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Pakistani postgraduate students' orientations for learning English as a second language: A factor analytic study



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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 25 July 2014

Received in revised form 31 March 2015

Accepted 17 April 2015

Available online 15 May 2015

Keywords:

L2 orientations

Factor analysis

English as a lingua franca

Pakistan

ABSTRACT

Given that the higher-level goals or 'orientations' of second language learners impact their motivation to learn, they are of consequent interest to researchers. Once conceptualized simply as either 'integrative' or 'instrumental', these orientations are increasingly understood to be more complex, particularly since the L2 in question is often English; as a global lingua franca, English is extending its range of functions around the world, while also becoming 'deterritorialized'. In contexts such as Japan and Pakistan, the latter the setting for this study, new orientations have recently been identified. However, research methods employed have not always included factor analytic techniques, which are particularly valuable for finding underlying structures in complex data. 500 postgraduates in a public university in North-Western Pakistan were surveyed and their responses subjected to factor analysis. 11 factors were identified: 'Education-Prestige', 'Identification', 'Receptive L2 Use for Non-Professional Purposes', 'Further Study-Work Abroad', 'Media-Instrumental', 'Travel-Friendship', 'Extrinsic-Ideal L2 Self', 'Business', 'National Interest', 'Intrinsic', 'International Posture and Learning L2 for Local Purposes'. Findings confirm the newly-discovered 'National Interest' orientation in this context and point towards the emergence of an 'L2 Indigenous Integrative' orientation that relates to using L2 for local purposes. Theoretical, methodological and pedagogical implications are discussed.

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1. Introduction

It has long been recognised that motivation is crucial for successful second language (L2) learning (e.g. Noels, Pelletier, Clément, & Vallerand, 2000; Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2009). Accordingly, L2 motivation researchers have directed their attention at the question as to *why* the language is being learned, focusing for example on the learners' *drives, goals, reasons* for learning or, to use a more technical term introduced by Gardner and Lambert (1959), their *orientations*; this aspect of motivation, learners' L2 *orientations* and in particular with regard to English, are the focus here.

Despite considerable research, there is still much we do not know about L2 *orientations*. Once conceived in terms of an *integrative/instrumental* dichotomy in the work of Gardner and Lambert (1959, 1972) and Gardner (1985, 2001), it is

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increasingly recognised that L2 *orientations* are more complex, appearing to vary considerably according to a variety of contextual, linguistic and learner factors worldwide, e.g. as evident in Bradford (2007) and Islam, Lamb, and Chambers (2013). Gaining a deeper understanding of these orientations seems particularly important since any insights gained might then inform key decisions in educational provision, such as the teaching methodologies employed or the educational materials designed. Amongst L2 *orientations*, those with regard to learning English might seem of particular interest, given the shifting status of this language in a globalizing world (Crystal, 2003), in which it seems to be increasingly ‘deterritorialized’ (Islam et al., 2013; Jenkins, 2006; Saraceni, 2008).

This article sets out to explore the L2 orientations of Pakistani postgraduates learning English in a relatively remote part of North-Western Pakistan using factor analysis. It is thus distinct from recent studies set in Pakistan that have used descriptive analysis to explore the L2 orientations of undergraduate and college students in another province, the Punjab (Islam et al., 2013; Shahbaz & Liu, 2012; Waseem & Jibeen, 2013). Our study makes use of factor analysis with the purpose of identifying the underlying structures within a large set of items related to L2 orientations (Dörnyei, 2007), which might otherwise seem large, unwieldy and “very difficult to interpret” (Robson, 2002, p. 433). While factor analysis has been central to important studies in the history of L2 motivation research in other contexts (e.g. Bradford, 2007; Clément & Kruidenier, 1983; Dörnyei, 1990; Gardner & Lambert, 1959), it does not seem to have featured in previous studies of L2 motivation in Pakistan. It may, though, be particularly useful here, given that the complexity of inter-relating L2 orientations in this country has increasingly been recognised, e.g. by Shahbaz and Liu (2012) and Islam et al. (2013). We present the findings of our study below after reviewing the literature and describing the research methodology in some detail.

2. Literature review

When Gardner and Lambert (1959), working in a Canadian context, identified the roles of *integrative* and *instrumental* orientations in shaping L2 learning, their work had a considerable impact on fellow researchers. They initially suggested that the integrative orientation, which refers to “willingness to be like valued members of the language community” (p. 271) had a greater role in influencing successful L2 learning experiences than the instrumental orientation, which relates to “the potential pragmatic gains of L2 proficiency, such as getting a better job or a higher salary” (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 41). However, as Dörnyei (1990) points out, given the context in which this research was conducted, with English-speaking Canadians learning French, the country’s second official language, through immersion, a variety of unique sociolinguistic factors may have shaped the results. In his own study of 134 Hungarians learning English as a *foreign* language, Dörnyei (1990) found that highly instrumentally-motivated learners were more likely to achieve L2 success at an intermediate level, although, to achieve greater proficiency, integrative motivation was also required. While utilizing Gardner and Lambert’s (1959) terms, Dörnyei (1990, p. 70) described these orientations as “broad tendencies ... comprising context-specific clusters of loosely related components”. In recent years, the conceptualization and explanatory power of the *integrative/instrumental* dichotomy in a changing world has increasingly been questioned.

As early as 1977 (e.g. Oiler and Perkins, 1978, cited in Clément, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1994, p. 420), it was already clear that there was ambiguity as to how certain orientations such as travelling abroad and learning more about English art, literature and culture were to be clustered. It was recognised that whether they were to be labelled integrative or instrumental might depend on “the intent and understanding of the respondent” (Clément & Kruidenier, 1983, p. 274). Similar challenges in interpretation have been highlighted more recently by Lamb (2004) in a mixed methods study of 219 secondary school students in Indonesia. Lamb concluded that, though traditionally distinct in the work of Gardner (1985, 2001), integrative and instrumental orientations were almost indistinguishable in his data, leading him to question the relevance of the traditional conceptualization of the ‘integrative’ orientation in a globalizing world in which English is losing its association with particular Anglophone countries. Writing in a South African context in which English is learned for purposes other than integration with a dominant English-speaking group, Coetzee-Van Rooy (2006) similarly suggests that the traditional notion of the ‘integrative’ orientation has very little explanatory power.

How, then, are L2 orientations for learning English currently conceptualized? One suggestion from Lamb’s (2004, p. 3) study is that “individuals may aspire towards a ‘bicultural’ identity which incorporates an English-speaking globally-involved version of themselves in addition to their local L1-speaking self”. This insight draws on research into identification processes (e.g. Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2009), and realization of the *ideal* and/or *ought-to* selves, the former referring to a learner’s vision of a future L2-using self in which personal wishes, hopes and aspirations are projected, the latter referring to a future self in which significant others’ sense of duty and expectations are embodied (Islam et al., 2013). Ushioda and Dörnyei (2009) hypothesize that if L2 proficiency is an integral part of one’s *ideal* or *ought-to* self, this will act as a powerful motivator, reducing the discrepancy between current and possible future selves. As Lamb (2004) recognises in his Indonesian context, this identity fulfilment might be shaped by the role-models available in a globalizing world in which the role of English is changing. With aspirations such as understanding pop songs, using computers and studying or travelling abroad, which might all be linked and related to English, the learners in Lamb’s study might be looking for role-models to middle-class Indonesians from urban areas who are already in possession of the global identity they aspire to.

L2 orientations for English identified by other researchers include, in a Japanese context, ‘international posture’ (Yashima, 2002), a term designed to indicate “interest in foreign or international affairs, willingness to go overseas to study or work, readiness to interact with intercultural partners and ... a non-ethnocentric attitude toward different cultures” (p. 57). Yashima (2009) indicates this orientation might be particularly relevant to contexts such as Japan, where English has never

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