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

Other

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.
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
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
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