necessary to maintain goal-directed action (Lamb 2012).

2. Ought-to self, which refers to the characteristics a person believes they ought to possess, i.e., a person's conceptualization of their obligations and sense of duty, which may or may not be similar to their hopes and wishes.

3. L2 learning experiences, which concerns context-specific motives present in the immediate learning environment and experience, including factors such as the reward structure in the classroom, the teacher's teaching style and personality, the impact of the syllabus, the peer group etc. (Dörnyei and Chan 2013, 438).

It was believed that any one of these L2 motivational elements alone was strong enough to influence students' L2 learning behaviour. For instance, a student's ideal self, together with their self-appraisal of their ability and of the potential for the attainment of the imagined goal within the given circumstances, should provide sufficient initial impetus and on-going directing influence for the student to reach their desired goal (in the context of learning a foreign language, this would mean at least a working knowledge of L2). However, if the student's ideal self is in harmony with their ought-to self, the driving forces influencing the student's motivated behaviour would come from both internal and external sources and their effects would become cumulative (Dörnyei 2009a).

Even though both ideal and ought-to selves are focused on the fulfilment of the same goal and are, thus, similar, the "predilections associated with the two different types of future selves are motivationally distinct from each other" (Dörnyei 2005, 101) – ideal self-guides focus on promotion and are concerned with one's personal growth and advancements, whereas ought-to self-guides focus on prevention and the regulation of potential or actual negative outcomes of behaviour.

The construct validity of the L2 Motivational Self-System has been investigated in different socio-cultural contexts, including Hungary (Csizér and Kormos 2009), Indonesia (Lamb 2012), Iran, Japan and China (Taguchi, Magid and Papi 2009) and Pakistan (Islam, Lamb and Chambers 2013) among others, with the results overall confirming that the model is a valid and reliable measure of motivation. Some doubt, however, remains with respect to the proper measurement and contribution of ought-to L2 self (Lamb 2012).

In investigating the effects of the ideal L2 self on students' invested effort in learning the L2, a number of studies have found that this factor exerts a significantly higher impact than ought-to L2 self (e.g., Csizér and Kormos 2009;

Kormos, Kiddle and Csizér 2011; Taguchi, Magid and Papi 2009). It is believed that ideal selves are socially constructed, since we form our aspirations and wishes by discovering what is possible from others in our surroundings – "a precondition for the development of ideal L2 selves [is] social contact with respected others who have acquired the L2 in similar circumstances and are seen to use it to good effect" (Lamb 2012, 1001). As of yet, the relationship between the culture's prevalent orientation along the individualism/collectivism dimension and the formation of ideal L2 self requires further investigation – although researchers have recognized that the way learners shape their L2 motivation is under the influence of their dominant culture (McEown et al. 2017; Noels et al. 2014), this factor is still under-researched.

The results of the contribution of ought-to L2 self in explaining the variance of motivated behaviour and invested effort of L2 learners have, so far, also not been straightforward. While some studies reported a low, positive impact (Csizér and Kormos 2009; Kong et al. 2018; Moskovsky et al. 2016; Papi 2010), others have found the impact to be negative (Kim and Kim 2014), or not significant (Kormos, Kiddle and Csizér 2011). The ought-to L2 self is assumed to play an important role in Asian learning environments because of the overall collectivist orientation in Asian cultures, a claim that is tentatively supported by research evidence (Lamb 2012; Markus and Kitayama 1998; Taguchi, Magid and Papi 2009).

So far, the strongest confirmation of the influence on learners' motivated behaviour has been established with respect to the factor of L2 learning experience, with positive attitudes and past experiences being a positive determinant of motivated learning behaviour (Csizér and Kormos 2009; Dörnyei 2019; Islam, Lamb and Chambers 2013; Lamb 2012; Papi 2010; Taguchi, Magid and Papi 2009). This factor, unlike the previous two, focuses on the learner's present experience and includes a range of situated motives present in the immediate learning environment. While research has persuasively shown the strength of the relationship between L2 learning experience and motivated behaviour, this factor, paradoxically, remains undertheorized, in part due to the fact that it did not emerge from the theory of possible selves (You, Dörnyei and Csizér 2016). In light of this, Dörnyei (2019) proposes a new engagement-specific perspective according to which the core construct of engagement is "behavioural participation in the classroom" (Skinner et al. 2008, as cited in Dörnyei 2019, 25). L2 learning experience can, thus, be better conceptualized and operationalized by using the phrase *to engage with TARGET* (Mercer and Dörnyei 2020), in which case the target the students engage with could include the school context, syllabus and the teaching materials, learning tasks, one's peers and the teacher. With respect to the cultural orientation, the two cultural contexts examined in this paper present examples of two distinct paradigmatic approaches to teaching

L2 – the learner-centred approach is mandated by the Framework of the National Curriculum of the Republic of Serbia (Okvir nacionalnog kurikuluma Republike Srbije (ONKRS), 2015, 38) and applied in Serbian classrooms (Baïdak et al. 2017; Đerić, 2019; Janković 2017; Jokanović 2015; Maksimović 2016; Raičević and Vlajković Bojić 2017; Vidaković 2016;)), whereas the teacher-centred approach appears to be dominant in Thai EFL classrooms (Chayakonvikom et al. 2016; Gorowara and Lynch 2019; Meissonier, Houze and Bessiere, 2013; Wilang and Sinwongsuwat 2012). The adopted approach to teaching L2 undoubtedly shapes the learning experiences of students, their attitudes and affective responses, which, in turn, influences their invested L2 learning effort (Csizér and Kormos 2009; Islam, Lamb and Chambers 2013; Lamb 2012). What remains to be answered is to what extent this factor has power to explain and predict the motivated behaviour relative to the dominant cultural orientation of the learner.

This paper reports on a quantitative exploratory study aimed at investigating Thai and Serbian students' motivation to learn the English language. Our goal is to analyse how students from two distinct cultural backgrounds and two different approaches to foreign language instruction, construct their motivational self-systems and how the elements that comprise their self-systems interact with each other. We are interested in ascertaining the answers to the following questions:

1. Do Serbian and Thai students differ in their motivation to learn the English language?
2. What are the interaction patterns and relative contributions of the elements of the L2 Motivational Self-System of Serbian and Thai students to their motivated learning behaviour?

Method

Participants

The participants were recruited from two state universities, one in Serbia (University of Novi Sad) and one in Thailand (Prince of Songkla University), among the humanities students who were not English majors and who took a course in English as a programme requirement. In total, 757 students at both universities completed a survey investigating various L2 motivational factors, following which they took an EFL placement test (Oxford University Press 2001). Of the initial cohort, the investigation proceeded with a total of 543 participants from both countries who were, based on the results of the test, placed on the A2 level of the Common European Framework of Reference. This step in the sampling procedure ensured that the sample was homogenous in terms of the participants' English language competence.

In terms of the gender structure of the sample, 18.4% were male students and 81.6% female students, with the distribution corresponding to the total number of female and male students in the EFL courses at the two universities (see Table 1).

Table 1. Gender structure of the sample

GENDER	Serbia	Thailand	TOTAL
Male	25	75	100
Female	81	362	443
Total	106	437	543

The gender structure of the Thai and Serbian samples was also internally controlled for appropriateness with an independent samples t-test. The results indicate that there is no statistically significant difference between the two sub-samples. The average age of the participants was 20.21, with the average age of Thai students being 20.36 and Serbian students 19.58.

Instrument

The current study employed the same version of a questionnaire adapted for use in Thailand and Serbia.[1] The questionnaire consisted of two major parts: the first part comprised questions about the students' background information (age, gender, grade in the English language), whereas the second part consisted of items measuring the students' attitudes and motivation related to learning English. The motivational items in the second part were based on the questionnaire introduced in Taguchi, Magid and Papi's (2009) paper, more specifically on the sections of the questionnaire entitled Ideal L2 Self and Ought-to L2 Self. The statements focused on students' motivated learning behaviour were based on Islam, Lamb and Chambers (2013), on the section entitled Intended Learning Effort.

In total, eighteen items were factor analysed in order to confirm the validity of the instrument. The results of the analysis indicate that with respect to multicollinearity none of the values in the correlation matrix exceeded $r = .533$. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis with a satisfactory KMO = .865, whereas Bartlett's test of sphericity was statistically significant ($p <.001$), indicating that correlation structure is adequate for factor analysis. Kaiser's criterion of eigenvalues greater than 1 yielded the following four-factor solution as the best fit for the data, accounting for 71.68% of the variance, with Cronbach's alpha as an indicator of reliability of each factor (see Graph 1):[2]

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[1] The full list of ítems is provided in the Appendix.
[2] Complete questionnaire is available upon request.

- Factor 1 – *L2 learning experience*, comprised of four items reported on a 5-point Likert scale with factor loadings from .639 to .736, α = .711 (sample item 'I like my teacher's teaching style');
- Factor 2 – *Ought-to L2 self*, comprised of four items reported on a 5-point Likert scale with factor loadings between .522 and .763, α = .637 (sample item 'I want to learn English so that I don't disappoint my parents');
- Factor 3 – *Ideal L2 self*, comprised of five items on a 5-point Likert scale with factor loadings from .535 to .712, α = .753 (sample item 'I can imagine myself speaking English with foreigners');
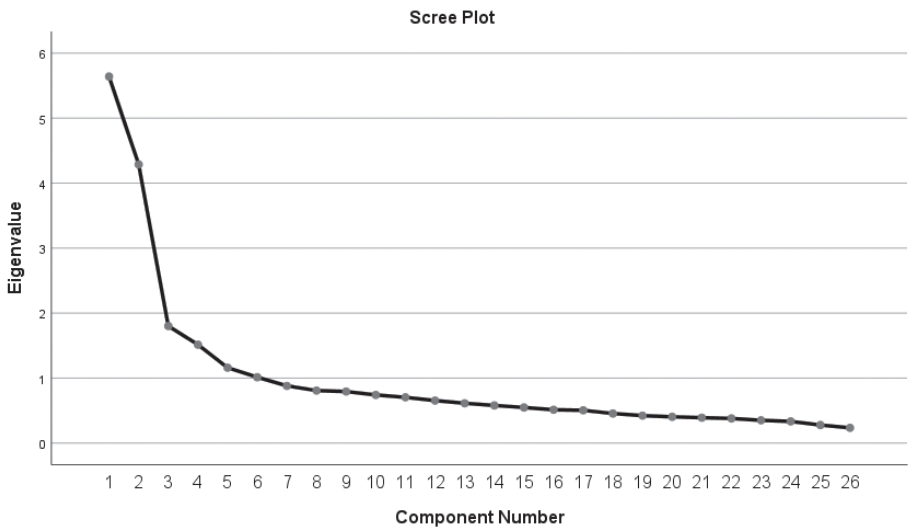
Graph 1. PCA scree plot

The items were ranked on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 – 'I completely disagree', to 5 – 'I completely agree'.

Procedure

The questionnaire was administered to students in regular English classes by the authors, with the collaboration of class teachers. The data were entered into SPPS 20. Descriptive statistics were used to calculate the motivational level of each motivational scale of the questionnaire. GLM ANOVA was used to identify the differences between the two subsamples, whereas, correlation and regression analyses were used to explore relationships between the scales for each of the subsamples.

Results

Prior to conducting relevant statistical tests, normality of the data was inspected using indices of skewness and kurtosis. The inspection revealed that no values exceeded +/-2.0, which indicated a normal distribution of data. Furthermore, univariate and multivariate outliers were examined using Standardized Z-Test and Mahalanobis Distance test (Tabachnick and Fidell 2007). Based on the results, seven multivariate outliers were identified and removed (three from the Serbian subsample and four from the Thai subsample).

A comparison of mean scores on the different motivational and attitudinal scales for the Serbian and Thai subsamples is presented in Table 2. A general linear model (GLM) ANOVA was conducted in order to identify significant differences between the two subsamples.

Table 2. Between-groups ANOVA for differences
between Serbian and Thai subsamples

Scale	Sample	Mean	SD	F	p	Effect size (η_p^2)
L2 learning experience	Serbia	4.14	.71	.495	.482	.001
	Thailand	4.10	.54			
Ought-to L2 self	Serbia	2.92	.93	118.771	.000	.180
	Thailand	3.71	.59			
Ideal L2 self	Serbia	4.17	.83	.011	.915	.000
	Thailand	4.18	.63			
Motivated learning behaviour	Serbia	3.68	.80	.445	.505	.001
	Thailand	3.73	.61			

For both groups, the highest mean scores were found with L2 learning experience and Ideal L2 self, whereas the lowest with the students' Ought-to L2 selves. Turning to differences between the subsamples, results indicate that students differed in their reported Ought-to L2 selves (F = 118.771, p = .001, η_p^2 = .180), with a higher mean discovered among Thai students. Effect size, reported above as partial eta squared, is considered large (Cohen 1988).

*Regression Analysis with Motivated Learning Behaviour
as a Criterion Variable for the Serbian Subsample*

A stepwise regression was conducted to evaluate which of the predictor variables were necessary to predict motivated learning behaviour among the Serbian subsample. We decided to employ a stepwise regression, as we were inter-

ested in discovering which of the variables are significant predictors, whereas which do not contribute uniquely to the criterion variable. Preliminary testing of the assumptions for a stepwise regression revealed the data were normally distributed, with equal variances. With respect to multicollinearity, no correlations between independent variables were higher than $r = .501$. Table 3 reports on the descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients between the investigated variables for the Serbian subsample.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients
for Serbian students

	1	2	3	4
	Motivated learning behaviour	L2 learning experience	Ought-to L2 self	Ideal L2 self
Mean	3.68	4.14	2.92	4.18
SD	0.80	0.71	0.93	0.83
1				
2	.452**			
3	.275**	.242**		
4	.479**	.473**	.501**	

Positive correlations of medium or low-to-medium strength were discovered between all of the investigated motivational scales.

Table 4 summarizes the coefficients of the conducted stepwise regression for the Serbian subsample.

Table 4. Regression coefficients for Serbian students

Model		b	$SE\ b$	B
1	(Constant)	1.749	.354	
	Ideal L2 self	.462	.083	.477***
2	(Constant)	.949	.427	
	Ideal L2 self	.329	.091	.341***
	L2 learning experience	.327	.105	.291***

$R^2 = .28$: for Step 1 $R^2\Delta = .22$, for Step 2 $R^2\Delta = .6$. *p <.05, **p <.01, ***p <.001

At step 1 of the analysis Ideal L2 self-entered into the regression equation and was significantly related to Motivated learning behaviour – $F (1, 104) = 30.914$, p <.001. The multiple correlation coefficient was .22, indicating approximately 22.9% of the variance of Motivated learning behaviour among Serbian students could be accounted for by their Ideal L2 self. L2 learning experience entered into the equation at step 2 of the analysis as a factor that is also significantly related to Motivated learning behaviour – $F (2, 103) = 21.533$, p <.001. The multiple correlation coefficient was .28, which indicates that Ideal L2 self and

L2 learning experience together account for approximately 28.7% variance of Motivated learning behaviour among Serbian students. The variable that did not enter into the equation was Ought-to L2 self at step 3 ($t = .468$, $p > .05$). Thus, the regression equation for predicting Motivated learning behaviour among the Serbian subsample can be represented as: Motivated learning behaviour = .949 + (.329) * Ideal L2 self + (.327) * L2 learning experience.

Regression Analysis with Motivated Learning Behaviour as a Criterion Variable for the Thai Subsample

Table 5 shows the results of the descriptive and correlational analyses of the motivational factors for the Thai subsample. Preliminary testing of the assumptions revealed the data were normally distributed, with equal variances and that no correlations between dependent variables were higher than $r = .530$.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients for Thai students

	1	2	3	4
	Motivated learning behaviour	L2 learning experience	Ought-to L2 self	Ideal L2 self
Mean	3.73	4.1	3.71	4.18
SD	0.61	0.54	0.59	0.62
1				
2	.528***			
3	.530***	.375***		
4	.427***	.480***	.527***	

The initial analysis revealed that all motivational factors are in positive correlations of moderate strength, with the only weak correlation discovered between L2 learning experience and Ought-to L2 self.

The results of the conducted stepwise regression for the Thai subsample are given in Table 6.

Table 6: Regression coefficients for Thai students

MODEL		b	SE b	β
1	(Constant)	1.700	.157	
	Ought-to L2 self	.546	.042	.530***
2	(Constant)	.480	.191	
	Ought-to L2 self	.399	.041	.387***
	L2 learning experience	.431	.045	.383*

$R^2 = .40$: for Step 1 $R^2\Delta = .28$, for Step 2 $R^2\Delta = .12$. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

Ought-to L2 self-entered the stepwise regression at step 1, accounting for 28.1% of variance in the Motivated learning behaviour among Thai students (F (1, 434) = 169.914, p <.001). At step 2 L2 learning experience entered into the equation as a factor that is also significantly related to Motivated learning behaviour (F (2, 433) = 148.717, p <.001). The multiple correlation coefficient was .40, which indicates that Ought-to L2 self and L2 learning experience together account for approximately 40.7% variance of Motivated learning behaviour among Thai students. The variable that did not enter into the equation was Ideal L2 self at step 3 (t = 1.496, p> .05). The final predictive model for the Thai subsample was: Motivated learning behaviour = .480 + .399 (Ought-to L2 self) + .431 (L2 learning experience) + .068 (Perceived obstacles).

Discussion

In examining the prevalence of motivational factors in the self-systems of our participants, it is apparent that, overall, the students from both subsamples have positive L2 learning experiences and developed ideal L2 selves. High overall means for the factor of L2 learning experience signal that the relative approaches to teaching L2 are well-received by the students. Their expectations of what the structure of tasks, goals, rewards in an L2 classroom should look like are met, further promoting the established L2 teaching approach. The differences between Thai and Serbian students were discovered with respect to their ought-to L2 selves, which were statistically higher for the Thai subsample. As far as the ought-to self is concerned, this falls in line with the collectivistic culture patterns of Thailand, which has been supported by several research studies (e.g., Lamb, 2012; Markus and Kitayama 1998; Taguchi, Magid and Papi 2009). In other words, the collectivistic pattern exerts a powerful influence over students' conceptualization of their future selves, which stems from societal models of behaviour and external pressures coming from the family and the society in general. The factor of ideal L2 self is high in both subsamples. Regardless of the culture this indicates that the participants are young adults who take responsibility for their choices and who can easily imagine themselves as future English users. Since English is an elective course, not a compulsory one, the choice to take English, together with high scores on ideal L2 self, signals the students' wish to approach the idea of a native English speaker, but, for Thai students the societal pressure overrides this ideal. The results further show that both subsamples show moderate level of preparedness to invest effort into learning English. This finding is not unlike the results of Islam et al. (2013) and Lamb (2012), who also noted moderate intended effort among university students.

With the Serbian subsample all of the motivational factors are in medium or low-to-medium correlation. Motivated learning behaviour is accounted for by ideal L2 self and L2 learning experience, with the former accounting for a greater percentage of variation in the model. Ought-to L2 self had no power in explaining the students' motivation to learn English. The strength of the factor of ideal self in explaining the motivation to learn English in contrast with ought-to self is in line with Csizér and Kormos (2009), Kormos, Kiddle and Csizér (2011), and Taguchi, Magid and Papi (2009). The relative contribution of the factor of L2 learning experience was lower than that of ideal self, which is somewhat different from previous studies, although the factor has been identified as significant in the students' overall motivated behaviour. Although Serbia is at the borderline between the individualistic and collectivistic culture pattern (Lazić 2004), these results indicate that younger generations, unlike Thai students, are less attuned to societal pressure, which shapes their ought-to L2 self. Turning to the factor of L2 learning experience, it has been found to influence Serbian students' motivated learning behaviour, which falls in line with Topalov, Radić-Bojanić and Bruner (2016) who found that "Serbian students have more favourable attitudes towards collaborative tasks and participate in them more often, [while] Thai students maintain a teacher-centred approach and express reluctance towards collaboration in foreign language learning" (459–460). Caution is, however, necessary in interpreting these results, particularly with respect to ought-to L2 self. The ambiguity identified in previous research concerning the relationship between ought-to L2 self and learners' motivated behaviour (some studies found a negligible connection (e.g., Islam et al., 2013, Taguchi, Magid and Papi 2009), while other studies (e.g., Csizér and Kormos 2009; Kormos, Kiddle and Csizér 2011) found no relationship) may be due to the way this construct is identified and operationalized. A reenvisioning of this motivational dimension, perhaps along the lines suggested by Teimouri (2017), may provide a clearer picture of learners' L2 motivation.

L2 learning experience is the strongest predictor of motivated behaviour for Thai students, which accords with Csizér and Kormos (2009), Kormos, Kiddle and Csizér (2011), Papi (2010), and You and Dörnyei (2016). Ought-to L2 self further accounts for Thai students' motivated behaviour and it is the combination of these two factors that explains roughly 40% in its variation. Previous studies have also found the factor of ought-to L2 self to be a significant contributor to the variation in learners' motivated behaviour in Asian contexts (e.g., Taguchi, Magid and Papi (2009) compared Iran, China and Japan, while Islam et al. (2013) investigated the Pakistani context), supporting the view that this component, as Islam and associates point out (Islam et al. 2013), may be more relevant in Asian than in western contexts due to the principles of collectivism. Ideal L2 self was high among the Thai students, however, its contribution to

the overall model was not significant. We believe that this is, again, due to the powerful influence of collectivism, whereby classroom climate possibly perpetuates its principles and the interaction between the teacher and students and among students themselves fosters face-saving strategies of avoidance and compromise. As Rojjanaprapayon, Chiemprapha, and Kanchanakul (2004) found, Thai culture is characterized by specific communication strategies in cases of face-threating situations, which implies that rather "than seeing peer feedback as an opportunity to develop their language skills, the students seem to identify this form of collaboration with an act of criticizing their colleagues and pointing out their mistakes, and, in turn, feel discomfort during these tasks" (Topalov, Radić-Bojanić and Bruner 2016, 458). In a similar Asian context, Lamb (2012) found that Indonesian students also had highly developed ideal L2 selves permeated with influential social motives which were powerful enough to motivate learners to learn English for the sake of their wider community. The idea put forth by Islam et al. (2013) that "we might expect to find National Interest acting as a stronger motive for English learning in Eastern cultures than Western" (10) is echoed in the Basic Education Core Curriculum from 2008 which emphasizes the need that "each Thai citizen will become a law abiding individual, physically healthy, capable of critical thinking, knowledgeable, and highly moral" (Wilang and Sinwongsuwat 2012, 249).

Another possible interpretation of the relative power of ideal L2 self in the reported motivated behaviour of Serbian students and the ought-to L2 self in the motivated behaviour of Thai students may be found in the context sensitive nature of future self-guides, as proposed by Oyserman, Destin and Novin (2015). According to these authors, whether the students perceive the educational context, or in this case the context of learning English in a university environment, as success-likely or failure-likely exerts a strong influence on their future self-images. Ideal self-images are more motivating in an environment that people perceive as success-likely, whereas in contexts where they feel more likely to fail, ought-to self-guides are more motivationally powerful. Keeping in mind the different rankings on the English Proficiency Surveys (EF EPI 2012; 2020), it is possible that Serbian students expect to become successful users of English, while Thai students do not share this expectation.

On the basis of all the presented results we can conclude that, overall, the reported motivated learning behaviour of both subsamples is at a moderate level, but the differences lie in different ways of constructing motivational self-systems. For Thai students, the most powerful factors include the learning experience and ought-to L2 self, whereas for Serbian students it is their ideal L2 self together with the learning experience that shapes their motivated behaviour. This lends credence to the assertions put forth by McEown et al. (2017) and Noels et al. (2014) about the influence of the relative cultural orientation on

students' L2 learning behaviour and intended effort. Namely, in a Thai culture, which observes collectivistic principles (Hofstede 2001; McEown et al. 2017; Morakul and Frederik 2001), ought-to L2 self-exerts a strong influence on their L2 motivation, while in Serbia, which is generally considered to be at a crossroads between collectivism and individualism (Lazić 2003), this research points to stronger individualism among students. Learning experience is also a salient factor in both subsamples, but for two educational contexts the forces at the root of educational systems are fundamentally different. In Serbia, previous research has shown the dominance of a student-centred approach (Baïdak et al. 2017; Jokanović 2015; Radić-Bojanić, Topalov and Sinwongsuwat 2015; Raičević and Vlajković Bojić 2017), while Thailand, despite the 2008 Reform which favours and promotes a student-centred approach, remains teacher-centred (Chayakonvikom et al. 2016; Meissonier, Houze and Bessiere, 2013; Wilang and Sinwongsuwat 2012), which we believe is due to the collectivist cultural pattern which overpowers attempts to reform the educational system and make classroom work more interactive and egalitarian.

Conclusion

The aim of this research was to investigate the motivational L2 self-systems of students from Serbia and Thailand. Through a quantitative exploratory study we established that students from Serbia construct their motivational self-systems on the basis of their ideal L2 selves, which means that their conceptualization of their future self relies on internally established incentives and imagery, while Thai students shape their motivational self-system on the basis of the ought-to L2 self, indicating focus on prevention and regulation of potential negative outcomes, both stemming from external, societal incentives. However, in both contexts we have also established that learning experience plays a major role in shaping the students' motivational behaviour, but for these two countries it is fundamentally different. On the one hand, in Serbia learning experience is guided by individualist principles and the communicative approach to language teaching (Đerić 2019; Janković 2017; Jokanović 2015; Maksimović 2016; Vidaković 2016; Radić-Bojanić 2020), which encourages individual work, pair and group work, a lot of interaction and feedback, all of which afford students plenty of opportunities to practice the foreign language. On the other hand, the Thai learning experience rests on a teacher-centred approach (Chayakonvikom et al. 2016; Gorowara and Lynch 2019; Meissonier, Houze and Bessiere, 2013; Wilang and Sinwongsuwat 2012), which promotes the one-to-many communicational pattern that is not conducive to practicing communication in the foreign language. The direct consequence of this is the stark difference in the ranking

of Serbia and Thailand on the English Proficiency Survey, where the former occupies the 15th place in the high proficiency band and the latter 89th in the low proficiency band.

In light of the general conclusions put forth, it is also necessary to consider the limitations of this research, which mainly concern the adopted research design. Our investigation was cross-sectional, providing insights into students' motivational factors at a single moment in time when the data were collected, which is why we believe a longitudinal study, along with participants' narratives of their experiences, may offer a more comprehensive picture. Also, the convenient sampling procedure resulted in unbalanced samples, which may have skewed the results. This was, hopefully, mitigated by the careful consideration of the statistical methods used in analysis.

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Appendix:
The items in the four-factor solution of the questionnaire

L2 learning experience

I think the English course content is interesting.

I like my teacher's teaching style.

I think there is a good balance between communicative tasks and grammar tasks.

I think there should be more tasks where we cooperate and communicate with other students in English classes. (reverse coded)

Ought-to L2 self

I have to study English, because, if I do not study it my parents will be disappointed with me.

It will have a negative impact on my life if I don't learn English.

Studying English is important to me because other people will respect me more if I have a knowledge of English.

I study English because close friends of mine think it is important.

Ideal L2 self

I can imagine a situation where I am speaking English with foreigners.

Whenever I think of my future career, I imagine myself using English.

I can imagine myself living abroad and using English effectively for communicating.

The things I want to do in the future require me to use English.

I can imagine myself communicating in English fluently.

Motivated learning behaviour

It is important for me to learn English.

I am doing my best to learn English.

If I have access to English-speaking TV stations and movies, I try to watch them often.

I try to listen to music in English and watch English-speaking films as often as possible.

I am prepared to spend a lot of time in order to learn English.

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*Kontrastivno istraživanje motivacionih sistema
u učenju engleskog jezika kod studenata iz Tajlanda i Srbije*

Cilj ovog rada jeste da, bazirajući se na teoriji motivacionog self-sistema za učenje stranog jezika, istraži kako tajlandski i srpski učenici konstruišu svoje motivacione sisteme prilikom učenja engleskog kao stranog. Od posebnog interesa za istraživanje objavljeno u ovom radu jeste dimenzija individualizma/kolektivizma koja opisuje stepen u kojem su pripadnici kulture integrisani u grupe, pri čemu se individualizam nalazi na jednom kraju zamišljenog kontinuuma, dok se s druge, suprotne strane nalazi kolektivizam. Posebna pažnja u radu posvećena je različitim filozofijama obrazovanja zabeleženim u kulturama koje se nalaze na suprotnim stranama kontinuuma. Za individualističke kulture cilj obrazovanja jeste obučiti učenike kako da uče, dok kolektivističke kulture obučavaju učenike kako da rade. S obzirom na kulturnu orijentaciju, dva kulturna konteksta razmatrana u ovom radu predstavljaju primere dva različita paradigmatska pristupa nastavi stranog jezika – u srpskim učionicama kao središni akter u procesu nastave nalazi se učenik, dok je u učionicama stranog jezika na Tajlandu dominantna nastavnikova uloga. Usvojeni pristup nastavi stranog jezika nesumnjivo oblikuje iskustva učenja učenika, njihove stavove i afektivne odgovore, što, zauzvrat, utiče na njihov uloženi napor tokom učenja. Ono što ostaje nerazjašnjeno jeste u kojoj meri ovaj faktor može da objasni i predvidi motivisano ponašanje u odnosu na dominantnu kulturnu orijentaciju učenika. Iz tog razloga ukupno 543 studenta iz Tajlanda i Srbije koji uče engleski kao strani u okviru univerzitetske nastave popunilo je upitnik od 18 stavki koji je imao za cilj da ispita relevantne motivacione faktore u okviru teorije motivacionog self-sistema. Iako su studenti sa oba univerziteta prijavili srednji nivo motivisanog ponašanja i snažan uticaj dosadašnjeg iskustva u učenju engleskog jezika tokom svojih studija, najuticajniji faktori u izgradnji self-sistema za dva ispitana uzorka bili su fundamentalno različiti. Dok srpski studenti konstruišu svoje motivacione self-sisteme na osnovu svog "idealnog-ja", tajlandski studenti oblikuju svoje motivacione self-sisteme na osnovu "očekivanog-ja". Ova razlika ukazuje na nastavne pristupe usvojene u istraživanim okruženjima, gde je u Srbiji kontekst nastave vođen komunikativnim pristupom u učenju jezika, dok nastavni kontekst u tajlandskim učionicama, pod uticajem kolektivističke kulturne orijentacije, počiva na pristupu usmerenom na nastavnika.

Ključne reči: motivacioni self-sistem u učenju stranog jezika, individualizam/kolektivizam, pristup usmeren na učenika/nastavnika, Tajland, Srbija, engleski jezik kao strani

*Les self-systèmes motivationnels dans l'apprentissage
de l'anglais chez des étudiants de Serbie
et de Thaïlande – étude contrastive*

L'objectif de ce travail est d'explorer, en s'appuyant sur la théorie du self-système motivationnel pour l'apprentissage des langues étrangères, comment les apprenants thaïlandais et les apprenants serbes construisent leurs systèmes motivationnels lors de l'apprentissage de l'anglais comme langue étrangère. D'un intérêt particulier pour cette recherche est la dimension de l'individualisme/ collectivisme qui décrit le degré d'intégration dans des groupes des représentants d'une culture, et où l'individualisme se trouve à un bout imaginé du continuum, alors qu'à l'autre bout se trouve le collectivisme. Une attention particulière est ici consacrée aux différentes philosophies de l'éducation notées dans des cultures se trouvant à des bouts opposés du continuum. Pour les cultures individualistes l'objectif de l'éducation est d'apprendre aux élèves comment apprendre, alors que les cultures collectivistes apprennent aux élèves comment travailler. Compte tenu de l'orientation culturelle, deux contextes culturels étudiés dans ce travail représentent des exemples de deux approches paradigmatiques différentes de l'apprentissage des langues étrangères – dans les classes serbes l'élève est considéré comme l'agent central du processus de l'enseignement, alors que dans les classes de langue étrangères en Thaïlande, c'est le rôle de l'enseignant qui est dominant. L'approche de l'enseignement des langues étrangères adoptée façonne sans aucun doute les expériences d'apprentissage des élèves, leurs opinions et réponses affectives, ce qui, en retour, influence l'effort investi au cours de l'apprentissage. Ce qui reste non élucidé, c'est dans quelle mesure ce facteur peut expliquer et prévoir le comportement motivé par rapport à l'orientation culturelle dominante des élèves. C'est pour cette raison qu'au total 543 étudiants de Thaïlande et de Serbie apprenant l'anglais comme langue étrangère dans le cadre de l'éducation supérieure, ont rempli le questionnaire composé de 18 entrées et ayant pour l'objectif d'examiner les facteurs motivationnels pertinents dans le cadre de la théorie du self-système motivationnel. Bien que les étudiants des deux universités aient attesté un niveau moyen de comportement motivé et une forte influence de leur expérience préalable dans l'apprentissage de l'anglais au cours de leurs études, les facteurs les plus influents dans la construction du self-système pour les deux échantillons étudiés étaient fondamentalement différents. Alors que les étudiants serbes construisent leurs self-systèmes motivationnels à partir d'un « moi idéal », les étudiants thaïlandais façonnent leurs self-systèmes motivationnels à partir d'un « moi attendu ». Cette différence rend compte des approches d'enseignement adoptées dans les milieux étudiés, où le contexte de l'enseignement en Serbie est mené par l'approche commu-

nicative dans l'apprentissage des langues, alors que le contexte de l'enseigne-ment dans les classes en Thaïlande sous l'influence de l'orientation culturelle collectiviste, repose sur une approche orientée vers l'enseignant.