

# 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?

### Other

How to cite:

Lanvers, Ursula (2009). UK language learner motivation in the age of Global English: what motivation is left? Department of Language & Linguistics, Newcastle University.

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](http://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
- language education optional at KS4 (2004)
- 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

Coleman, J. A. (2009) 'Why the British do not learn languages: myths and motivation in the United Kingdom', *Language Learning Journal*, 37:1, 111 -127

# 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

- Dörnyei, Z. (2001). *Teaching and researching motivation*. Harlow, England: Longman.
- Csizier & Dörnyei (2005) The internal structure of language learning motivations and its relationship with language choice and learning effort. *Modern Languages Journal* 89, 1, pp.19-36.

## 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

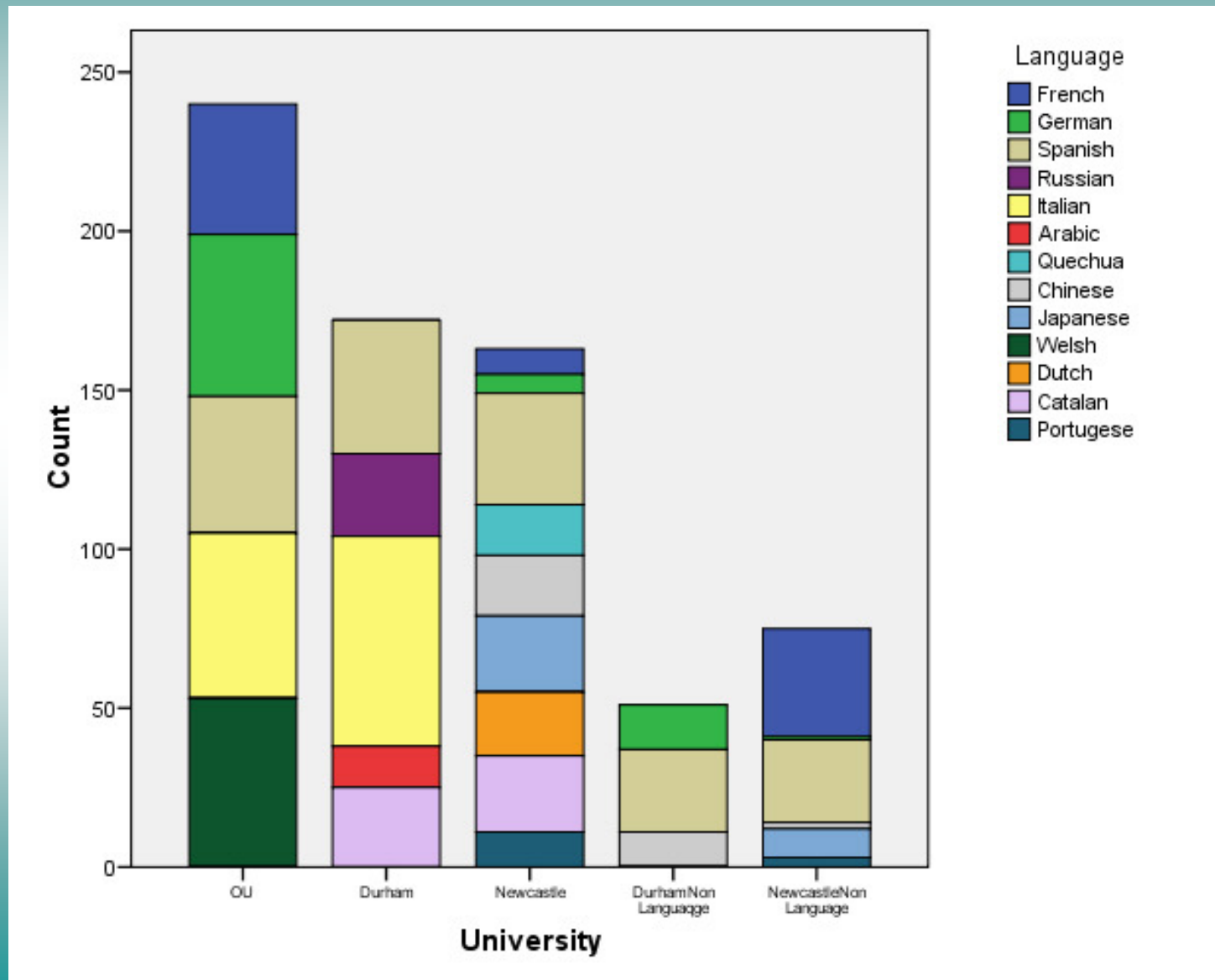
Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The what and the why of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry*, 11, 4, 227–268.

# 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



# 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)

**Motivation questions Mean**

Instrumental 2.76

Accomplishment 2.54

Knowledge 2.07

Intellectual stimulation 1.93

Integrative 1.90

**Global English question Mean**

Ubiquity of English use in L2 3.23

Ubiquity of Global English 2.93

Global English as threat 2.79

L2 speakers' use of English 2.20

Comparison to European learners 1.85

LL worth while despite Global English 1.69

# 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](mailto:u.lanvers@open.ac.uk)

