Open Research Online
The Open University’s repository of research publications and other research outputs

UK language learner motivation in the age of Global English: what motivation is left?

How to cite:

For guidance on citations see FAQs

© 2009 Ursula Lanvers
Version: Version of Record

Copyright and Moral Rights for the articles on this site are retained by the individual authors and/or other copyright owners. For more information on Open Research Online’s data policy on reuse of materials please consult the policies page.

oro.open.ac.uk
L1 = English Language Learners:

• Motivation?

• Effect of Global English?

• Distance & Campus learners?

Dr Ursula Lanvers
Collaborators:
Newcastle: Prof Florence Myles
Durham: Theresa Federici
Rationale:
Empirical research so far:

- emphasis on learning English as a foreign language
- very little on L2 motivation at Tertiary level
- no comparative studies of Campus/Distance students
Societal/educational background:

• Language learning decline in UK at Secondary & Tertiary level


• spread of Global English: umbrella term for varieties of E. used as foreign, second & lingua franca

• Englishisation: influence of E. in non-E. speaking countries (studying in Europe..)

• monolingual UK culture

What motivation is left for L1 English speakers?

- Englishisation & Global English:
  - Effect of English infiltration into L2?
  - L2 learner aspiration to speak & integrate into community:
    - Ubiquity of Global English culture in contrast to availability of other language cultures: how to develop L2 integrative orientation?
    - Englishisation as
      - hindrance (‘They just want to speak English with me’)?
      - threat to integrative motivation?
      - distorting & spoiling L2 culture?
Theoretical background: LL motivation research

• the psycho-cognitive model of L2 motivation: Dörnyei
  – emphasis on immediate learning context (school, teacher..)
  – motivation as process
  – Integrative orientation & self-image as L2 speaker: current revalidation

Self Determination Theory:
- competence (the ability to attain internal and external outcomes, the ability to be efficacious about them)
- relatedness (the need to develop secure and satisfying social connections with others)
- autonomy (the need to self-initiate and self-regulate)

more suited for: adult learner, post-compulsory, independent study

Research design

• Comparative: OU, Durham & Newcastle University: Beginners only
• questionnaire with demographics, 12 motivation & 6 Global English questions
• informed by focus groups & pilot studies
• 2 collection points for OU students:
  – Start of course: Newcastle, Durham, OU
  – End of course: OU
The data

The diagram shows the count of enrollments by language at different universities. The universities included are OU, Durham, Newcastle, Durham Non-Language, and Newcastle Non-Language. The languages represented are French, German, Spanish, Russian, Italian, Arabic, Quechua, Chinese, Japanese, Welsh, Dutch, Catalan, and Portuguese.
Reliability

• Chronbach Alpha of all 18 questions: .851

• Principal Components Analysis of all 18 questions: .5337
No. of respondents

- OU X 1 238  5 languages
- (OU X 2 202  5 languages)
- Durham 223  8 languages
- Newcastle 238  14 languages
Prior target language contact

• Most students (61%) little contact with speakers of target language
• **Lowest contact Durham** (72 % report no contact, 56% among non-linguists)
• 70% no prior contact at Newcastle (65% among non-linguists).
• OU students highest prior contact (only 47% no contact)
• T-test: significant (sig.000) in all 4 questions: OU students more contact with target language speakers.
Self rated language competencies

- Prior to studying: students self-rated language competencies (fluency in all L2s they know)
- Durham students report most, OU students fewest, and to a much less fluent degree than Campus students (sign.000)
- Worthy of note:
  - OU: high prior L2 contact & low self rated language competencies
  - Campus: low prior L2 contact & high self rated language competencies
**Means** (Likert scale 1-5: 1=agree strongly, 5=disagree strongly)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation questions</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td>2.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accomplishment</td>
<td>2.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>2.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual stimulation</td>
<td>1.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrative</td>
<td>1.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Global English question</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ubiquity of English use in L2</td>
<td>3.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ubiquity of Global English</td>
<td>2.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global English as threat</td>
<td>2.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2 speakers’ use of English</td>
<td>2.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison to European learners</td>
<td>1.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LL worth while despite Global English</td>
<td>1.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Integrative Orientation:

- Highly motivated
- mean at OU: 1.88, at Durham:1.73.
- Non-linguists at Durham & Newcastle as well as Newcastle linguists: mean 2.0
- differences Campus-Distance not significant
**Instrumental Orientation:**

- Studying for a Qualification:
  - mean is 3.06 at OU and 2.80 at other Universities

- Significant difference (sig .001)

- OU students less motivated by qualifications
Instrumental Orientation

Target language as important world language

- mean 2.27 at OU and 2.04 at other Unis

• difference (sig .003) between OU and Campus students, OU students viewing the target language as less important in the world

• Results depend largely on type of languages (small vs large, poor vs rich L1 community)
Instrumental Orientation

Professional development seen as important:

• Mean 3.16 at OU, 2.35 at other Unis
• Sig. 000
• Sig. 000 also if all 3 Instrumental questions taken together
• OU students > lower Instrumental Motivation
I can learn languages to a high standard
I am a good linguist

> Accomplishment Construct

- Overall students see themselves as good linguists.
- Mean 2.73 at OU, 2.45 at other Unis
- OU students: more patchy:
  - 23% neutral response (as opposed to 18% in cohort)
  - 10% disagree (as opposed to only 5% in cohort).
- OU students: lower perception of linguistic accomplishment (sig .000) in 2 of 3 questions
- only ‘Wanting to speak with fluency’ scored equal for OU/Campus
I like the intellectual stimulation of LL. LL to keep my brain active

> Intellectual Stimulation Construct:

• *intellectual challenge*: OU mean 1.86, other Unis: 1.72, = small difference .020
• *LL X to keep brain active*: OU mean 1.80, other Unis 2.19, = Sig. difference .000
• BUT: Both questions together:
  • No sig. difference (mean at OU 1.88 vs 1.96 at other Unis
Valuing language learning as part of education

>Knowledge construct:

• 73% of all students view knowing a FL as part of good education
• No sig. difference between Unis
• mean 2.15 at OU, 2.03 at other Unis
• non-linguists agree more (80%) than linguists (70%)= sig.000
Global English &

Englishisation

questions
English in the target language

- Even native speakers of X find it hard to avoid using English words in many contexts, e.g. IT, business.
  - somewhat dependant on dependant on target language (sig. 019)

- English words are used all the time in X.
  - sig. 000: dependant on target language

- The smaller the language/close proximity to E speaking country. the higher the perceived infiltration

>Dependent on target language studied
English as a threat to X?

- No Uni differences but polarised response:
  - 45% agree (strongly)
  - 29% no opinion
  - 28% disagree (strongly)

- Sig.000: dependant on language studied. > Students of Welsh and Quechua > small, high contact with English highest agreement to this statement

- Students of larger languages varied responses
Perception of Global English

- *Is English spoken everywhere?* polarised response:
  - 43% agree (strongly)
  - 39% disagree (strongly)
- No sig. differences Campus/OU
- Not dependent on language studied
Global English makes learning other languages unnecessary

- 86% disagree/disagree strongly
- No sig. differences Campus/OU
- not dependent on target language
British students as as capable of learning languages as Europeans

- 84% agree/agree strongly, 86% at the OU
- No sig. Uni difference
- not dependent on target language
Age

• Even native speakers of X find it hard to avoid using English words in many contexts, e.g. IT, business:
  - sig. 003: Older students are more likely to agree.

• British students are just as capable of learning languages as other Europeans:
  - younger students tended to agree more with this statement (sig.038)
Summary

• Instrumental Orientation & Accomplishment quite low
• Intellectual stimulation & integrative orientation high
• Awareness of Englishisation does not interfere with desire to learn L2
• Learning languages despite Global English: great consensus
• English as threat to L2? polarised responses:
  – similarly large groups: agree/neutral/disagree
  – somewhat dependant on target language studied
Differences OU-Campus

Campus: prior knowledge of languages: highest at Durham, then Newcastle

Campus students (esp. Durham) have less prior language contact

Campus students more motivated in nearly all respects (intellectual stimulation, knowledge L2 culture) and significantly in:

- ling. accomplishment
- Instrumental
Discussion/Future research

- Impact of Global English?
- Self Determination Theory & motivation?
- Comparison to European learners?
- …
• Motivation results & Self Determination Theory

• Global English results & Self Determination Theory
Motivation results & Self Determination Theory

• **Competence**: Lower accomplishment scores in OU students are a concern:
  – a vicious circle?
  – due to lack of prior ling. experience?
  – Prior contact with L2 community: little/no linguistic effect?

• **Autonomy**: Intellectual stimulation/self development important > positive as
  – Independent from Global English movement
  – largely independent from learning environment
Motivation results &
Self Determination Theory

• Relatedness: Integrative Orientation
  – little exposure to L2 culture (Quechua, Japanese…): How can it develop? Distorted perception of target culture?
  – re-define: Emphasis on L2 Ideal Speaker instead (Dörnyei) and/or LL community not target language L1 speakers (Lamb)
  – how to support LL integrative orientation?

• Relatedness: Instrumental orientation:
  - clearly less important for Distance learner
  - accept or try to increase?
Global English and SDT

• **Autonomy**: Does perception of Englishisation increase some L2 motivations (learning *despite*, creating new learner identity…)?

• **Relatedness**: consensus that LL is worth while despite Global English: Why? Is this belief Instrumental? Integrative? or linked to autonomy aspects such as personal/intellectual development?
Global English and SDT

• **Competence**: positive comparison to European LL- good but why? > research

  • contrast to actual UK linguistic achievement
    – Explore possible student rationales:
      ‘We are as capable but don’t achieve as much because…’
      • languages are taught wrongly: system failure
      • historic reasons, Europhobia
      • Global English & Englishisation impeding motivation
      • ...


Relevance for language teaching at HE?

- instrumental motivation lower than expected > raise awareness?
- Global English not impeding motivation in self selected linguists > increase this awareness in other students?
- positive comparison to European learners > foster attitude, defy popular beliefs
- long term goals:
  - increase LL uptake/ fight decline
  - safeguard plurality of language offers & uptake in UK
Thanks for listening

u.lanvers@open.ac.uk