Edited by
Sarah Mercer, Stephen Ryan
and Marion Williams

PSYCHOLOGY FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING

Insights from Research, Theory and Practice

Psychology for Language Learning

Also by Sarah Mercer

TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF LANGUAGE LEARNER SELF-CONCEPT

Also by Marion Williams

PSYCHOLOGY FOR LANGUAGE TEACHERS: A Social Constructivist Approach
(*co-authored*)

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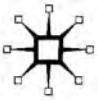

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To the memory of Richard Pemberton, a pioneer in the field of learner autonomy in language education.

Figures and Tables

Figures

Tables

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Sarah Mercer is a lecturer at the University of Graz, Austria. Her research interests include all aspects of language learner psychology – in particular affect, beliefs, mindsets, and the self. Recently she has become especially interested in complexity perspectives on these areas. She is

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Naoko Morita is a lecturer at Simon Fraser University, Canada. Her research interests include sociocultural and sociopolitical perspectives on identity and language learning, academic discourse socialization in multilingual educational contexts, and heritage language education and maintenance.

Tim Murphey is a professor at Kanda University of International Studies, Japan. His research interests include transdisciplinary understandings of agency, identity, community, motivation, and learning. He is co-author of *Group dynamics in the language classroom* and the author of *Teaching one to one* and *Language hungry!*

Richard Pemberton was an associate professor in the School of Education at the University of Nottingham, UK, until ill health forced him to withdraw from work in December 2011. He taught on the MA TESOL programme and supervised PhD students, and his research interests included self-directed language learning and the development of criticality. With his customary generosity of spirit, he remained committed to seeing his chapter through to completion. Sadly, Richard died on 19 January 2012 at the age of 54.

Stephen Ryan is a professor in the School of Economics at Senshu University, Japan. He is interested in all aspects of language learning psychology, but especially issues of learner motivation and identity connected to the role of English as a language of globalization.

Ema Ushioda is Associate Professor in ELT and Applied Linguistics at the University of Warwick, UK, where she jointly coordinates the MA ELT programmes. Her main research interests are language learning motivation, autonomy, sociocultural theory, and teacher development. Recent publications (with Zoltán Dörnyei) include *Teaching and researching motivation* (2nd ed.) and *Motivation, language identity and the L2 self.*

Marion Williams was formerly Reader in Applied Linguistics at the University of Exeter, UK, where she coordinated the postgraduate programmes in TESOL. She is interested in all aspects of psychology in language learning. Her research interests include motivation, attributions,

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1
Introduction

Sarah Mercer, Stephen Ryan, and Marion Williams

What this book is about

This book aims to provide an overview of current theory and research in the field of psychology in foreign language learning by bringing together a range of psychological constructs in a single volume. Each chapter focuses on a different psychological construct written by a specialist in the field. Each presents an outline of current thinking in the area, drawing on insights from educational psychology, a summary of research in the field, and an example of current research carried out by the author(s). The book also attempts to draw together the interconnections between the different strands of research reviewed in the chapters and in doing so to offer a picture of current thinking and directions for further research in the field.

Why we compiled this book

The three editors have long shared a common interest in the application of concepts from educational psychology to foreign language education. We also share a basic belief that one of the most effective ways to improve pedagogic practice is through a more complete understanding of the thoughts, motives and emotions of learners. While research in the field has been growing and provides a rich resource from which pedagogy can draw, it was also apparent to us that there are many different strands to the research, often moving in different directions without linking to other psychological factors. As such, the field can seem somewhat fragmented. We therefore decided to bring together research on a range of constructs and to provide a platform where we can consider some of the common themes that emerge.

When we began to contact potential contributors to invite them to take part, we soon realized that our enthusiasm was shared by others. Thus, the seeds of an idea quickly led to concrete work involving a collection of distinguished scholars. In compiling this book, we were aware of the need to be selective in our choice of constructs and the impossibility of including all aspects of psychology. However, we have tried to cover a broad base of core topics in the field as well as some from educational psychology that have received less attention in applied linguistics.

Who this book is for

This book is intended for those involved in different areas of psychology in language learning, whether carrying out research or teaching aspects of psychology. It is also aimed at others involved in applied linguistics who would like an overview of current thinking and research in the field of psychology in language learning. We have made every effort to ensure that the chapters are accessible to those engaged in postgraduate study, whether at doctoral or master's level. Hence, we have explained difficult concepts as they arise and provided a glossary of terminology. In addition, each chapter concludes with suggestions for further reading which we hope will assist readers in pursuing their own interests. Finally, we hope that the implications for practice will be of interest to teachers and teacher trainers in informing classroom pedagogy.

Language learning psychology: The story so far

To begin with, we would like to clarify how we use the term 'psychology' in this book. We take our understanding from educational psychology, and see language learning psychology as concerned with the mental experiences, processes, thoughts, feelings, motives, and behaviours of individuals involved in language learning. Our perspective therefore differs from psycho- and neurolinguistic approaches which emphasize more cognitive processes and neurological dimensions of learning. In order to set this book in context, we will consider briefly some of the main developments in language learning psychology to date.

In trying to provide an overview of the history of the field, one is immediately aware of the fragmented nature of work in the area and an absence of any clearly identifiable, overarching body of language learning psychology research. Instead we mainly find a history of research

on learner individual differences, many of which have blossomed into fields of their own, such as autonomy, motivation, or learning strategies.

Given that there is no obvious beginning to the story of psychology in language learning, it is difficult to know where to start an account of its historical development. In terms of individual psychological constructs, interest in learner-related variables began in earnest with the good language learner studies (see Naiman, Fröhlich, Stern, & Todesco, 1978; Rubin, 1975; Stevick, 1989), in which the focus was on the characteristics of the learner that were believed to lead to their success in learning. In addition, the advent of communicative language teaching and learner-centred approaches led to an interest in learners as active agents in their own learning, and researchers turned their attention rather more to learners' needs, expectations, goals, motivation, and beliefs. While good language learner studies have concentrated on a range of learner characteristics, a main focus has been on language learning styles and strategies (see Cohen & Macaro, 2007), as well as motivation.

It is possible to argue that motivation has dominated individual differences research in second language acquisition (SLA). Motivational research itself has been influenced by certain theoretical frameworks, most notably a social psychological approach, which stressed the 'different' nature of language learning, an issue discussed by Ema Ushioda in this book (Chapter 5). Using Gardner's social psychological framework, a large number of studies focusing on instrumental and integrative orientations to language learning have been produced (see Masgoret & Gardner, 2003). As a result, language learning motivational studies drew less on the broad range of frameworks and perspectives used in educational psychology, preferring to concentrate on its own specific agenda, and thus moved in a different direction from that taken by educational psychology (see Williams & Burden, 1997, pp. 115–119.) However, as Dewaele (2005, pp. 367–368) suggests, SLA could benefit from broadening its horizons by incorporating work on "relevant psychological variables not usually reported in the SLA literature."

The growing number of research papers and specialized monographs related to language learning psychology is testimony to an upsurge of interest in the field. Recently there have been several influential papers (e.g., Dewaele, 2005) which have called for more research in this area. In a key book on the psychology of the language learner, Dörnyei (2005, p. 110) concludes that there is a "changing climate in applied linguistics characterized by an increasing openness to the inclusion of psychological factors and processes into research paradigms." Indeed, as

Dörnyei (2009, p. xii) has argued, to disregard developments in psychology would impede the development of SLA generally given its centrality in the learning process. Perhaps the best way to look at the historical development of language learning psychology is to consider certain landmark publications and how they chart the development of work in this area. One early work explicitly connecting psychology and language learning was McDonough's (1981) *Psychology in foreign language teaching*. This was a comprehensive attempt to link psychology with theories of language learning while retaining a practical pedagogical focus. In addition to considering more typical cognitive dimensions, such as information processing and memory, McDonough also drew attention to social psychological factors involved in learning and interacting in a foreign language, as well as typical individual differences, such as aptitude, strategies, personality and motivation. He concludes by stressing that psychology has a key role to play in helping us to understand language learning.

Of necessity, McDonough's book was rooted in the prevailing approaches to educational psychology of the time. A different perspective was provided by Williams and Burden (1997), in their book *Psychology for language teachers*. This volume, written by an applied linguist and an educational psychologist, examines developments in educational psychology through a social constructivist lens. It focuses in particular on the role of others in fostering learning, interaction, mediation and the influence of contextual factors. The publication helped to contribute towards a growing recognition of a broader range of psychological topics by introducing a number of lesser known concepts such as Feuerstein's theory of mediation, attribution theory, self-efficacy, and the role of the environment. The authors were also some of the first to take issue with individual differences studies, concluding: "What they [individual differences studies] tell us about is groups of people and average scores, rather than individuals. They can, therefore, give teachers very little information about what to do with individual learners in their classrooms" (p. 91).

A more theoretically oriented book is Dörnyei's *The psychology of the language learner* (2005). The book offers a comprehensive overview of contemporary theorizations of individual differences, including several lesser known constructs such as anxiety, willingness to communicate, and self-esteem. It also challenges the validity of some of these established concepts and the ways in which they have been theorized and researched. It builds on the sociocultural perspectives encountered in Williams and Burden (1997) by stressing the need for learner variables to

be considered with respect to situational parameters. Dörnyei also draws attention to one of the problems facing researchers in this area in terms of the need to acquire expertise in both linguistics and psychology, and the dangers of creating over-simplistic models if the complexity of the field is not sufficiently understood.

The final publication we consider here is Dörnyei's (2009) *The psychology of second language acquisition*. There are significant differences between this and the preceding work. Dörnyei again problematizes the issue of working at the interface of applied linguistics and psychology. However, in this book his focus shifts to a consideration of the implications of cognitive and neuropsychological research for understanding language acquisition processes. He highlights important insights being gained as a result of the rapid and profound changes emerging from the fields of psycholinguistics, neurolinguistics, neuroscience, and general cognitive sciences. Although highly significant, these neurological and cognitive branches of psychology represent quite a distinct field which differs in focus from social and educational psychology, which are our main interest in this book. Nevertheless, the publication marks another significant stage in the continuing shift in thinking on learner characteristics towards more holistic perspectives that focus on contextualized understandings of actual individual learners.

Currently, the field of language learning psychology is vibrant, and we agree with Dörnyei (2009, p. xiii) that "the psychological aspects will not go away but will take up an increasingly central position within the study of foreign or second language." Continuing the work which began in many cases over 30 years ago, as we shall see, there is an ongoing progression towards more holistic views of learners and their psychology and a growing interest in investigating psychological factors in combination to explore the ways in which these interlink. For these reasons we hope that bringing together many of the constructs in one volume will help readers to see their interconnections and appreciate the broader picture of language learning psychology and its diversified research methodologies. In the Conclusion (Chapter 16), we will pull a number of the common threads together, discuss more fully current developments and theoretical frameworks that are influencing the field, and propose possible directions for the future.

What this book consists of

This book is organized into 16 chapters with 14 of them each focusing on a key construct. Apart from this Introduction and the Conclusion,

they all follow the same general pattern while allowing each author to express their own individual perspective on the topic. Each begins with an overview of the literature related to their construct and a summary of research in the area. The authors then present an illustrative example of their own recent research on the topic. Each chapter concludes with implications for further research and for practice. To assist further study in the area, each author has provided three annotated key texts for suggested further reading. In addition, we have included a glossary at the end of the book composed with the help of all the contributors.

Organization of this book

We have loosely organized this book around three key questions that learners have about themselves and their learning. These questions can have a significant impact on an individual's achievement in learning a language. Chapters 2–4 consider the question of how learners construct their identities, or 'Who am I?'

We begin with Sarah Mercer's exploration (Chapter 2) of the nature of self-concept. Based on longitudinal case study data, she illustrates how the self can be conceptualized as situated not only in relation to external contexts and other individuals, but also intra-personally in respect to other aspects of the learner's psychology, and temporally in relation to the person's past experiences, ongoing present, and future goals and visions. Next (Chapter 3), Naoko Morita considers the situated construction and negotiation of learner identities. She reports on a study which examines the academic socialization and identity negotiation of Japanese graduate students at a Canadian university and illustrates how identities are constructed in a dynamic fashion. Finally in this section (Chapter 4), Jean-Marc Dewaele looks at how psychologists have considered personality. He examines the research into the effects of personality traits on SLA and considers the emerging research on the links between SLA, multilingualism, and personality.

The next five chapters address the issue of how learners view their learning of languages, a fundamental concern which affects the way learners approach the task. In the first of these chapters (Chapter 5), Ema Ushioda provides an overview of the most widely researched and theoretically developed psychological variable in language learning, motivation. She explores how L2 motivation theory has evolved in relation to developments in mainstream motivational psychology, and traces a shift in research focus from the motivation of the L2 learner to the integration of L2 motivation within a person's overall motivational self-systems and contextual interactions. Next (Chapter 6), Stephen

Ryan and Sarah Mercer consider a key part of learners' motivation, language learning mindsets, which are deeply held systems of beliefs that can profoundly affect our approaches to learning. The concept of mindsets has attracted much interest in educational psychology but has yet to receive significant attention in relation to language learning. They consider both the possibilities offered by a greater understanding of mindsets and also the challenge of adapting the construct to the particular requirements of the language learning context. A related concept is that of attributions, which is concerned with what we see as the causes of our perceived successes and failures in life. Pei-Hsuan (Peggy) Hsieh provides an overview of research in this important area (Chapter 7) and argues for the need to help learners to develop internal and controllable attributions that facilitate learning.

Next (Chapter 8), Peter MacIntyre and Tammy Gregersen examine the role of affect in SLA, with a focus on language anxiety, and they argue for a more process-oriented approach to understanding how emotions can influence second language learning and communication. They suggest that there is a need to expand research into emotions by drawing on new theories of positive emotions. Following this, and echoing a theme that recurs throughout the book, Tomoko Yashima (Chapter 9) notes a rapid shift in conceptualizations of and approaches to researching willingness to communicate in a second language. This was originally regarded as an individual personality trait and researched through quantitative instruments, but she illustrates how scholars are now paying greater attention to the situated nature of willingness to communicate and using more qualitative approaches in their research.

The final group of chapters address the question of what learners do to learn a language, or 'What are the mental processes involved and what are the steps that learners take in order to learn?' In the first (Chapter 10), Andrew D. Cohen considers case study work in which his students study their own language learning and that of their peers. He makes the case that it is beneficial to view learning strategies as lying at the intersection of learning style preference, motivation, and L2 tasks. Next (Chapter 11), Carol Griffiths examines the related concept of learning styles. She provides an overview of some of the taxonomies that have been created and highlights the problem of generating such inventories. She argues that there is no specific learning style that leads to success, and instead a more flexible, individual, and context-sensitive understanding is needed. Following this, Neil J Anderson (Chapter 12) examines the psychological principles of metacognition and identifies how second language educators can increase learners' awareness of their metacognitive strategies. He presents research findings to support

the integration of metacognitive strategy awareness training within a second language curriculum. This is followed by Lindy Woodrow's consideration of the issue of learners' goals (Chapter 13). She examines different conceptualizations of goal orientations and indicates the important role these play in second language learning motivation.

Richard Pemberton and Lucy Cooker (Chapter 14) continue by examining the notion of self-directed learning and how this relates to similar educational concepts of learner autonomy and self-regulated learning. They provide examples of how self-directed learning has been effectively carried out in educational contexts around the world, and introduce 'Q methodology' as an innovative research method for investigating the subjective 'self' in self-directed learning. Finally in this section, Tim Murphey, Joseph Falout, Yoshifumi Fukada and Tetsuya Fukuda (Chapter 15) look at the importance of understanding the psychology of individuals when in groups. They argue that success and failure depend on our sense of belonging to groups, the way we interact with others within the group and the whole group dynamics. They identify some of the difficulties in researching these group dynamics and offer what they hope will be an accessible framework for researching these in language classrooms.

In the Conclusion (Chapter 16), we, the editors, reflect on the main themes emerging from the contributions. While there is much diversity across the chapters in terms of theoretical and methodological approaches, there is also evidence of a movement towards more contextualized, dynamic and complex understandings of psychological constructs, as well as a tendency towards exploring the ways in which the different constructs are interlinked.

Our task as editors has been at once stimulating, challenging, enjoyable, and fulfilling. It has been a privilege working with such an exceptional team of people from different contexts. The experience of doing so has broadened our own perspectives on and insights into language learning psychology, and our hope is that these will be shared by our readers.

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2
Self-concept: Situating the Self

Sarah Mercer

Introduction

Self-concept is a powerful construct that lies at the centre of an individual's psychology connecting various dimensions such as motivation, affective attitudes, motivation, goals, and strategic behaviours (Denissen, Zarrett, & Eccles, 2007; Marsh, 2006). While this makes it an exciting construct to study, self-concept poses a challenge for those wishing to research it, given that there is "wide disagreement about how to define the self, measure it, and study its development" (Brinthaupt & Lipka, 1992, p. 1). In this chapter, I will attempt to make some sense of the differing perspectives in the field and provide an overview of key understandings about the construct. I will begin by establishing a definition and clarifying the relationship of self-concept to other self-related constructs. Then I will look at some of the characteristics of self-concept, focusing in particular on its potential dynamism and development, and considering the ways in which the construct can be researched. An example of research is then presented which seeks to consider in what ways the English as a foreign language (EFL) self-concept can be conceived of as a situated construct.

Background literature

Definitional concerns

Any discussion of research in the field must remain aware of the multitude of possible definitions of self-concept emerging from the interest of different disciplines and diverse theoretical perspectives. Although all the terms share a common concern with the self, they differ with respect to their focus and boundaries in ways that are important to understand.

While I have chosen to conceptualize self-concept in a certain way, other researchers may have used this and related terms differently, and readers need to be aware of potentially conflicting understandings of terms.

As the words suggest, self-concept represents our 'concept' of ourselves. It is everything we believe (rightly or wrongly) about ourselves (Neisser, 1997, p. 3). However, it is not just a cognitive belief; it has an affective dimension of how we feel about the person we believe ourselves to be. It is a self-description "that includes an evaluation of competence and the feelings of self-worth associated with the judgement in question" (Pajares & Schunk, 2005, p. 105).

An important characteristic of self-concept is that it is multidimensional. This means that we do not hold just one global self-concept but we have multiple interrelated self-concepts in a range of domains. In other words, I have a French self-concept, an academic writer self-concept, a mathematics self-concept, an athletic self-concept, and so on. Although these are distinct self-concepts, each connected to a specific domain, they are also interrelated with each other and should be viewed as interconnected, integral parts of a global self-concept network (Mercer, 2011a).

One of the problems associated with researching self-concept has been separating it from other related terms. Two constructs frequently confused with self-concept are self-efficacy and self-esteem. All three constructs differ largely in terms of the degree of domain-specificity and the relative importance of cognitive and evaluative self-beliefs involved (cf. Valentine & DuBois, 2005, p. 55). Self-efficacy is the most cognitive and domain-specific of the three constructs and refers to a person's expectation of their ability to perform a particular task in a specific context (Bandura, 1997). Many researchers acknowledge that these very specific beliefs are likely to contribute to the higher-order self-concept and may be viewed as a constituent part of it. As Bong and Skaalvik (2003, pp. 10–11) explain, self-efficacy "may be the most important building block in one's self-concept." The most global and evaluative of the self-constructs is self-esteem which refers to a person's overall evaluation of their worth or value as a person (Harter, 1999). An individual's overall self-esteem can be influenced by domain-specific self-concepts to differing degrees, depending on the relative importance of the respective domain for an individual.

Identity (see Morita, Chapter 3, this volume) is another construct that is often used interchangeably with self-concept. The identity construct differs from self-concept largely in terms of focus, although the two are clearly interrelated. Identity is an individual's sense of self in relation

to a particular social context or community of practice. Self-concept is concerned more with the underlying psychological sense of self in a particular domain, rather than with its specific interplay with a particular context. This is not to say that self-concept should be viewed as detached and independent of context, as will be discussed below, but rather it means that studies investigating either construct tend to have a differing emphasis and focus (Mercer, 2011a, pp. 18–19). For example, learner identities are learners' sense of self as a language learner or user in relation to a particular linguistic community or learning context, whereas a learner's self-concept refers to their general sense of competence and related evaluative beliefs about themselves as a language learner, not just in respect to a specific setting.

Clearly, all of these constructs can offer valuable insights into learner psychology and behaviour; however, I have chosen to focus on self-concept for three main reasons. First, it is sufficiently broadly defined to capture a wider set of beliefs and feelings related to a language-learning domain beyond just specific language tasks or skill areas. Second, it represents an individual's underlying domain-specific self-related beliefs across a range of contexts, not just in relation to a single specific setting. Finally, self-concept is not just a cognitive evaluation of ability, as self-efficacy tends to be defined, but it also incorporates an affective dimension. For these reasons, it appeals to me as the most widely relevant construct in a range of settings, although I acknowledge the interrelated nature of all the various self-related constructs and the difficulties of attempting to tease them apart for research purposes (Mercer, 2011a).

Dynamism and development

There is a considerable body of research in psychology investigating various characteristics and interrelations of self-concept. As an educator, I am particularly concerned with understanding how learners form their self-concepts and how these may change over time. Therefore, this section will focus on considering the extent to which self-concept is believed to be dynamic and what factors can influence its development.

Essentially, self-concept has been found to include both dynamic elements as well as more stable elements; however, debate continues about the nature of and reasons for these differently dynamic dimensions of the construct. In their frequently cited paper on the 'dynamic self-concept', Markus and Wurf (1987, p. 302) propose that differences in the dynamism of self-concepts stems from the "centrality or importance" of beliefs involved. They explain that some beliefs are central

to an individual's overall sense of self, whereas others are less important and more peripheral. They suggest that the core aspects of the self are more resistant to change, whereas the less central self-beliefs are more prone to fluctuation.

Another influential perspective on the dynamic nature of the self is offered by those who focus on the dynamic nature of self-concept in relation to various contexts. From this perspective, the focus is on the fluidity of the self-concept as it varies, changes, and adapts across contexts and interactional settings (e.g., Harter, Waters, & Whitesell, 1998; Onorato & Turner, 2004). Within this perspective, opinions differ as to the extent to which any dimension of the self-concept can be viewed as stable or whether there is only a continually dynamic self-emerging from the interactions with particular contexts and individuals. Nevertheless, it is now generally accepted that self-concept should be viewed as interrelated with sociocultural contexts and interpersonal interactions, and as such is dynamic across these settings (Neisser & Jopling, 1997).

Accepting that self-concept is at least partially dynamic, it is of interest to understand what other factors may influence the self-concept's development. Naturally, there are fundamental changes in the nature and content of self-representations across the lifespan depending on the person's age and stage of cognitive development (Harter, 1999). A considerable body of work has also examined the role of other demographic factors, such as gender and ethnicity (Craven & Marsh, 2005; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2004). In addition, there has been growing interest in the influence of culture on understandings and expressions of self-concept, as it appears that cultures may differ in how they conceptualize the self and which characteristics are valued (e.g., Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002).

Of particular interest to educators are insights gained from Marsh's (1986) internal/external frame of reference model. This refers to the frames of reference an individual uses to form their self-concept and these may be situated primarily within the self (internal) or largely outside of the self (external). In Marsh's model, the internal frame of reference refers to the internal comparisons learners make across their self-concepts, for example, comparing their perceived competence in maths and English and how this comparison can then affect each respective self-concept. The external frame of reference dimension of the model refers to learners' social comparison processes, in other words when they compare themselves to their peers or others around them, as well as to the grades or explicit feedback students receive. However, it is possible that learners' subjective perceptions of success or failure are

more important than their actual standardized grades (Mercer, 2011a; see also Hsieh, Chapter 7, this volume).

Related constructs in second language acquisition

In second language acquisition (SLA), work examining the self-concept explicitly has been relatively scarce. My own work has focused on trying to better understand the nature and development of the construct specifically in the domain of foreign language learning (FLL). I have found self-concept to be composed of a complex web of interrelated beliefs, which can be highly personal (Mercer, 2011a). My research has shown that self-concept can vary across individuals, contexts, and settings, and although some aspects of it display a certain degree of stability, others are also seen to be dynamic across time in complex ways (Mercer, 2009, 2011a, 2011b). In my findings, Marsh's (1986) model is also extended to include the influence of the interrelationships between language learners' self-concepts and their belief systems and affect (Mercer, 2011a).

To understand the importance of self-related beliefs in effective and successful language learning, it is also necessary to consider findings about other related self-constructs, given the relative scarcity of studies explicitly employing self-concept. For example, self-efficacy has been shown to play a defining role in relation to language learners' use of strategies (e.g., Graham, 2007; Yang, 1999). Self-efficacy has also been found to be closely connected with other aspects of a learner's psychology, such as the kinds of attributions they make (Hsieh, Chapter 7, this volume; Hsieh & Schallert, 2008), the degree of anxiety they feel in using the language (MacIntyre & Gregersen, Chapter 8, this volume; Mills, Pajares, & Herron, 2006) and the kinds of goals they choose to set themselves (Woodrow, 2006; Woodrow, Chapter 13, this volume). Another related construct specifically conceptualized with language learning in mind is L2 linguistic self-confidence (Clément, 1980), which in some ways is comparable to self-efficacy. Research has shown how this construct appears to be crucially linked with other centrally important learner variables, such as identity (Clément, Noels, & Deneault, 2001; Morita, Chapter 3, this volume), motivation (MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, & Donovan, 2002; Ushioda, Chapter 5, this volume) and learners' willingness to communicate (WTC) (Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide, & Shimizu, 2004; Yashima, Chapter 9, this volume).

The importance of self-concept in relation to motivation in SLA has been highlighted recently in discussions surrounding the 'L2 motivational self system' model (Dörnyei, 2005; Ushioda, Chapter 5, this

volume). This model emerged in response to a growing need for a theory of motivation in SLA that reflects the drives of learners across the globe who participate in increasingly interconnected, multilingual and multicultural communities. Based on the theories of self-discrepancy and possible selves (see Murphey et al., Chapter 15, this volume), the model places self-concept at the centre of learner motivation. The model's underlying hypothesis is that an individual compares their current self-concept with other possible self guides, such as their 'ideal self' and 'ought-to self', and is then motivated to reduce any perceived gap between their current self-concept and these 'ideal' and/or 'ought-to' self-concepts (see Ushioda, Chapter 5, this volume).

Together these studies highlight the importance of self-related beliefs and their central role in connecting a range of key variables in the domain of FLL. While the focus varies across these studies, viewing them in sum can leave no doubt about the need for research in SLA to have a thorough understanding of self constructs, in particular self-concept.

Research approaches

Within psychology, research on self-concept has been dominated by the use of statistical analysis and fixed-item questionnaires, in particular a range of self-description questionnaires developed by one of the leading self-concept researchers and his team (Marsh, 2006).[1] For the development of these tools an important step has been the recognition of the domain-specificity of self-concept. This means that questionnaires are generally designed and worded in terms specific to a particular domain rather than at a global level. Further, it has been argued that quantitative research examining relationships between factors involving a dimension of the self needs to ensure that the factors concerned are matched in terms of their specificity (Swann, Chang-Schneider, & McClarity, 2007); in other words, correlational studies should avoid combining a mixture of global and specific-level factors.

Within SLA, much of the research examining self-efficacy and L2 linguistic self-confidence has also been similarly quantitative in nature. As self-concept represents a set of beliefs, it is useful to consider research approaches to the study of beliefs, and Barcelos (2003) provides a comprehensive overview of possible research methodologies, their advantages and limitations. Essentially, she emphasizes the situated, dynamic nature of beliefs: "beliefs do not have a cognitive dimension only, but a social dimension as well, because they are born out of our interactions with others and with our environment" (ibid, p. 8). Understanding self-beliefs, such as self-concept, as complex, situated and

dynamic networks of beliefs (Mercer, 2011a, 2011b) has implications for research approaches which need to acknowledge these characteristics. Despite the useful understandings gained from the quantitatively oriented research in psychology, such studies have left many questions unanswered. To examine the contextualized, complex and individual nature of self-concept, qualitative studies present perhaps a better alternative.

An example of research

The data examined here form part of a larger longitudinal study that was designed to investigate the development of a single learner's self-concept during the course of her three-year university degree programme (Mercer, 2011b). The analysis presented in this chapter will focus on considering in what ways this learner's self-concept can be conceived of as being situated, in other words, what it appears to be interconnected with.

Data collection and analysis

Case studies

Following calls by some researchers to move away from 'depersonalized', abstracted understandings of learners and instead acknowledge their individuality (Ushioda, 2009), this study sought to examine the situated complexity of one learner's self-concept. A particularly useful method for examining individual learners is case-study research. Case studies are not without their critics and perhaps the most frequent criticism concerns the generalizability of their findings. Although findings cannot be unthinkingly applied across contexts and settings, case studies are capable of generating theoretical propositions which can be explored in other studies. They can also provide rich, detailed descriptions that enable the reader to consider the potential appropriateness and 'transferability' of the findings to their own contexts. Importantly, their strength lies in their capacity to provide a deeper understanding of individuals in a way that embraces differences and uniqueness without any express need to search for similarities (for a thorough discussion of case studies in SLA, see Duff, 2008).

Method and analysis

Data were generated with a single, mature female language learner at a university in Austria. The participant, Carina (a pseudonym), was studying for a bachelor's degree in Intercultural Communication involving

two foreign languages, Spanish and English. Carina began her studies at university aged 38 following 11 years of working in her home country as well as in various English- and Spanish-speaking countries.

Two different data collection tools were used to generate data: 15 weekly journal entries during Carina's first six months at university and a series of six in-depth, informal interviews based on open, semi-structured guidelines conducted twice a year over the course of the learner's three-year degree programme. Questions covered retrospective reflections of her experiences in the past semester, goals and hopes for the upcoming semester as well as self-descriptions of abilities and feelings about her studies and self as a language learner.

The data were coded using the data management software Atlas.ti and analysed using a grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2006) in which the data were coded and re-coded until no further new coding was possible. Examining interrelations between codes and alternating between holistic and micro-level perspectives on the data, I gradually formulated ideas in respect to the nature of her language learning self-concepts and the ways in which they appeared to be situated. A characteristic of a grounded theory approach is that external structures are not imposed on the data, but rather the analysis must emerge from the actual data. This does not mean that the researcher approaches the analysis without any prior thinking; however, it is essential for the researcher to keep an open mind and allow the data to 'speak'.

Findings

The case-study data were examined to consider the ways in which Carina's EFL self-concept could be conceived of as a situated construct.

Situated contextually and interpersonally

The first way in which Carina's self-concept can be thought of as a situated construct is in relation to her current educational context. This is especially apparent in Carina's journal data following her transition to university as she adjusts to the demands and expectations of the new setting and considers the implications for her self-concept:

> I always thought I am in good command of English but had to realize that I am a naive beginner. It sometimes scares me when I read a text in one of the grammar books and don't even understand the explanations, not to talk about the exercises.

Throughout the data, it is possible to observe this interaction between her EFL self-concept and her educational context as she (re-)considers

her frames of reference based on her experiences of participating in this context:

> I think the way of how we are tested here is difficult to learn or difficult to get used to because you expect different things.

During the interviews, when asked to describe her strengths and weaknesses in English, the content of what she reported often changed to reflect the content of her current courses:

> I'm a learner when it comes to writing, really now I know I'm good at it. Paragraphs and all that stuff, linking words. I was a learner, I never was aware of linking words, so I'm really a learner when it comes to a higher level of English, absolutely.

However, contexts beyond her immediate current educational setting also appear to affect her current EFL self-concept as she frequently refers to experiences in using the language outside of university and their impact on her self-concept:

> I really thought I don't... but now that I was back in the States and I got assured by so many people that my English is flawless to their standards and far better than English of native speakers they know. And that encouraged me. And I thought, ok, ok, I'm a perfectionist, I want to reach the highest possible level but it might be good enough now for here, you know. I always thought I am not good enough and maybe I am.

In this way, Carina's EFL self-concept can be seen as situated in relation to her ongoing experiences and interactions with the language in a range of contexts, not just in relation to her immediate educational setting.

Another way of understanding her self-concept as situated is through her relationships with other people. First, as expected from the literature (e.g., Marsh, Trautwein, Lüdtke, & Köller, 2008; Mercer, 2011a), she often compares herself to others around her in order to form and evaluate her self-concept in the university setting:

> There were others who were much better and I really wanted to be one of the better ones and I am just not.

She also relies on feedback and grades from teachers in order to help her orient herself in relation to the group and formalized expectations, as well as on informal feedback from others whose opinions she values:

> I took all the exams at the first date and I passed them all. And I think I was really the only one. Because I met a lot of students and nobody did it, so, I was, like, yeah, I'm on the right track and that combined, of course, with the summer and my family and my friends they were all so proud of me, they all congratulated me and they were all very supportive, you know. It was them, everybody.

In this way, her EFL self-concept can be also considered to be socially and relationally situated to a host of individuals such as her peers, teachers, family, and various other individuals.

Situated intrapersonally and temporally

Another dimension to the situated nature of Carina's EFL self-concept concerns how it appears to be situated in relation to other aspects of her psychology. As expected, Carina frequently compares her self-concepts, such as her EFL self-concept and her Spanish self-concept, showing that her sense of self in one domain is interdependent on how she sees herself in perceived related domains:

> For English I really have to work hard, I really do. Spanish, oh my God, I don't make any mistakes. Not at all. Not written, not spoken, not at all. I have huge vocabulary. I don't know why. And I thought in English it's the same but...

All the data are also strongly affective in tone and it is possible to see how her EFL self-concept appears to be closely connected to her feelings and emotional responses to contexts and experiences:

> I had to take an English test on Wednesday and failed so terribly, I feel embarrassed thinking about it.

Other aspects of Carina's psychology which seem interrelated with her self-concept concern her motivation and goals. Through her expression of goals in terms of possible future selves, her current self-concept can be thought of as situated in relation to her imagination and visions of herself in the future:

> ... my goal definitely is American English. (...) So, I strive for perfection as usual. I would love to get rid of my accent.

Carina also expresses clearly held beliefs about the nature and process of language learning. Throughout the data, she appears to use these as a

frame of reference against which she evaluates her own behaviours and self-concept (cf. Mercer, 2011a). For example, she believes it is important to have a 'natural talent' for learning a foreign language (see Hsieh, Chapter 7, this volume; Ryan & Mercer, Chapter 6, this volume) in order to be successful and she reports feeling grateful that she has such a natural gift:

> Probably I do have a certain gift.
>
> Thank God I don't have to do it [learn grammar rules by heart]. It comes to me easily, naturally.

It is evident in the data that many of her current self-related beliefs stem from her personal history and past experiences of using and learning the language. In this way, Carina's present self-concept cannot be detached from her past:

> Ok, so I think since my mum always told me "you're good at languages, you're good at languages, you're good at languages" so I kind of believed it. And I think I am good at languages.

The temporal dimension of her self-concept is also evident in her sense of progress which she reports when she compares her past self-concept in the domain with how she feels now:

> It became better and I was really, I could see a progress.

Carina has accumulated experiences and formed her beliefs about herself and the domain gradually over years and these connections with her recent and distant past still impact on her present self-concept. As such, her EFL self-concept also needs to be understood as situated in time connecting both past and present, as well as with the future through her expression of possible selves.

Summary

This small-scale exploration of one student's EFL self-concept helps to illustrate the potential complexity and interrelatedness of learners' self-concepts. It implies the importance of taking a holistic view of learners and considering the temporal development and multilayered, interconnected nature of self-concept. The data suggest that understanding the self as a situated construct means moving beyond acknowledging how it is situated solely in relation to external contexts, settings, and other

people, and also considering how it is situated within a person as a holistic being in relation to their other beliefs, imagination, attitudes, affect, and ongoing personal history. Above all, the findings suggest that any research that examines self-concept in an abstracted way detached from its contexts and the holistic nature of the individual is only capturing a fragment of the true complexity surrounding this construct.

Implications

For research

Self-concept is a complex psychological construct that has been conceptualized in a multitude of ways depending on the perspective and field of inquiry. To date, it remains relatively under-researched within SLA although the central importance of the self in its various guises is widely acknowledged. The challenge for researchers in SLA is to learn from the breadth of insights in other disciplines, such as psychology and sociology, and incorporate these in ways sensitive to the nature and character of language learning. Particular questions that the domain poses in respect to self-concept concern:

- the interrelations between various language-related self-concepts (especially for multilinguals);
- the impact on self-concept of native-speaker models and norms;
- the influence of experiences in a variety of settings (formal, instruction-based and informal, acquisition-based);
- the contextual particularities of different individual languages.

Although I have found taking a holistic view of the learner to be especially revealing, I suggest that to push forward understandings about self-concept in the domain of FLL, work in this area would benefit from collaboration between researchers employing a mixture of methodologies and theoretical approaches (cf. MacIntyre, Noels, & Moore, 2010).

For pedagogy

Against the backdrop of the complexity that emerges from the brief consideration of the data in this chapter, it becomes apparent that to talk of enhancing self-concept in a straightforward manner is at best naive. However, as has been seen, self-concepts are formed in relation to contexts and learners' beliefs about the nature, demands, and expectations in those settings. Therefore, educators can work at explicitly exploring learners' beliefs and creating a learning environment which is conducive

to developing a strong, positive but, importantly, realistic self-concept. In such an environment, learners need to be able to develop a sense of security, have genuine experiences of success, feel a sense of progress, and develop a positive affective relationship to and motivation for the language. There are no magic recipes for enhancing learners' FLL self-concepts, but given the acknowledged importance of the construct for effective and successful learning, both educators and researchers need to make understanding this construct in SLA a priority.

Note

1. ASDQ = Academic Self Description Questionnaires; SDQ = Self Description Questionnaires. (Marsh, 2006, pp. 9–16). Instruments available online: http://www. self.ox.ac.uk/Instruments/packages.htm

Suggested further reading

Harter, S. (2006). The self. In N. Eisenberg (Ed.), *Handbook of child psychology. Volume 3: Social, emotional and personality development* (pp. 505–570), Hoboken, NJ: Wiley and Sons.

This chapter offers a detailed background to some of the issues surrounding the development of self-concept and provides an overview of key historical developments in this area. It focuses on both cognitive development and the role of socialization processes.

Marsh, H. W., Craven, R. G., & McInerney, D. M. (Eds.) (2005). *International advances in self research.* Volume 2. Greenwich: Information Age Publishing.

One of a series containing contributions from many of the leading researchers in self-related research in educational psychology. A useful place to start exploring much of this strand of research. See also: http://www.self.ox.ac.uk (website of the SELF research centre based in Oxford).

Mercer, S. (2011). *Towards an understanding of language learner self-concept.* Dordrecht: Springer.

This book provides an overview of the literature from psychology and considers how it may be relevant for SLA. It also reports on an exploratory, qualitative study designed to help understand the nature of the construct and its development in respect to FLL.

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3

Identity: The Situated Construction of Identity and Positionality in Multilingual Classrooms

Naoko Morita

Introduction

Identity and language learning is one of the most vibrant areas of current research that considers language learning as a fundamentally social process. While recognizing the limitations of more traditional psycholinguistic models that see language learning as primarily an individualistic mental process, many scholars are now interested in exploring the socially, culturally, and historically situated nature of language learning (Zuengler & Miller, 2006). Parallel to this changing view of language learning is the changing notion of language learners: learners are now seen in terms of their dialectical, or mutually constitutive, relationship to the social world rather than as constellations of particular cognitive styles, affective orientations, and personality types (Norton & Toohey, 2001). Within this view, identity is understood as being constructed and negotiated within a given discourse community. While scholars have drawn from various conceptions of identity, two theoretical orientations that have been particularly influential in second language acquisition (SLA) are what I broadly call sociocultural frameworks and poststructuralist/critical feminist frameworks. The former includes language socialization (Ochs, 1993) and community-of-practice perspectives (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998), both of which view language learning as a process of participating in the practices of a given community and gaining competence and membership within that community. Here, identity is conceptualized as being socially and interactionally produced as individuals interact with other members with varied statuses, knowledge, and experiences and

negotiate their competence and positions. Many studies have found these frameworks useful in analysing the dynamic, situated process of second language (L2) identity negotiation (Duff, 2002; Morita, 2004, 2009; Toohey, 2000). My own understanding of identity also comes primarily from these sociocultural frameworks and I define it as individuals' sense of who they are in relation to the particular social context or community of practice in which they participate.

Poststructuralist and critical feminist perspectives of identity were first introduced to L2 research by Bonnie Norton (Norton-Peirce, 1995). Through an examination of the identity struggles of immigrant women in Canada, Norton developed a theory of identity that emphasizes how language learners' identities and opportunities to practise the target language are shaped by inequitable relations of power in the larger society. Norton (2000) further argued that learners are "constantly organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world" (p. 11), and that therefore, identities are multiple, fluid, and often contradictory. This conception of identity, as well as the notion of 'investment,' has been influential in many subsequent identity studies (e.g., McKay & Wong, 1996). Investment, according to Norton (2000), "signals the socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language, and their often ambivalent desire to learn and practice it" (p. 10). Investment differs from the more traditional notion of motivation in SLA: the former considers language learners as having a complex social identity and multiple desires that are influenced by social relations of power, while the latter presupposes a "unitary, fixed, and ahistorical language learner" (p. 10).

Interest in identity and language learning has continued to grow for the past decade and a half. In 1997, Norton edited a special-topic issue of *TESOL Quarterly* on language and identity that included five extended research studies conducted in five different countries. In 2002, a new journal devoted to this area of research, the *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education*, was launched. In recent years, a number of books and edited volumes addressing issues of identity, language, and education have also been published (e.g., Block, 2007; Kubota & Lin, 2009; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). In what follows, I will first provide a brief overview of the literature by illustrating the wide variety of L2 learning contexts that research has examined. This will be followed by an example of my own research in which I seek to show the situated construction and negotiation of identities within multilingual university classrooms and its impact on L2 international students' academic discourse socialization.

Overview of the literature

While sharing some basic assumptions about identity and language learning summarized above, scholars have investigated different groups of learners by employing various research approaches. Most commonly, studies on identity in SLA, including my own research (Morita, 2004, 2009), have taken an ethnographic or qualitative case-study approach where researchers attempt to gain a holistic understanding of a specific research context and participants by using multiple data collection methods such as observations, interviews, and open-ended questionnaires (e.g., McKay & Wong, 1996; Toohey, 2000). Another common approach has been a narrative study where the main data come from participants' narratives such as diaries, journals, and a series of in-depth interviews (e.g., Norton, 2000; Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000). The types of learners and learning contexts that have been typically examined include:

- adult immigrants in L2 classrooms, workplaces, or homes;
- students in postsecondary institutions;
- adolescents in secondary schools;
- children in early childhood schooling.

Identity research on adult immigrants

Studies on adult immigrants have most commonly investigated how this population often struggles to reconstruct their identities as the power structures related to race, ethnicity, gender, class, language, and so on in their host communities tend to limit their identity options (Cervatiuc, 2009; Norton, 2000; Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000). Norton's aforementioned study (2000) explored the identity transformations of five immigrant women in Canada through qualitative methods including a diary study. The women's narratives revealed their ongoing struggle to achieve 'the right to speak,' which was unequally distributed in their workplaces and homes. For example, Eva, a young Polish woman, was initially excluded from the social network among her Anglophone co-workers at a fast food restaurant. However, Eva eventually gained access to this network as well as opportunities to speak from a more powerful position by actively resisting marginalization and making use of certain symbolic resources such as her 'youth and charm' that were valued within the network. Norton argued that Eva's changing identity from an unskilled immigrant to a valued co-worker needs to be understood with reference to the power relations at her workplace as well as her human agency and

investment. More recently, Cervatiuc (2009) investigated the identity formation of adult immigrants to Canada. The 20 participants in this study, in contrast to the women in Norton's study, considered themselves as professionally successful and highly proficient in their target language. Through a series of interviews, Cervatiuc identified three common strategies used by the participants for constructing such positive identities: generating a self-motivating inner dialogue, gaining access to the social networks of native speakers, and adhering to an imagined community of successful multilingual individuals.

Identity research on postsecondary students

Research has also examined L2 students in postsecondary institutions (Canagarajah, 2004; Morita, 2004, 2009; Waterstone, 2008). The focus of the studies with this population is usually students' identity negotiation as part of their academic discourse socialization through which the new students become increasingly competent in academic ways of knowing, speaking, and writing as they participate in various academic practices. My study (Morita, 2004, 2009) investigated the academic socialization experiences of a group of international students from Japan in a Canadian university. Through classroom observations, interviews, and student self-reports, I analysed the varied ways in which these students negotiated their competence, roles, and identities in their new academic communities. A notable finding was that the students' membership and identities were constructed locally and interactionally within a given classroom context, and that therefore the same individual could develop different types of identity and participate differently across different classroom contexts. This study also revealed the transformative nature of linguistic, cultural, and academic border-crossing: the students' sense of who they were changed significantly as they appropriated academic discourses selectively and creatively. This is a common theme in studies on identity and academic literacy such as Canagarajah's (2004) textual analysis on multilingual writers' strategies and struggle for 'voice' in academic discourse, and Waterstone's (2008) interview-based study on an undergraduate English language learner's multiple and contradictory identifications through academic writing.

Identity research on multilingual adolescents

Studies on multilingual adolescents have documented the complex, often unsettling picture of identity negotiation by learners of this age group (Duff, 2002; Harklau, 2000; Lam, 2000; McKay & Wong,

1996). McKay and Wong's (1996) two-year ethnographic study analysed the identity construction of four Chinese immigrant students in a US high school. By examining the students' literacy experiences, the authors found that the students were subjected to multiple discourses in their environment that were characterized by asymmetrical power relations. These discourses included colonialist/racialized discourses on immigrants, model-minority discourse, Chinese cultural nationalist discourses, social and academic school discourses, and gender discourses. While being positioned variously by these discourses, the individual students exercised their human agency by constructing varied identities, which, in turn, had a significant impact on their different learning trajectories. An ethnographic case study by Lam (2000) documented an interesting identity transformation of a Chinese immigrant teenager, Almon, through his electronic textual experiences. Whereas Almon was largely stigmatized as a low-achieving English as a second language (ESL) student and struggled to develop English literacy in his school environment, his engagement with written communication on the internet with a transnational peer group in English allowed him to construct a more confident identity in this web-based context and to develop a sense of belonging to a global English-speaking community.

Identity research on young children

Finally, identity construction can be central to younger children who experience schooling through their additional language (Day, 2002; Hawkins, 2005; Toohey, 2000). Toohey's (2000) longitudinal ethnographic project followed a group of children with minority language backgrounds in kindergarten, Grade 1 and Grade 2, and examined how they "came to inhabit (temporarily and in contradictory ways) particular identities in their classrooms" (p. 16). Toohey found that the specific practices of their classrooms (e.g., "using your own words and ideas" in Grade 1) contributed to the stratification of the classroom community, which then led to the exclusion of some minority children from certain activities, resources, and identities. Similarly, Hawkins (2005) investigated "positioning and identity work" (p. 67) in a kindergarten classroom through ethnographic methods and illustrated how identities constructed by two bilingual children, William and Anton, led to their differential access to the academic literacy practices of school. Interestingly, Hawkins found that William, who achieved a high-status social positioning among the network of his classmates, showed significantly less progress in language and literacy development than Anton, who had a much lower social status within the same network.

As we have seen, research on identity and language learning has examined a wide variety of language learners based on the assumption that learners are complex social beings. On the one hand, research in this area places a great emphasis on the social, political, and economic arrangements of a given context within which learners negotiate their sense of who they are. Many studies have documented that these arrangements often position language learners unfavourably and that therefore identity negotiation for them can be a "site of struggle" (Norton, 2000). On the other hand, studies also show that individuals with various needs, desires, and aspirations resist positioning and attempt to reposition themselves to gain legitimacy or the right to speak. Exploring and theorizing this dynamic interplay between the social context and the individual language learner has been the primary goal of identity research.

The situated construction of identity and positionality in a multilingual classroom: An example of current research

Background

The example of current research I present here comes from a multiple case study on the academic socialization and identity negotiation of Japanese graduate students at a Canadian university (Morita, 2002, 2004). In this larger study, I was particularly interested in exploring how the students participated in classroom discussions, what kinds of identities or positions they constructed through their classroom participation, and how these identities and positions in turn influenced their participation and academic socialization. I collected data over an entire academic year by using multiple methods including: students' weekly self-reports about their classroom participation, formal interviews as well as frequent informal conversations with each of the seven focal students, classroom observations, and interviews with ten course instructors (see Morita, 2002, 2004 for more detail). While data analysis was grounded in the collected data, it also drew insights from both of the two approaches that I have outlined earlier in this chapter: sociocultural frameworks – particularly community-of-practice perspectives (Wenger, 1998), and poststructuralist/critical feminist frameworks on identity and power (Canagarajah, 1999; Norton, 2000).

In this chapter, in order to illustrate the situated construction of language learners' identities in a multilingual academic setting, I present two cases from the larger study, Emiko and Shiho (pseudonyms), whose

stories were not featured in my earlier article (Morita, 2004). Both were in their early 20s, pursuing their first master's degree in linguistics, and took exactly the same courses in their first year. In the larger study, I explored their experiences in depth by examining their personal backgrounds, histories, and investments, analysing their classroom participation and identity negotiation and transformation within two different courses over time, triangulating multiple sources of data and viewpoints, and also comparing and contrasting their experiences. Due to space limitations, what I present below is a significantly condensed version of my analysis and refers only to the students' experiences in one course, Course C. My main goal here is to demonstrate how the students negotiated their identities and positionalities, in other words their positions or roles in this particular community of practice, through their ongoing interaction with their instructor and peers and by employing unique strategies (see Morita, 2002 for a more comprehensive analysis and discussion). Course C was a two-semester introductory course on sociolinguistics. There were 25 students including both graduate and senior undergraduate students from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Dr. Hill (pseudonym) was an experienced female instructor who herself had both personal and professional multilingual experience. A typical class consisted of a lecture by the instructor, a whole-class discussion based on weekly readings, and student presentations.

Emiko in Course C

Emiko had spent her entire life on a small island in Western Japan until she became an English major at a university in a much larger city. She described her university days as being much more challenging compared to her life on the island, where she had felt completely comfortable being surrounded by a close network of friends and families and doing well at school. In university, she struggled to participate actively in her classes, especially English conversation classes, and felt that she consequently developed an identity as "being less able than others" in these classes. Emiko then sought other opportunities to learn English and regain her confidence such as enrolling in an eight-week intensive English course in England and travelling through Europe for two months alone. During these trips, she also collected data for her graduating paper that was about "images of women" – a topic in which she had always been interested. After graduation, she went back to her hometown and began teaching English at local public high schools on a part-time basis. After one and a half years of teaching, however, she decided to "go abroad and meet different kinds of people," which she

stated was her primary reason for coming to Canada. She also wanted to study teaching Japanese as a foreign language and further explore the issues of language and gender at the graduate level.

Emiko's participation in Course C was characterized by her almost complete silence especially for the first four months. It was not uncommon that an entire class would go by without her speaking once. The only times she spoke were when she was asked to do so by the instructor, and when she did speak, she spoke softly and minimally. Even when the class discussed aspects of the Japanese language and society, which happened fairly often, it was normally Shiho who provided information, while Emiko remained silent. Emiko attributed her difficulty in participating to her limited ability to follow lectures and class discussions as well as her extreme nervousness about being called upon by the instructor without warning. In one class I observed Emiko being asked to speak. The following is an excerpt from my field notes about this instance:

> [After a lively discussion], Dr. Hill called upon Emiko and said, "Which question did you do?" Emiko said something softly.... Then Dr. Hill said, "...Can you summarize the question for us?" Emiko remained silent for 5 seconds or so, looking down at her notes. Dr. Hill then read the question for Emiko, and Emiko began reading her answer. Emiko was speaking rather softly and Dr. Hill stood up from her chair, perhaps trying to hear her better. After Emiko finished, Dr. Hill said to the class, "Do you follow Emiko?"
>
> (Field notes)

Commenting on this incident, Emiko said that Dr. Hill did not understand her, which was "embarrassing," and that she wished that her classmates would forget about her "bad speech."

Emiko felt that the main source of her nervousness was her fear of making English mistakes and lack of confidence. She was also concerned about being viewed as "stupid" by her classmates because of her "limited speech" or silence. Facing these issues, however, Emiko attempted to improve the situation by using several strategies. First, she consulted Dr. Hill individually and asked her if it would be possible not to call upon her in class, while also indicating that it was not her intention to avoid speaking indefinitely. Dr. Hill's response was empathetic and she agreed to "wait until [Emiko was] ready" (Dr. Hill, interview). After this meeting, Emiko began visiting Dr. Hill periodically to discuss course-related topics as well as issues she was facing in her studies.

Through such interactions, Dr. Hill came to understand Emiko's appreciation of the course subject and felt that they developed a relationship where they "could trust each other" (Dr. Hill, interview). Meanwhile, Dr. Hill did not ask Emiko to speak for the rest of Term 1. Although this arrangement helped to reduce Emiko's anxiety, it also contributed to her sense of isolation as well as her identity as a marginal non-participant. Furthermore, somewhat ironically, her prolonged silence put her in a situation where she might "draw attention and curiosity from everyone if [she] spoke" (in Emiko's words). Her worries ended, however, in the first class in Term 2 when Dr. Hill spontaneously suggested that Emiko present her essay assignment. Emiko seemed surprised and requested her presentation to be postponed to the following class. In response, Dr. Hill said, "Emiko is worried about her English being not good enough, but we all understand her, don't we?" (Field notes).

In addition to approaching the instructor, Emiko also attempted to talk to her classmates individually during breaks. Being aware of her role as a quiet student, she felt that it was important for her to "somehow make [her] presence known":

> If I could talk to my classmates during breaks or outside the class and tell them what I thought about the issues discussed in class, I would feel much better because my classmates would then know what I'm thinking about. If I could do that, I wouldn't feel so disappointed when I couldn't make myself understood in class.
>
> (Emiko, weekly report)

Even though it was not easy for Emiko to approach her classmates, she made a conscious effort to do so. One strategy she used was to approach individuals who showed an interest in Japan and who might be willing to talk to her. Emiko also attempted to compensate for her limited oral performance with her written work. In particular, she put additional effort into her long essay assignment, for which, although this was not required, she designed and conducted a small-scale research project. Dr. Hill indicated that through this essay Emiko displayed her "sensitive appreciation" of the subject matter. Reflecting on her participation in Term 2, Emiko said:

> Toward the end I didn't feel pressure to speak perfect English.... I think it's because I talked to my classmates more and they started to know me better. Also, I remember this clearly. When I was presenting

> my paper, one of them smiled at me. That smile made me feel really good. It's such a small thing but changed the way I felt in the classroom.
>
> (Emiko, interview)

Shiho in Course C

Shiho was born in a large metropolitan city in Eastern Japan. Due to her father's employment, she lived in various locations including Korea (between age two and six), two different cities in Japan (from Grade 1 to 3), and London (from Grade 4 to 8). In London, she went to an international school where she took ESL courses in the first two years and was mainstreamed in her third year. While she quickly developed her English during her stay there, her father made sure that Shiho retained Japanese as her first language as he "hated the idea that [Shiho] might become someone without a home country and language" (Shiho, interview). When she returned to Japan, however, her resocialization into a pubic junior high school did not go smoothly: she felt that she "stood out" as a returnee and that her Japanese was inadequate to properly communicate with her teachers and senior students. She felt much more at ease after changing to a senior high school for returnees. She then went to a university in a large metropolitan city in Japan and majored in Japanese literature. She had a special reason for choosing this major:

> The international school I went to in London had students from all over the world... My classmates knew quite a lot about their country for their age, but I didn't know much about Japan at all... I needed to learn about Japan in order to describe it to foreigners. I was also in my adolescence and forming my identity, and perhaps for that reason I felt even more strongly that I should learn about my own country.
>
> (Shiho, interview)

During university, Shiho continued to have the desire to provide accurate information about Japan and its language to non-Japanese speakers, and decided to study Japanese linguistics at the master's level in Canada in order to teach Japanese as a foreign language in the future.

Shiho's participation in Course C was in sharp contrast with Emiko's. She was a regular contributor in class discussions and when she spoke, she appeared calm and seemed to take her time. While she mentioned in her earlier reports that she became occasionally frustrated for not being

able to speak "spontaneously" or "accurately," overall, she enjoyed participating in discussions:

> I guess I am getting used to giving comments or asking questions in class. At the beginning of the term, I had to prepare myself before I could speak in class, but now I can speak more naturally and spontaneously. This is good because I won't have to miss the timing to ask or give comments while preparing myself.
>
> (Shiho, weekly report)

Shiho particularly enjoyed the discussions when topics related to Japan or other Asian societies and languages received attention. Over the academic year, she introduced and discussed various topics such as historical use of hiragana (a phonetic Japanese orthography) by women, personal pronouns, address terms, kinship terms, and honorifics in Japanese. She also appreciated the positive feedback she received from others and felt a sense of membership in the classroom:

> For the Japanese kinship terms presentation, I was asked a lot of questions from my classmates, especially from students with a non-Asian background.... The question-answer session during my presentation was really nice because we know each other and can involve ourselves in the discussion in a relaxed mood without being nervous. I really feel I am part of the class.
>
> (Shiho, weekly report)

There seemed to be multiple reasons for Shiho's active and very visible participation. First, she felt comfortable speaking English in this context, perhaps much more than Emiko did. Because of her earlier socialization in a British school, she was used to the kinds of classroom interaction that, in her observation, were normative in English-speaking Western countries (e.g., active interaction between teachers and students). In addition, her self-reports indicated that while offering information about Japan/Japanese on a regular basis, she also attempted to be considerate of her classmates' needs and avoided talking excessively about a topic that might not interest them. This particular aspect of her participation seemed to help construct her status as a competent and accountable member of the classroom community, which in turn further facilitated her participation. Finally, she believed that it was considered important in Western educational culture to demonstrate one's knowledge and presence by actively participating in discussions:

> By participating actively in discussions, you can demonstrate to your instructor that you are learning well... I think that's better than being quiet and being forgotten by your instructor.... [In Western countries] you need to demonstrate how much you know and how much you understand. When I was in London, I wasn't aware of this explicitly but knew it implicitly.
>
> (Shiho, interview)

Discussion

The contrasting experiences of the two students described above illustrate, first of all, the situated nature of identity construction: that is, identities are constructed locally and interactionally in a dynamic fashion rather than simply pre-determined by fixed social categories such as race, ethnicity, gender, and age. While sharing a very similar background in terms of some of these categories, the students developed very different identities in Course C that reflected the different ways in which they participated as well as the different positions they occupied in the classroom community. Emiko struggled to participate actively, which contributed to her identity as a "less competent" member of the class and her relatively peripheral position in the group. In addition, although well intentioned, the instructor's comments regarding Emiko (e.g., "Do you follow Emiko?"; "Emiko is worried about her English being not good enough, but we all understand her, don't we?") seemed to help confirm Emiko's status as someone with less legitimacy. In contrast, Shiho developed an identity as a competent member by actively participating in class discussions and having her contributions validated by others. This difference came partly from the different kinds of learning trajectories these students had brought with them. This leads to my second point: identities are constructed historically. During her childhood and adolescence, Shiho had been socialized into multicultural English-speaking classrooms, and she was able to use this background to her advantage in Course C. In other words, Shiho was a relative old-timer (Lave & Wenger, 1991) in a classroom like Course C, whereas Emiko was a relative newcomer to such an environment.

Another insight that can be drawn from these cases has to do with the role of human agency. While being positioned differently, both Emiko and Shiho used various strategies to maximize their learning opportunities and negotiate positive roles and identities. Emiko tried to counteract her relatively marginal membership by interacting with the instructor and her classmates individually and also by trying to compensate for

her perceived limited oral performance with her written work. By doing so, she gained the opportunity to communicate her knowledge, competence, and sense of investment, which in turned helped her to establish some level of legitimacy as a class member. Even Shiho, who did not seem to experience much difficulty, made a conscious effort to establish her status by actively demonstrating her knowledge and also monitoring the quality and quantity of her contributions. This view of language learners as active human agents with a unique set of personal history, needs, and aspirations, leads to my final point concerning the significance of identity in language learning. As the two cases showed, learners' sense of who they are, which is co-constructed by their human agency and the given learning context, influences significantly how they participate or are allowed to participate in the target language community and what kinds of opportunities they gain for learning and using the target language.

Future directions for research and considerations for pedagogy

To summarize, research on identity and language learning has revealed how language learners are socially and historically constructed and constrained, and how at the same time they actively identify themselves and may also resist identification. Research has also shown that this process of identification has a significant impact on the ways in which learners participate in their target community, which in turn affects their language learning in different ways. More research is needed, however, in order to theorize the complex and seemingly variable relationship between identity and language learning. Since a large portion of research has examined ESL contexts within North America, future research should explore second and foreign language learning contexts in other parts of the world involving different languages (e.g., Siegal, 1996). Research on identity negotiation through different modes of communication (face-to-face, written, online, etc.) needs to be encouraged as people now enjoy a variety of multimodal communication technologies (e.g., Lam, 2000). Another fertile area to examine is the identity formation of individuals who use multiple languages in different spheres of their daily lives, and its impact on the acquisition, maintenance, or loss of languages (e.g., Maguire & Curdt-Christiansen, 2007).

Finally, more attention needs to be paid to implications of identity issues for pedagogical practices. In spite of the centrality of identity

demonstrated by research, there has been limited discussion as to what teachers, educational institutions, and researchers should do to address it. Based on her diary study with immigrant women, Norton (2000) puts forward the notion of "classroom-based social research" and suggests that through engagement in reflective practices such as journal writing, learners can take on "the more powerful identity of ethnographer in relation to the larger world of target language speakers" (p. 18). If we take the view that language learning is a transformative process of identity construction and reconstruction, pedagogical interventions of this sort must be explored in order to understand and support learners' varying needs associated with this process.

Suggested further reading

Norton, B. (2000). *Identity and language learning: Gender, ethnicity, and educational change*. London: Longman/Pearson Education.

This book presents Norton's pioneering work on identity and language learning and offers a good introduction to poststructuralist and critical feminist approaches to identity. It presents the compelling stories of five immigrant women in a naturalistic setting and is a must read for those who are interested in identity and adult L2 learning.

Toohey, K. (2000). *Learning English at school: Identity, social relations and classroom practice*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Toohey complements Norton's work by offering a community-of-practice perspective and analysing the identity construction of minority children in a school setting. It is also an excellent example of ethnographic classroom research that aims for a contextualized understanding of identity formation and transformation.

Pavlenko, A., & Blackledge, A. (Eds.) (2004). *Negotiation of identities in multilingual contexts*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

This edited volume presents a collection of papers that examine identity (re)negotiations of groups and individuals in a wide variety of multilingual contexts. The opening chapter by the editors offers a comprehensive introduction to current issues and theories in this area of research, in addition to the particular theoretical approach (a poststructuralist approach) taken by this volume.

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4

Personality: Personality Traits as Independent and Dependent Variables

Jean-Marc Dewaele

Introduction

Considering the massive amount of research on aptitude and motivation in second language acquisition (SLA), it is rather surprising that so little has been published on the effect of personality on SLA. Dörnyei (2005) suggests that this may be because from an educational perspective "the role and impact of personality factors are of less importance than those of some other individual differences variables such as aptitude and motivation" (p. 10). However, Dörnyei (2005) decided to include a chapter on "Personality, temperament and mood" in his book after coming across the following quotation by the psychologists Pervin and John (2001): "Personality is the part of the field of psychology that considers people in their entirety as individuals and as complex beings" (p. 3). The relatively limited interest in individual differences in personality and SLA stands in sharp contrast with the field of personality psychology, where several journals focus on individual differences, such as *Personality and Individual Differences* and *Individual Differences in Learning*. SLA researchers who have integrated psychological variables into their research designs have primarily done so in order to identify the personality traits that may be linked to success in SLA. The fact that so few significant relationships between personality traits and success in the second or foreign language (L2/FL) have been identified has puzzled researchers. This is due to two main reasons: first, the nature of the dependent variable, namely the wide variety of measures of 'success' in the L2 and, second, the difficulty of disentangling the independent variable from instructional and situational variables. In other words, a

certain personality trait might have an effect in a particular situation where learners have to perform a specific task (MacIntyre, Clément, & Noels, 2007), but that effect may disappear in another situation or in relation to another task. Moreover, although significant relationships between psychological variables and L2 measures have been found, their effect sizes are always small. It is thus difficult to draw clear-cut conclusions that apply to SLA in general. All this has probably discouraged researchers from delving further into possible links between personality traits and SLA.

I have compared this search for the psychological sources of individual differences in SLA to the search for the Holy Grail where researchers resemble "Arthur's knights, stumbling through the night, guided by a stubborn belief that something must be there, glimpsing tantalizing flashes of light from a distance, only to discover that their discoveries looked rather pale in the daylight" (Dewaele, 2009, p. 625). The fact that findings have been relatively disappointing is probably linked to both theoretical and methodological reasons; the SLA researcher needs to combine considerable theoretical knowledge and methodological skill in personality psychology and social psychology, as well as applied linguistics, educational psychology, sociolinguistics, and psycholinguistics (p. 625). Given the complex interaction of personality variables of language learners with dynamic socio-educational contexts, it becomes very difficult to isolate the effect of personality among the cognitive, social, and situational variables that contribute to SLA and L2 production. Indeed, the effect of some personality traits can remain hidden in some situations or tasks, but may appear in other circumstances. My own research, for example, has shown that while extraverts and introverts are roughly indistinguishable in terms of fluency in a relaxed conversation in the L2, the introverts' fluency drops significantly in an oral exam situation (Dewaele & Furnham, 1999).

Dörnyei (2009) agrees with this dynamic view, pointing out that we should abandon the outdated idea of stable and monolithic learner characteristics "because it ignores the situated and multicomponential nature of these higher order attributes" (p. 243). SLA research today is situated and process-oriented, which means that learner attributes are neither stable nor context-independent, but interact with the context and vary over time.

In this chapter, I will briefly present the background of research into personality traits before offering a short overview of the link between some specific dimensions of personality and their link with SLA.

Personality

Personality traits are hierarchically organized with (typically) five broad, orthogonal (i.e., independent) dimensions at the apex and a larger number of more specific traits further down the hierarchy (Pervin & John, 2001). These traits are universal, in other words, the same dimensions appear in questionnaires in various languages across the world. Personality inventories always rely on self-report from participants who have to indicate whether, or to what extent, they agree that a particular statement applies to them. Typical items are "Does your mood go up and down?" or "Are you a talkative person?" or "Do you usually take the initiative in making new friends?" There are usually ten items or more per dimension, which allows researchers to calculate individual scores on the various dimensions. Indeed, a participant may answer "yes" to some of the items dealing with a personality dimension, but not necessarily to all. Traits are thus continuous dimensions of variability and scores are normally distributed. In other words, there are more people situated in the middle of a personality dimension rather than at its extremes. It means, for example, that there are more 'ambiverts' than either extraverts or introverts (Pervin & John, 2001).

The dominant personality taxonomy is the so-called 'Big Five' construct. Costa and McCrae (1985) constructed the NEO Personality Inventory based on the Big Five framework, and the items were designed to assess how respondents typically think, act, and feel.[1] The Big Five personality traits (Extraversion versus Introversion; Neuroticism versus Emotional Stability; Conscientiousness; Agreeableness[2] and Openness-to-Experience) are situated at the summit of the hierarchy. Personality psychologists working in the Big Five framework are resolutely quantitative, mainly because the five-factor model emerged from the application of factor analysis (a statistical technique) to numerous datasets from around the world. Further, almost all of the evidence in support of this model is quantitative and based on statistical analyses (Petrides, personal communication). In addition to the 'Big Five', there are many more so-called 'lower-order' personality traits, which are often correlated with Big Five traits but also explain unique variance. A number of such traits have been considered in SLA.

While there is abundant evidence that 'super-traits' (or 'higher-order traits') and 'lower-order' traits determine behaviour in general, it is less clear to what extent they affect SLA or L2 production. In the next section I shall present a short overview of some of the SLA research linked to

personality traits. First, I will consider four higher-order traits; second, I will highlight the more abundant SLA research on seven lower-order personality traits.

Personality variables in SLA research

Extraversion

The first 'Big Five' dimension, extraversion, has been most frequently included in SLA research designs. This is not surprising considering the common belief among teachers and SLA researchers that extraverts should be successful L2 learners. Indeed, the typical extravert is sociable, active, talkative, person-oriented, optimistic, fun-loving, assertive, and affectionate. Their gregariousness and willingness to engage in interactions, driven by an innate optimism and love of taking risks, seem to give them an edge over the introvert who is typically reserved, sober, aloof, unexuberant, task-oriented, retiring, and quiet (Costa & McCrae, 1985). However, these teachers and researchers perhaps underestimated the quiet determination of the hard-working introverts. The latter may be more inclined to read books than engage in risky social interactions, but it has become clear that they often have an edge over the more extraverted learners in some areas of the L2. In other words, extraverts and introverts seem to follow different routes to success in the L2.

Not surprisingly, studies where extraversion scores have been correlated with foreign language test scores have revealed weak and inconsistent results (Dewaele, 2007). Extraversion also acquired a bad reputation after a partially flawed study by Naiman, Fröhlich, Stern, and Todesco (1978) on personality variables and language learning (Dewaele & Furnham, 1999). The authors looked at whether 'good language learners' scored higher on extraversion. They attributed the lack of correlation between test results and extraversion scores to the nature of the personality questionnaire. As a result, applied linguists have tended to shun psychological variables in their research designs. Dewaele and Furnham (1999) have suggested that if Naiman et al. (1978) had included fluency variables, they might have come to very different conclusions. Indeed, extraverts have been found to score higher on oral fluency measures, especially in stressful situations where the larger capacity of their short-term memory gives them an edge in L2 production (Dewaele & Furnham, 1999). Ockey (2011) reported that several facets of extraversion, namely assertiveness, warmth, activity and excitement seeking, were significant explanatory variables of English L2 fluency ratings of Japanese learners.

Ehrman (2008) used an improved and updated 'good language learner' design with the same aim, namely to establish the psychological profile of a sample of the top 2 per cent best language learners out of 3145 learners (using a commonly used personality questionnaire, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator). Only one type was significantly overrepresented, namely introverted-intuitive-thinking-judging (INTJ) types (p. 64). She concluded that "the best language learners tend to have introverted personalities, a finding which runs contrary to much of the literature, and, even, to pedagogical intuition. The best learners are intuitive and they are logical and precise thinkers who are able to exercise judgment" (p. 70).

Introverts have been found to perform slightly better on written tests compared with extraverts who excel in oral tasks (Robinson, Gabriel, & Katchan, 1994). They have also been found to perform slightly better on L2 vocabulary tests (Carrell, Prince, & Astika, 1996; van Daele, Housen, Pierrard, & Debruyn, 2006). In addition, introverts were found to perform best on vocabulary tests when the items were learned in a familiar learning situation, while extraverts performed best when the learning situation had a moderate degree of novelty (MacIntyre, Clément, & Noels, 2007).

Introverts and extraverts also seem to prefer different strategies in learning the L2. Extraverts tend to prefer social strategies, like cooperation with others or asking for clarification, while introverts are more likely to try to overcome obstacles without outside help (Wakamoto, 2009). The extraverts' inclination to take risks seems to extend to their linguistic behaviour including the use of more slang words (Dewaele & Regan, 2001) and a greater willingness to engage in potentially more risky emotional interactions (Dewaele & Pavlenko, 2002).

Neuroticism

The second of the 'Big Five' constructs is the dimension neuroticism versus emotional stability. People who score high on neuroticism (N) are worried, nervous, emotional, insecure, and feel inadequate. Low-N individuals are calm, relaxed, unemotional, hardy, secure, and self-satisfied (Costa & McCrae, 1985). Very few research designs in SLA have included neuroticism. An exception is Robinson, Gabriel, and Katchan (1994) who found that high-N foreign language students performed better in an oral exam task and in a written test.

In a study I carried out with Flemish high school students, I found that neuroticism was unrelated to the students' foreign language attitudes and their foreign language grades (Dewaele, 2007). However, in an

earlier study on the same sample I found that High-N students tended to experience more Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) in their English L3 (Dewaele, 2002). A stronger positive correlation emerged between neuroticism and FLA in the L2, L3, and L4 of university students in Spain and the UK (Dewaele, 2011).

Conscientiousness

The next 'Big Five' dimension that has been linked to SLA is conscientiousness. This refers to the degree of organization, persistence, and motivation in goal-directed behaviour. Individuals who score high on conscientiousness tend to be organized, reliable, hard-working, self-disciplined, punctual, scrupulous, neat, ambitious, and persistent, while those who score low tend to be aimless, unreliable, lazy, careless, lax, negligent, weak-willed, and hedonistic (Costa & McCrae, 1985). A highly conscientious L2 learner would be expected to work harder, but it is unclear whether this could also affect fluency in the L2. Wilson (2008) reported that British students who scored higher on conscientiousness were more likely to complete the French L2 course successfully at the Open University. Ockey (2011) found that one facet of conscientiousness, achievement striving, correlated positively with his learners' scores for pronunciation, fluency, grammar, vocabulary, and communication skills in the L2.

Ehrman (2008) describes learners who score high on this dimension as being merciless with themselves, always trying to improve their mastery of the target language. They are also more likely to be strategic thinkers, using a range of metacognitive strategies (goal-setting, self-assessment, self-monitoring). They love analysis and enjoy learning relatively fine distinctions. They also strive to be precise in their use of words, expressions, and grammar (Ehrman, 2008).

Openness-to-experience

The final 'Big Five' dimension to be presented here is openness-to-experience. This reflects proactive seeking and appreciation of experience for its own sake as well as a willingness to explore the unfamiliar. It seems to be a good predictor of foreign language learning achievement. Individuals who score high on openness-to-experience have wide interests, and are imaginative and insightful. Those who score low on this dimension are conventional, down-to-earth, have narrow interests, are unartistic and unanalytical. Openness-to-experience is significantly related to intelligence (Costa & McCrae, 1985). Verhoeven and Vermeer

(2002) found that openness-to-experience was linked to the development of basic organizational skills involving lexical, syntactic, discourse, and functional abilities, the acquisition of pragmatic skills and the development of monitoring strategies among young L2 learners in the Netherlands. Ehrman (2008) reported that learners who score high on openness "concentrate on meaning, possibilities, and usually accept constant change" (p. 66). They typically seek hidden patterns, are high ability readers, and can pick up native-like ways of self-expression (p. 66). Openness has also been found to be a significant predictor of frequency of use of English L2 and of self-perceived English L2 proficiency among Polish immigrants in the UK and Ireland (Ożańska-Ponikwia & Dewaele, 2012).

The following sections present seven low-order personality traits, which are often linked to a higher-order dimension but which explain unique variance, and which have been the focus of SLA research.

Risk-taking

Communicating in a L2 can be perceived as risky and some learners may wish to avoid the potential social embarrassment of getting something wrong. The willingness to take risks depends on the situation; when peers are listening in, learners may be more anxious about appearing foolish. They might, however, feel more relaxed in interactions with teachers and native speakers with whom they are not in competition (Beebe, 1983). Extraverts are more likely to take risks in using the L2 in class (Ely, 1986, p. 3), possibly also because they tend to be more optimistic and hence more confident in the positive outcome of their risk-taking.

Ely (1986) found that learners' willingness to take risks in using their L2 was linked significantly to their class participation, which in turn predicted their proficiency. Risk-takers were more likely to use the L2 in free language use (Ely, 1988). Risk-takers also tend to obtain higher grades in the L2 (Samimy & Tabuse, 1992). However, one should not jump prematurely to the conclusion that risk-taking "always create[s] consistent results for all language learners" (Oxford, 1992). Indeed, it interacts "in a complex way with other factors – such as anxiety, self-esteem, motivation, and learning styles – to produce certain effects in language learning" (p. 30). Reckless risk-taking is unlikely to have any beneficial effects in foreign language learning, but moderate and intelligent risk-taking is likely to lead to greater success (Arnold, 1999; Oxford, 1992).

Tolerance/intolerance of ambiguity

Another lower-order personality trait that has been linked to success in SLA is tolerance/intolerance of ambiguity. This reflects the way in which an individual tends to perceive and deal with ambiguous situations or stimuli (Furnham, 1994). Individuals who are tolerant of ambiguity do not mind ambiguous situations too much and feel less anxious in ambiguous situations than individuals at the other end of the scale. Individuals who are intolerant of ambiguity are less likely to engage with ambiguous information or stimuli, while individuals who are more tolerant of ambiguity are less likely to be discouraged. Rubin (1975), in her seminal paper on the profile of the 'good language learner', pointed out that the "good language learner is... comfortable with uncertainty... and willing to try out his guesses" (p. 45). In further reflections on the topic Rubin speculates that the learners' realization that change is an integral part of the language learning process that makes them more comfortable with uncertainty (Rubin, 2008, p. 11). Recent research has shown that tolerance of ambiguity accounts for a large proportion of variance in native listeners' perceptions and evaluations of foreign accented speech produced by L2 users of a wide variety of backgrounds (Seravalle, 2011). The knowledge of more languages and the experience of having lived abroad have been found to be positively correlated with tolerance for ambiguity (Dewaele & Li Wei, 2011).

Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy refers to a person's beliefs in his/her capabilities to perform in ways that give him/her some control over events that affect his/her life (Bandura, 1986). It seems to have a powerful influence on learners' effort, tenacity, and achievement (Bandura, 1986). Self-efficacy can be influenced by learners' past experiences, classroom experiences (encouragement or discouragement), and vicarious experiences.

Some researchers define self-efficacy in a general sense; others have used more domain-specific or even task-specific definitions, in other words, your belief in your capability to carry out a particular task. Individuals can experience feelings of more or less self-efficacy in different domains or situations.

Mills, Pajares, and Herron (2007) examined the influence of self-efficacy and other motivational self-beliefs on the achievement of intermediate French students in US universities. The authors found that self-efficacy strongly predicted achievement: "Students who perceived themselves as capable of using effective metacognitive strategies

to monitor their academic work time effectively were more apt to experience academic success in intermediate French" (p. 417).

Hsieh and Kang (2010) investigated the link between Korean learners' self-efficacy, attributions, and their test grades in English L2 (see Hsieh, Chapter 7, this volume). The authors found that learners with higher levels of self-efficacy attributed their test results to more internal and personal control factors than those who reported lower self-efficacy levels. Unsuccessful learners with higher self-efficacy made stronger personal control attributions than learners with lower self-efficacy.

Foreign language (classroom) anxiety

Foreign language (classroom) anxiety (FLCA) is probably the psychological variable that has been most frequently included in SLA designs (see also MacIntyre & Gregersen, Chapter 8, this volume). It has been defined as "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings and behaviours related to classroom learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986, p. 128). FLCA affects all foreign language users when they use the target language, but it is typically highest for speaking (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994, p. 284). High levels of FLCA can "freeze" learners, leaving them unable to produce or even comprehend the foreign language. Not surprisingly, high levels of FLCA negatively affect learning and performance (Horwitz, 2001) and may turn students off from the study of FLs (Dewaele & Thirtle, 2009). Variation in FLA and FLCA has been linked to various sociobiographical variables, including the individual's linguistic history, knowledge of multiple languages, and current linguistic practice (Dewaele, 2010a). Quality and quantity of affordances – defined as the perceived opportunities for action provided for the observer by an environment (Gibson, 1979) – also seem to affect the way in which a foreign language learner will judge the difficulty of the road ahead. In Dewaele (2010b), I operationalized affordances as a total score reflecting the knowledge of languages that are typologically related to the target language. The hypothesis was that for learners of French, the knowledge of other Romance languages would create stronger or clearer affordances. Indeed, participants who had French as an L2 and L3 and who knew other Romance languages felt significantly more proficient in French and reported lower levels of FLA. The effect was not significant for participants with French L1 or French L4, which led me to conclude that affordances can serve as a crutch at intermediate levels of proficiency, but that this crutch is either superfluous for highly proficient users or insufficient for beginners (p. 105).

Trait emotional intelligence

One personality trait that has only just started to be included in SLA research designs is trait emotional intelligence (trait EI) – also called trait emotional self-efficacy. This is based on the idea that individuals differ in the extent to which they attend to, process, and utilize affect-laden information of an intra-personal or interpersonal nature (Dewaele, Petrides, & Furnham, 2008). Trait EI is typically measured via self-report questionnaires and is located at the lower levels of personality hierarchies. It correlates negatively with neuroticism, and positively with extraversion, openness, and conscientiousness.

Recent research has found that high levels of trait EI correlated positively with frequency of use of English L2 among Poles who had settled in the UK and Ireland (Ożańska-Ponikwia, 2010). In other words, the emotionally intelligent participants were more likely to engage in conversations in English L2. These findings could be linked to an earlier study that reported that emotionally intelligent multilinguals are less anxious when speaking their various languages, including their L1, probably because of their better ability to gauge the emotional state of their interlocutor (Dewaele, Petrides, & Furnham, 2008).

Perfectionism

Progress in SLA is not linear; it is often a messy and dynamic affair, where progress can be followed by sudden dips. The experience can be particularly gruelling for perfectionists who would wish to skip the 'trial and error' stage of SLA. Perfectionist L2 learners tend to make slower progress because the fear of making mistakes hinders their learning. They are inhibited about classroom participation, unwilling to volunteer a response to a question unless they are absolutely sure of the correct answer and they react badly to minor failures (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002). The authors found that anxious learners were more perfectionist, more fearful of evaluation, more concerned about making errors, set themselves higher personal performance standards, and were more inclined to procrastinate.

Musicality

There is evidence that L2 learners with music skills may have an advantage in some aspects of SLA. Learners with musical aptitude seem to be better in distinguishing and producing sounds in the L2, but it had no effect on syntax or lexical knowledge (Slevc & Miyake, 2006). Nardo and Reiterer (2009) found strong correlations between musicality and productive phonetic talent (as measured by a pronunciation talent score),

as well as the aptitude for grammatical sensitivity. The authors conclude that "musicality, ideally in the form of a well developed perception ability together with a good pitch perception ability and an enhanced ability and liking for singing, are the best ingredients for achieving talent and expertise in foreign language pronunciation" (p. 238).

A change in perspective: looking at the effect of SLA on personality

All of the studies reviewed so far have used some personality trait as a predictor variable, in other words, researchers have investigated the effect of a particular trait on some linguistic variable reflecting success in SLA or L2 production. Research in personality psychology also overwhelmingly uses personality traits as independent variables. It would be wrong, however, to consider somebody's personality profile as being set in stone. Dörnyei (2005) refers to a psychologist, Cooper, who pointed out that establishing a personality structure (such as the Big Five) is only one step in the study of individual differences. The "logical subsequent step is to investigate the development of personality" (p. 14). The personality of an individual is determined by biological factors related to hereditary factors but also by environmental factors such as the home in which the person grew up (p. 14). As applied linguists, we can do little to investigate the effects of biological factors, but it should be possible to investigate the effect of environmental factors on the personality of individuals, including the linguistic and cultural background in which a person grew up. These changes are most likely to occur among children and young adolescents whose personality is still malleable.

The potential effect that language learning may have on personality has been highlighted by Guiora et al. (1975, p. 48): "To speak a second language authentically is to take on a new identity as with empathy, it is to step into a new and perhaps unfamiliar pair of shoes." The authors develop the concept of a language ego in one's first language and the permeability of this ego in the face of an empathetic relationship with an L2. One could argue that the shift in ego resulting from the acquisition of an L2 should be perceptible in scores from personality questionnaires. However the difference might be too subtle to catch through a single introspective question. Medved Krajnović and Juraga (2008) did just that in their study of Croatian advanced learners of English L2. Their questionnaire included just one general question on the link between language and personality. Half of the participants felt that their L2 learning had not influenced their personality; a quarter felt that learning English had changed their personality; and the remaining participants were undecided.

Dewaele and Van Oudenhoven (2009) carried out a more systematic investigation on the link between multilingualism, multiculturalism, and scores on five personality traits of young London teenagers (using the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire developed by Van Oudenhoven & Van der Zee, 2002). Immigrant teenagers were found to score significantly higher than locally born teenagers on the dimensions of open-mindedness and, marginally, on cultural empathy. However, they scored significantly higher on neuroticism. Participants who reported that they were dominant in two languages obtained significantly higher scores on the dimensions of open-mindedness, marginally higher scores on cultural empathy and significantly lower scores on emotional stability compared with participants who were dominant in a single language. Multilinguals scored significantly higher on the dimensions of cultural empathy and open-mindedness, and scored significantly lower on the dimension of emotional stability compared with incipient bilinguals, that is monolingual classroom learners of a second language.

A follow-up study by Dewaele and Stavans (2012) used a similar design to investigate variation in the psychological profiles of Israeli multilinguals. Statistical analyses revealed that participants born in Israel scored marginally higher on emotional stability compared to those born abroad. The composition of the family was also found to have an effect: participants with one immigrant parent (but not two) scored higher on cultural empathy, openmindedness, and social initiative. Those who had become dominant in Hebrew as a FL scored lower than L1-dominant participants on emotional stability. Contrary to the findings in Dewaele and Van Oudenhoven (2009), the number of languages known by participants was not linked to their personality profile. One possible explanation for this was that all participants were already functional bi- or multilinguals. A frequent use of many different languages was linked to significantly higher scores on cultural empathy and open-mindedness. We thus concluded that active multicompetence does affect the personality dimensions that are most likely to be shaped by environmental factors. In other words, it is not merely the knowledge of a FL that opens the mind, but it is the active engagement in authentic interactions with various linguistic and cultural groups.

Future directions for research and considerations for pedagogy

Further research is needed on the link between knowledge and use of multiple languages and personality. One way to do this is through

online web-based questionnaires in order to gather data from a very large sample of monolinguals, bilinguals, and multilinguals from around the world. By controlling the number of languages, the way they were learnt and how frequently they are used, it should be possible to determine their effect on various personality dimensions. While further research into independent variables that could be linked to success in SLA is to be encouraged, it also needs to happen with realistic expectations: no single factor is a fool-proof predictor of success in SLA and we need to map out the myriad of – often unquantifiable – factors that are interlocked.

Does research on personality and SLA have any pedagogical implications? I personally feel that the implications are limited, because no single personality trait has been identified that can explain more than a small proportion of variance in successful SLA. Indeed, learners' psychological variables interact with each other and with a wide range of socio-biographical and educational variables. Teachers need to be aware of different personality types in their classrooms, but since any classroom will contain a wide variety of personality types, it is impossible for teachers to cater for specific types. What teachers can do, of course, is to create a positive emotional environment, work at motivating learners and help learners to believe that whatever their personality, they are capable of attaining a high level of proficiency in a FL.

Notes

1. A shorter, 50-item personality inventory is available free of charge online from the International Personality Item Pool (2001), a public-domain personality resource (http://ipip.ori.org).
2. Almost no research in SLA has included Agreeableness as an independent variable, so I will not discuss it here.

Suggested further reading

Arabski, J., & Wojtaszek, A. (2011). (Eds.) *Individual learner differences in SLA*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

The editors have assembled an interesting selection of papers on individual differences researchers situated mainly in Eastern and Southern Europe. It covers some of the background in individual difference research, learner autonomy, strategy application, experienced learners, phonological attainment, reading and writing.

Arnold, J. (2011). Attention to affect in language learning. Special issue 'Focus on affect in language learning'. *Anglistik*, 22(1), 11–22.

Jane Arnold is a pioneer in the research on affect in foreign language teaching. This is a special issue edited by herself and Carmen Fonseca on affective factors of relevance to language learning and teaching. It investigates their influence on the development of current language teaching theories and practice.

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This is an excellent overview of the research on various psychological and affective dimensions in SLA.

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5
Motivation: L2 Learning as a Special Case?

Ema Ushioda

Introduction

Among the psychological constructs implicated in L2 learning, none has perhaps generated as much literature as motivation. As a field of inquiry, the study of L2 motivation has a rich history dating back some 50 years to early work on individual differences in language learning. As Ellis (2008, p. xix) notes, this work pre-dates the establishment of mainstream second language acquisition (SLA) research in the 1960s. Motivation is widely recognized as a variable of importance in the L2 learning process, and possibly one of the key factors that distinguishes first language acquisition from SLA. Put simply, while motivation is not really an issue in the case of infants acquiring their mother tongue, being motivated or not can make all the difference to how willingly and successfully people learn other languages later in life (Ushioda, 2010, p. 5). Yet we might qualify this observation by noting that motivation is similarly critical to all forms of conscious and intentional human learning, and that it has been a major pedagogical and research issue across the field of education. In this respect, we might ask whether L2 learning represents a special case in the psychology of learning motivation, giving rise to distinctive motivation theories and concepts specific to this domain of learning; or whether L2 motivation can broadly be explained in terms of general theories of learning motivation.

The answer to this question has changed over the years, and tracing these changes offers a useful framework for examining past, current, and future research perspectives on L2 motivation. Simplifying somewhat, we might say that L2 motivation research originated in a focus on what makes L2 learning distinctive from other forms of learning (1960s–1990s). Researchers then recognized the need to redress the balance and

bring L2 motivation theory in line with mainstream motivational psychology (1990s). Since the turn of the century, L2 motivation research has kept apace with significant developments in mainstream psychology, integrating these with theoretical perspectives specific to language learning. In reality, as we will see, the analysis is more complex than this.

L2 motivation: its distinctive social-psychological nature

As Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011, p. 39) observe, L2 motivation research originated largely independently of the broader field of motivation research in educational psychology, since it was shaped by a concern to address the unique social, psychological, behavioural and cultural complexities that acquiring a new communication code entails. The field of inquiry was founded by two social psychologists, Gardner and Lambert (1959, 1972), working in the bilingual social context of Canada. They speculated that L2 learning had important social and psychological dimensions which distinguished the motivation to learn a second language from other kinds of learning motivation. In their view, L2 learners are expected not simply to acquire knowledge of the language but to identify with the target language community and adopt their distinctive speech behaviours and styles, or, as Gardner (1979, p. 193) put it, allow "elements of another culture into one's own lifespace." They hypothesized that learners' attitudes towards the target language community, as well as their ethnocentric orientation in general, would influence their motivation to learn the target language. This hypothesis led the researchers to propose two kinds of motivational orientation in L2 learning: an integrative orientation "reflecting a sincere and personal interest in the people and culture represented by the other group"; and an instrumental orientation, "reflecting the practical value and advantages of learning a new language" (Gardner & Lambert, 1972, p. 132). This theoretical framework effectively set the research agenda for the next 20 years, with much work focused on examining these twin orientations and their relative impact on motivation and success in L2 learning, not just in North America but in other social and cultural contexts across the world such as India (Lukmani, 1972) and Israel (Kraemer, 1993). (For a meta-analysis of empirical studies, see Masgoret & Gardner, 2003.)

Firmly anchored in a social-psychological paradigm, L2 motivation research thus evolved independently of the individual-cognitive perspectives then dominating mainstream motivational psychology. It developed within a tradition of associated social-psychological theories of SLA and communication through the 1970s and 1980s.

This tradition included, for example, Schumann's (1978) acculturation model, Clément's (1980) social context model, and Giles and Byrne's (1982) intergroup model, which all focused on L2 learning and use in situations of interethnic contact in multilingual settings, and involved a motivational dimension that closely paralleled Gardner and Lambert's notion of integrative orientation. At one level, as Dörnyei (2005, p. 67) comments, this social-psychological analysis of motivation was radically ahead of its time since socially grounded perspectives did not really become significant in mainstream motivational psychology until the 1990s. Interestingly, as we will see later, current research perspectives on L2 motivation have become even more strongly socio-contextually grounded, though social psychology is no longer the dominant theoretical paradigm.

Linking L2 motivation with motivation in general: two paradigms of inquiry

At another level, on the other hand, in emphasizing what is distinctive about L2 motivation, the social-psychological tradition inevitably drew researchers' attention away from those features which it shares with motivation in other domains of learning, and which might be explained by more general theories of motivation. There are two related but significantly different points to be made here.

First, from a theoretical perspective, it would be surprising indeed if concepts of motivation that apply to human learning in various skill and knowledge domains (e.g., mathematics, history, swimming, painting, teaching, management) did not apply also to the specific domain of language learning. Thus, well-established concepts in motivational psychology, such as need for achievement, expectancy of success, or goal-setting, may usefully inform our analysis of L2 motivation processes and L2 learner behaviours.

Second, from the perspective of those engaged in learning a language, it is unlikely that they will experience their motivation for this area of activity as wholly independent of their motivation (or lack of motivation) for other pursuits or subjects of study. To understand how L2 motivation fits within a person's overall system of motivational processes, behaviours and competing goals and priorities, it is clear that we must look to broader theories beyond social psychology.

In effect, these two points represent different paradigms of research inquiry – the first focusing on what general motivation theories and concepts we can draw on to explain L2 motivation, and the second

focusing on how we can theorize L2 motivation within an overall complex dynamic system. By this we mean an evolving system containing multiple interconnected components, whose adaptive behaviour emerges organically from the interactions of these components. Following its distinctive social-psychological origins, L2 motivation research can be viewed as evolving through these two paradigms in succession, and in some senses moving from a position of 'catching up' with motivation research in mainstream psychology, to a position of engaging closely with and leading debate on current significant developments in this broader field.

Let us look briefly at the interim 'catching up' phase before focusing on the current picture.

Looking beyond social-psychological perspectives

The social-psychological hold on the L2 motivation field began to loosen its grip in the early 1990s. A seminal position paper by Crookes and Schmidt (1991) critiquing the social-psychological tradition heralded an important series of discussion papers published in *The Modern Language Journal* in 1994. These discussions (e.g., Dörnyei, 1994; Oxford & Shearin, 1994) called for a significant broadening of the research agenda to consider cognitive theories of motivation that had wide currency in education and other branches of psychology. As Ushioda and Dörnyei (2012) note, the ensuing phase of L2 motivation research also brought about a shift in focus from the broad macro perspective of ethnolinguistic communities and L2 learners' general motivational dispositions, to a more situated analysis of motivation in specific instructional settings.

Central to Crookes and Schmidt's (1991) critique of the social-psychological perspective on L2 motivation had been the argument that it lacked practical relevance for teachers. While integrative and instrumental motivational dispositions may be important in determining basic learning goals and language choice, they are insufficient to explain ongoing processes of motivation shaping learning, particularly in classroom contexts where L2 learning is compulsory and learners have no choice and may be poorly motivated. Drawing on insights from motivation research in educational psychology, L2 motivation scholars thus turned their attention to key motivational cognitions that can explain learner behaviours in the classroom and that, importantly, were more amenable to pedagogical influence than social-psychological attitudes. Motivational cognitions refer to the kinds of beliefs, self-perceptions,

and thinking patterns that affect students' engagement in (or disengagement from) learning, such as the goals they bring to the classroom (e.g., develop skills and knowledge, please the teacher, outperform others), or their internal explanations for poor performance outcomes (e.g., low ability, insufficient effort, task difficulty). Attention was also focused on the range of factors that may affect individual motivational cognitions, including learner-internal as well as social and situational factors. Two comprehensive theoretical frameworks were developed in the 1990s that sought to capture these individual cognitions and internal and contextual factors relevant to L2 learning motivation – Dörnyei's (1994) three-level framework of L2 motivation, and Williams and Burden's (1997) social constructivist framework of L2 motivation.

Dörnyei's framework analysed L2 motivation in terms of three levels: language level (integrative and instrumental motivational subsystems); learner level (individual motivational characteristics such as self-confidence and need for achievement); and learning situation level (situation-specific motives relating to the course and social learning environment). Williams and Burden's framework classified the internal and external factors shaping L2 motivation. Internal factors include, for example, intrinsic interest, sense of agency, perceptions of success and failure; while external factors include interactions with significant others and, features of the immediate learning environment, as well as the broader social and cultural context. These two comprehensive L2 motivation frameworks proved influential in the field and offered a valuable reference point for pursuing specific areas of research inquiry through the 1990s and the turn of the century (for a review, see Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, pp. 49–60).

While space does not permit analysis of specific areas of research inquiry during this interim period, I would like to conclude this section by making three important points.

First, looking beyond social-psychological perspectives did not mean abandoning these original perspectives. Dörnyei's (1994) three-level framework retained the integrative and instrumental motivation concepts, while social-psychological attitudes to the target language community and culture featured among the learner-internal factors in Williams and Burden's (1997) framework. At some level and in some contexts, therefore, these traditional L2 motivation concepts continued to have explanatory significance and, more importantly, could be integrated meaningfully with the newly adopted concepts of motivation, such as self-efficacy (i.e., perceived ability to perform particular tasks; see Tremblay & Gardner, 1995), or intrinsic and extrinsic motivation

(i.e., engaging in an activity as a pleasurable end in itself, or as a means to a separable outcome or reward; see Noels, Pelletier, Clément, & Vallerand, 2000).

Second, as explained earlier, these newly adopted motivation concepts represent particular cognitions affecting motivated engagement in learning, such as goals, expectancies, beliefs, self-perceptions, and evaluations of success and failure experiences (i.e., attributions). Clearly, such learner cognitions constitute significant areas of research inquiry in themselves, as attested by several chapters in this volume (e.g., Hsieh, Chapter 7, on attributions; Mercer, Chapter 2, on self-concept; Ryan & Mercer, Chapter 6, on mindsets).

In this connection, the third point to be made is that it is clearly difficult to separate the analysis of motivation from these other areas of research inquiry on learner cognitions, as well as associated affective processes or emotions (see MacIntyre & Gregersen, Chapter 8, this volume), and social influences and dynamics (see Murphey et al., Chapter 15, this volume). Moreover, it is rather limiting to isolate motivation in time and to classify individuals according to particular motivational labels (e.g., intrinsically versus extrinsically motivated learners), given the extended process of learning a language and the unstable evolving nature of motivation during this learning process. To understand how L2 motivation fits within the person's overall system of cognitions, emotions, interactions and experiences over time, we need to look beyond not just social psychology but also cognitive theories of motivation, and adopt a rather more holistic perspective that takes account of these dynamically interacting complexities. As noted earlier, this moves us into the current paradigm now shaping research in L2 motivation and to which we now turn.

L2 motivation as part of a complex system: self and context

To summarize briefly so far, I began this chapter by asking whether L2 motivation can broadly be explained in terms of general theories of motivation, or whether L2 learning represents a special case in the psychology of learning motivation, necessitating distinctive motivation theories and concepts specific to this domain of learning. As we move to consider current thinking in the field, however, we find that this inquiry becomes reframed as a different question: How does L2 motivation fit within a person's overall complex system of motivation, behaviours, interactions, and experiences?

A key change to note here is the shift in conceptual focus from 'L2 learner' to 'person'. What this shift signals is a move to a holistic perspective on the individual person who is engaged in the L2 learning process, and who is necessarily situated in a particular temporal, social and physical context. This perspective contrasts with the abstract notion of the L2 learner, conceptualized as a theoretical bundle of variables (e.g., the integratively motivated L2 learner, or the intrinsically motivated L2 learner with high self-efficacy), or conceptualized as generalized (and essentialized) types of learner (e.g., exam-oriented Chinese learners of English). Of course, the degree to which research attention has switched from abstract 'L2 learners' to real 'persons-in-context' is open to question, given the continuing need to develop generalizable insights and theoretical models (for fuller discussion, see Ushioda, 2009). Nevertheless, the paradigm shift towards a more integrated analysis of L2 motivation, self, and context is a significant aspect of current thinking, and mirrors similar concerns in contemporary theories of motivation in mainstream psychology. In the sub-sections to follow, I will first consider concepts of self in relation to motivation, and then discuss current perspectives on integrating motivation, self and context.

Motivation and self

Since the turn of the century, as Pajares and Schunk (2002) observe, concepts of 'self' have come to dominate research on academic motivation in education, as reflected in motivation concepts such as self-efficacy, self-belief, self-worth, self-esteem, self-determination and self-regulation. This self-related focus has similarly become common to motivational psychology more broadly (e.g., self-determination and self-regulation of behaviour in areas of life such as health, work, and emotions; see, e.g., Deci & Ryan, 2002), and places self-concept and associated self-perceptions and sense of personal agency at the core of human motivation (in relation to self-concept, see also Mercer, Chapter 2, this volume).

In recent years, an influential strand of inquiry has developed around the future-oriented dimension of the self-concept (e.g., Hoyle & Sherrill, 2006; Oyserman, Bybee, & Terry, 2006; Murphey et al., Chapter 15, this volume). This strand of inquiry is based on the psychological notion of possible selves, originally defined by Markus and Nurius (1986) as representing people's ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming. Possible selves thus constitute future-oriented aspects of the self-concept and can function

as self-guides which channel and give direction to current motivational behaviours, as individuals strive to achieve their desired future self-images (e.g., as a successful entrepreneur) or to avoid feared self-images (e.g., as a school drop-out). Of course, not all types of possible or imagined selves will channel motivation, and those which represent 'ideal' future self-images are more likely to energize motivation because of our natural psychological desire to reduce the discrepancy between our current and ideal selves (Higgins, 1987).

In the L2 motivation field, these future-oriented aspects of the self-concept have come to reshape our understanding of the traditional social-psychological notions of integrative and instrumental orientation. A key construct in Dörnyei's (2005, 2009a) recently developed *L2 Motivational Self System* is the ideal L2 self, defined as the L2-specific dimension of one's ideal future self-representation, whereby motivation is shaped by aspirations towards desirable future images of oneself as a proficient L2 user. The ideal L2 self is thus theorized to subsume integrative motives (traditionally defined in terms of identification with external reference groups) as well as internalized forms of instrumental motivation, depending on whether our ideal L2 self is associated with social, personal or professional contexts of L2 use. Less internally driven is the ought-to L2 self, which corresponds to more externally regulated types of instrumental motivation such as studying the L2 hard in order not to fail an exam or disappoint one's parents.

By theorizing L2 motivation in the context of future possible selves, Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System thus reframes traditionally defined motivational goals (integrative or instrumental) as future-oriented dimensions of the self-concept – that is, in terms of how one sees oneself in the future. In other words, L2 motivation is explained with reference to the person's future self-representations in life, rather than with reference only to the individual's learning process, behaviours, and outcomes as an L2 learner, as in traditional analyses of L2 motivation. In short, the theoretical boundaries of L2 motivation research have expanded considerably not only to look beyond social-psychological or cognitive theories of motivation, but to look beyond the L2 learner self to the person's motivational self-systems as a whole, and their associated cognitive, behavioural and affective processes.

Motivation, self and context

In taking this broader holistic perspective, however, L2 motivation research must further expand its theoretical boundaries to find ways of capturing the dynamic interaction between self and context. Unlike the

abstract L2 learner or generalized L2 learner types, people engaged in language learning are not only uniquely individual, but are also necessarily located in particular temporal, situational, and social contexts that contribute to shaping their motivation and their developing self-systems, and which they actively shape through their behaviours and interactions (Ushioda, 2009). In the L2 motivation field as in the field of contemporary motivational psychology, a key issue now emerging is how to integrate the self and context in the analysis of motivation, and to explore how motivation develops and emerges through the complex reciprocal interactions between self and context (e.g., Järvelä, Volet, & Järvenoja, 2010; Turner, 2001).

Engaging with wider debates in SLA (de Bot, Lowie, & Verspoor, 2007) and applied linguistics (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008) as well as across the social sciences, L2 motivation research is currently seeking to address this issue by moving towards complexity theory and dynamic systems approaches. Originating in the fields of mathematics, biology and the physical sciences, such approaches concern the behaviour of complex systems that contain multiple interconnected components, where development is characterized by non-linear growth as systems adapt and evolve organically in response to contextual processes, and in ways that contribute to shaping context. In terms of how we might conceptualize L2 motivation within a dynamic systems perspective, at one level it is clear that it becomes just one element in a complex evolving system of multiple interacting elements. As Dörnyei (2009b) argues, this dynamic systems perspective on SLA processes renders the notion of discrete individual difference variables (such as motivation) rather meaningless, since processes of motivation, cognition and emotion and their constituent components interact with one another and the developing context, thereby changing and causing change in non-linear and unpredictable ways, as the system as a whole restructures, adapts and evolves. At another level, however, as I have argued elsewhere (Ushioda, 2010), it seems likely that the analysis of motivation may play a major role in any dynamic systems perspective on L2 learning, given the need to consider processes of human agency, intentionality and reflexivity that are fundamental to the interactions between self and context (Sealey & Carter, 2004).

In short, returning to the reframed question that began this section (How does L2 motivation fit within a person's overall complex system of motivation, behaviours, interactions and experiences?), we might say that current perspectives:

- analyse L2 motivation with reference to a person's motivational self-systems and future self-representations as a whole;
- highlight the significant role of L2 motivation in the dynamic interactions between self and context.

Researching L2 motivation: overview and an example

In shifting the theoretical focus from 'L2 learners' in the abstract to 'persons' located in particular temporal, situational and social contexts, it is clear that the research methodologies we adopt should take account of the individuality of our research participants and the specific socio-historical and interactional contexts in which they are situated. This sharply focused, contextualized and individualized perspective goes against the grain of the traditional quantitative methodologies that have dominated L2 motivation research and that seek to develop generalizable insights.

A quantitative research history

This traditional quantitative approach reflects the research heritage of the broader disciplines of social psychology and cognitive motivational psychology which, as seen earlier, have shaped the evolution of L2 motivation research. Motivation research has generally relied on questionnaire instruments to gather measures of students' self-reported attitudes, feelings, goals, intentions, and behaviours. These motivation measures are then entered into statistical analyses to examine relationships with other variables and learning outcomes.

As Ushioda and Dörnyei (2012) observe, the strengths of this approach include methodological rigour and systematicity in data-gathering and statistical analysis, as well as comparability and replicability of data, and generalizability to wider populations. In the L2 motivation field in particular, considerable attention has been paid to constructing rigorous measurement instruments with robust psychometric properties, as typified in the standardized Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) developed by Gardner and his associates (Gardner, 1985). The psychometric design principles of the original AMTB have been applied to the development of measures of cognitive motivation constructs (e.g., self-efficacy, Tremblay & Gardner, 1995; intrinsic and extrinsic orientations, Noels et al., 2000), and measures of the new constructs of future possible selves (MacIntyre, Mackinnon, & Clément, 2009; Ryan, 2009; Taguchi, Magid, & Papi, 2009).

In short, current research that seeks to investigate and empirically validate these new self-related motivation constructs continues to sustain the prevailing methodological paradigm. However, as Ushioda and Chen (2011) argue, a more qualitative research approach may be needed to explore an area of human experience as individual, complex and locally grounded as how one sees oneself now and imagines oneself in the future. Possible selves imply individual subjective experience and perception, and the extent to which this individuality can be meaningfully captured through a quantitative measurement instrument that pre-defines respondent options seems questionable.

Illustrating a qualitative research approach

Having long championed a qualitative approach to researching L2 motivation (Ushioda, 1994, 2001, 2009), I would like to sketch an approach I am currently working on that tries to capture how motivation develops through and shapes interactions among persons in a specific context. To date, qualitative studies of L2 motivation or mixed methods studies that incorporate qualitative methods have generally relied on exploratory interviews as the qualitative research tool (e.g., Lamb, 2004; Ushioda, 2001; Williams & Burden, 1999). While interview methods allow for much deeper individual perspectives to emerge than questionnaire methods, the interview context and interactions are necessarily different and disconnected from the research participant's L2 learning context and interactions. Our understanding of how motivation evolves at the actual site of L2 learning is limited to what our research participant can usefully tell us (and perhaps rationalize retrospectively) about certain L2 learning experiences and events, in response to our probing questions.

To try to capture a more in situ analysis of motivation, we need to capture (i.e., record) the contextualized event under focus – for example, a whole lesson, a critical episode in a lesson, students' interactions in a pair work task, a group presentation or, a one-to-one feedback tutorial. Through a detailed multimodal analysis of the event (e.g., discourse, non-verbal interactions and behaviours, silences, lesson materials, task design, off-task interactions and behaviours), we can develop our interpretative perspective (informed by our theoretical and analytical insights) on processes of motivation shaping and shaped by the event and the interactions and behaviours of its central participants. Our interpretative analysis might then be integrated with participants' (i.e., teachers' and students') own retrospective analyses through stimulated recall interviews in which they are invited to watch and comment

on the recorded episode. This kind of multimodal and multidimensional analysis has rich potential to uncover the moment-by-moment complexities of motivational processes at work in the L2 classroom.

In my own research-in-progress with colleagues, for example, we are focusing on teacher–student interactions in relation to feedback on writing, and examining how processes of motivation shape and are shaped by these interactions. Our research context is the UK higher education setting, which has a diverse international student population, and where recent nationwide surveys (http://www.thestudentsurvey.com) have highlighted assessment feedback as a perceived area of dissatisfaction among students. For international students whose first language is not English and who, despite meeting English language entry requirements, may find academic writing challenging, the role of feedback assumes particular importance in helping or not helping them to improve their writing skills. Yet while students may expect or desire specific advice on how to improve their writing, academic subject tutors may not feel it is within their brief to provide such advice, beyond offering rather general comments such as "you need to polish your use of English" or "written expression is rather awkward and stilted". They may expect students to identify their own specific language and writing problems and find ways of addressing these, or to have recourse to in-sessional language support. The feedback process may thus be beset by underlying tensions between conflicting expectations, needs and agendas. In addition, as our initial explorations suggest, cross-cultural factors may contribute to differing beliefs and expectations about the nature and function of feedback (e.g., whether positive comments and encouragement are perceived as motivationally important, or whether negative informational feedback is valued or even preferred). Cross-cultural factors may also contribute to varying perceptions of and affective responses to feedback discourse (e.g., evaluative comments such as "it's a pity" or "what a shame" may have a strong impact on some students' self-concept).

By focusing on the assessment feedback event within the broader context of teaching–learning, and by examining this individual event from multiple perspectives, we are endeavouring to capture a dynamic analysis of how processes of motivation evolve. The multiple perspectives under analysis include the following: students' assessed writing, associated feedback comments from academic tutors, and recorded face-to-face tutorial interactions, as well as tutors' and students' perceptions of these events. These perceptions are being captured through stimulated recall interviews using tutorial recordings and tutors' written

feedback comments as focuses for individual discussion with participants. We aim to explore how motivation is constructed and construed in the written and oral interactions between tutors and students in relation to their respective feedback expectations and agendas, and the affective and behavioural responses evoked during the feedback process as well as after the event, for both students and tutors.

Although it is too early in the research process to report any detailed findings, our initial explorations suggest that the motivational impact of the assessment feedback process depends in large part on the particular orientation which individual students bring to this process, and the degree to which tutors are sensitive towards and respond to this agenda. For instance, students may simply be looking for reassurance or encouragement, or want an evaluation of their strengths and weaknesses, or be anxious to improve their writing as much as possible. Thus, for example, encouraging remarks by tutors may be perceived as motivating for some students but as frustratingly uninformative for others.

Future directions for research and considerations for pedagogy

Surprisingly, perhaps, the kind of richly grounded in situ analysis I have sketched here remains rare in the L2 motivation field, given the preponderance of questionnaire- and interview-based studies where motivation processes and experiences are largely filtered through self-report data, with minimal use of observation data (though see Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008). While self-report perspectives will continue to have importance in researching motivational self-concepts and future possible selves, a clear direction for future research must be an empirical focus on the dynamic and interactive contexts through which motivation processes evolve, and which contribute to shaping more long-term motivational trajectories (i.e., future possible selves).

This contextual focus clearly has implications for pedagogy – that is, for our understanding of how teachers' instructional and interactional practices may contribute to shaping processes of motivation in their classrooms. Current conceptions of L2 motivation point to a significant role for teachers as principal orchestrators of the learning context, as key interactants in the complex dynamics integrating self-and-context, and as significant socializers of students' future possible selves (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Thus, a key implication for classroom practice is to raise teachers' awareness of their critical role in this regard. Yet understanding how this role contributes to shaping processes of motivation calls for contextually grounded classroom research. In short, exploring

research and practice in classrooms can undoubtedly help further refine our understandings and theoretical conceptions.

Suggested further reading

Dörnyei, Z., & Ushioda, E. (Eds.). (2009). *Motivation, language identity and the L2 self*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

This volume brings together key conceptual and empirical papers which address the current re-theorizing of L2 motivation in relation to concepts of self and identity. The volume also includes the most extensive account of Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System.

Dörnyei, Z., & Ushioda, E. (2011). *Teaching and researching motivation* (2nd ed.). Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.

This book provides a comprehensive updated overview of L2 motivation theory, research and practice. It also illustrates approaches to researching motivation and provides sample questionnaire tools.

Schunk, D. H., Pintrich, P. R., & Meece, J. (2008). *Motivation in education: Theory, research and applications* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.

This authoritative resource offers a comprehensive introduction to motivation in education. The authors provide accessible accounts of theory, overviews of research, illustrative vignettes, and questions for discussion and exploration.

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6

Implicit Theories: Language Learning Mindsets

Stephen Ryan and Sarah Mercer

Introduction

Implicit theories (or mindsets) refer to the fundamental, core beliefs that individuals hold about the nature and malleability of various aspects of the human condition. Our specific interest is with implicit theories relating to intelligence or ability, as these beliefs affect approaches to learning and have been shown to connect to motivation (see Ushioda, Chapter 5, this volume), attributions (Hsieh, Chapter 7, this volume), goals (Woodrow, Chapter 13, this volume), strategies (Cohen, Chapter 10, this volume), and self-concept (Mercer, Chapter 2, this volume). While mindsets have been the focus of an increasing number of studies within psychology, they remain an under-researched construct in the domain of foreign language learning.

In this chapter, we aim to provide an overview of research into mindsets and in doing so illustrate the value of a framework that seeks to explain how psychological variables connect, as opposed to treating individual variables in isolation. Employing Dweck's (1999) central theoretical model as a base for our discussion, we also hope to make the case for a more enthusiastic adoption of the mindsets framework within the field of language education.

Overview of the literature

In this section, we discuss the literature relating to mindsets. First, we consider how the concept has been developed in mainstream psychology, and then we examine how it can be applied to the field of language learning.

Implicit theories in psychology

The origins of implicit theories can be traced back to Kelly's (1955) work on personal constructs, which considered the role of lay theories – the beliefs that people use in their everyday lives – and how they affect individuals' perceptions of the self and of others. Within educational psychology, the challenge of exploring how these theories can be understood as part of a comprehensive theory of learning has been taken up by the American psychologist Carol Dweck and numerous associates (Blackwell, Trzesniewski, & Dweck, 2007; Chiu, Hong, & Dweck, 1997; Dweck, 1999, 2006; Dweck, Chiu, & Hong, 1995; Dweck & Molden, 2007; Hong et al., 1999). Since "people's theories are largely implicit or poorly articulated" (Dweck et al., 1995, p. 267), the psychology literature tends to refer to these lay theories as 'implicit theories.' Dweck (1999) identifies two principal sets of implicit theories: an entity theory and an incremental theory. A person holding an entity theory of intelligence is likely to believe that an individual's intelligence is a fixed quantity. In contrast, a person subscribing to an incremental theory believes that people have the capacity to develop their intelligence. Dweck (2006) also uses the more accessible term 'mindsets' and the implicit theories outlined above correspond to two mindsets: a fixed mindset, a belief in the fixed nature of ability or intelligence, which is consistent with an entity theory, and a growth mindset, equivalent to an incremental theory. We have chosen to adopt the mindsets nomenclature as we have found it to be more readily understood by a wider audience and feel that it better captures the comprehensive and pervasive nature of the construct. As Dweck (2006, p. 209) explains: "Mindsets frame the running account that's taking place in people's heads. They guide the whole interpretation process."

The relationship between the two types of mindsets reveals something of a tension, or even an inconsistency, within the literature. On the one hand, there is a tendency to imply an almost irreconcilable chasm between the two mindsets, 'a world from two perspectives' (Dweck et al., 1995), yet there also appears to be a consensus warning against assuming a simplistic dichotomy. Murphy and Dweck (2010, p. 283) stress that, "people find both entity and incremental views of intelligence plausible: however, they tend to personally endorse one theory more chronically than the other." This suggests that it may be more productive to conceive of mindsets as a continuum with most people lying at some point between the two extreme positions.

Links to other psychological variables

A significant feature of the mindsets framework is how it connects to a range of other key psychological variables, and Dweck's motivational model of achievement (Dweck, 1999) illustrates some of the interconnections between mindsets, self-efficacy, attributions, and patterns of motivation. The model predicts that a growth mindset can mitigate the impact of low self-efficacy, since individuals holding a growth mindset believe that their abilities can be increased through effort and practice. As a result, they are more likely to be motivated to seek out challenges and look for opportunities to learn through the adoption of learning-oriented goals. They have also been shown to experience more positive emotions and make more adaptive attributions for poor performance that contribute to higher expectations for the future, in turn enhancing motivation (see Hsieh, Chapter 7, this volume). Numerous studies have provided empirical support for a link between implicit theories and patterns of motivation (see Dupreyat & Mariné, 2005; Ommundsen, 2001; Rhodewalt, 1994). As Chen and Pajares (2010, p. 75) note, "implicit theories have been shown to be related to so many motivational constructs."

One key area of research (Baird et al., 2009; Dweck & Leggett, 1988) explores the links between people's mindsets and their goal orientations (see Woodrow, Chapter 13, this volume). It has been shown that people's mindsets tend to lead them to pursue different types of goals, with a fixed mindset being strongly associated with performance goals in which the objective is to demonstrate and prove one's ability, and a growth mindset with learning or mastery goals, where the aim is to develop and improve one's ability (Elliott & Dweck, 1988). However, these relationships are again more than a simple, neat dichotomy; individuals' goal orientations can be complex and the relationship between mindsets and goals can be mediated by other factors such as self-efficacy and attributions (Baird et al., 2009; Leondari & Gialamas, 2002).

It was research into attributions (Dweck, 1975) that first triggered interest in mindsets. When individuals attribute their successes and failures to abilities that they believe to be fixed, the consequence is helplessness; the challenge for psychologists has been to understand and counter these feelings of helplessness. Hong et al. (1999) found that entity theorists were likely to attribute poor performance to a lack of ability, whereas incremental theorists were more likely to attribute negative outcomes to insufficient effort. In a recent study of young people with learning difficulties, Baird et al. (2009) concluded that theories of

intelligence were strongly connected with learners' effort attributions, leading those with fixed mindsets to be more likely to interpret exertion of effort as a sign of limited ability.

Within psychology as a whole, there is a strong tendency for researchers to isolate and analyse discrete variables. However, Robins and Pals (2002, p. 315) make a powerful case when they argue that the mindsets model represents "the interrelations among a set of variables that work together as a motivational and self-regulatory system, and is thus more appropriately tested in its entirety than in a piecemeal fashion." Mindsets are probably best understood as part of a network of beliefs and self-regulatory processes linking a range of psychological variables that have traditionally been considered in isolation.

Mindsets in education

A central characteristic of mindsets is their domain-specific nature. This means that, as Dweck et al. (1995, p. 269) argue, "people need not have one sweeping theory that cuts across all human attributes." Individuals may hold different mindsets for different areas of their lives, such as intelligence, creativity, athletic ability, relationships, or personality. Although there is likely to be some interaction between domains, these mindsets can operate relatively independently of each other. It may be possible, for example, for someone to hold a strong fixed mindset in the domain of music, believing that musical abilities depend on an innate gift for music, while holding a strong growth mindset with regard to physical or athletic ability, believing that success is possible for anyone prepared to put in the requisite effort and practice.

Perhaps one of the most important characteristics of mindsets for educators is their potential for change. Several studies have shown that despite their deep-rooted nature, mindsets are dynamic and that interventions can lead to changes in a person's mindset and motivation (see Aronson, Fried, & Good, 2002; Good, Aronson, & Inzlicht, 2003). For example, in a study with children in New York, Blackwell et al. (2007) carried out an intervention study where pupils took part in a series of workshops in which they learnt about the brain and were taught that intelligence is malleable. They found that not only did the pupils' grades improve, but their motivation was also enhanced.

Pedagogic interventions designed to foster growth mindsets in learners have clear echoes in Feuerstein's theories of structural cognitive modifiability and mediated learning experience (Feuerstein, 1990; Feuerstein & Feuerstein, 1991). The essential premise of Feuerstein's theories is that intelligence is not fixed, that it can be modified and

developed through appropriate mediation. This is defined as "an intentional interaction with the learner, the purpose of which is to enhance the learner's understanding beyond the immediate experience and to help the learner to apply what is learned in broader contexts – goals that often go beyond the simple transmission of knowledge" (Feuerstein, Feuerstein, & Falik, 2010, p. xviii). This distinction between mediation and teaching, the transmission of knowledge and skills, is an important one that remains unexplored in language education and demands more serious consideration (see Williams & Burden, 1997).

Implicit theories in language learning

Mindsets have been examined in domains where natural or innate talent is popularly believed to be essential to success, such as music and sport (Martin, 2008; Ommundsen, 2001). However, despite the widespread perception (see Graham, 2002; Mori, 1999) of a 'natural,' innate aptitude for language learning, very little attention has been paid to the role of implicit theories within the field of applied linguistics.

Perhaps the most closely related line of inquiry within second language acquisition (SLA) can be found in the literature examining learner beliefs (Cotterall, 1999; Horwitz, 1998; Kalaja & Barcelos, 2003; White, 2008). Underlying much of this research is the understanding that learner beliefs are "important because learners hold their beliefs to be true and these beliefs then guide how they interpret their experiences and how they behave" (Wenden, 1998, p. 517). One influential study that paved the way for a consideration of mindsets in language learning was Mori's (1999) investigation of the epistemological beliefs of language learners – their beliefs about the nature of knowledge and learning. One of the immediately relevant findings of Mori's study was that "a strong belief in innate ability is associated with lower achievement. This suggests that if students perceive their own ability as a controllable, increasable entity, they have better chances to attain higher proficiency" (Mori, 1999, p. 408).

Unfortunately, research focusing explicitly on mindsets within language learning has been rare. In our own work (Mercer & Ryan, 2010; Ryan & Mercer, 2011), we have adapted Dweck's basic distinction between fixed and growth mindsets to describe two language learning mindsets. A fixed language learning mindset describes a person who believes that successful language learning is attributable to natural talent or an innate ability that cannot be changed. Someone who believes that language learning abilities can be developed as a result of effort,

dedicated practice and hard work is said to hold a growth language learning mindset.

Noting some of the warnings about the dangers of importing constructs from psychology into SLA in an inappropriate manner (Dewaele, 2005; Dörnyei, 2005), we have attempted to remain sensitive to the particular needs of language learning. For example, our initial exploratory research suggested that language learners may hold different mindsets for different language skill areas (Mercer & Ryan, 2010). In other words, an individual may simultaneously hold a strongly fixed mindset for something such as pronunciation, believing that excellent pronunciation can only come to those with a 'natural gift,' while holding a growth mindset for another skill, such as writing.

An additional caveat emerging from our initial studies concerns the cultural or contextual base of mindsets. Various psychologists have already drawn attention to the need for research to consider differing understandings of constructs and beliefs systems across cultural systems (see Heine et al., 2001; Lockhart, Nakashima, Inagaki, & Keil, 2008; Norenzayan & Heine, 2005). Our own small-scale cross-cultural work has highlighted the need for research to be conducted in context-sensitive ways and this parallels findings from mainstream psychology, such as those of Murphy and Dweck (2010), who, in a study of mindsets within different organizational contexts, found that mindsets may exist and function even at an institutional level.

Researching implicit theories

Within mainstream psychology, most research investigating mindsets has been conducted using quantitative questionnaire instruments, such as Dweck's Implicit Theories questionnaire (Dweck, 1999), or employing various adaptations of this instrument (see Chen & Pajares, 2010). Such research instruments used in conjunction with statistical analysis can be useful in testing hypotheses and identifying broad patterns or trends. More recently, there has been some recognition that fixed-item questionnaires alone cannot provide a complete picture. There are notable examples of other innovative methods being used alongside questionnaires. In a study investigating implicit theories within organizations, Murphy and Dweck (2010) employed a range of role-play and simulation activities to elicit data, and in work with younger learners, Levy and Dweck (1999) created scenarios for interpretation using various stimulation materials.

Within applied linguistics, the difficulties of investigating beliefs have been well documented (for a critical overview, see Barcelos, 2003). For example, Benson and Lor (1999) point out that in using questionnaires, there is a risk of putting words into the mouths of participants by requiring them to consider ideas that may not be important to them, or of ignoring other beliefs they consider important but are not included in the questionnaire. A further criticism of research based solely on questionnaires and statistical analysis is that it fails to acknowledge the dynamic and contextualized nature of beliefs (Kalaja, 1995). In response to this, more context-sensitive qualitative approaches have been proposed, which are also able to accommodate the dynamic nature of these beliefs in context. Barcelos (2003) concludes that no single data collection method can capture the full complexity and unpredictability of people's beliefs and recommends multiple data collection methods, combining various techniques such as questionnaire analysis, classroom observations, interviews, case studies, and narratives. The message appears to be that researchers need to be pragmatic, innovative, and open to new approaches.

Research focusing specifically on mindsets in language learning is still relatively sparse but our own experience of researching language learning mindsets has persuaded us of the value of diversity and a range of methodological approaches. In our earliest research, questionnaires adapted for the language learning context from Dweck's Implicit Theories questionnaire provided us with some interesting insights into general tendencies within and across populations in different cultural settings (Mercer & Ryan, 2009). However, in attempting to explain some of our findings and to better understand the specific nature of mindsets within language learning, we shifted the focus of our inquiry towards an exploration of the detail and situated complexity of learners' mindset beliefs.

An example of mindsets research

Participants and procedure

This small-scale study was intended to build upon earlier work and generate hypotheses for further research. In particular, we were keen to explore the concept of innate 'natural' ability as an expression of a fixed mindset. Our aim was to elicit detailed data concerning this one specific aspect of mindset-related beliefs. We asked learners to write reflective pieces about their thoughts on the role of natural ability in language

learning. Our hope was that extended written pieces would allow the students time to reflect in depth, at their own pace, thereby providing richer, more nuanced data.

We anticipated that tertiary-level students would be better able to reflect and articulate their implicit, deeply held thoughts than younger learners. Therefore, we decided to confine our study to university students. We received 23 texts in English: 14 from students at an Austrian university and, 9 from Japanese university students; participation was voluntary. The participants were asked to write about "your ideas on the possible role of a natural ability for learning foreign languages and your beliefs about the process of language learning generally." To help partially focus their writing, a set of open-ended guidelines were provided. Some example questions are:

- What factors do you feel are necessary to be a highly successful language learner?
- Do you believe there is such a thing as a natural ability for learning languages? Please explain your answer.
- If you believe there is a such thing, how would you describe a natural ability for learning languages?

The data were coded for content on a line-by-line basis using the data management software Atlas.ti and were repeatedly re-coded until 'saturation,' when no further fresh coding was possible (Charmaz, 2006). The data were analysed for content using a grounded theory approach. In line with such an approach, hypotheses were not imposed on the data, but rather the analysis generated ideas and themes which remained close to the data. Although data were obtained from two very different educational settings, partly due to the small size of the sample, we chose not to analyse the texts for cross-cultural or cross-contextual factors but rather concentrate in detail on the nature of the beliefs rather than any group generalizations.

The findings

The role of 'natural talent'

All but five participants expressed a clear belief in the existence of a natural ability for learning languages. As anticipated, the learners described this in terms of a 'talent' or a 'feeling' for languages, and suggested that this was not something you could change or develop but that it was 'innate.' Such beliefs are indicative of a fixed mindset and are clearly articulated here by one of the Austrian participants:

> This feeling mentioned before cannot be learned or hammered into somebody therefore it is a naturally given thing and a good precondition for learning foreign languages.

However, those learners who mentioned the role of natural ability differed considerably in the degree of importance they attached to it as a factor in successful language learning. Another Austrian participant explained:

> I have to say that I actually do not 100 per cent believe in natural ability as many other aspects also play an important role.

Statements such as this suggest that it is more appropriate to think in terms of a mindsets continuum, rather than a distinct dichotomy.

Integrating other factors

None of the learners expressed a belief that language learning success stems from natural ability alone, but rather they saw this as one of several key ingredients; natural ability was perceived of as playing a role, but only in combination with other factors. Participants in the study offered a wide and highly personalized range of factors they considered important; the most common were interest or motivation, but contextual factors were also often mentioned. Some, such as the student cited below, refer to a wide range of factors and show a sophisticated awareness of the complexity involved in successfully learning a language:

> To sum up, factors I consider important for foreign language learning are: motivation, support, cultural understanding, interest and a bit of natural ability. Of course I think all of these features are interlinked, which makes it almost impossible to tell them apart.

Learners also assigned differing degrees of importance to the various factors they considered important for successful learning. The thoughts of the following two students serve to illustrate this point; the first thinks that motivation is the 'key' factor, more important than other factors she refers to in her text, while the second student contends that several factors contribute to language learning success with the most critical of these being natural ability:

> In my view, the key factor to be a successful foreign language learner is motivation.

> I feel that there are a number of factors that influence our language learning process. I think natural ability is one of the most important.

Learners appear to view language learning success as attributable to a range of factors, not just ability, and that these factors combine and contribute in differing degrees to an individual's approach to learning. Research into mindsets and academic achievement has tended to concentrate on beliefs concerning the perceived malleability of ability and intelligence. While these beliefs are doubtless of importance, our data suggest that for language learners beliefs about the malleability of other factors may be equally, or possibly more, important depending on the relative importance assigned to that factor by the individual.

To illustrate this point, one of the Japanese students suggested that alongside natural ability, an individual's 'natural character' was an important part of becoming a successful language learner. He implied that personality characteristics, such as being 'shy', were fixed traits, concluding that a 'shy' person could only succeed at writing in a foreign language. For this learner, a consideration of his beliefs about the relative malleability of personality characteristics would be an important part of understanding his overall language learning mindset.

Variation

A final finding emerging from the analysis of the data is that learners vary considerably in their beliefs. The data illustrate how beliefs can vary according to a series of perceived mediating factors, such as the learning context – a stay abroad or classroom-based setting, the language skill area under consideration, and other variables such as age:

> Of course it also depends on other factors such as age or setting. One is much faster at acquiring any language the younger the person is because there is a certain threshold to acquiring languages until a certain age. When it comes to the setting, there is of course a huge difference whether you learn the aspiring foreign language in your home country or in the country where the language is actually spoken.

A second area of variation concerns the dynamism of mindsets across time and this was reflected in one learner's narrative about the perceived development and changes in his beliefs about the role and nature of natural ability:

> I actually believed that I had a natural ability for learning a foreign language. I later changed my opinion about the concept natural ability.

This final data extract serves as a cautionary yet optimistic note on which to conclude our discussion. The statement is cautionary in that it reminds us of the complexity of learner belief systems, warning against overly simplistic understandings of mindsets, yet optimistic in highlighting a capacity for change in those systems.

Summary

The findings from this small-scale study illustrate the complexity and potential dynamism of mindsets. The data suggest that beliefs about the nature of ability or talent provide only a part of the picture. For a more meaningful understanding of language learning mindsets, it is essential to consider learners' beliefs about other influential factors in language learning, and in particular notions of malleability or modifiability, alongside the relative importance they assign to these factors. While we remain convinced that, as suggested by the psychology literature, beliefs about the malleability of intelligence and ability exert a powerful influence on approaches to learning, we also recognize that these are only one set of beliefs among many. The texts we obtained were also highly individual, displaying considerable inter-learner variation. This appears to be an indication of how personalized and unique learners' belief systems can be and, as such, cautions against simplistic frameworks or models that do not acknowledge complexity, variability, or dynamism (cf. Ushioda, 2011). From a methodological viewpoint, the study also illustrates the value of in-depth qualitative research which can generate valuable nuanced insights.

Future directions for research and pedagogic considerations

Research in psychology has highlighted how mindsets affect approaches to learning, especially in domains where natural talent is considered important. Research into language learning mindsets is still very much in its infancy and much work remains to be done before we can claim to more fully understand their complexity. While the kinds of insights offered by quantitative and experimental-style studies can be valuable, it is apparent that by blanketing over individual variation and complexity

(Dörnyei, 2010) we are only observing a fragment of the bigger picture. In order to gain a broad but also deep understanding of mindsets, we suggest that much can be gained by considering a range of theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches. Particular questions that we suggest need to be immediately addressed with respect to mindsets in foreign language learning are:

- To what extent might learners at differing levels of proficiency hold different mindsets across skill domains?
- How do learners' mindsets across a range of related domains interconnect, in particular foreign language and mother tongue domains?
- In what ways are learners' mindsets influenced by their social, cultural, and educational contexts?

In pedagogic terms, the intervention studies are encouraging in that they suggest the potential for learners' mindsets to change. Conceptualizations of mindsets as a continuum also make it easier for individuals and educators to conceive of progress in developing mindsets as learners have the potential to move gradually along the continuum, rather than less plausibly execute a radical mindset shift. In terms of practice, an explicit discussion of learner beliefs and mindsets is likely to be helpful in dispelling inhibiting, unhelpful beliefs. In addition, there are four other key ways in which educators are believed to be able to influence and enhance mindsets (Dweck, 1999):

1. through the careful use of praise and feedback;
2. through positive modelling of their own and other successful individuals' growth mindsets;
3. by providing learners with strategies to actively direct and manage their own learning;
4. by using materials which enable learners to witness their own 'growth' and thereby feel a sense of progress.

It is clear that learners' belief systems cannot be influenced in easily predictable ways. Nevertheless, through the careful consideration of implicit messages contained in classroom behaviours, task construction, and interactions, it may be possible to create a learning environment that facilitates growth mindsets. A substantial body of research from educational psychology holds that doing this may empower learners to engage with their learning purposefully and increase the likelihood of successful learning outcomes.

Suggested further reading

Molden, D. C., & Dweck, C. S. (2006). Finding "meaning" in psychology: A lay theories approach to self-regulation, social perception, and social development. *American Psychologist*, 61(3), 192–203.

This article is a good introduction to research in this area. It is accessible and situates research into lay theories within the overall framework of educational psychology, showing how they link to other key concepts in psychology.

Kalaja, P., & Barcelos, A. M. F. (Eds.), *Beliefs about SLA: New research approaches*. Dordrecht: Kluwer.

Though not specifically about mindsets, this edited volume provides an excellent overview of some of the key issues connected to researching beliefs within SLA.

Dweck, C. S. (1999). *Self-theories: Their role in motivation, personality, and development*. Hove: Psychology Press.

An essential read for anybody with an interest in the issues discussed in this chapter. Compact and well organized, the book shows how cognitive and motivational patterns originate in people's self-theories.

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7

Attribution: Looking Back and Ahead at the 'Why' Theory

Pei-Hsuan (Peggy) Hsieh

Introduction

Motivation is generally acknowledged as a key determinant of successful outcomes in learning. However, simply acknowledging the importance of learner motivation does not allow us to understand fully how learners develop motivation and how we can help them sustain that level of motivation. In order to understand motivation more fully, it is important to explore some of the factors that contribute to an individual's desire to learn and achieve. One of these is learners' attributions.

In this chapter, I first outline what is meant by attribution theory before focusing on attributions in foreign language learning. I then look at different approaches to research in the field, and present a current research study into the attributions for success and failure of 500 students studying Spanish, French, and German in the USA.

An overview of attribution theory

From a constructivist perspective on learning, learners try to understand their world by actively attaching meanings to their learning situations (White, 1959; Williams & Burden, 1997). They often form beliefs about their capabilities to complete tasks successfully and these perceptions play an important role in their actions, motivation, and achievement (Bandura, 1977; Schunk, 1991; Weiner, 1985). One perspective that has contributed substantially to an understanding of students' motivation to learn is Weiner's (1976, 2000) attribution theory.

Attribution theory represents an attempt to discover how individuals perceive the causes of their behaviour and to look at the ways in which their beliefs may affect their motivation and achievement

(Fiske & Taylor, 1984). The attribution process begins as follows: at many points in their lives, individuals succeed at some things and fail at others and, thinking back about their experiences, they ask themselves why success or failure occurred. It is a part of human nature to want to find reasons for one's successes or failures. By seeking explanations for the underlying causes of one's successes, one might be able to control the events that affect them and continue working with the hope of succeeding again. Similarly, the process of ascribing a reason for failure can guide a person to avoid failing again. The process, however, is dependent upon one's beliefs and therefore a person's attributions may not represent the 'true' reasons for the success or failure of a task (Hsieh & Schallert, 2008). For instance, if a student believes that his or her success in learning a foreign language is due to the amount of effort he or she has put into learning (e.g., practising speaking with a native speaker), the student will expect to do well the next time he or she approaches similar tasks assuming that effort can determine the outcome. Or, if the student fails in a language class and believes that failure is due to his or her low ability (i.e., the person believes they do not have 'a gift' for learning foreign languages), the student may avoid similar tasks in the future so as to avoid failing again.

Heider (1958), generally acknowledged to be the founder of attribution theory, first proposed that perceived causes of behaviour depend on two types of factors: personal and environmental. As an extension to Heider's theory, Rotter (1966) introduced the dimension of locus of control, a dimension concerned with whether the individual perceives the cause of an event as internal to the self or as due to external factors.

While there have been numerous conceptions of attribution theory proposed, the theory that is most comprehensive in its relationship to achievement motivation is the attribution theory formulated and elaborated by Weiner in 1976. Within Weiner's model, attributions can be categorized along three dimensions: locus, stability, and control. It is these three causal dimensions that influence individuals to choose to continue or disengage with doing a task. Locus is concerned with whether the individual perceives the cause of an event as internal or external. For example, students with an internal locus of control may attribute success to ability, something that may consequently affect their confidence or pride and will then influence their expectancy for future success. Learners with an external locus of control may attribute success to luck, giving little basis for control over what future outcomes may be like. The stability dimension refers to whether the cause of

an event is stable or unstable across time and events. Innate ability is often considered as being stable as it is believed it does not change over time, while effort would be seen as unstable and will vary according to an individual's choice in each new situation. The last dimension, controllability, refers to how much control individuals perceive they have over a cause. Effort and strategy use would normally be classified as controllable because learners can control how much effort to allocate to a task and can decide on the strategy to use. Ability, along with health and luck, on the other hand, are generally categorized as uncontrollable. What is important is the way in which learners perceive these causes as they have important consequences for their expectations for future success and also subsequent behaviour.

There are many times when students will engage in a search for attributions spontaneously. But on what basis do they assign success or failure to internal or external factors, stable or unstable characteristics, controllable or uncontrollable causes? Weiner (1977) claimed that learners' attributions come from situational cues such as their past experiences, feedback from teachers, observation of the performance of peers, and how much help was received.

It is important to understand learners' attributions in achievement settings because these are likely to influence their decisions in taking on achievement activities. Regardless of the accuracy of these attributions, they will influence learners' intensity of work at these activities, the degree of persistence in the face of failure, expectancy for success, beliefs about their competence, and, in turn, influence their motivation, achievement, and even emotions (Graham, 1994; Weiner, 2000).

Different individuals make different attributions

How individuals make attributions differs across culture, age groups, and gender. For example, hard work and obedience are virtues that Asian parents and teachers typically emphasize. As a result, cross-cultural studies on attribution reveal effort as the main attribution learners ascribe for academic achievement in Asia, while it receives relatively less emphasis in Western countries, compared with ability (Stevenson & Stigler, 1992). Researchers also found that African American students were more likely to make external attributions, whereas white Americans were more likely to make internal attributions for failure (Graham, 1994). Williams, Burden and Al-Baharna (2001) found that Bahraini students tended to attribute successful language learning experiences to practice and support from family and teachers, while inadequate teaching methods were the most common reasons given for failure.

It would not be surprising to find that attributions for success and failure differ between age groups. Because of developmental differences, the meaning of 'effort' and 'ability' differ among children and adults. Young children hold incremental views of ability (Dweck, 1999), that is, they tend to believe that their ability will improve with time because they see themselves being more successful with practice (e.g., reading, throwing a ball). (For a discussion of implicit theories of intelligence, see Chapter 6 by Ryan & Mercer.) As a result, when children attribute failure to lack of ability, it may not have a negative consequence for their expectancies for future success. Rather, it is comparable to an attribution to lack of effort; skills will develop through practice. On the other hand, adults tend to have an entity view of intelligence and believe that failure in spite of working hard indicates lack of ability (Nicholls, 1990). Williams, Burden, Poulet, and Maun (2004) found a drop in effort attributions for success between 7th and 11th graders, which may be in congruence with their entity view of intelligence and the meaning learners attach to 'effort' as mentioned above.

There are many studies investigating gender differences in making attributions. This area, however, has produced conflicting results (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). A few studies have found that women are more likely than men to attribute success to external causes and failure to internal and stable causes (Nelson & Cooper, 1997). In addressing college students' attributions for academic performance, Beyer (1999) found that men made internal, stable attributions for success, whereas women made more internal, stable attributions for failure. However, some studies have found the opposite. Riordan, Thomas and James (1985), in a study looking at athletes' attributions, found that for unsuccessful outcomes, boys and men tended to ascribe more internal causation than girls and women did. The pattern of ascribing failure to internal, stable, and uncontrollable causes may be seen as 'maladaptive' because success is not felt to be within the individual's control and failure is regarded as unavoidable.

Given the importance of learners' perceptions of control, helping them to attribute outcomes of performances to strategy use and effort has been the focus of attribution retraining as these factors are controllable by the individual and are therefore considered healthy attributions.

The benefits of attribution retraining

Individuals' attributions have been of interest to researchers because of their suggested influence on learners' expectancy for future success

and motivation. Andrews and Debus (1978) found that when failure is attributed to a stable cause such as lack of ability, future failure is anticipated and expectancy of success decreases. Meyer (1970) demonstrated that in situations of failure, expectancies of future success do not greatly decrease among individuals who attribute their failure to lack of effort, an unstable cause. Researchers investigating children with dyslexia have suggested that when children made uncontrollable attributions, they had significantly lower perceived scholastic competence than children who made controllable attributions (Frederickson & Jacobs, 2001), suggesting that learners' attributions play an important role in determining their perceived competence, expectations, and achievement.

Dweck (1975) noted that attributions of failure to one's lack of innate ability result in less effort to change future patterns of motivation than do attributions to effort. In an experiment, Dweck taught students who exhibited learned helplessness (believing that they cannot do well no matter how hard they try) to attribute failure to lack of effort. Results showed that these students started to improve their performance and at the same time, attribute failure to insufficient effort. Individuals' expectancy for success changes as their attributions change.

Much empirical evidence has indicated that attributions will influence student achievement motivation, and vice versa. For example, Schunk (1983) found that students who were told that they were smart and have high ability demonstrated the highest skill in a task and had greater confidence than their counterparts who were given no feedback on how they did. One explanation for this is that as children learn, they develop a sense of efficacy, that is beliefs about their ability to complete a task successfully. Providing attributional feedback helps to support their self-perceptions of progress and enhances their sense of efficacy (Schunk, 1982). A heightened sense of efficacy helps sustain motivation, which in turn leads to greater skill acquisition.

Attributions in learning a foreign/second language

Foreign language learning is often regarded as a unique academic subject which is different from other subjects because it challenges learners by requiring them to integrate and assimilate new cultural practices (Williams, 1994). Learning a language has also been described as being associated with losing face as learners must speak a foreign language in public (Horwitz, 1990), risking criticism and embarrassment. While maths or science are areas of learning that have usually been a part of students' previous academic lives and are more likely to be considered a part of their own culture (Gardner, 2001), learning a foreign language

requires students to incorporate material that may seem more markedly different from their own culture.

Horwitz (1988) found that many language learners make pre-assumptions of whether they can succeed in learning a foreign language. Learners' beliefs about their ability to speak accurately can be influenced by their perceptions of how others might judge them or vicariously through observations of how their peers perform. For language learners who struggle, there are many ways in which they explain failure; lacking ability is often top on their list of reasons. If learners frame themselves as not having been born with a natural ability to learn foreign languages, their expectations for success would often be low, leading to a lack of motivation to learn.

Foreign language learning is an interesting context in which to study attribution effects because in many countries undergraduates are not required to take foreign language courses. Students who choose to take a foreign language class may vary in the degree to which they feel capable of meeting the challenges that the course offers (Graham, 2004). Students often perceive that foreign language learning is difficult and that only those who have a special gift can do well (Fisher, 2001; Graham, 2002; Horwitz, 1988), an ability attribution. Such a belief can contribute to a decision to opt in or out of learning a foreign language.

Approaches to research on attribution theory

A number of different methods have been used to investigate learners' attributions. In the early work on attributions, the relevance of the research to educational practice had its limitations because most studies focused on learners' reactions to hypothetical scenarios, contrived laboratory tasks, or tasks that were not directly relevant to the learners. For example, in a quantitative experimental study, Weiner and Kukla (1970) examined causal attribution where participants were either involved in role-playing situations or given a scenario for which they were asked to explain why they believed a particular outcome occurred and the extent to which the outcome was a result of the person's effort or ability.

In another quantitative study, Frieze and Weiner (1971) divided participants into two groups in which one group of participants were told they succeeded on a hypothetical task and the other group were told they failed. They were then asked to attribute the outcomes to the four causal factors of ability, effort, task difficulty, and luck. Results indicated that success was more often attributed to internal factors than failure was.

There have been a considerable number of attribution studies carried out in the areas of maths and sports. These have often been conducted using quantitative methods. In some studies, participants read scenarios of successful or failure situations and rated whether they believed the outcome was due to effort or ability. Other studies required participants to complete a task and based on their performance they were asked to rate how strongly they believed the outcome was due to an internal, external, or stable factor (e.g., Bempecha, Ginsburg, Nakkula, & Wu, 1996; Bond, Biddle, & Ntoumanis, 2001; Chase, 2001; Powers, Choroszy, Douglas, & Cool, 1986).

Even as recently as 2001, Holschuh, Nist, and Olejnik used hypothetical scenarios to determine how individuals make attributions for successes and failures. However, such studies are limited in that using hypothetical situations that lack personal authenticity and asking individuals to make self-judgements on tasks that may be irrelevant to their lives does not necessarily capture how they truly feel. As a result, it is difficult to know the degree to which these tasks evoke the true attributions that the individuals would give in achievement settings they are personally involved in. Learners are naturally curious and tend to want to know what is behind their own success or failure. As Weiner (1986) noted, if an individual comes upon a situation that is unexpected, attribution is more likely to occur and as such, individuals are more likely to find causes for an event that is important to them personally.

A different strand of attribution research has emerged more recently in the area of language learning. These studies have moved away from the quantitative approaches described and employed more qualitative methods mainly using interviews and open-ended questions to examine foreign language learners' attributions (e.g., McQuillan, 2000; Tse, 2000; Williams & Burden, 1999; Williams, Burden, & Al-Baharna, 2001; Williams et al., 2004). Many of these have involved asking participants to give reasons for their perceived successes or failures in their own words, which were then content-analysed using a grounded theory approach. The researchers then categorized the given reasons into groups and reported the most prevalent attributions. Participants' responses for the reasons for their success have often been effort, the support of parents and teachers, and interactions with people who speak the foreign language. Reasons frequently given for failure have tended to be lack of practice and insufficient effort.

While quantitative studies can provide a more precise relationship between independent and dependent variables under investigation

(e.g., the relationship between attributing success to ability and one's confidence level), qualitative studies offer a more holistic view of the phenomena being examined (i.e., actual reasons for successes and failures are provided by students without restricting their responses to the causes given by researchers on paper).

A study of foreign language students' attributions

A study involving 500 students learning Spanish, French, and German, which I conducted with a colleague on learners' attributions, makes an attempt to expand on current research. Research in the past has either assessed attributions through actual reasons (e.g., "Using the information which you have been given, determine how much of the result was due to effort or how skilful the person was") or used the 'dimensions' of causal attributions offered by Weiner (e.g., "From the scenario, using a 5-point scale, rate how strongly you believe the outcome was due to an external factor"). However, for some people, ability is viewed as stable and uncontrollable, while others who hold an incremental view of intelligence see ability as unstable and controllable. Therefore, using both a questionnaire asking students to assess the actual reasons for their grade and an attributional dimension measure yields multiple perspectives on learners' attributional beliefs (Hsieh & Schallert, 2008).

The students were given a midterm exam and were later given their grades. We used two attribution scales as measures of attributions. One measures dimensions and the other measures the reasons. The Causal Dimension Scale (CDS-II), developed by McAuley, Duncan and Russell (1992), contains 12 items assessing the four subscales of locus of causality, stability, personal control, and external control that are each scored on a 9-point scale (e.g., "The grade reflects an aspect of yourself"). Scores on subscales can range from 3 to 27, with higher values representing attributions that are more internal, stable, personally controllable, and externally controllable.

In addition to using the dimension scale, we created an 8-item attribution scale called the Language Achievement Attribution Scale (LAAS) to assess, first, the degree of success the students believed their test scores represented, and second, their perceived reason for their result. Students filled out the LAAS upon receiving their test scores before the teacher gave any feedback. They wrote down their score on the test and how satisfied they were with the result using a 6-point scale. Based on their satisfaction, their perceptions of their success and failure were determined.

A self-efficacy measure was also given to students to fill out. Students responded to questions based on a 5-point Likert scale, pertaining to their level of confidence in learning the foreign language they were enrolled in.

Students' own perceptions of whether the test was a success or a failure was used because getting 90 per cent on a test may be categorized as a successful grade, but students with very high expectations of themselves may view it as a failure, failing to reach their own standards or goals. Ratings of their satisfaction under 3 were categorized into the unsuccessful group whereas those whose ratings were 4 and above were categorized into the successful group.

Students then rated the degree to which they believed the result of their test was due to their ability, effort, task difficulty, mood, and luck (e.g., "I received the grade because of the amount of effort I put into learning the language") on 6-point rating scales, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Results indicated that ability attributions and internal factors were the strongest predictors for language achievement as measured by the test. In addition, students who perceived themselves as unsuccessful and who believed that effort did not play a significant part in the test outcome scored significantly lower on self-efficacy than those who believed that lack of effort played a role in the test outcome. This may suggest that when students attribute failure to factors that are not within their volitional control, their confidence suffers.

Implications for practice

Attributions not only influence achievement but can also affect one's willingness to persist on future tasks and one's expectancy for future success. It is therefore important that educators help learners to develop attributions that facilitate learning.

As research suggests, students are most likely to be motivated and have higher achievement if they attribute success to factors over which they have control. Emphasizing uncontrollable causes, such as lack of innate ability and task difficulty, can decrease students' willingness to learn or seek challenges and can increase anxiety. Learned helpless students in particular believe that success has little to do with how much effort they put in. Therefore, for these students, emphasizing the use of strategies and effort is one way to shape their beliefs in a positive way, leading to higher expectancy for future success, increased motivation to learn the foreign language and ultimately having a positive impact on these students' achievement.

Attributions also have important effects on how students feel about themselves, which can lead to higher or lower confidence. From the results gathered in our study reported here, it can be suggested that a more fruitful approach to enhancing the development of positive self-efficacy beliefs (beliefs about one's capabilities to complete a task successfully) is likely to result from attribution retraining procedures that are used in conjunction with appropriate language skills training.

Suggested further reading

Hsieh, P. H., & Schallert, D. L. (2008). Implications from self-efficacy and attribution theories for an understanding of undergraduates' motivation in a foreign language course. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 33, 513–532.

This paper describes a study that examines both self-efficacy and attributions. Attributions were measured in two ways, using dimensions of attributions and asking about actual reasons for a real outcome using a new instrument developed by the authors. The authors provide an in-depth description of how the study was conducted and how results were interpreted.

Schunk, D. H., Pintrich, P. R., & Meece, J. L. (2008). Attribution theory. In D. H. Schunk, P. R. Pintrich, & J. L. Meece (Eds.), *Motivation in education: Theory, research, and applications* (pp. 79–120). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

This chapter on attribution theory gives an in-depth summary of the theory, the role it plays in learners' motivation, research findings, and its implications for classroom practice. The authors offer educators concrete suggestions on providing feedback designed to develop learners' motivation.

Weiner, B. (2005). Motivation from an attributional perspective and the social psychology of perceived competence. In A. J. Elliot & C. S. Dweck (Eds.), *Handbook of competence and motivation* (pp. 73–84). New York: Guilford Press.

In this chapter, Bernard Weiner takes on a new approach to examining the relationship between attribution and emotion. He discusses the psychology of others viewing the individual who have either succeeded or failed at a task. A thorough discussion of the social and emotional reactions that come with the observers' attributions for another person's success and failure is offered.

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8

Affect: The Role of Language Anxiety and Other Emotions in Language Learning

Peter MacIntyre and Tammy Gregersen

Introduction

The term 'affect' includes many things, such as feelings of self-confidence, feeling willing to communicate, or feeling anxious. Perhaps the most widely studied affective reaction to L2 communication, and the main focus of this chapter, is language anxiety. Language anxiety is a term that encompasses the feelings of worry and negative, fear-related emotions associated with learning or using a language that is not an individual's mother tongue. The term covers language being learned in locations where intergroup contact is available (so-called 'second' language) or not available (so-called 'foreign' language) and also covers various language skills (especially speaking, but also reading, writing, and comprehension). After reviewing the literature on language anxiety, we will consider the issue of affective variables more broadly. There is still much to learn about the role of affective variables in Second Language Acquisition (SLA), and we will conclude with some suggestions for future research.

Overview of the literature on language anxiety

Whereas the literature on language anxiety has discussed the possibility of the positive effects of stress, sometimes called eustress or facilitating anxiety, a tension and arousal that keeps learners alert (Ehrman, 1996), it is important to emphasize that this chapter deals with anxiety in its debilitating form. With this caveat in mind, one of the most consistent findings in the SLA literature is that higher levels of language anxiety are associated with lower levels of language achievement (Dewaele,

2007; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993; Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991a, 1991b, 1991c; Onwuegbuzie, Bailey, & Daley 1999, 2000, 2002; Sanchez-Herrero & Sanchez, 1992; Woodrow, 2006). Students who are more anxious tend to get lower course grades (Aida, 1994; Elkhafaifi, 2005; Horwitz, 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994b; Young, 1986) and are more likely to want to drop out of their language course (Dewaele, 2009). Contributing to the negative effects of anxiety on language achievement is the tendency for anxiety to interfere with cognitive processing at the input stage (e.g., taking in new information), processing stage (e.g., incorporating new information into long-term memory) and the output stage (e.g., verbal production) (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994a; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2000).

In the classroom, anxious learners tend to freeze up in role-play activities, forget previously learned material, are less likely to volunteer answers, and participate less than their non-anxious counterparts (Ely, 1986; Horwitz et al., 1986). All of this works towards lower course grades (Gardner, 1985) and ultimately, problems with language proficiency. Students who are anxious sometimes respond by studying more, or 'overstudying' (Horwitz et al., 1986), but complete the course with lower levels of achievement. The feeling of not being rewarded for one's efforts can be a source of considerable frustration for anxious learners (Price, 1991). Anxious students respond less effectively to their own errors (Gregersen, 2003) and may rely on strategies to manage their emotions (MacIntyre & Noels, 1996). They can also exhibit avoidance behaviours, such as missing class or procrastinating on assignments, that can be linked to unrealistically high personal performance standards (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002).

For this brief review of the literature, we will adopt an historical perceptive. Some of the early work in affective reactions to language learning examined whether the tendency to experience anxiety correlated with second language performance. In the late 1970s, Scovel's (1978) review of the available literature on the effects of anxiety on foreign/second language learning found 'mixed and confusing' results. Perhaps the best example of the research difficulties was Chastain's (1975) study that reported positive, negative, and near zero correlations between anxiety and second language learning. In a later summary of the literature, Young (1991) listed 16 studies of anxiety and language learning (see pp. 438–439); as a group, they showed inconsistent results. MacIntyre (1999) suggested the research reviewed by Scovel (1978) and Young (1991) is not what we would now consider to be language anxiety because the types of anxiety being studied were not specific to the SLA context.

Publication of Horwitz et al.'s (1986) paper outlining a conceptualization of language anxiety along with a 33-item Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) questionnaire was a turning point in language anxiety research. Horwitz et al. (1986) conceptualized language anxiety as a distinct form of anxiety, separate from other types of anxiety or situations in which anxiety arises. Although language anxiety is related to apprehension about communicating, a fear of negative evaluation by others, and test anxiety, Horwitz et al. (1986) viewed it as "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (p. 128). From that point on, the uniqueness of the second language learning process was foregrounded and language anxiety was conceptually separated from other anxiety triggers (see MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989, 1991a, 1991b).

Although much of the literature has referred to anxiety when speaking the second language (see Horwitz & Young, 1991; Saito, Garza, & Horwitz, 1999), in recent years, there has been a movement to examine the role of anxiety in all four major skill areas: speaking, writing, reading and listening. There is also a strong non-verbal dimension to anxiety, and the ability of teachers to identify the non-verbal cues of anxious learners is a promising line of research (Gregersen, 2005, 2007a, 2009). The FLCAS was found to be primarily concerned with speaking. As a response, efforts have been made to study the effects of language anxiety in specific skill areas. For example, while Saito et al. (1999) established that reading in a foreign language can also provoke anxiety, Sellers (2000) discovered that foreign language reading anxiety influenced recall of passage content. With respect to writing, Cheng, Horwitz, and Schallert (1999) examined the connections between second language classroom anxiety and second language writing anxiety and how these related to L2 speaking and writing achievement. Cheng (2002) went on to further investigate students' perceptions of their writing anxiety and how it interacted with other forms of language anxiety. Listening anxiety was targeted in Vogely's (1998) qualitative study, where she investigated the sources of and solutions to listening comprehension anxiety and discussed pedagogical implications. Elkhafaifi (2005) suggests that foreign language learning anxiety and listening anxiety are separate but related; both negatively affect achievement.

Integrating language anxiety into the broader literature of SLA and education has led researchers to examine links to other strands of research. Higher levels of language anxiety are linked to lower levels of perceived competence, lower self-efficacy, less motivation (see Ushioda, Chapter 5, this volume), and lower willingness to communicate (WTC)

in the second language (MacIntyre, 1999; Yashima, Chapter 9, this volume). There is also some evidence that language anxiety is related to broad dimensions of the learner, such as learning styles (Bailey & Daley, 1999; Castro & Peck, 2005; Griffiths, Chapter 11, this volume), perfectionism (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002), and emotional intelligence (Dewaele, Petrides, & Furnham, 2008; Dewaele, Chapter 4, this volume). Given that the students' apprehension can be 'written all over their faces,' the ability of teachers to identify the non-verbal cues of anxious learners is a promising line of research that recognizes the dialectic and social dimensions of such emotions (Gregersen, 2005, 2007b, 2009).

Although the literature consistently shows a negative correlation between language anxiety and a wide variety of measures associated with language achievement, the issue of causality has been raised. Sparks and Ganschow (1995, 2007) have published a series of articles that question whether anxiety should be seen as a cause or effect of language ability, specifically deficits in linguistic coding (see also, MacIntyre, 1995). One of their recent papers (Sparks, Patton, Ganschow, & Humbach, 2009) presents an impressive longitudinal study showing a correlation between, on the one hand, native language linguistic coding difficulties (see glossary) and, on the other hand, second language anxiety measured ten years later. Even these data do not directly address the issue of causality. MacIntyre and Gardner (1994a) employed random assignment (see glossary for an explanation) in an experiment designed to induce anxiety during a computerized language learning and performance task. They found that anxiety arousal led to decreases in performance at the input, processing and output stages. Therefore, there is evidence that anxiety arousal can affect the process of acquiring second language vocabulary. That is not to say, however, that Sparks and Ganschow (1995, 2007) are incorrect. The most encompassing view of language anxiety proposes that it is both a cause and effect, part of an non-linear, ongoing learning and performance process (see MacIntyre, 1995).

Research approaches to foreign language anxiety

Data in the literature cited above has come from both quantitative and qualitative measures, and, more recently and frequently, a combination of the two approaches. Quantitative measures have, for the most part, used Likert-scale self-reporting where participants are asked to respond to items that measure their agreement with statements indicative of foreign language anxiety (e.g., "I get nervous in language class"). Although the FLCAS (Horwitz et al., 1986) is the most frequently used scale, other

measures of language anxiety include the French Use and French Classroom Anxiety scales (Gardner, 1985) and the Input-Processing-Output scale (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994b). Adapting measures to other skill domains has resulted in instruments such as the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS) (Saito et al., 1999), the Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale (FLLAS) (Elkhafaifi, 2005) and the Second Language Writing Anxiety Test (SLWAT) (Cheng, 2002). Within quantitative approaches, researchers have been able to do large-scale analysis of language learners' affective response towards anxiety with the goal of producing generalizable findings.

Qualitative measures provide illuminating accounts of personal experience, rich, contextualized descriptions and humanistic data. Using interview techniques and diaries that elicit open-ended comments, researchers have been able to elaborate upon the contexts in which anxiety arises. Price's (1991) work reports vivid descriptive detail by documenting her interviews with foreign language learners, allowing readers to view anxiety from the point of view of the respondent. Similarly, Yan and Horwitz (2008) investigate how learners' perceptions of anxiety interact with other variables through their interview study, and Ewald (2007) uses analogous qualitative measures to examine anxiety in upper-level language classrooms. To explore the function of stress in language instruction, Spielmann and Radnofsky (2001) used a myriad of qualitative naturalistic measures, including individual and group interviews, observations, participant-teaching, impromptu casual interactions, analysis of documents, and unobtrusive information residues.

More and more researchers are triangulating their data, that is, using both quantitative and qualitative measures as they answer their research questions. Gregersen (2003), for example, used quantitative measures to acquire data on the frequency of errors made by anxious and non-anxious learners as well as the regularity of their self-corrections and code switching. To enrich the results and interpretation of the data, she contextualized the numerical data through qualitative descriptions of participants' comments. Another triangulated study was that carried out by Pappamihiel (2002), who analysed focus group transcripts to illuminate quantitative data gathered through statistical tests to investigate anxiety in both second language and mainstream classrooms. Similarly, open-ended questions used to gather data were incorporated into the Frantzen and Sieloff Magnan (2005) study of anxiety among true and false beginners in second language classes (French and Spanish). Although this approach to research helps to put a human face on the frequency data, there is still something missing.

Example of current research

Current approaches to research in the area of language anxiety demonstrate the difficulty in describing the 'process' by which affect in general has an impact on second language learning and performance. Research methods based on questionnaires or interviews are valuable but both give partial answers; they are not well suited to studying ongoing processes, as they evolve. Therefore, there is a need for research to describe the underlying mechanisms that connect affect in general, or anxiety in particular, to language performance. Adding a process orientation to the existing literature would allow researchers to uncover the rise and fall of anxiety as a communication situation unfolds. Much of the existing quantitative literature might be described as summative, where a person's anxiety level, as represented by the total score on a test (e.g., the FLCAS), is correlated with scores on a measure of learning (e.g., course grades or test scores). We often find that those with higher anxiety tend to get lower grades (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994b), but such research leaves unspecified the underlying process that produces this result. Much of the existing qualitative research has tended to take a long view, with retrospective narratives emerging from interviews that may be influenced by a number of factors, such as self-serving bias, hindsight bias, and autobiographical memory biases.

Research can also add a more formative, process-oriented description, based on studying brief timescales (e.g., a few minutes). In a recently published study, MacIntyre and Legatto (2011) introduced a procedure for collecting data that allowed for close-to simultaneous self- and observer-reporting of affective responses to communication in a second language (see Yashima's Chapter 9 on WTC, in which she discusses this study in detail). The authors gathered video data of L2 French speakers participating in eight oral tasks, in a question-and-answer format (e.g., Can you describe what is happening in this painting?). Immediately afterwards, the participants watched a video recording of their speech and reported on their WTC using software written for the study. Clicking the left mouse button increased WTC rating (to a maximum of +5) and clicking the right button caused the rating to fall (to a minimum of –5). The process is similar to the 'clicker' data used during political speeches where participants are placed in a room, listen to the speech, and click to indicate their approval or disapproval to what is being said. As soon as the rating process was complete, a graph of the WTC ratings was printed and presented to the participant. Using the graph as a reference, the participant and a research assistant reviewed the video,

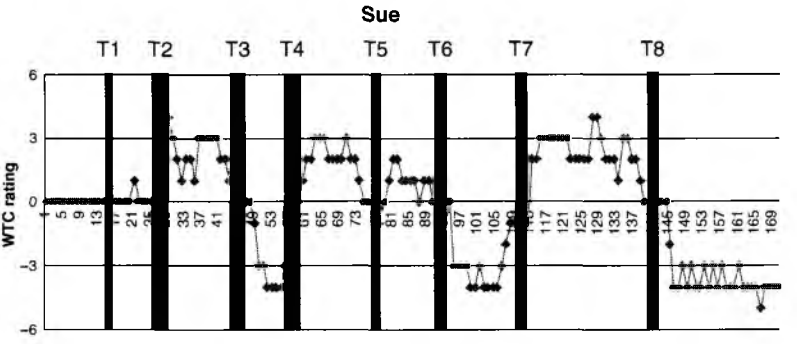

Figure 8.1 Changes in ratings of WTC (per second) over eight tasks

pausing when reaching peaks and valleys on the graph, in order to ask the respondents why their WTC went up or down, as the case may be. Figure 8.1 shows a graph from one of the participants whose pseudonym is "Sue."

In this study, affective ratings of WTC could be matched with verbal and non-verbal output in real time. This allows for an inspection of the connection between WTC and verbal output. In the following excerpt from another respondent's, "Mabel's," transcript, she was asked to count in French and her dynamic WTC ratings appear over her words:

RA—Please count to one hundred by tens.

0 0 1 3 3 4 3 3 3 2 0 -1

Mabel—Ok. Dix, vingt, trente, quarante, cinquante, soixante, soixante-dix.... [laughs and

-1 -1 -1

puts her hand to cover her mouth] oh my god I can't believe I can't remember that.... I

-1 -1 -1

can't believe I can't remember eighty....

0 0 0

RA—Ok, you want to just go to the next one?

0 0 0 0 0

Mabel—No, I'm trying to think of it in my head... [counts quietly, barely audible]... I

0 *0* *0* *0* *0*

can't believe I can't remember that. Soixante-dix... [inaudible] and I can't get ninety if I

0 *0* *0* *0* *0*

can't get eighty... Cent... I can't think of eighty or ninety... you're going to tell me this

0 *0*

later 'cuz I can't remember it.

In the interview, Mabel described how she felt confident until she got stuck on the French word for eighty. Try as she might, the L2 term simply would not come to mind and she said that her WTC came crashing down. Although she was not asked to describe anxiety directly, Mabel indicated she was nervous about participating and about being videotaped. In this situation, forgetting a vocabulary item seemed to increase anxiety immediately and it became difficult for her to recall a word that she knew. Overall, respondents consistently linked falling WTC with difficulty recalling vocabulary, though MacIntyre and Legatto (2011, p. 164) observed that "there is more going on than meets their introspective eye." Ratings made by the respondents' interlocutor (a research assistant) confirmed that Mabel and other participants were showing signs of anxiety as they were communicating. MacIntyre and Legatto (ibid.) concluded:

> Previous quantitative research shows a negative correlation between anxiety and WTC-trait scores (for example, Baker & MacIntyre 2000).... However, in the present study changes in WTC seem to be somewhat independent of anxiety when considered within a person on a moment-by-moment basis. Anxiety can rise and fall without necessarily changing WTC.

The authors found a different process when anxiety rises and WTC falls early on in communication, compared to mid-stream. Therefore, the process of deciding to initiate communication appears to be an affectively different context than the process of continuing to speak if one stumbles over words.

To expand this study, we are currently exploring the non-verbal behaviours that are indicative of WTC. The data from the original participants are being used to study observers' ratings of WTC. Observers will be asked to watch each video under three conditions (auditory only, video only, auditory + video), and, using the software for WTC ratings, report on their perceptions of the learners' WTC. The points at which

the data converge (the participants and the observers of the participants) will be described as being markers indicative of high or low WTC. The observers' ratings also will be examined for consistency between modes (visual, auditory, combination) to see the condition in which observers' ratings are most strongly correlated with the learner's own ratings. Both of these studies share a focus on changes in affective processes over a short period of time that will reveal more about the process by which anxiety affects learning, where the 'rubber meets the road.'

Thinking about anxiety through a process-oriented lens, we visualize the affective processes as fast-moving, like a spinning CD, changing quickly and always coming around again. Therefore, we are becoming convinced that affect in general, and anxiety in particular, is a part of an ongoing cycle, and should not be approached in strict cause-effect terms. For this reason, it is not particularly helpful to ask "Is anxiety a cause or an effect of poor language performance?" as some researchers have done in the past (Sparks & Ganschow, 1991; Young, 1986). Imagine a situation in which a young man says "Hello" to a young lady, a non-English speaker. She recognizes the non-verbal behaviour as a friendly greeting, but becomes a little nervous because the language is unfamiliar. For a moment, she hesitates to respond, somewhat unsure if she can hold up her end of a conversation in English. Very quickly, however, her anxiety-coping efforts begin, her extraverted personality urges her to meet a new friend, so she draws on explicit linguistic knowledge from the cognitive system to say, "Hello, how are you today?" – a phrase she recently learned in class. The young man and woman each make a new friend that day.

Even in such a brief exchange we see:

1. Affective reactions, such as rising and falling confidence, anxiety and motivation, are evoked quickly and individual differences (e.g., extraversion can play a role).
2. Language in the form of grammar and vocabulary are produced.
3. Cognition is triggered (Why did he say hello to me? It's just a greeting. This is a chance to practise English with a native speaker).
4. Ongoing metacognition and self-evaluation also are relevant to the linguistic exchanges ("Did I sound like a native speaker, or a dummy?").

Seymour Epstein (1993) contends that we experience 'vibes' that act as precursors to cognition and behaviour and that these automatic, unconscious, subtle and influential sensations are evoked by scanning our memories for related events which will then colour future thought or action. In the above example, a friendly vibe will keep the young lady

engaged, even though she is struggling with the language. A negative vibe is likely to lead to avoidance of the whole conversation, and along with it the lost opportunity for language practice. That is how important affect can be, how quickly its effects can be experienced, and even this brief example illustrates why affect must also be studied as a dynamic process (see also Yashima, this volume).

Future directions

If affective reactions rise and fall quickly, with peaks and valleys to be expected, how do we arrive at the sort of summative evaluations of affect and experience that have been studied in much of the previous literature? Epstein (1993, p. 323) suggests, "A typical sequence of behaviour is that an event occurs; the experiential system scans its memory banks for related events; and vibes from the past events are produced that influence conscious thoughts and behaviour." Kahneman and Riis (2005) give further evidence concerning how these 'vibes' might be created. They distinguish between what they call the 'experiencing self' (an introspective, in-the-moment response) and the 'remembering self' (a reflective evaluation whose accuracy depends upon authentic retrieval of feelings and reasonable integration of experiences spread over time). For example, a language student might have several affectively good and bad moments during a class. Those are the experiencing selves. But if you ask this same student when the semester is over, "How was the class?," s/he would evoke the 'remembering self,' tend to focus on the peak experiences relative to the number of low ones, and come up with a summative judgement of the class. Endings tend to have a commanding role in memory of experience; the way something ends disproportionately influences an individual's memory for affective evaluation of events at a later time (Fredrickson & Kahneman, 1993). Thus, language teachers need to be aware of the power of both the 'remembering selves' and the 'experiencing selves' in creating the 'vibes' students feel as they approach the language learning process, in both the short and long term. The 'remembering self' draws upon the power of endings and high moments, while the 'experiencing self' takes into account reactions to events as they happen. These in-the-moment incidents may escape a learner's reflective memory but yet they will still shape the vibes that undergird future thoughts and actions.

The importance of affective reactions behoves teachers and researchers to elevate the importance of emotions to a prominent place

on our agendas. A recent and rapidly developing subfield of psychology, positive psychology, might help shape future directions in this field. Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) suggest that the traditional focus of psychology on healing the sick and fixing the broken has neglected studying the fulfilled individual and the thriving community: "The field of positive psychology at the subjective level is about valued subjective experiences: well-being, contentment, and satisfaction (in the past); hope and optimism (for the future); and flow and happiness (in the present)" (p. 5). One of the major, early contributions within positive psychology has been the development of the 'broaden-and-build' theory of emotion (Fredrickson, 2001; Fredrickson & Losada, 2005). This theory suggests that positive affect has a different function in human development, and is qualitatively different from the more widely studied group of negative affective reactions (including anxiety). In brief, negative emotions tend to focus the individual on specific tasks, obstacles or threats (e.g., an anxiety reaction to being embarrassed). Positive emotions, on the other hand, function to broaden our thinking and build strengths (e.g., exploring the meanings inspired by a beautiful work of art). Much more work needs to be done to focus on the process by which positive emotions facilitate language learning, but evidence from Gardner's (e.g., 1985, 2009) research suggests that emotions like interest, desire, and enjoyment play a significant role in that process.

Conclusion: Considerations for pedagogy

As we contemplate the importance of understanding both negative and positive affect in the language learning process, we must pay special attention to the process of creating positive emotion. There is one element on which positive psychologists agree: building communities, social networks and intimate relationships make people happy. Diener and Seligman (2002) discovered that the leading variables shared by the 10 per cent of students with the highest levels of happiness and fewer depressive symptoms were their solid relationships with friends and, family, and commitment to spending time with them. We often encounter pedagogical implications concerning the creation of supportive environments to lower language learners' anxiety and increase their motivation and WTC, but do we really translate that into action by providing the opportunities inside and out of the classroom for students to bond and build relationships that go beyond the last day of class?

Suggested further reading

Horwitz, E. K. (2010). Foreign and second language anxiety (Research Timeline). *Language Teaching*, 43, 154–167.

Perhaps the best starting point currently available for a person exploring the topic of language anxiety is the annotated list of 44 'milestone' papers assembled under the expert eye of Professor Elaine Horwitz. Horwitz uses her judgement of each included paper's importance, impact, and prominence to produce a collection of the key papers in this area.

MacIntyre, P. D., & Gardner, R. C. (1994). The effects of induced anxiety on cognitive processing in computerized vocabulary learning. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 16, 1–17.

This paper presents an analysis of the effects of language anxiety at three stages of computer-assisted language learning: input, processing, and output. It might be the only true experiment on language anxiety in the SLA literature and, we believe, puts to rest any thought that anxiety is merely a side effect of poor language performance. Anxiety was aroused by introducing a video camera at various stages of computer-assisted learning (or not at all for a control group). Results show that anxiety caused disruptions of language learning and performance, and also that habituation to anxiety and coping efforts can ameliorate its negative effects.

Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 70, 125–132.

This is one of the most frequently cited papers on language anxiety. The authors blend experience gained from trying to cope with, and reduce, the effects of language anxiety among students with three key conceptual foundations drawn from literature outside SLA (communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation). The result is a conceptualization of language anxiety as distinct from other types of apprehension and a 33-item scale researchers and teachers can use to measure the concept (the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale). The authors provide all 33 items for interested readers.

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9

Willingness to Communicate: Momentary Volition that Results in L2 Behaviour

Tomoko Yashima

Introduction

It is a common perception among language teachers that the acquisition of L2 competency does not necessarily lead to communication in the L2. As MacIntyre (2007) puts it, "even after studying language for many years, some L2 learners do not turn into L2 speakers" (p. 564). Research on willingness to communicate in an L2 (L2 WTC) has attempted to shed some light on this enigma. L2 WTC is particularly significant from a pedagogical perspective because L2 communication is a necessary part of L2 learning. As many researchers agree, L2 competency develops through productive use of the language (e.g., Swain, 1995).

Further, in naturalistic settings outside the classroom, learners seek jobs, make friends, or maintain or break relationships using the language they are learning. If they are unwilling to communicate, they will not learn the language since they will not develop social networks, and will thus fail to communicate. A vicious cycle sets in (Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide, & Shimizu, 2004). If they are to present themselves fully, learners constantly have their personality and ability judged based on their performance in a language that is not yet well-developed. As MacIntyre and Legatto (2011, p. 149) note, "Some people are more willing than others to accept this unusual communication situation," a situation in which self-esteem is at stake.

In this chapter, I will first review the development of this construct through an overview of the literature and of different approaches to research on the topic. Second, I will describe examples of current research in this field. Finally, future directions for research and pedagogical implications will be discussed.

Theoretical perspective

WTC research originates in scholars' interest in unwillingness to communicate as a personality trait (Burgoon, 1976). Personality traits are patterns of thought or behaviour that tend to be stable within an individual across situations and over time (for a more thorough discussion of personality traits see Dewaele's Chapter 4 in this volume), and it is worth noting that the beginnings of WTC research were in this area as this has considerably influenced the subsequent development of the field. This interest in why certain people were unwilling to communicate evolved into research in WTC, which is defined as the probability of engaging in communication when given a choice. Early research (e.g., McCroskey & Richmond, 1987) was based on the assumption that, although this is largely contextually dependent, individuals exhibit regular WTC tendencies across situations. The methodology of this early WTC research – a topic I will return to later in the chapter – was also based on many of the assumptions of personality psychology of the time, employing quantitative instruments to measure personality variables. For example, the scale developed by McCroskey and Richmond encompassed four different communication contexts – speaking in dyads, in small groups, in meetings, and publicly – with three types of receivers – strangers, acquaintances, and friends – and was thoroughly validated through a series of investigations (e.g., McCroskey, 1992). Research results show that L1 WTC is related to introversion, communication apprehension, perceived communication competence, and self-esteem (McCroskey & Richmond, 1991). It was also found that the WTC scale is a valid predictor of actual communication. Chan and McCroskey (1987) show, for example, that college students with high WTC scores were observed to participate more in class than those with lower scores.

L2 WTC

Early WTC research was concerned with L1 communication but it was not long before scholars began to consider possible applications within the field of L2 learning. The first significant interest came from a group of Canadian social psychologists who had been conducting extensive research on anxiety, attitudes, and motivation in L2 learning (for details, see Dörnyei, 2005). L1 WTC research stimulated MacIntyre and associates to conceptualize L2 WTC as a construct that captures a number of individual and contextual variables that influence

a learner's tendency to communicate in an L2 (e.g., MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; MacIntyre & Clément, 1996). In these studies, path models – statistical models used to explain relationships, including cause and effect, between variables – were constructed and tested, incorporating WTC and other individual difference variables whose influence on L2 acquisition had been studied independently. These include extraversion/introversion (see Dewaele, Chapter 4, this volume), anxiety (see MacIntyre & Gregersen, this Chapter 8, volume), integrativeness, and motivation (see Ushioda, Chapter 5, this volume). These studies led to the pyramid model of WTC discussed in the next section.

The pyramid model

While L1 WTC is regarded as a personality variable, L2 WTC is not a simple transfer from L1 WTC, as there is much greater variation in competence among L2 users. MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei, and Noels (1998) presented a conceptualization of L2 WTC as the "readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using a L2" (p. 547). The idea of WTC as a convergence of different individual and situational variables resulting in L2 behaviour is schematized in the pyramid model (MacIntyre et al., 1998). This model (Figure 9.1) integrates psychological, linguistic, educational, and communicative approaches to L2 research and it shows how both trait variables, those tendencies that are stable within the individual across time and situations, and state variables, which are specific to a particular situation, influence the decision to communicate in the L2 at given points in time.

At the lower levels of the pyramid, layers IV, V, VI in Figure 9.1, are more stable variables including, at the base, intergroup climate and personality, which are hypothesized to have an indirect influence on L2 WTC. In the fifth layer are each individual's affective and cognitive contexts that underlie all communication events, including attitude towards different groups, perception of social situations and communicative competence. The fourth layer consists of motivational propensities, which affect decisions to initiate communication with a particular group or a particular individual as well as the fairly stable sense of being confident about communicating in the L2. L2 self-confidence comprises a cognitive component, namely how one perceives one's L2 competence, and an affective component, namely anxiety about using the L2. The upper layers of the pyramid consist of state variables, for example in the third layer are two immediate

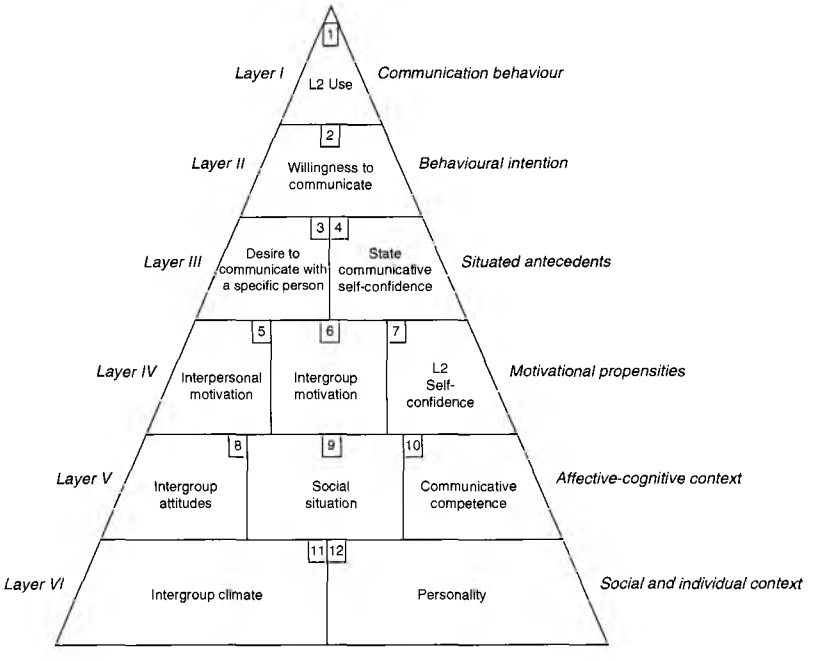

Figure 9.1 Heuristic model of variables influencing L2 WTC

precursors of WTC: a desire to communicate with a specific person at a specific moment as well as the situated or state self-confidence that partly reflects more enduring self-confidence in using the L2. The second layer from the top shows WTC in the L2, which is the culmination of the processes described in the layers below. The model emphasizes the communicative goal of L2 learning/teaching, in which L2 proficiency is not regarded as the goal of learning an L2 per se but is seen as a means to achieve interpersonal/intercultural goals.

This model has since stimulated research in various learning contexts, and a substantial amount of quantitative research has been conducted with the aim of validating the model and identifying other factors that may influence L2 WTC. Reflecting the concerns of Canada as a bilingual nation, Baker and MacIntyre (2000) studied the influence of the learning context (e.g., immersion versus non-immersion) on WTC, while Clément, Baker, and MacIntyre (2003) focused on context, norms, and ethnolinguistic vitality (see glossary). These researchers found that immersion students and the minority group (francophones) were more willing to communicate than their counterparts. Other variables studied

in Canada include L2 learning orientations – the reasons an individual wishes to learn an L2, social support (MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, & Conrod, 2001), and age and gender (MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, & Donovan, 2002), all of which were found to influence WTC in French to some degree.

The WTC model has been applied to English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts outside Canada to investigate factors that affect Asian learners' WTC in English. In my own studies (e.g., Yashima, 2002; Yashima et al., 2004) in the Japanese EFL context, I introduced a context-specific attitudinal construct, international posture, in an attempt to capture attitudes towards the international community, an interest in an international vocation, and the tendency to approach and communicate with intercultural partners. My associates and I examined the relationships among motivation, self-confidence, international posture, and L2 WTC. Using a statistical procedure called structural equation modelling, we found that those who are high in international posture tend to be more motivated to study English and more willing to communicate in the language. A study conducted with Chinese EFL learners also employed structural equation modelling and reported that classroom contextual variables such as teacher support and learners' beliefs about how to learn English, as well as appropriate learning behaviours, had some influence on L2 WTC in classrooms (Peng & Woodrow, 2010).

Many of these quantitative studies use McCroskey's original construct, which conceptualizes WTC as an individual trait, while others use somewhat more situated WTC scales that I will discuss later. Research consistently found that L2 WTC leads to a higher frequency in L2 communication and was predicted by L2 self-confidence (Clément et al., 2003; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; Yashima, 2002; Yashima et al., 2004). Attitudes including integrativeness, attitudes towards the learning situation, and international posture have also been found to relate to WTC in varying degrees.

Two components of L2 confidence, namely anxiety and perceived communicative competence, contribute differently to WTC in different language learning contexts. Anxiety predicts L2 confidence to a larger extent in situations where use of the L2 is high, as in immersion contexts, while perceived competence has a stronger influence on WTC among non-immersion students (Baker & MacIntyre, 2000; MacIntyre et al., 2002). Their explanation is that chances to use the L2 in non-immersion contexts are limited and, therefore, communicative competence tends to be lower compared with immersion contexts. Consequently, how one perceives one's competence has a large weight in

determining one's WTC. By contrast, immersion students have real-life opportunities to apply what they have learned, and with higher expectancy and pressure to perform, anxiety becomes a central factor. This pattern is confirmed by studies conducted in EFL contexts, where the amount of L2 use is relatively low and where perceived communicative competence has a stronger influence on L2 WTC than does anxiety (Peng & Woodrow, 2010; Yashima, 2002; Yashima et al., 2004). We might say that compared to FL situations, immersion – and possibly other second language situations – are closer to L1 situations, where anxiety is the single best predictor of WTC (McCroskey & Richmond, 1991).

Approaches to research on the construct

The development and use of scales

As I mentioned in the earlier discussion of the origins of WTC research, the dominant methodologies of personality psychology have influenced both conceptualizations of WTC and approaches to researching the concept. This has resulted in a prominent role for the use and development of scales in researching WTC, and one highly influential scale is the one developed by McCroskey (1992). While McCroskey's WTC scale is a well-validated instrument and useful in assessing an individual's general tendency to communicate, some researchers have pointed out problems in using the generic trait measurement scale in analysing WTC in L2 classrooms (Cao & Philp, 2006; MacIntyre et al., 2001). Some researchers, therefore, have attempted to develop situation-specific scales. MacIntyre et al. (2001) developed measures to assess skill-specific L2 WTC, that is, WTC in speaking, listening, reading, and writing, both inside and outside classrooms. In a technical paper, Weaver (2005) examined the psychometric properties of his own 33-item scale designed to measure language learners' willingness to speak and write in language classrooms. He selected items after studying what communication activities are most likely to take place in Japanese EFL classrooms, such as "Do a role play in English at your desk," or "Ask in English the meaning of a word you do not know." McCroskey and Richmond's (1987) original scale asked respondents to indicate the percentage of time (from 0 meaning never to 100 meaning always) they would choose to communicate in given situations. MacIntyre et al. (2001) changed this to a standard 5-point scale. Weaver then introduced a new 4-point rating scale, the psychometric properties of which he confirmed using the Rasch model (see glossary for an explanation).

Weaver's items were then adapted and reduced to ten items by Peng and Woodrow (2010) to examine WTC in Chinese EFL classrooms. Ryan (2008) created a shorter L2 WTC scale consisting of eight items adapted from McCroskey's original version on a 6-point scale (with high internal consistency). Ryan administered the measure with 2397 Japanese students together with many other motivational and affective constructs to be tested in the Japanese context. The short version is particularly useful for researchers who typically administer questionnaires consisting of several different scales and who need to make each scale compact.

Situational and dynamic WTC (from quantitative to qualitative research)

In addition to the mostly quantitative research conducted in the early days, qualitative studies carried out more recently have focused on situational and dynamic aspects of L2 WTC. Kang (2005) attempted to examine how situational L2 WTC emerges dynamically. Through an experiment using pairs of Korean learners of English and native speakers, she found that the decision to communicate in a particular situation is mediated by three psychological variables: security, excitement, and responsibility. Security refers to a feeling of being free of fear in L2 communication, a condition that is shaped mainly by relative familiarity among the interlocutors and familiarity with the topic. Excitement is "a feeling of elation about the act of talking" (Kang, 2005, p. 284). This condition depends on interest among interlocutors in the topic of the conversation as well as on the expression of interest, attention, and response among the partners. Finally, responsibility is felt when the participants feel a strong need to gain information, when they themselves introduced the topic, or when the topic is one that the participants are knowledgeable about. Moreover, as the number of participants in a conversation decreases, responsibility increases. In sum, feelings of security, excitement, and responsibility are created through a combination of situational variables including topics, interlocutors, and conversational contexts and result in situated WTC.

Cao and Philp (2006) also focused on situational L2 WTC in instructional contexts. Claiming that a generic self-report questionnaire may not be valid in assessing situational classroom-related WTC, they first examined correlations among the level of WTC as trait, assessed with a scale adapted from McCroskey and Richmond (1987) and the levels of WTC in different instructional situations. The researchers observed and assessed situated WTC in classrooms in three different interactional situations (pair work, group work, and whole class). They found

no correlations between trait WTC and situational WTC nor in WTC across three interactional situations. They also found that the level of WTC differed substantially across interactional situations. In interviews with learners, four factors emerged as having the most impact on WTC: group size, self-confidence, familiarity with interlocutors, and interlocutor participation in the conversation.

Most recently, MacIntyre and Legatto (2011) used a dynamic systems approach (see glossary) to research in WTC, examining moment-to-moment fluctuations in level of WTC (see also MacIntyre & Gregersen, Chapter 8, this volume). I will discuss this study in detail later. For now, I will explore the cultural dimensions of WTC.

Culture and WTC

North American cultural values are reflected in the original conceptualization of WTC. As McCroskey and Richmond (1991) indicate, in North American culture, "in most instances the more a person communicates, up to a very high extreme, the more positively the person is evaluated" (McCroskey & Richmond, 1991, pp. 19–20). Specifically because of this cultural value and attitude towards speech, L2 WTC is of particular relevance to EFL learners, as Yashima et al. (2004) describe through the experiences of Japanese high school students in the USA. In their struggle to communicate in order to make friends with their American peer group, Japanese learners face a double handicap through their low level of competence in English and the cultural expectation of a great deal of speech being produced in social situations in the USA (and probably in other English-speaking cultures to different degrees) (Yashima, 2004).

Further, this original conceptualization of WTC suggests that care is required when it is applied to other cultures. Wen and Clément's (2003) theoretical work addressed this issue. Focusing on two notable features of Chinese interpersonal relations, the tendency to care very much about evaluation by others and to submit to authority, they presented a Chinese culture-specific model of L2 WTC. In their proposed model, the researchers added variables that would mediate desire to communicate and WTC (on the third and second levels in MacIntyre et al.'s (1998) pyramid model), including group cohesiveness and teacher support as well as personality factors such as risk-taking and tolerance of ambiguity, among others. Central to their claim are Chinese cultural values based on Confucianism that emphasize social relationships, concern for evaluation by others, and the need for affiliation, which create unique classroom situations that are different from Western L2 classrooms.

Another promising research direction is to consider how power relations involving gender, ethnicity, class, social roles, and the history of relationships influence the participants' WTC in interactions. Thus, incorporating socially and culturally structured aspects of willingness to communicate in the L2 should set a new research agenda and is a necessary step to make WTC research more ecological (see glossary for an explanation of ecological research).

While some researchers try to situate WTC in sociocultural contexts, psychological research on WTC is moving towards micro analyses of the dynamic nature of WTC, which I will discuss in the next section. I will also discuss pedagogically oriented studies, my colleagues and I conducted, that focus on changes in WTC in different instructional contexts. I will start with our research that uses more traditional research methods on WTC.

Current research in the dynamic (evolving) nature of WTC

The history of WTC research is relatively short, yet has seen amazingly fast development. Generally, the focus of current research is on the dynamic aspect of WTC. Being more of a quantitative researcher, my approach to this goal has been to employ quasi-experimental methods. My colleagues and I investigated how WTC and/or frequency of communication undergo changes as a result of educational practice (Yashima & Zenuk-Nishide, 2008) and study abroad experiences (Yashima, 2009). These studies also raise questions about the scales required to assess the dynamic aspect of WTC, which is discussed later. The first study was conducted at a Japanese high school where content-based L2 instruction in global studies (with a Model United Nations) is a feature of education. TOEFL scores, international posture, L2 WTC, and frequency of communication in L2 were assessed in the participants' first and third years, and we compared a study abroad group and two stay-home groups. (The two stay-home groups learn in two separate programmes with different class hours and emphasis in education). The results indicate that proficiency and frequency of communication changed significantly with all three groups. The study abroad group demonstrated a clear advantage in most of the indicators over groups who stayed home, showing much larger increases. Trait WTC assessed through the original scale by McCroskey and Richmond (1987), however, did not change significantly in any of the three groups. Subsequently a cluster analysis delineated three clusters that show clearly distinct developmental patterns among those who stayed home. One of them exhibited a developmental profile similar to

the study abroad group. The majority of students in this cluster had studied in the programme with a heavier emphasis on global studies content. We concluded that the development in proficiency, frequency of communication and international posture can take place when the learners fully participate in a community of practice of learners and teachers that links to an imagined international community through global studies content.

The second study (Yashima, 2009), attempts to capture students' development through their participation in a somewhat more real international community of practice. I investigated the effects of international volunteer experience on the affect of learners of English through using English. The participants of the study are 265 college students who joined in international volunteer work projects and a control group of 109 students who did not participate in the projects. Participants live and work together in a youth community of about 10–20 people from all over the world for about three weeks. In pretests it was revealed that those who had previous experience of study abroad (mostly home stay) showed a significantly lower level of anxiety, higher level of WTC, and scored higher in a parameter named "Having things to communicate" than those who never had such an experience. In addition, as participants in the project and non-participants were different in all of the parameters already in pretests, ANCOVA was conducted to assess changes that occurred through the project controlling the pre-existing differences. The results indicated that participants gained in WTC and felt that they had more to communicate than non-participants. Further, through ANOVA, participants of the project were shown to substantially reduce the level of L2 anxiety. In this study I used a more situated scale of WTC adapted from Ryan (2008), and found that WTC increased significantly through the experience.

The results of the two studies imply that trait WTC is robust and does not change much over time and that we need a scale that is susceptible to change to capture the dynamic aspect of WTC. The two studies also indicate that changes in the level of L2 WTC and frequency of communication were brought about through collaborative work as well as through participation in an English-speaking imagined or real community such as Model United Nations and international volunteer work.

While quasi-experimental methods assess changes in WTC levels measured at different points in time, MacIntyre and his associates attempt to capture moment-to-moment dynamics of WTC (a detailed example of this can be found in MacIntyre & Gregersen, Chapter 8, this volume). With their research on ambivalence about communicating in

the L2 (MacIntyre, Burns, & Jessome, 2011), MacIntyre and colleagues made a significant departure from the conceptual and operational definition of WTC as a bipolar continuum from not willing to very willing to communicate. Focusing on the psychology of adolescent immersion learners, they demonstrated that one can feel both willing and unwilling to communicate in certain situations. An analysis of diary entries by junior high school students revealed that situations where students were most willing to communicate were similar or even identical to those in which they were least willing. Subtle features of the communication context involving location, interlocutor, and how the interaction unfolded determined whether the students were willing or unwilling. This implies that a slight change in any one detail in the interaction can lead the same person to initiate communication or remain silent.

The next step taken up by MacIntyre and his associates was to examine fluctuations in WTC from a dynamic systems perspective, focusing on its evolution. This is quite timely at a time when Dynamic Systems Theory is gaining momentum (Dörnyei, 2009; Larsen-Freeman, 2007) as a promising theoretical perspective in accounting for SLA.

MacIntyre and Legatto (2011) investigated fluctuations in WTC over a very short time period using the new 'idiodynamic method,' which researchers developed to capture the dynamics in the speaker's affective state. Their research investigates:

- the extent to which different tasks affect the level of WTC and/or amount of speaking time;
- the extent to which WTC varies over time;
- attributions that participants make for increases and decreases in their WTC levels.

Six female participants first answered a paper-and-pencil survey of L2 affect including trait WTC and then responded to seven communicative tasks (e.g., describe what you are wearing, discuss the role of Parliament in the Canadian system of government), which were videotaped and transcribed. After completing the tasks, the respondents rated their WTC on computer by moving a mouse while watching a video recording of their performance shown on the same computer screen using software developed by the researchers. This was followed by a review and discussion with the participants of how and why their WTC fluctuated.

Results showed that WTC fluctuated dramatically over the few minutes during which the participants were performing the tasks. Consistent patterns were also observed regarding the influence of the tasks

themselves, such as a decline in WTC in certain (supposedly less familiar) tasks than in others. Consistency within individuals was observed, as some participants showed high dynamic WTC all through while others had low and flat WTC. Respondents often attributed their decline in dynamic WTC to a perceived lack of competence and vocabulary knowledge relative to what was required to perform the task. Topic shifts also seem to be a major determiner of changes in WTC. Through this investigation, the researchers explored the applicability of the dynamic systems approach to WTC. MacIntyre and Legatto (2011) maintain that changes in WTC levels and the participants' cognitive appraisal of their affective state constitute evidence of key properties of dynamic systems.

In this section I have introduced two types of current research into WTC, which I hope provide some indication of the rapidly changing research landscape and point to possible future directions. Though they are methodologically different, both approaches described here try to capture changes in WTC over time. The strength of the approach that I have adopted, along with my colleagues, is that it is firmly embedded in sociocultural practice, enabling us to focus on the effects of educational intervention. In more recent work, MacIntyre and his associates have sought to expand the research agenda, both theoretically and methodologically. Here I have described a basic, yet innovative, psychological laboratory experiment which focuses on changes in WTC as a dynamic cognitive/affective system. The different approaches to research described in this section suggest that as the field develops and matures, L2 WTC research is likely to experience considerable methodological innovation and diversification, as researchers gradually move away from the field's narrow quantitative origins.

Future directions for research

As the studies discussed in the previous section indicate, WTC research has expanded its scope to represent a wide range of interests. A number of directions for future research can now be suggested. These include the following:

1. The approach taking a Dynamic Systems Theory perspective should be pursued as it allows the analysis of WTC as a dynamic system that changes in response to changes of all the other variables that might affect WTC within that system. With the development of the idiodynamic method, which allows for micro analyses, follow-up studies using that method could be performed to respond to a number of

questions including: How and in what way does WTC change over a short time due to factors other than topic shift and perceived difficulty of the task, that is, changes in the interlocutor(s), the number of interlocutors, and the interlocutors' responsiveness?

2. From a completely different research tradition, we might investigate the influence of power relations (gender/status differences/NS versus NNS) on WTC. In recent years, applied linguistics has seen a great deal of what is broadly termed sociocultural research, which shows the real-life contexts in which the learners are situated – how immigrants and/or sojourners' L2 use is constrained in power relations between native speakers and newcomers to the community (e.g., Morita, 2004; Norton, 2000). These studies show that willingness (or unwillingness) to communicate is socially structured within inequitable power relations. L2 WTC research offers a chance to complement this work by accounting for the individual differences in participants' initiative to change "the dynamism of interactions by themselves rather than leaving it to the empathy and/or control" of others in intercultural interactions (Yashima et al., 2004, p. 122).
3. From a pedagogical perspective, of utmost concern is how we can change learners' WTC so as to help it grow. I introduced two examples from our studies above. However, more research is still needed to assess the effects of educational practice on changes in WTC levels.

Enhancing L2 WTC through pedagogy

Finally, I discuss insights from research in L2 WTC that have implications for pedagogy. Based on research using the original WTC scale, it has been suggested that a combination of a familiar interlocutor and a dyad or a small group may lead to higher WTC. Studies in Japan indicate that international posture (Yashima, 2002; Yashima et al., 2004) and international empathy and interest (Ryan, 2008) predict WTC in English. This suggests that including materials that heighten learners' awareness of international affairs in L2 learning should be effective in encouraging greater WTC in EFL learners. Another study of Japanese EFL learners indicates that learners' L2 WTC can be enhanced through online chatting as they are free of the anxiety involved in face-to-face communication (Freiermuth, 2006). The effects of channels of communication on WTC are worth investigating.

Qualitative studies are particularly powerful in suggesting concretely in what pedagogical situations learners may be more or less willing to communicate. Kang's (2005) results indicate that familiar topics create

a sense of security on the part of the learners but that the learners also need to be interested in the topic to be stimulated to talk. Another useful insight was that a topic that triggers a sense of responsibility places positive pressure to talk on the participant, thus boosting WTC. MacIntyre and Legatto (2011) also show that if learners build up vocabulary related to the topic, this will heighten their sense of self-efficacy and WTC at the moment of talking. Moreover, the speakers' WTC is affected not only by familiarity with the interlocutors but also by how they respond and whether they are eager and attentive, as Kang (2005) and Cao and Philp (2006) indicate. This suggests that learners also need to learn to be good listeners, through pair work, for example, so that they can enhance mutual WTC and thus learn that communication is interactive and dynamic.

Although a topic is usually given to participants in research tasks and in classrooms, L2 users in real-life situations need to be able to introduce topics of their own to initiate communication. In classrooms, learners should be given chances to contribute to discussions by introducing topics. From a sociocultural perspective, it is crucial to create a community of practice in L2 learning in which students participate and move towards assuming an increasingly central role, for example, through discussion. To achieve this, the learners' sense of which community they are to participate in and therefore the concept of imagined L2 community becomes relevant. As one moves from the periphery to centre through problem solving and other collaborative activities, one's communicative skills, sense of responsibility, and self-concept change, and so does WTC.

Conclusion

Studies of WTC began as quantitative, macro level investigations of rather stable variables, but have gradually moved towards micro analyses of how momentary volition leads to L2 behaviour in each individual. Also conceivable are analyses of WTC situated in sociocultural contexts. What is probably needed is to link micro and macro level analyses of WTC among changing individuals and contexts.

Communication is an inherently social process. It takes at least two people to communicate. This somewhat contradicts the notion of WTC as an individual tendency. In this sense, although a psychological construct of WTC is measurable as an individual's attribute using a scale, WTC can only be enhanced and developed through social processes and communicating with others. It takes two to tango. Yet each person needs

to be willing to dance. WTC may be created in collaborative work, yet how much an individual is willing to participate crucially affects the outcome.

Suggested further reading

MacIntyre, P. D., Clément, R., Dörnyei, Z., & Noels, K. A. (1998). Conceptualizing willingness to communicate in an L2: A situational model of L2 confidence and affiliation. *The Modern Language Journal*, 82, 545–562.

This theoretical paper presents the first comprehensive model of WTC in an L2. This heuristic model includes both trait and situated and psychological and intergroup variables hypothesized to influence L2 WTC. An explanation of each variable together with its theoretical and research background will help those wishing to explore the conceptualization of WTC.

McCroskey, J. C., & Richmond, V. P. (1991). Willingness to communicate: A cognitive view. In M. Both-Butterfield (Ed.), *Communication, cognition, and anxiety* (pp. 19–37). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

This paper is an introduction to the original concept of WTC as a personality construct and its measurement scale. It also summarizes a number of studies that examine intercorrelations between WTC and its antecedents and effects.

Yashima, T., Zenuk-Nishide, L., & Shimizu, K. (2004). The influence of attitudes and affect on willingness to communicate and second language communication. *Language Learning*, 54, 119–152.

One of the first empirical studies on WTC conducted in EFL contexts, examining the relations among variables influencing WTC. A context-specific variable, international posture, is introduced to capture EFL learners' attitudes towards international communities. The paper also shows that L2 WTC predicts the amount of L2 communication in a study abroad context.

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10

Strategies: The Interface of Styles, Strategies, and Motivation on Tasks

Andrew D. Cohen

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to consider the psychological dimensions of language learner strategies in an effort to make the construct more accessible to those working in the field of language learning. The chapter will also call attention to issues of theoretical debate and demonstrate how case-study research can contribute to understanding the process of language learning. The case is made that viewing strategies in isolation is not as beneficial to learners and instructors alike as viewing them at the intersection of learning style preferences, motivation, and specific second-language (L2) tasks.

Language learner strategies: Classifications, research, and practice

The construct language learner strategies has been defined – and consequently researched – in numerous ways over the years. My own working definition is:

> Thoughts and actions, consciously chosen and operationalized by language learners, to assist them in carrying out a multiplicity of tasks from the very onset of learning to the most advanced levels of target-language performance.

The element of choice is crucial because this is what gives a strategy its special character. Note that the notion of consciousness is part of the definition of strategies although there is some controversy here. In my view, the element of consciousness is what distinguishes strategies from those processes that are not strategic. Strategies have been further classified in various ways – for example, strategies for language learning versus language use, strategies by language skill area, and strategies

according to function (namely, metacognitive, cognitive, affective, or social).

As an outgrowth of a meeting of 23 international scholars who met in June 2004 at Oxford University to 'push the envelope' on language learning and language use, I conducted a survey among these experts to determine their take on terms and issues (Cohen, 2007). The results of the survey underscored a paradox of language learner strategy research. While the field fascinates researchers and teachers alike – possibly because there is a sense that effective language learning and use depends in part on strategies – there is still a lack of consensus as to a unified theory. The survey found, for example, a lack of consensus as to how conscious of and attentive to their language behaviours learners need to be in order for those behaviours to be considered 'strategies,' as opposed to being thought of simply as 'processes.' In reviewing the literature on consciousness and attention, Dörnyei (2009, pp. 132–135) points out that consciousness is, in his words, "a notoriously vague term" and that attention actually refers to "a variety of mechanisms or subsystems, including alertness, orientation, detection, facilitation, and inhibition." So, if learners are conscious (even peripherally) that they are skimming a portion of text in order to avoid a lengthy explanation, then the move would be termed a 'strategy.'

The survey also found some disagreement as to the extent to which a behaviour needs to have a mental component, a goal, an action, a metacognitive component (involving planning, monitoring, and evaluation of the strategy), and a potential that its use will lead to learning, for it to be considered a strategy. There was, however, consensus that strategies are generally not used in isolation, but rather in sequences (e.g., strategies for looking up a word in a dictionary) or clusters (e.g., strategies for preparing a written summary of a text). This fact is often overlooked in studies which report on strategies as if the isolated use of each were the norm. In addition, two contrasting views about strategies emerged, each with its merits:

(1) that the actual strategies that learners use to complete tasks are likely to be detailed, specific, and combined in sequences or clusters with other strategies;
(2) that it is best to conceptualize strategies at a more global, flexible, and general level.

I personally ascribe to the detailed approach to strategies and strategizing, as can be seen from the Spanish Grammar Strategies website launched in July 2009.[1]

With regard to the purposes for language learner strategies, there was agreement that strategies enhance performance in language learning and use, both in general and on specific tasks. There was also consensus that strategies are used to help make language learning and use easier, faster, and more enjoyable. The survey also found that these experts did not favour the view that language strategies are used to compensate for a language deficit. My own feeling is that strategies still serve in a compensatory fashion in numerous instances. The respondents generally agreed that whereas the use of learner strategies can lead to enhanced autonomy, being an autonomous learner does not necessarily imply that the learner is drawing selectively and effectively on a refined repertoire of strategies.

In a chapter on learner strategies, we would be remiss in not pointing out that at present there are those who would use self-regulation in place of the term 'strategies.' But doing so leaves unanswered the question as to what learners do to self-regulate? The answer is that they use strategies. In his most recent book on the psychology of second language acquisition (SLA), Dörnyei (2009, p. 183) minimizes the value of looking at language learner strategies altogether since what learners do is better viewed as "idiosyncratic self-regulated behaviour, and a particular learning behaviour can be strategic for one learner and non-strategic for another." Similarly, Oxford (2011) embraces a self-regulation model for L2 learning, but unlike Dörnyei's approach, in Oxford's model, learners actively and constructively use strategies (and lower-level tactics) to manage their own learning. So, the compromise position would be to include self-regulation as perhaps an umbrella notion when referring to language learners and to also include the strategies that they use for both learning and performing in an L2. (For more on self-regulation, see Pemberton & Cooker's Chapter 14 on self-directed learning.)

As a means for better understanding research on language learner strategies, let us now consider some of the ways such strategies have been classified.[2]

Language learning versus language use strategies

One means of classification is by distinguishing strategies for the learning of language material for the first time from strategies for using the material that has already been learned, at least to some degree (see Cohen & Weaver, 2006). Language learning strategies include strategies for identifying the material that needs to be learned, distinguishing it from other material if need be, grouping it for easier learning (e.g., grouping vocabulary by category into nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs,

and so forth), having repeated contact with the material (e.g., through classroom tasks or the completion of homework assignments), and formally committing to memory whatever material is not acquired naturally through exposure. Krashen (1991) popularized a distinction between language material which is learned consciously (say, as the consequence of explicit teaching by an instructor or self-instruction) and material which goes more directly into the acquisitional base. While some material may follow the latter route, much of what learners gain control over probably starts as explicit knowledge and is converted into implicit knowledge through practice (see Dörnyei, 2009, pp. 159–161).

In contrast to language learning strategies, language use strategies put the emphasis on learners making use of the material at whatever their current level of mastery, and involve at least four subsets of strategies: retrieval strategies, rehearsal strategies, coping strategies, and communication strategies. Retrieval strategies are used to call up language material from storage by means of whatever memory searching strategies the learner can muster. Rehearsal strategies are usually deployed to prepare the learner for language use (e.g., rehearsing the subjunctive in Spanish to ask the boss for a day off). Coping strategies are of two kinds – compensatory strategies used if specific language knowledge is lacking (e.g., lexical avoidance, simplification, and approximation through paraphrasing or word invention) and cover strategies used to create an appearance of language ability so as not to look unprepared, foolish, or even stupid (e.g., using a memorized and perhaps only partially understood phrase in, say, a classroom drill in order to keep the action going).

Communication strategies have been viewed as the verbal (or nonverbal) first-aid devices that may be used to deal with problems or breakdowns in communication. They may be used to steer the conversation away from problematic areas, to express meaning in creative ways (e.g., by paraphrasing a word or concept), to create more time to think, and to negotiate the difficult parts of their communication with their conversation partner until everything is clear (such as through facial expressions or gestures). They also include conversational strategies, including asking for help, seeking clarification or confirmation, and using fillers (such as uh and uhm) when pausing while speaking (see Erard, 2007 for further discussion), along with other hesitation devices such as word repetition.

Undoubtedly the distinction between language learning and use strategies can be fuzzy at times. Oxford (2011, pp. 90–91) in fact contends that the distinction is inappropriate since learning can only be

accomplished through language use. But I would maintain that for many language learners much of what they 'learn,' especially in language classes, never makes it to real-world communication. As such, this learning versus use distinction is based not on theory and on potential, but rather on the way both the learning and, more importantly, the forgetting of language (i.e., language attrition) show up in the real world.

Some strategies contribute directly to learning, such as strategies for memorizing vocabulary (e.g., the use of keyword mnemonics) or strategies for organizing grammatical structures (e.g., the use of charts which emphasize and contrast the key features of the structures to be learned). Other strategies, perhaps the bulk of them, have as their main goal that of using the language – for example, verifying that the choice of vocabulary produced the intended results or that grammatical inflections were appropriate for a given context. Further, some strategies are behavioural and can be directly observed (e.g., asking a clarification question), others are behavioural but not easily observable (e.g., using a short paraphrase rather than a long circumlocution), and others are purely mentalistic and not directly observable (e.g., making mental translations into the native language for clarification while reading). In order to identify them, such mentalistic strategies must be accessed through means other than observation, such as through the collection of verbal report data (i.e., think-aloud, introspection and retrospection, and self-report; see Cohen, 2011, pp. 78–86).

Language strategies by skill area

A second way to classify strategies is by skill area. Bearing in mind that a skill constitutes the ability to do something (such as looking up a word in a dictionary or paraphrasing a text), strategies are the means used to carry out tasks involving this skill. So, strategies can be viewed in terms of their role while engaged in both the receptive skills of listening and reading, and the productive skills of speaking and writing. Strategies are also used for skills that crosscut these basic skill areas, such as the learning and use of vocabulary and grammar. As the Spanish Grammar Strategies website at CARLA (Centre for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition at the University of Minnesota) illustrates, dealing with grammar offers a rich area for strategy development. The use of strategies can be an effective way to remember problematic grammar rules, when to use them, and how to apply them. Another strategy area that crosscuts all four skills is that of translation. For example, while many students prefer to think in the L2 and to translate as little as

possible from their first language (L1), some learners may prefer to write out their text in their native language first and then translate it into the L2 (see Cohen & Brooks-Carson, 2001).[3]

Language strategies by function

A third way to classify strategies is in terms of their function, namely, metacognitive, cognitive, affective, or social (Chamot, 1987; Oxford, 1990). Metacognitive strategies deal with pre-assessment and pre-planning, online planning and monitoring, and post-evaluation of language learning activities and of language use events. Such strategies allow learners to control their own cognition by coordinating the planning and organization of strategy use, the monitoring of their use, and the evaluation of how effective the use was in the learning process. Cognitive strategies involve the awareness, perception, reasoning, and conceptualizing processes that learners undertake in both learning the target language (e.g., identification, grouping, retention, and storage of language material) and in activating their knowledge (e.g., retrieval of language material, rehearsal, and comprehension or production of words, phrases, and other elements of the target language). Social strategies encompass the means employed by learners for interacting with other learners and native speakers, such as through asking questions to clarify social roles and relationships, asking for an explanation or verification, and cooperating with others in order to complete tasks. Finally, affective strategies help students regulate their emotions, motivation, and attitudes.[4]

A problem with trying to distinguish strategies in terms of the functions that they play is that the distinctions are not so clear-cut. In other words, the same strategy, say "ongoing summarization of the text being read," may be interpretable as either cognitive or metacognitive. Indeed, it might not be possible to draw the line neatly between what would be viewed as the metacognitive strategies aimed at planning out how to summarize a text and then evaluating the results, on the one hand, and the cognitive strategies associated with summarizing the text such as that of reconceptualizing a given paragraph at a higher level of abstraction, on the other. It is likely that both types of strategies may be deployed simultaneously in an overlapping way. In that case, delineating whether the strategy is cognitive or metacognitive could be problematic. In fact, the same strategy may function at different levels of abstraction. For instance, skipping an example in the text so as not to lose the train of thought may reflect a metacognitive strategy (i.e., part of a conscious plan not to get distracted by detail), as well as a cognitive

strategy to avoid material that would not assist in working out the gist of the text.

Linking strategies to learning style preferences, motivation, and tasks

Language learning and use strategies do not operate in a vacuum, but rather are directly tied to learners' underlying learning style preferences (i.e., their general approaches to and preferred ways of learning).[5] It has been pointed out that each style preference makes its contribution to learning and that consequently learners benefit from identifying their style preferences, viewing these as a 'comfort zone,' and stretching their comfort zone through practice (Oxford, 2001). (See Chapter 11 by Griffiths for more on learning style preferences.)

It is possible for a learner to have a robust repertoire of language learner strategies and yet not make progress in language learning because of a lack of motivation to do so. Just because the strategies are available does not mean that they will be accessed. Equally, learners need strategies to keep motivated. Dörnyei (2002) popularized the notion of motivation as a dynamic process in a continuous process of change. It was in the spirit of this view that an instrument was constructed, Taking My Motivational Temperature on a Language Task (Cohen & Dörnyei, 2001), with the intention that it be administered before, during, and after a group of learners do an L2 language task in class. More recently, Dörnyei and Ushioda have embraced a sociodynamic perspective on motivation, involving the interaction of motivation with numerous internal, social, and contextual factors (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, pp. 75–90). (See also Ushioda's Chapter 5 on motivation in this volume.) My own bias is to continue to make use of the Motivational Temperature Measure with the caveat that some learners will be better able than others to describe how their motivation to perform a given task fluctuates as they perform it. While this measure gives only a partial picture of learners' motivation, the insights gained in a given context may still provide helpful insights to learners and to their teachers as well, especially about those frustrating learning moments which dissuade a learner from forging ahead.

Finally, it is important to call attention to the effect that a particular task might have on the choice of strategies, as well as on the effectiveness of the selected strategy or set of strategies. Just as there are differing views as to what language learner strategies are, so there are differing views as to what constitute L2 pedagogic tasks (Samuda & Bygate, 2008, pp. 62–70). Learners' perceptions of the tasks are likely to determine

whether learners will persevere to the end of the given task or not. Learners are most likely to warm up to tasks perceived to be relevant, interesting, and doable.

Example of current research

Over the years, numerous approaches have been used for conducting research on language learner strategies. Oxford (2011, Chapter 7) provides an updated discussion of both quantitative methods, involving experimental, quasi-experimental, and non-experimental research, and qualitative methods involving phenomenology, grounded theory, case studies, ethnographies, and narratives. A key instrument for data collection has been a language strategy survey, often administered to a large group in order to determine their reported strategy use patterns (see Oxford, 2011, pp. 156–166, for details, and Macaro, 2010 – in the suggested further reading below, – for misgivings about this approach).

The qualitative approach shared here is that of multiple case-study work, an outgrowth of a course that I have been teaching at the University of Minnesota since 2001, "Practical Language Learning for International Communication." The course provides students with background on the learning of an L2 and on language and culture strategies for maximizing study abroad. Students assume the role of researchers in that they need to collect and analyse data on their own language learning and that of their peers. The case studies include data on learning style preferences (using Cohen, Oxford, & Chi, 2002b), language strategy repertoire (using Cohen, Oxford, & Chi, 2002a), and motivational fluctuation (using Cohen & Dörnyei, 2001) on two language tasks, conducted both as self-study for their midterm paper and then as a study of three peers of their own choosing as their final course project.[6]

Of the 47 students taking the course in Autumn 2010, 22 agreed to have their midterm papers in the data set. About 17 of these also agreed to have their final paper included, each with three case studies, so there were 41 case studies from the study of other learners, bringing the grand total to 63 in this multi-case-study effort. A close analysis of these case studies identified 20 studies that most effectively illustrated how learning style preferences, strategy choices, and motivational fluctuation come together in the performance of L2 tasks. Prior to this study, my references to the close-knit intersection of styles, strategies, and motivation on specific tasks had been limited to hypothetical data (Cohen, 2003).

The following are three samples from the 20 case studies that are available in their entirety at: https://sites.google.com/a/umn.edu/

andrewdcohen/projects (accessed 16 February 2011). They are intended to illustrate how styles, strategies, and motivation intersect in L2 tasks. The ideas here are those reported to me by the students themselves, though I have taken the liberty of paraphrasing some of the text to make it more succinct, and I have also reorganized it in order to highlight the relationships among styles, strategies, and motivation on tasks.

> Rochelle – a senior, majoring in Asian Languages and Literature, and prior Spanish study in high school.
>
> Task: watching a Japanese drama without using subtitles, with the goal to understand as much of the episode as possible.

The visuals for this show were so powerful that Rochelle could use the strategy of watching without worrying about catching every word because she knew that they would show plot while they talked about it. Her strategy of refraining from consulting a dictionary made her style-stretch since her desire to get clarity about new vocabulary would have her check a dictionary to discover what a certain word actually meant, or at least pause to write down all of the words that needed to be further addressed.[7] Some words stuck in her memory, and so she looked them up that night to discover that even though they had repeated *ninkyou* (generosity, heroism) and *koi* (intention, request) many times, learning the meaning of the words did not lead to secret 'aha!' moments regarding the plot.

Another instance where Rochelle needed to rely on a less preferred learning style during the listening task was when it came to open-versus closure-oriented learning. Having no script or translation for the story ahead of time meant that she had to allow a lot of openness towards the assignment. After getting over the fact that she was not going to understand everything and knowing that it did not count against her to miss some details, it really was not so bad to simply try to let the video drama 'soak in.' She found it an interesting approach to, in her words, "abolish an attempt at complete accuracy and understanding," though she did wonder whether she was laughing about the same thing as intended in the show.

The task kept her attentive and curious during the entire show. The motivation to understand the drama was purely to increase personal enjoyment. As she put it, "No comprehension check would be turned in, no extra credit would be earned, but I still felt like watching another episode and doing it again after finishing."

Bethany – a junior majoring in Elementary Education, with her last study of an L2 being high-school Spanish four years earlier.

Task: attending a Spanish conversation group session for 45 minutes with six others at a café near campus.

Bethany saw her decision to attend a conversation group despite not having taken a Spanish class for four years as evidence of her preference to be extraverted and impulsive. She got to engage in a social environment, meet new people, and even visit with a friend. She reported understanding the gist of what was said to her, and used the strategy of asking for clarification when she did not. She also reported being able to communicate although as she put it, "I often had to creatively express myself" (e.g., using an English word, using a Spanish synonym, or even inventing a Spanish word). She also used the strategy of asking for help when she could not remember specific words. Her motivation was low at the outset but increased as she got into the task. She reported being more concerned about communicating meaning than about making mistakes, revealing her impulsive learning style preference. Receiving feedback – whether positive (a nod or smile when she used phrases correctly) or negative (a correction on a grammar mistake) – was highly motivating for her. Several of her preferred strategies were utilized, such as asking others either to repeat themselves, provide a word definition, or slow down the speed of their conversation when she did not understand. As a result of this social atmosphere, by the time she had finished the task, she had a strong desire to complete a similar task in the future.

Nicole – a senior, majoring in Spanish and Portuguese.

Task: attending a Portuguese conversation hour and interacting with fellow students of Portuguese and a native speaker.

Nicole was highly motivated before attending the conversation hour. Her self-confidence, however, was not very high since many others had better Portuguese-speaking skills than she did, which made her feel self-conscious and caused her to employ social strategies which she would have preferred to avoid, such as pretending to understand so as to not feel left out. She nonetheless used effective speaking strategies such as imitating speech which sounded particularly idiomatic and asking for help from her conversation partner. Since she tried to avoid thinking in English, she found herself asking for the equivalents of Spanish words and made guesses about Portuguese words based on her Spanish

vocabulary (e.g., converting the suffix *–ción* to *–ção* and hoping that it would fit with the common pattern of relationships between Spanish and Portuguese nouns and that it was actually a word). She viewed using translation techniques from Spanish rather than from English as 'cheating.' She also used the strategy of rehearsal before saying anything, consistent with a more reflective approach to language performance. This bolstered her confidence when she did speak, but the strategy was sometimes detrimental in that by the time she had decided how she wanted to contribute to the conversation, the speakers may already have moved on to another topic.

Nicole found that while she spent the majority of her time listening, she was also bolstering her comprehension through visual stimuli, such as looking at the expressions on her speaking partners' faces and the gestures that they used. In addition, she catered to her kinaesthetic style preference (reportedly as high as her visual preference) by putting her legs up on the chair and playing with her pen and cell phone. She viewed making herself physically comfortable as a strategy which influenced her affect and made her less concerned about committing errors, since her body language was broadcasting that it was a casual encounter.

Her detail-oriented style preference also emerged in that she noticed details in the language, such as whether someone chose to use the preterit or the imperfect tense, and she tried to analyse why they had chosen that tense and which tense she would have used in that context. At times she missed what was being said in the conversation because she was lost in her own language analysis. Although she considered herself more closure-oriented, she felt herself becoming more open during this task because it was in an informal, non-academic context. She could relax more, knowing that she was not going to be tested on what she was hearing so she did not have to worry about comprehending everything. She started having fun and stopped comparing her language skills to those of others so much. Her motivation was high after completing this activity and she looked forward to doing it again the next week.

What makes this type of research unusual and potentially beneficial is that by transforming learners into their own data gatherers and analysers, both of their own data (for the midterm paper) and of three other learners (the final paper), they come away from the exercise with heightened awareness about language learning and use. They acquire a keen sense at the operational level of just what learning styles, language strategies, and motivation on specific tasks can look like. I stress the importance of their choosing two different kinds of tasks so that they can experience task effect (e.g., a speaking versus a reading task).

Future directions for research and considerations for pedagogy

In an ideal language learner situation, learners become informed consumers of L2s at an early age, maximize their experiences in and out of class, and become life-long users of a host of languages, thus enriching their interactions with others in numerous speech communities around the world, and enhancing their employment prospects and performance globally (see Cohen & White, 2008 for more on this approach). Learners would start their language learning trajectory by taking a learning style preference measure and a language strategy inventory to see how style preferences and language strategy choices relate to each other. If the fit is not good, then the learners would vary their strategy repertoire or style-stretch to match their preferred strategy choices. We need more research to determine the extent to which this informed consumerism is actually taking place.

Beyond creating more savvy language learners is the need to further the work in specific domains of strategy use, such as strategies for grammar and for pragmatics (see Ishihara & Cohen, 2010), and to further develop websites where this information can be posted to the international community. In addition, strategy instruction needs to be integrated into language instruction so that learners are provided with an opportunity to enhance their language learning experiences. Although language learners around the world are becoming increasingly multilingual, multilingual skills are not necessarily being developed at a level that would be considered 'professional.' So there is a need for strategy instruction and corresponding research dealing with advanced L2 ability. Another concern is how learners can be strategic in their efforts to guard against attrition of L2 attainments – another variable to add to the study of L2 attrition (see Bardovi-Harlig & Stringer, 2010). In addition, given the accumulation of studies looking just at frequency of strategy use (e.g., see Cohen, 2011), there is a commensurate need to look at knowledge about the strategies that language learners actually use (not just report using), how they use them, and the effectiveness of these strategies as used by the given learners over time (e.g., Cohen, Pinilla-Herrera, Thompson, & Witzig, 2011).

Finally, a current line of investigation looks at how the strategies used by individual learners may vary from one learning context to another. In an autobiographical case study, for example, He (2002) described how her choice of strategies shifted according to the phase of her life that she was in, as she studied English in six different phases. She reported

mostly using cognitive and metacognitive strategies in school, but made greater use of metacognitive strategies as an independent learner (see also Gao, 2010).

These are just some suggestions for both research and practice in the field of language learner strategies. If we are truly to link theory with practice, we need to demonstrate how theory and research contributes in a significant way to enhancing the experiences of language learners in and outside of the classroom.

Notes

1. http://www.carla.umn.edu/strategies/sp_grammar/index.html; accessed on 14 February 2011.
2. For a discussion of others ways that strategies can be classified (e.g., by age, proficiency-level, gender, and by specific language or culture) see Cohen (2011).
3. For a skills-based inventory of language strategy use developed by Cohen et al. (2002a).
4. Oxford (2011) revisits these basic distinctions, providing new distinctions within and among them.
5. The *Learning Style Survey* (Cohen et al., 2002b) encompasses perceptual, cognitive, and personality-related style categories, and has helped hundreds of language learners at the University of Minnesota to heighten their awareness of their style preferences.
6. A link to the Autumn 2010 syllabus for the course, with detailed instructions to students regarding both the midterm and the final projects, can be found at https: //sites.google.com/a/umn.edu/andrewdcohen/projects (accessed 16 February 2011).
7. Rochelle used the term from the *Learning Style Survey, sharpener,* to describe herself – someone who wants to get distinctions clear when committing material to memory, while a *leveler* is willing to have blurriness.

Suggested further reading

Oxford, R. L. (2011). *Teaching and researching language learning strategies*. Harlow: Longman/Pearson Education.

This book provides theoretical perspectives and practical suggestions for language learning practitioners, students, and researchers regarding how to provide strategy instruction and how to conduct research on L2 strategies. In demonstrating why self-regulated learning strategies are necessary for language proficiency, the book integrates sociocultural, cognitive, and affective dimensions.

Cohen, A. D. (2011). *Strategies in learning and using a second language* (2nd ed.). Harlow: Longman/Pearson Education.

This book brings together a series of different themes united by their focus on L2 learners and their strategies. It offers an updated look at language learner strategies, helping to sort out terminology and providing suggestions on how to do research in this area, especially with regard to verbal report techniques.

Macaro, E. (2010). The relationship between strategic behaviour and language learning success. In E. Macaro (Ed.), *Continuum companion to second language acquisition* (pp. 268–299). London: Continuum.

Macaro problematizes what success at language learning actually means, and the relationship between strategic behaviour and language learning success. Rather than using large-scale questionnaires to study learning processes, he recommends having learners provide concurrent and retrospective verbal reports while engaged in specific learning- or skills-based tasks.

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11

Learning Styles: Traversing the Quagmire

Carol Griffiths

Introduction

On first acquaintance, the language learning style concept is intuitively appealing. Understanding it has the potential to greatly enhance learning and to make learning more enjoyable and successful. It is a concept that acknowledges individual differences, rather than seeing all learners as similar. For teachers, it presents an opportunity to offer students methodologies and materials appropriate to their own learning style preferences. For learners, it allows them the freedom to learn in ways which are enjoyable and can help them to become the best that they are capable of.

However, in the literature one soon finds oneself bogged down in a "quagmire" (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 120) of conflicting definitions, concepts, models, theories, and inventories. Amid the confusion, one might be tempted to conclude that any potential benefits are not worth the effort required to address the multitude of questions clamouring for answers. Yet, there remains "something genuinely appealing about the notion" (ibid.) of language learning styles. If only we as teachers could work with them effectively, what a wonderful tool they could be.

To begin to understand the potential offered by an appreciation of learner styles, we need to look first at how learning styles are defined and differentiated from other constructs, at the characteristics of language learning styles, at how they are identified, labelled and categorized, and to review insights from previous research in the area. In this chapter, I will begin by considering various understandings of the style construct and will then report on one aspect of a study investigating the style preferences of tertiary-level English as a foreign language (EFL)

learners. I will conclude the chapter by considering the implications of the literature and this study for future research and pedagogy.

Literature overview

What are learning styles?

Learning styles have been defined as "an individual's natural, habitual and preferred way(s) of absorbing, processing, and retaining new information and skills" (Reid, 1995, p. viii). This definition has proven to be enduring, but the existence of other closely related concepts has caused much confusion. Therefore, when considering what learning styles are, it is helpful to begin by considering what they are NOT.

The first related construct that needs to be differentiated from learning styles is cognitive styles, which Dörnyei (2005, p. 125) defines as "an individual's preferred and habitual modes of perceiving, remembering, organizing, processing, and representing information." Although he has done a lot of work on the concept, Riding (2000, p. 365, cited in Dörnyei, 2005, p. 126) concedes that the "study of cognitive style has been rightly criticized for being vague." Dörnyei (2005, p. 125) suggests that the difference between cognitive and learning style is that cognitive styles are "devoid of any educational and situational/environmental interferences, thereby allowing for a 'purer' definition." In other words, cognitive style refers to how individuals think, process information and solve problems in general. As such, it is a broader concept than learning style, which is more focused on how an individual acquires and retains new understanding or knowledge.

Another concept that, although often closely related, is NOT the same as styles is strategies (Macaro, 2006; Oxford, 1990, 2011; see Cohen, Chapter 10, this volume). Griffiths (2008a, p. 87) has defined strategies as "activities consciously chosen by learners for the purpose of regulating their own language learning." In other words, they are what learners DO. In contrast, styles tend to describe learners or their learning preferences. Although strategy choice may to some extent be determined by students' stylistic preferences (see Cohen, Chapter 10, this volume), the two concepts are actually quite distinct. As Bailey, Onwuegbuzie, and Daley (2000, p. 118) explain: "It should be noted that learning styles are not the same as learning strategies.... Whereas learning styles represent unintentional, or automatic individual characteristics, learning strategies are actions chosen by students that are intended to facilitate learning."

Personality is another area which should NOT be confused with style. Frequently measured on the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI; originally published by Myers, 1962), personality is a very broad and basic concept which is usually defined in terms of an individual's personal, emotional, and/or behavioural traits and may include the way they interact with others (e.g., Ehrman, 2008). Learning style, on the other hand, is limited to the way individuals prefer to learn. Although personality may to some extent be a factor in determining stylistic preferences (we might expect, for instance, that an extraverted personality would tend towards a communicative, interactive, or cooperative style, rather than working individually), the two concepts are different and should not be confused (see Dewaele, Chapter 4; Lawrence, 1997, this volume).

Characteristics of learning styles

Having defined and differentiated learning styles from other related constructs, it is now important to turn our attention to the characteristics of learning styles and how they have been understood. As Nel (2008) points out, learning style is generally considered to be a relatively stable learner characteristic. Oxford (2011, p. 40), however, argues that "although the learner may have some strong style tendencies, they are not set in stone." In particular, learners' styles may vary according to the context in which the learning occurs, since what works for a particular individual in one environment or for one particular task may not work for others elsewhere engaged in different activities. According to Reid (1987, p. 100), "learning styles are moderately strong habits rather than intractable biological attributes, and thus they can be modified and extended." It may, therefore, be useful for learners to retain some degree of stylistic flexibility if they are to be able to maximize learning opportunities (Cohen & Dörnyei, 2002).

Identifying, labelling, and categorizing learning styles

One of the salient characteristics of learning style research has been the use of taxonomies which have attempted to identify, label, and categorize learning styles. In this section, I will consider some of the main typologies used in the field and their insights for learning style research over the years.

The learning style concept has been recognized in the field of education since at least the mid-1970s. One of the earliest instruments was the Learning Style Inventory by Dunn, Dunn, and Price (1975). Although this inventory has undergone numerous adaptations over the years (e.g., the Productivity Environmental Preference Survey; Dunn,

Dunn, & Price, 1991), it originally divided learning style into five domains of preference:

- Environmental (sound, light, temperature, design)
- Emotional (motivation, persistence, responsibility, structure)
- Sociological (learning alone, in pairs, with peers, in teams, with an adult)
- Physiological (perceptual preference, food and drink intake, time of day, mobility)
- Psychological (global or analytic preferences, impulsive, reflective).

Around the same time as Dunn et al.'s inventory appeared, Kolb published his Learning Style Inventory (1976). According to Kolb's model, learning preferences can be described using two continua: active experimentation versus reflective observation, and abstract conceptualization versus concrete experience, resulting in four types of learners:

- Converger (active experimentation-abstract conceptualization). Convergers tend to like to take different ideas and see if they work in practice.
- Accommodator (active experimentation-concrete experience). Accommodators like a hands-on approach.
- Assimilator (reflective observation-abstract conceptualization). Assimilators like to take a logical, thoughtful approach.
- Diverger (reflective observation-concrete experience). Divergers prefer to begin with the details and use these to construct the big picture.

Gregorc (1979) continued the quadrant model for conceptualizing learning style when he produced The Gregorc Style Delineator with two axes (concrete versus abstract, and sequential versus random) which delineated four styles:

- Concrete Sequential (registering information through the five senses in a step-by-step fashion).
- Concrete Random (registering information through the five senses in no set order).
- Abstract Sequential (demonstrating the ability to visualize ideas and order them in a linear fashion).
- Abstract Random (demonstrating ability to visualize ideas but not necessarily in a set order).

Then in the early 1980s, Honey and Mumford published their Manual of Learning Styles (1982), which included their Learning Styles Questionnaire. Again, this new survey retained Kolb's quadrant model but added some new categories:

- Reflector (likes to be allowed to think things over).
- Theorist (likes to be allowed to think through issues and form hypotheses).
- Pragmatist (likes to apply new learning to real situations to see if it works).
- Activist (likes activity and new experiences).

Moving away from the quadrant model, Curry (1983) conceived of style in terms of a metaphorical onion. The outer cognitive/personality layer influences the information processing layer, which then contributes to inner instructional preferences. This somewhat different conceptualization of style also contributed to changing understandings of styles by laying the ground for more interrelationships among stylistic preferences, rather than seeing them as discrete and distinct from one another.

Although Dunn et al.'s (1975) and Kolb's (1976) inventories introduced the style concept to the field of education in the mid-1970s, one of the first well-known applications of the style concept to language learning was by Reid (1987), who developed the Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire (PLSPQ) which was based on five modalities:

- Visual (learning by seeing).
- Auditory (learning by hearing).
- Tactile (learning by touching).
- Kinaesthetic (learning by moving).
- Individual versus group preference.

In the same year, Willing (1987) conducted a large-scale survey of immigrants to Australia. Using a Kolb-style quadrant model, he used a twin-axis framework (passive-active and analytic-holistic) which produced four more learner types:

- Convergers (independent learners who can focus on component parts).
- Conformists (those who are authority-oriented).

- Concrete learners (those who are people-oriented).
- Communicative learners (those who are willing to take risks).

As we moved into the 1990s, Fleming and Mills (1992) produced the VARK, another well-known instrument for measuring learning styles. The acronym VARK stands for Visual, Aural, Read/write, and Kinaesthetic, in other words, three sensory modalities to which a literary/graphic preference was added, thereby adding yet another label to the growing list of possible learning style preferences identified in the bullet points above:

- Read/write (preferring to read or write things down).

The Style Analysis Survey (Oxford, 1993) analysed learning style according to other preferences including:

- Intuitive random (describes those learners who can use intuition and who do not depend on highly structured approaches).
- Concrete sequential (describes those learners who like a highly organized approach where new knowledge is presented on a step-by-step basis).
- Closure-oriented/open (describes those learners who need certainty versus those who can cope with more ambiguity).
- Global/analytic (describes those learners who look at the big picture versus those who attend to the details).

Arguing that an inability to cope with uncertainty may limit learners' ability to acquire new language, Ely (1995) developed the Second Language Tolerance of Ambiguity Scale, thereby adding another dimension to the list:

- Tolerance of ambiguity

In addition to the Style Analysis Survey (1993), Oxford also contributed to the Learning Style Survey (Cohen, Oxford, & Chi, 2002) with yet more style dimensions, including:

- Sharpener/leveller (emphasizing the differences rather than the similarities).
- Global/particular (focusing on the big picture rather than on the details).

- Synthesizing/analytic (preferring to put things together rather than look at them separately).
- Deductive/inductive (taking a top-down rather than a bottom-up approach).
- Impulsive/reflective (preferring to act rather than spend too much time thinking).
- Metaphoric/literal (preferring to look for underlying truths rather than what is only on the surface).
- Field dependent/independent (dealing with discrete items rather than holistically).
- Memorization (preferring to learn by committing things to memory).

Two years later, Ehrman and Leaver produced the Learning Style Questionnaire (LSQ) (2003), which operates between two poles: ectasis (exercising conscious control) versus synopsis (relying on subconscious processing). The LSQ employs other style types, including:

- Random/sequential (preferring not to learn in a set order versus preferring a set sequence).
- Analogue/digital (preferring to learn in a meaningful context versus taking a more literal approach).
- Concrete/abstract (preferring to learn through real materials versus taking a more theoretical view).

As one runs an eye down the multitude of bullet points listed above, it is difficult not to feel intimidated by the 'quagmire' they represent. And this overview of style categories is by no means exhaustive, but merely represents some of the better-known dimensions and taxonomies. In the end, we are left with a bewildering and unwieldy list, the items of which often seem to bear little relationship to each other or to what has gone before and which often seem to have materialized with little or no actual research or theoretical justification. Conflicting, overlapping, ambiguous concepts abound, making comparisons across style surveys difficult. This difficulty is compounded by the fact that many of the inventories noted above are commercial products which are not readily available for research purposes, leading some, such as Bonham (1988), to warn: "Let the buyer beware." It is important, however, to consider these multiple taxonomies, since they have all, to a greater or lesser extent, influenced the way the learning style concept has developed, been conceptualized and researched.

Previous research into learning styles

As can be seen above, there have been many attempts over the years to identify, label, and categorize learning styles and to develop inventories. However, studies that empirically investigate the concept in order to explore the relationship between learning style and effective learning are surprisingly difficult to find.

There have been a number of studies examining closely related concepts such as cognitive style (e.g., Lee, Cheng, Rai, & Depickere, 2005; Riding & Rayner, 1998), learning strategies (e.g., Cohen, Chapter 10, this volume; Green & Oxford, 1995; Griffiths, 2008a) and personality (e.g., Dewaele, Chapter 4, this volume; Ehrman & Oxford, 1989, 1990, 1995). Some of these (such as the Ehrman and Oxford studies, which used the MBTI for personality) extended the implications of their findings to learning style. However, there are remarkably few studies which focus directly on learning style, although various aspects of learning style have been investigated in isolation, such as the most commonly researched, field in/dependence (e.g., Chapelle, 1988).

First introduced by Witkin (1962), the field in/dependent dimension has been one of the most enduring and possibly the most controversial concept in the learning style arena. Field dependent learners are unable to separate details from the background, are more holistic or global in their approach, and more concerned with the overall picture than with particulars. Field independent learners, on the other hand, are able to analyse tasks into sections and focus on discrete aspects. The field in/dependent distinction has generated much debate over the years (e.g., Chapelle, 1988; Ellis, 1994), not least over the validity of the way the construct is assessed, usually by means of Witkin's Embedded Figures Test (1971), which requires students to discern patterns among more complicated shapes, inevitably raising questions about its relevance to language learning (see also Williams & Burden, 1997, pp. 91–93). Further, field in/dependence is sometimes equated to or even defined in terms of concepts such as global, holistic, analytic, particular, discrete, and so on, whereas at other times all of these concepts are regarded as separate manifestations of learning style and are listed separately in inventories. In addition, field in/dependence is sometimes included as an aspect of personality or cognitive style (e.g., Riding & Rayner, 1998), rendering its role as an aspect of learning style somewhat dubious.

Where learning style has been researched directly with an appropriate instrument, results have, in general, been less than overwhelmingly

supportive of the usefulness of the learning style concept as a factor in successful learning. Bailey et al. (2000), for instance, using the Productivity Environmental Preference Survey (Dunn et al., 1991) with a sample of American college students, concluded that only a "modest proportion of variance in foreign language achievement" could be explained by the selected style variables, suggesting that "learning style may not be a strong predictor of foreign language proficiency" (p. 126).

Since, however, as Nel (2008, p. 57) reminds us, "every learner does have a learning style," the question of whether some learning styles might be better than others in terms of effective language learning would seem to be important in order to inform teaching practice and enhance learning. An example of research which aimed to explore this question follows.

An example of research

The majority of research in respect to styles has used questionnaires such as those outlined above. However, a growing recognition of the potential impact of individual and situational variables on research findings suggests the merits of a more contextualized approach where instruments are specifically designed for a particular set of participants. As Bailey et al. (2000, p. 129) suggest, "a situation-specific learning style instrument written to elicit specific information on how students prefer to learn foreign languages" might be more useful than the standardized instruments that are commonly employed across contexts.

Recognition has also been growing of the usefulness of a qualitative approach (see Cohen, this volume; Dörnyei, 2007; Nunan, 1992) in language learning research. Qualitative approaches can take the form of interviews, observations, think-aloud protocols, narratives and commentaries, and can be especially useful as complements to quantitative studies.

Thus, in order to further investigate the question of whether some learning styles are better than others in terms of effective language learning, an exploratory study was conducted among students at a private, English-medium university in Istanbul, Turkey. The students were studying for a four-year bachelor's degree in TEFL. Since these students were in their fourth year at the university, they were already quite experienced learners with an intermediate to advanced level of English. There were 33 students in the class of whom a majority (29) were female, and most of the students were in their early 20s.

The study used a questionnaire – the Inventory of Language Learning Styles (ILLS; see Appendix 11A) – constructed from a selection of the

style elements listed above chosen specifically to suit the characteristics of the particular situation and research participants. For instance, since these students were mostly young adults who were reasonably serious about their studies, style items which were appropriate for such participants were selected for the inventory. Different items might have been selected if, for instance, the participants had been younger or in a different learning environment. For example, item 6 (by moving around) or item 10 (with others) might not be included in a more 'traditional' setting since in such classrooms students are frequently forbidden to move out of their seats or to talk to classmates, so these style preferences are simply not an option. Item 9 on correction was included because these students had raised correction as an issue. However, in an environment where correction is accepted as standard practice, it might not be considered a useful addition to the questionnaire. On the other hand, other researchers might consider it worth exploring error correction preferences further by including more detailed items about HOW students like to be corrected – implicitly, explicitly, immediately, publicly, and so on. Although the questionnaire was restricted in length (since students can resist lengthy questionnaires as is typical for many style inventories), every attempt was made to include as many as possible of the dimensions identified in the literature in as far as they were meaningful and appropriate for the students in the current learning/research context. Students were asked to rate these items on a Likert scale from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree).

These quantitative data were triangulated with qualitative data obtained by means of comments which students included in an open space alongside each item. Although students' attention was drawn to this column and they were asked to add any comments they felt would help to explain the rating they gave, the learners were under no pressure to do so and completing this column was voluntary. At the end of the questionnaire, another space was left for students to make any further comments they felt were appropriate.

The questionnaires were distributed to students who completed them in their own time and returned them at their convenience (31 questionnaires were returned – 28 females and 3 males). Students' end-of-semester scores were obtained in the course of routine class assessment procedures. Questionnaires were numbered in the order received and the ratings were entered into SPSS and analysed for means. The end-of-semester scores were also entered into the database and correlated (Spearman's rho) with the ratings to investigate whether particular learning style preferences might be related to higher or lower grades.

For the qualitative analysis, the comments from the students' questionnaires were examined for content regarding common themes and informative insights.

Findings

According to the average ratings (where 5 indicated the strongest level of agreement and 1 indicated strong disagreement), the two style preferences with which the respondents most strongly agreed were:

- by speaking in the target language – item 3 (average rating = 4.5)
- by hearing the language spoken – item 4 (average rating = 4.5)

This suggests a reasonably strong tendency to an aural/oral style among these students. There was also quite strong agreement (in the agree to strongly agree range) that they preferred to learn:

- in a pleasant environment – item 11 (average rating = 4.4)
- by means of reading – item 1 (average rating = 4.2)
- in the company of others – item 10 (average rating = 4.2)
- by seeing – item 5 (average rating = 4.0)
- by moving around – item 6 (average rating = 4.0)

These popular preferences suggest that environment is important for these students who like to be able to move around and interact with others. They also tend towards a visual style and like to learn by reading.

The least popular preferences, with average ratings of less than 3.5, were learning:

- by memorization – item 12 (average rating = 2.8)
- by learning the rules – item 8 (average rating = 3.1)
- by concentrating on details – item 14 (average rating = 3.2)
- by being corrected – item 9 (average rating = 3.4)

These less popular items suggest that the students in this environment do not like traditional memorization and rule-driven learning. They also do not like excessive attention to detail or being corrected.

Perhaps more important than popularity is the question of what the relationship between stylistic preferences and effective learning is. It is, after all, possible that a popular style may not be effective in terms of learning outcomes, or that an unpopular style preference may in fact help lead to good results.

In fact, none of the style items (whether popular or unpopular) had a significant correlation (Spearman's rho) with final grades in the course. Indeed, the highest correlation (for "I like to learn language by speaking in the target language") was only .33, with the second highest (for "I like to learn language in order") only .26. According to the statistics, many of the correlations (11 out of the 17) were actually negative, indicating that preferences such as learning by memorization (item 12) were in fact negatively related (R = –.28) to higher scores.

The qualitative data, consisting of comments added to the questionnaire by students, provide additional support for the lack of correlation between stylistic preference and success in terms of final scores. The comments are very mixed in terms of stylistic preferences and appear to be highly individual. For example, with regard to a visual preference (item 5), Student 20 suggests that diagrams and pictures help to "make the knowledge more permanent," whereas Student 17 declares "not for me!" In regard to item 1, Student 15 expresses a preference for learning by reading since "it helps me to understand... also it develops memorizing, pronunciation, fluency and accuracy" but Student 13 is rather negative: "I know that reading contributes language learning. But personally I don't like reading." Reactions to item 6 on kinaesthetic preferences also varied considerably. On the one hand, Student 2 objects that a kinaesthetic style is not helpful "as an adult but in younger ages" although her classmate, Student 13, suggests that "when students and teachers are active language is learned better."

As this sample of comments illustrates, student feedback on style preferences was very varied, and there is really nothing to suggest that particular stylistic preferences may be contributing to student success in this context. This would therefore seem to lead to the conclusion, in agreement with the results of Bailey et al.'s (2000) study, that no particular style can be isolated as being important for success in language learning for these learners. Instead success rather depends on learners choosing a style which suits their own individual and contextual needs.

Considerations for pedagogy and directions for future research

While mindful of the small scale of this study, the quantitative and qualitative data obtained do seem to suggest that stylistic preferences appear to have little relationship to successful grades for these students. In other words, no one particular set of styles is more likely to lead to success

than any other, which confirms conclusions reached elsewhere in the literature (e.g., Nel, 2008; Reid, 1987).

The study reported in this chapter would thus seem to concur with Nel's (2008) conclusion that successful students employ a wide range of different styles, and it would therefore follow that encouraging students to adopt one style or another is unlikely to be helpful in terms of facilitating successful language learning. What, then, should teachers do in relation to this particular learner variable?

A possible answer to these questions might lie in a consideration of the case of Hiro, who did not take part in this particular exploratory study (see Griffiths, 2008b). Hiro was a 64-year-old Japanese man who decided to study English abroad since "I have worked hard all my life. Now I am going to have some fun!" He experienced difficulties, however, adapting his familiar traditional style of learning to fit in with the communicative teaching style favoured by his teacher. In order to cope with this problem, he frequently opted out of classroom activities and occupied himself with his notebook instead. This left his teacher nervous that he was perhaps discontented with her teaching.

As Director of Studies, I consulted both Hiro and his teacher. In fact, Hiro was a delightful student, who actually did well during his time in the class – his preferred style was not affecting his learning negatively. As for his teacher, once she was reassured that he was not dissatisfied, she was happy enough to allow him the freedom to work in the style with which he felt comfortable. This experience mirrors the conclusions reached by Zhou (2011, p. 74), who recommended that since students are likely to have a variety of learning styles, teachers should be prepared to "change their own styles and strategies and provide a variety of activities to meet the needs of different learning styles."

Interestingly, as his course progressed, Hiro did steadily become more 'communicative', more willing to join in the activities of the class, less threatened by the fear of losing face in front of younger classmates. This supports the idea that, although learning style may be a relatively fixed individual characteristic, successful students are able to be stylistically flexible, at least to some degree, and that they are able to adapt their style to the situation in which they find themselves (Oxford, 2011; Reid, 1987). Although, as Kawai (2010) points out, teachers tend to have preferred teaching styles, these may conflict with students' learning styles. Teachers should therefore be prepared to expand their styles as well as helping learners to leave their comfort zones and experiment with different styles, thereby enhancing their chances of achieving success in language learning.

Perhaps the main conclusion which should be inferred from the exploratory study reported on in this chapter is that students should be allowed some degree of individual freedom as there is clearly no one-size-fits-all learning style that can lead to success for specific individuals in particular contexts. As such, teachers should try to accommodate stylistic variety when planning and conducting their lessons to allow learners to employ a learning style that suits their preferences and is personally enjoyable for the individual. Such an environment will empower students "to equitably develop their individual learning styles" (Kinsella, 1995, p. 193). As Nel (2008) reminds us, style is one of the factors that ought to be considered when it comes to dealing with our students, and, as teachers, we cannot ignore the stylistic preferences of our learners. Students are unique individuals, and it is surely part of our professional responsibility to conduct our classes in such a way that each individual is able to reach the highest level of learning of which he or she may be capable.

Although the study reported here generally accords with conclusions reached elsewhere in the literature, it was relatively small-scale and limited in context. In order to further explore in what ways language learning styles might have a relationship to successful learning, it would be interesting to use the ILLS, perhaps adapted as a result of experience with this study or in order to better suit the target participants and/or situation, to investigate stylistic preferences with other groups of learners across a wider range of contexts. Since it was impossible to include all of the style dimensions listed in the literature review without creating an impossibly long instrument, others might like to include some of the dimensions left out of this study or which were underrepresented if they are deemed appropriate for other particular students or contexts.

In order to extend the insights gained from both quantitative and qualitative data, interviews with a purposive sample of participants might also be included to add further triangulation and reveal more nuanced differences across the learners. An especially interesting direction for future research might be to adopt a longitudinal rather than a cross-sectional approach to investigate the degree to which styles can change over time and contexts and the effect that this might have on learning success or otherwise. Other areas that remain underexplored include the relationship between learning styles and the use of technologies, and also the relationships among learning style and combinations of other key learner variables such as age, gender, culture, beliefs, different learning situations, and so on.

Appendix 11A Inventory of language learning styles (ILLS)

Please rate each of the following learning style preferences according to the scale:

5 = strongly agree; 4 = agree; 3 = neutral; 2 = disagree; 1 = strongly disagree.

	I like to learn language	Rating Comment
1	by reading	(literary style) (Fleming & Mills, 1992)
2	by writing things down	(graphic style) (Fleming & Mills, 1992)
3	by speaking in the target language	(oral style) (Reid, 1987; Fleming & Mills, 1992)
4	by hearing the target language spoken	(aural style) (Reid, 1987; Fleming & Mills, 1992)
5	by seeing, e.g., diagrams, pictures, etc.	(visual style) (Reid, 1987; Fleming & Mills, 1992)
6	by moving around	(kinaesthetic style) (Reid, 1987; Fleming & Mills, 1992)
7	by manipulating, e.g., models, cards, etc.	(tactile style) (Reid, 1987; Fleming & Mills, 1992)
8	by learning the rules	(rule-based style) (Willing, 1987)
9	by being corrected	(authority-based style) (Willing, 1987)
10	with others	(co-operative/social/interactive style) (Reid, 1987; Willing, 1987)
11	in an environment that I find pleasant	(environmental preferences) (Dunn et al., 1975)
12	by memorizing	(memory-dependent style) (Cohen et al., 2002)
13	by having what I need to learn clear and unambiguous	(ambiguity toleration) (Ely, 1995)
14	by concentrating on details	(field in/dependent/global/holistic) (Cohen et al., 2002)
15	by thinking before speaking or writing	(reflective style) (Cohen et al., 2002; Ehrman & Leaver, 2003)
16	in order	(sequential) (Ehrman & Leaver, 2003)
17	by playing games	(people oriented) (Willing, 1987)
18	Do you have any other preferences regarding how you learn language?	

NB: For anyone planning to use this survey in their own work, the notes included in the comments column are for researcher reference only and should be removed before being administered to students.

Suggested further reading

Dörnyei, Z. (2005). *Psychology of the language learner: Individual differences in second language acquisition.* Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Chapter 5 in this book contains a wealth of information about learning styles and about the basic conceptual issues involved. Dörnyei outlines the work of many of those who have researched and written in the area and discusses the practical implications of the concept of learning style preferences.

Nel, C. (2008). Learning style and good language learners. In C. Griffiths (Ed.), *Lessons from good language learners* (pp. 49–60). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

In this chapter, Nel deals with conceptual issues, outlines existing research and describes existing measurement instruments. She then addresses the question of whether there is a good language learner style before considering pedagogical implications and suggesting questions for further research.

Reid, J. (Ed.) (1995). *Learning styles in the ESL/EFL classroom.* Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.

This is a classic in the field which contains 15 chapters by many of the well-known names in the area. The appendices contain a wealth of survey material which might be useful for those wanting to conduct their own research.

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12

Metacognition: Awareness of Language Learning

Neil J Anderson

Introduction

The focus of this chapter is to examine the psychological principles of metacognition and identify how second language (L2) educators can increase learners' awareness of their metacognition. The chapter will present research findings to support the integration of metacognitive strategy awareness training within an L2 curriculum. Training learners to be more cognizant and reflective of how they engage in language learning facilitates the development of learner autonomy.

Metacognition: definitions, principles, key studies, and rationale

In the 35 years since Flavell first introduced the concept of metacognition (1976), there has been an explosion of research with numerous journal articles, book chapters, and books dedicated to exploring how metacognition impacts on teaching and learning (Anderson, 2002a, 2002b, 2007, 2008; Baker & Brown, 1984; Coutinho, Wiemer-Hastings, Skowronski, & Britt, 2005; Efklides, 2006, 2008; Efklides & Misailidi, 2010; Larkin, 2009; Prins, Veenman, & Elshout, 2006; Sánchez-Alonso & Vovides, 2007; Terrace & Son, 2009; Yzerbyt, Lories, & Dardenne, 1998). In 2006 a journal dedicated to exploring the issues of metacognition emerged, *Metacognition and Learning*. It is clear that metacognition is a topic of great interest across a variety of disciplines and for an increasing number of scholars within L2 teaching.

Flavell (1976, 1979, 1987) engaged in the early aspects of researching and identifying components of metacognition and identifying how metacognition enhances learning. According to Flavell:

> metacognition refers to one's knowledge concerning one's own cognitive processes and products or anything related to them, e.g., the learning-relevant properties of information or data. For example, I am engaging in metacognition (metamemory, metalearning, metattention, metalanguage, or whatever) if I notice that I am having more trouble learning A than B; if it strikes me that I should double check C before accepting it as fact.
>
> (1976, p. 232)

He proposed a model of cognitive monitoring (Flavell, 1979) that consists of four key elements: metacognitive knowledge, metacognitive experiences, goals (or tasks), and actions (or strategies).

Metacognitive knowledge refers to our acquired knowledge about our cognitive processes, knowledge that can be used to control thinking processes. Flavell further divides metacognitive knowledge into three categories: knowledge of person variables, task variables, and strategy variables. Knowledge about each of these three categories is central to being aware of one's cognitive processes. Person variables include your awareness of yourself as a learner and of your awareness of others as learners. The task variables category includes your awareness of the difficulty or ease of tasks. Knowledge of one's strategies plays a significant role in the ability to metacognize. Without the knowledge of the range of strategies available for addressing a learning challenge, learners do not have the strategic behaviours available to them to accomplish their learning goals and tasks.

Metacognitive experiences include those cognitive or affective experiences that we associate with learning. Goals are highlighted as the primary objective of a cognitive activity and actions are the specific steps we take to achieve those goals. When individuals have a greater awareness of these variables, they are in greater control of how they learn and how they react to successes and setbacks in learning.

Anderson (2002a, 2008) indicates that metacognition is the ability to make one's thinking visible. It is the ability to reflect on what one knows and does and what one does not know and does not do. Metacognition results in critical but healthy reflection and evaluation of one's thinking which may result in making specific changes in how one learns. Metacognition is not simply thinking back on an event, describing what happened and how one felt about it. It requires a cognitive awareness and engagement with the awareness of one's thinking. He subdivides metacognition into five primary components:

(1) preparing and planning for effective learning,
(2) deciding when to use particular strategies,
(3) knowing how to monitor strategy use,
(4) learning how to combine various strategies,
(5) evaluating the effectiveness of strategy use.

Metacognition is not any one of the five elements in isolation. It is the blending of all five into a kaleidoscopic view (Anderson, 2002b) that may be the most accurate representation of metacognition. Each of these five aspects interacts with the others. Metacognition is not a linear process moving from preparing and planning to evaluating. More than one metacognitive process may be happening at a time during a learning task. The shifting patterns help us understand the changeable nature of teaching and learning. Each time we look through the kaleidoscope we see different patterns. We can therefore see why metacognitive knowledge is so important to teaching and learning. No two class sessions are the same. The view of metacognition through the kaleidoscope may give us the most realistic view of what happens in teaching and learning.

Models of language learning strategies typically include metacognitive strategies (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990, 2011). Grabe (2009) suggests that there are not separate categories of cognitive and metacognitive strategies, but "rather, there are levels of metacognitive awareness that can consciously direct strategy use to support [learner] goals" (p. 224). Chamot and her colleagues (Chamot, Barnhardt, El-Dinary, & Robbins, 1999) outline a metacognitive model of strategic learning. In this volume, Cohen's Chapter 10 on strategies offers an excellent review of the literature and a current view of the interactions among strategies, learning styles, and motivation on tasks.

Healthy self-assessment is a central principle of a learner who is metacognitively aware and can be seen as being at the centre of a continuum with superficial self-assessment at one end and hypercritical self-assessment at the other. Students who are superficial in their self-assessment have a firm belief that their performance in class is nearly perfect and they do not feel challenged. These learners often overestimate their ability to perform well in an L2.

At the other end of the self-assessment continuum, we have learners who are hypercritical of their performance. They tell you all the reasons why they do not believe that they are performing well in the language. These learners often underestimate their performance. We want to help

both of these types of learners to engage in healthy, but critical self-assessment. In order for this to happen, they must be metacognitively aware of their learning processes.

Understanding and controlling cognitive processes may be one of the most essential skills that classroom teachers can develop in themselves and their students. Rather than focusing students' attention only on issues related to learning content, effective teachers structure a learning atmosphere where thinking about what happens in the learning process leads to stronger learning skills. Developing metacognitive awareness also leads to the development of stronger cognitive skills as well.

Dörnyei (2001) has identified four components of motivational teaching practice in the L2 classroom: creating the basic motivational conditions; generating initial motivation; maintaining and protecting motivation; finally, encouraging positive, retrospective self-evaluation (p. 29). The fourth component of his framework is especially important to our discussion on metacognition. Dörnyei encourages teachers to be consciously aware of how they serve as motivators of student learning. Specifically engaging learners in effective metacognitive reflection of the learning process and encouraging them to become competent self-assessors is a vital teacher role as a motivator.

Wenden (1999, 2001) makes a connection between metacognitive knowledge and learner beliefs. Our beliefs about learning certainly influence our thinking about how we can learn better. Others have conducted research on learner beliefs and the findings support the connections between one's beliefs about self and L2 learning (Cotterall, 1999; Horwitz, 1999; Mori, 1999; Sakui & Gaies, 1999; Yang, 1999). Dörnyei and Ushioda (2009) provide an additional line of investigation in their volume on motivation, language identity, and the L2 self. The beliefs that a learner carries within him/herself are part of the knowledge base that influences learning. (See Mercer's Chapter 2 for a discussion of self-related beliefs.)

It is important to highlight the difference between cognition and metacognition. Cognition is our thinking, while metacognition is our thinking about the thinking. Thinking that a learning task is difficult is an act of cognition. Doing something about our thinking of that difficult learning task is an act of metacognition. This suggests that cognition must precede metacognition. The two acts are however closely tied together. Thus, it is challenging at times to actually separate them. If we use our thinking in strategic ways to accomplish learning goals, we are being metacognitively aware of our goals and assessing achievement of those goals.

The examination of a few key research studies on metacognition can help us see the differences between cognition and metacognition. One such study is from Kruger and Dunning (1999). In their study, these researchers highlight the centrality of metacognitive skills and provide a rationale for why we need to include a strong metacognitive awareness training component in educational contexts. Kruger and Dunning's (1999) suggest that,

> when people are incompetent in the strategies they adopt to achieve success and satisfaction, they suffer a dual burden: Not only do they reach erroneous conclusions and make unfortunate choices, but their incompetence robs them of the ability to realize it.
>
> (p. 1121)

They tested their hypothesis in four separate studies. The first study addressed the domain of humour. Subjects had to rate the humour in a series of jokes. Their ratings were compared with the ratings of professional comedians. The second study compared the subjects' perceived and actual abilities to engage in logical reasoning. Subjects completed a 20-item logical reasoning test and then were asked to rate themselves on their perceived test performance and their perceived abilities in logical reasoning. The third study was an English grammar knowledge test. Subjects completed a 20-item English grammar test followed by a self-assessment of their ability to recognize grammar errors by indicating how they thought they would compare in their test performance in comparison with their peers. A second phase was added to the third study. Researchers invited subjects in the bottom quartile and in the top quartile to participate in a follow-up study. Subjects were asked to evaluate the tests of five of their peers and asked to evaluate how competent they felt their peers were in completing the grammar test items. The final study was a replication of the second study on logical reasoning. This study provided a logical reasoning training component. Following the completion of the training packet and the test, subjects participated in a session in which they verbalized for the researchers which items on the logical reasoning test they thought they had answered correctly and which ones they thought they had not answered correctly.

The results from all four of these studies (Kruger & Dunning, 1999) support the hypothesis that subjects overestimate their abilities, but especially those who perform the poorest on the tests were unaware of their lack of abilities in logical reasoning. When subjects are provided with some training on the skills being tested, those who perform well tend to underestimate their performance, while those who perform

poorly continue to overestimate their performance and perpetuate their belief that they are good at the domain being tested. Based on the results of these four studies, part of the key to improving learning is the combination of feedback to the learner and training on the skills being evaluated. These data provide empirical support for the self-assessment continuum described earlier. There are learners who overestimate (superficial self-assessors) and those who underestimate (hypercritical self-assessors) their actual language abilities.

Kruger and Dunning continued this line of research with other colleagues and continue to find similar results (Dunning, Johnson, Ehrlinger, & Kruger, 2003; Ehrlinger & Dunning, 2003). As will be illustrated below, a similar research format has been conducted with L2 learners and reported in this chapter.

Metacognition and the language skills

A number of research studies have been conducted on the impact of metacognitive knowledge training on L2 learners. In this section we will review one key study for each of the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Listening

Vandergrift and Goh (2011) provide a theoretical foundation for a metacognitive approach to L2 listening instruction. They want learners to be more aware of the variety of listening strategies available to them and to use those strategies in real-time listening. They suggest that learners be more metacognitively aware during planning, monitoring, and evaluating of the listening task. The framework of metacognition they present focuses on the learners' experience, knowledge, and strategies for managing learning.

Speaking

Zhang and Goh (2006) examined student awareness of strategies while involved in both listening and speaking contexts. Their study included 278 Singaporean students and investigated the knowledge and use of 40 listening and speaking strategies. The researchers divided appropriate strategies into four categories: use-focused strategies, form-focused learning strategies, comprehension strategies, and communication strategies. The results showed that the learners used more use-focused strategies even though they understood that strategies in all four categories were useful. Half of the learners identified 32 of the 40 strategies as useful, but they reported using frequently only 13 of the strategies. The

researchers suggest that this finding provides evidence that the learners are not yet confident strategy users. This suggests that metacognitive awareness training would be an appropriate addition to a language learning curriculum.

Reading

Zhang (2010) provides a current perspective on the value of metacognitive awareness and L2 reading. He reports a study conducted with 20 learners in China who were asked to read two expository texts of 500 words each followed by a 20-minute interview designed to gather insights into the readers' motivation, self-efficacy, emotions, and attitudes while reading.

The results focus on three categories: knowledge about self, knowledge about cognitive tasks, and knowledge about strategies for effective reading. Successful readers are more aware of themselves as readers. Their motivation, confidence, self-efficacy, and interest in English were significantly different from that of the less successful readers. Successful readers are aware of how to make meaning from what was read, while the less successful readers focused more on issues of grammar and vocabulary while reading.

Based on these findings, Zhang (2010) makes three recommendations for L2 teachers. First, raise students' awareness of metacognitive knowledge. Second, teachers need to reinforce the students' knowledge about the learning tasks they are engaged in. Finally, students need knowledge about effective strategies they can employ while reading.

Writing

Anderson (2007) illustrates ways of raising learners' metacognitive awareness to improve L2 writing. He encourages teachers to engage in the frequently used research tool of think-aloud protocols in the writing classroom to get learners to make their thinking visible through the process of writing. An 11-step pedagogical outline is suggested. The teacher's modelling of the cognitive and metacognitive processes used while writing is the highlight of the pedagogical procedure. Scaffolding the writing and the thinking processes that good writers use is an appropriate way for teachers to assist struggling L2 writers.

Example of current research

The current research study reported here was sparked by the Kruger and Dunning research (1999). Their research suggests that it is difficult for

learners to self-assess in areas where they are weak because they lack the ability to see what they have been asked to self-assess.

Two research questions were addressed. First, do L2 learners who score in the upper and lower quartiles on an integrated language skills test differ significantly from each other on their self-assessments of their performance? Next, do L2 learners who score in the upper and lower quartiles on an oral skills test differ significantly from each other on their self-assessments of their performance? A hypothesis is tested to determine whether learners in the upper quartile underestimate their performance while learners in the lower quartile overestimate their performance.

Data were collected from 992 English as a foreign language (EFL) learners in Costa Rica from 13 levels of language proficiency. The 992 were then divided into quartiles for the analyses. The quartile cut scores were established to include all learners of the same score. Therefore, we do not have a perfect division into quarters. Four scores were collected from learners in these two groups: the course final exam score on an integrated skills test, a self-assessment of the course final exam score on that test, the course final exam scores on an oral skills test, and, finally, a self-assessment of the course final exam score on that test. After establishing the cut scores for each level, we evaluated the estimated scores and the actual scores for 545 learners (290 learners in the upper quartile and 255 in the lower quartile) on the integrated skills test and from 488 learners (252 learners in the upper quartile and 236 in the lower quartile) on the oral skills tests. (Note: 57 of the learners failed to provide their surveys of their estimated scores on the oral skills test and thus were dropped from the analysis.)

Learners took their final exams on the integrated skills test in their individual classrooms and were monitored by their teachers. Upon completing the test, each learner was given a self-assessment questionnaire. Using the test paper, learners were asked to go back over each of the questions on the exam and provide a self-assessment of their performance. They were asked to identify for each item on the test whether they thought they had got the item correct, incorrect, or they were not sure.

Following the self-assessment on the integrated skills test, students participated in a one-on-one oral interview. Following the administration of the oral skills test, learners were provided with a self-assessment questionnaire which asked for their judgement of their performance on the test. Table 12.1 contains the oral skills self-assessment form.

Table 12.1 Self-assessment instructions for the oral interview

Oral interview	**Self-assessment**	
	Task #1	**Task #2**
1. Fluency	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
2. Accuracy/Grammar	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
3. Accuracy/Pronunciation	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
4. Content and Vocabulary	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4

Notes: Provide a self-assessment of your performance on the final oral interview for each of the two tasks. How well do you think you did on each of the following parts: fluency, grammar, pronunciation, and content and vocabulary?

The data were analysed through ANOVA. The results are reported in Table 12.2 for the integrated skills test and in Table 12.3 for the oral skills test.

Therefore, in response to the first research question (do L2 learners who score in the upper and lower quartiles on an oral skills test differ significantly from each other on their self-assessments of their performance?), we see that there is a statistically significant difference between the perceived and actual scores of learners on this integrated skills test. Learners who score in the upper quartile of an integrated skills test underestimated their performance on the test while those in the lower quartile overestimated their performance.

As noted by the *p* column in Table 12.2, for all 13 levels there is a significant difference between the self-assessment scores and the actual scores for learners in the upper and the lower quartiles. For the upper quartile, we note that in every case these learners underestimated their performance on the integrated skills test. Learners in the lower quartile overestimated their performance on the integrated skills test.

As noted by the *p* column in Table 12.3, we have mixed results across the 13 levels on the oral skills test. For 7 of the 13 levels (54 per cent), there is a statistically significant difference between the ways that learners in the upper quartile and those in the lower quartile self-assess their performance on the oral skills test. For the remaining six levels (46 per cent), there is no statistically significant difference between the self-assessments and the actual performance on the oral skills test.

Therefore, in response to the second research question (do L2 learners who score in the upper and lower quartiles on an oral skills test differ significantly from each other on their self-assessments of their

Table 12.2 Difference in integrated skills test: Actual scores versus estimated scores

Level	*k*	Upper		Lower		Difference				
		Estimated score	Actual score	Estimated score	Actual score	Upper	Lower	*df*	*F*	*p*
1	22	18.64	20.17	16.46	15.3	−1.53	1.16	81	27.43	< 0.001
2	30	24.68	28.76	21.83	22.04	−4.08	−0.22	44	10.36	< 0.001
3	28	25	27.06	21.88	20.74	−2.06	1.14	34	9.18	< 0.001
4	27	22.47	25.17	22.26	19.65	−2.70	2.61	69	38.27	< 0.001
5	70	61	62.2	55.58	44.92	−1.2	10.66	25	13.52	< 0.001
6	28	24.95	27.43	21.56	21.38	−2.47	0.19	79	10.92	< 0.001
7	28	23.88	26.95	20.75	18.59	−3.08	2.17	15	10.78	< 0.001
8	30	26.24	28.49	23.32	22.27	−2.26	1.04	43	17.32	< 0.001
9	27	22.14	26.04	21.63	20.96	−3.90	0.67	14	8.51	< 0.01
10	28	23.53	26.53	21.26	18.24	−2.49	3.02	37	31.22	< 0.001
11	30	26	28.43	20.6	17.32	−2.43	3.28	32	19.77	< 0.001
12	25	20.94	24.77	19.58	18.90	−3.83	0.69	27	16.57	< 0.001
13	30	26.67	29.47	23.87	23.18	−2.80	0.69	32	10.40	< 0.001

Table 12.3 Difference in oral skills test: Actual scores versus estimated scores

Level	Upper		Lower		Difference				
	Estimated score	Actual score	Estimated score	Actual score	Upper	Lower	*df*	*F*	*p*
1	23.0	28.17	21.25	25.2	−5.17	−3.94	58	8.28	< 0.01
2	24.18	29.68	21.83	25.26	−5.5	−3.43	44	16.55	< 0.001
3	24.26	29.05	20.5	24.81	−4.78	−4.31	27	5.21	< 0.05
4	24.81	29.14	22.15	27.62	−4.33	−5.47	61	1.96	ns
5	21.14	27.79	20.67	24.67	−6.64	−4.0	22	6.63	< 0.01
6	24.27	28.83	22.59	26.64	−4.56	−4.05	68	8.59	< 0.01
7	26.25	29.25	22.63	28.62	−3.0	−6.0	16	1.41	ns
8	23.28	28.56	21.95	24.16	−5.28	−2.21	47	36.12	< 0.001
9	22.14	29.43	23.38	27.38	−7.28	−4.0	9	2.58	ns
10	24.68	27.95	21.84	25.63	−3.26	−3.78	35	3.10	ns
11	25.63	29.13	21.8	26.2	−3.5	−4.4	25	.73	ns
12	25.45	28.19	24.33	27.08	−2.75	−2.75	26	.05	ns
13	25.33	29.83	23.6	26.47	−4.49	−2.86	37	4.69	< 0.05

performance?), we respond with a cautionary 'no'. As can be seen in the difference column for the data reported in Table 12.3, the data from all 13 levels show that learners in both the upper quartile and in the lower quartile underestimated their performance. We see here a different pattern emerging related to self-assessment.

This research points out that learners at varying levels of language proficiency find it difficult to correctly estimate their language abilities on both an integrated skills test as well as an oral skills test. Learners who score in the lower quartile of an integrated skills test have a tendency to overestimate their actual abilities and those learners who score in the upper quartile of the exam have a tendency to underestimate their actual abilities. These data provide empirical support for the self-assessment continuum. There are learners who overestimate (superficial self-assessors) and those who underestimate (hypercritical self-assessors) their actual language abilities.

Perhaps the reason why learners did not maintain this pattern of over- and under-estimating their performance on the oral skills test is because there were finer-tuned criteria for making the self-assessment. On the self-assessment task for performance on the oral skills test, learners had to do more than simply indicate whether they thought they had scored correctly on a discrete test item. They had to think about their range of performance on four separate scales: fluency, grammar, pronunciation, and content and vocabulary. Perhaps because the nature of the self-assessment task had changed, all the learners were underestimating their performance.

These data point to the importance for language programmes to embed in the curriculum a metacognitive awareness training component to help learners narrow the gap between their perceived and actual abilities in language learning. Assisting learners in becoming more metacognitively aware should provide benefits to both the learner and the learning process for everyone involved.

Future directions for research and considerations for pedagogy

The future for research into metacognition and L2 learning is rich. Two areas of specific research will enhance our understanding and continue to move us forward in our efforts to improve L2 teaching and learning. The first, as others have pointed out (Dörnyei, 2005), is strengthening the connections between metacognitive knowledge and learner beliefs. Although Wenden (1999) introduced the idea over a decade ago, no

follow-up has occurred to explicitly make the connections between these two important ideas.

Second, the results of research studies on metacognition indicate that less proficient learners are generally not metacognitively aware. Studies should be conducted to determine if consistent and effective integration of a metacognitive awareness training component into regular classroom instruction can increase the less proficient learner's awareness of their learning process. These should include delayed studies to see if immediate benefits of such training are retained over time.

Now, let us consider specifically what the classroom teacher can do to develop stronger metacognitive awareness in L2 learners.

First, teachers can engage learners in a structured self-assessment task following the administration of classroom tests and tasks. When a test (diagnostic, progress, or achievement) or a classroom quiz is administered, as well as prior to the submission of a written essay, ask the students to review their performance on each of the test items or writing assignment.

As an example, assume that a midterm essay has just been written on which the learners will be assessed on their writing skills. Learners should be given the scoring rubric when they are given the writing assignment. Teachers should verify that the writers understand each of the criteria against which they will be evaluated. Prior to submission of the essay, give the learners a self-assessment like the one in Appendix 12A, based on a scoring rubric from Reid (1993, p. 237).

Through this type of activity, teachers can begin to make students more aware of the connections between the scoring criteria for the essay and their actual writing ability. This type of self-assessment activity also allows teachers to help learners become more aware of their strengths and weaknesses in self-assessment.

One additional pedagogical activity that teachers can use to help students become more metacognitively aware of their learning is a metacognitive journal. The use of this type of journal is one useful way to engage learners in reflecting on their thinking. The key to making the journal an effective metacognitive tool is in the types of prompts that you ask the students to respond to. Appendix 12B contains examples of a few writing prompts for the language skills of listening, speaking, and reading that teachers could consider using to engage learners in metacognitive reflection following a class language task. The key to successful implementation of classroom instruction for metacognitive awareness is explicitly talking about the cognitive processes that learners are engaged in while completing learning tasks.

Teachers must be consistent in their reminders of the importance of being metacognitively aware during learning.

Conclusion

If we want metacognitively aware learners, we must have metacognitively aware teachers. When learners engage in reflecting upon their learning, they become better prepared to make conscious decisions about what they can do to improve themselves as language users. Strong metacognitive skills empower learners. The empowerment results not only in improved learning, but also will transfer to other aspects of the student's life.

Appendix 12A Self-assessment of writing assignment

Name:

Part A

Review your essay using the scoring criteria below and provide a self-assessment of your performance. How well do you think you did for each of the following?

Introduction					
Informative title and lead-in	1	2	3	4	5
Clear thesis statement	1	2	3	4	5
TOTAL _____ (out of 10)					
Support					
Specific examples and details	4	8	12	16	20
Connections between ideas	2	4	6	8	10
TOTAL _____ (out of 30)					
Organization					
Transitions	2	4	6	8	10
Paragraph unity and coherence	2	4	6	8	10
TOTAL _____ (out of 20)					

Style					
Sentence structure	1	2	3	4	5
Vocabulary	1	2	3	4	5
Grammar	1	2	3	4	5
Mechanics and spelling	1	2	3	4	5
TOTAL _____ (out of 20)					
Rhetorical Stance					
Purpose clear throughout	2	4	6	8	10
Audience expectations met	2	4	6	8	10
TOTAL _____ (out of 20)					

After the essays have been scored by the teacher, return them to the students along with the self-assessment sheet. Then ask them to complete Part B of the self-assessment form.

Part B (to be completed after receiving the essay has been scored by the teacher)

My perceived score was _____ / 100 points

My actual score was _____ / 100 points.

I _____ my score on this essay.

A. overestimated (I estimated my score would be more than ____ points.)

B. correctly estimated (I estimated my score would be between ____ points.)

C. underestimated (I estimated my score would be lower than ____ points.)

In preparation for writing the next essay, I will do the following things to improve my score:

Appendix 12B Metacognitive journal prompts

Listening

Based on the listening passage we just completed, respond to the following reflective questions:

1. What strategies did you use while listening?
2. Were those strategies effective in helping you to understand the passage?
3. What could you do differently on the next passage to improve your listening?

Speaking

You will participate in a speaking assignment during class today related to identifying advantages and disadvantages of using public transportation. Take a few minutes to plan what you are going to say and what strategies you will use to keep the conversation moving. As you engage in the conversation, monitor how the reality of the conversation and your plan are similar and different. After the conversation evaluate how successful you were of expressing your ideas and to accomplishing the task of keeping the conversation moving.

Reading

For the reading passage and comprehension questions we completed during class today,

1. How difficult was the reading for you? 1 2 3 4

Please explain why you gave the passage this difficulty rating.

2. How difficult were the comprehension questions? 1 2 3 4

Please explain why you gave the comprehension questions this difficulty rating.

3. In what ways have you improved as a reader over the past few weeks?

Suggested further reading

Efklides, A., & Misailidi, P. (2010). *Trends and prospects in metacognition research.* New York: Springer.

This book provides a current perspective on the basic research in metacognition and the developmental and educational implications of metacognition. Because it is not related to the teaching and learning of languages, it provides language educators a perspective of metacognition beyond our specific context of language learning and teaching.

Mokhtari, K., & Sheorey, R. (Eds.). (2008). *Reading strategies of first- and second-language learners: See how they read.* Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon Publishers.

This book provides examples of how metacognition plays a key role in first and second language reading. As part of the repertoire of reading strategies, metacognition is central to success in reading inside and outside of the classroom.

Vandergrift, L., & Goh, C. C. M. (2011). *Teaching and learning second language listening: Metacognition in action.* Clifton, NJ: Routledge.

This book provides the theoretical foundation that L2 teachers need to fully implement a metacognitive approach to L2 listening in the classroom. It will also propel our profession forward in significant ways to help learners become more efficient listeners.

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13

Goal Orientations: Three Perspectives on Motivation Goal Orientations

Lindy Woodrow

Introduction

Motivation is the force that propels an individual's engagement with a given course of action. The notion of goal orientations plays a central role in models of language learning that include motivation. Typically, in language learning theorizing, a goal orientation is viewed as a reason, or a cluster of reasons for learning the language.

This chapter will start by defining goal orientations from language learning and educational psychological perspectives. It will discuss goal orientations in learning a foreign language and then present three of the most important conceptualizations of goal orientations in current motivation research. This is followed by the presentation of a research project that uses quantitative research methodology typical of goal orientation research. Finally, the need for further research into goal orientations relevant to language learners and how positive goal orientations can be promoted at a classroom and teacher level are considered.

Background literature

Goal orientations have been investigated by motivation researchers within different theoretical frameworks. In this chapter, three conceptualizations of goal orientations are considered: first, from the perspective of Robert Gardner and his socio-educational model of second language acquisition; second, from a self-determination theory perspective (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Noels, 2001) and third from an educational psychology achievement goal perspective (Ames & Archer, 1988).

Motivational goal orientations may be broadly defined as reasons for learning a language. The research literature covers a vast number of possible reasons for learning a language, for instance an individual may be learning a foreign language to get a better job, to find a spouse or because of an intense identification with the target language group (Cid, Granena, & Tragant, 2009). Gardner defines orientations as categories of reasons: "An orientation is an inclination, the underlying force directing the choice of the particular reason" (Gardner, 2010, p. 17). To arrive at these clusters of reasons usually the researcher will gather self-reported reasons for studying a language and then subject these to a statistical factor analysis which will suggest clusters of variables that are related to each other (see, e.g., Cid et al., 2009; Clément & Kruidenier, 1983).

Goal orientations are important in any model of learning because they may be viewed as the impetus for motivated behaviour. They can be the source of sustained effort and achievement. In the conceptualization of motivational orientations, the relationship between the orientation and the learning outcome is usually highlighted. Thus, in Gardner's theorizing, an integrative orientation (identification with the target language group) is viewed as being one of the characteristics of successful language learning; in self-determination theory, an intrinsic motivational orientation (interest in language learning) is viewed as being most desirable, and in goal orientation theory a task or mastery goal orientation (interest in a learning goal) is viewed as superior. It is important to note that orientations do not in themselves indicate the level of motivation, engagement or effort, but represent an aspect of a motivational profile. So, successful learners are likely to have intrinsic motivation, but it is possible for a learner to have an intrinsic goal orientation but not to engage in sustained effort. Current thinking in education research suggests that learners may hold multiple goals that previously were considered incompatible, such as task goals and performance goals (Pintrich, 2000).

Research into second language motivation started in earnest with the work done by Robert Gardner in 1959 (Gardner & Lambert, 1959, 1972). Gardner has made a substantial contribution to knowledge in this field through his model of language learning. This model has been developed and revised over four decades and is labelled the socio-educational model of second language acquisition (Gardner, 1985b, 2010). Gardner is perhaps most well known for his conceptualization of motivation orientations. In his initial study, he hypothesized a dichotomous construct of goal orientations reflecting instrumental and integrative reasons for learning a language. Broadly speaking, an instrumental orientation

reflects pragmatic reasons for learning a language, for example to get a better job, while an integrative orientation reflects identification, to some degree, with the target language group or culture. This distinction proved to be very attractive to researchers and there are a vast number of research projects that have focused on these. However, many of these studies, according to Gardner, misconstrue the scope and role of orientations in language learning (Gardner, 2010).

In Gardner's research, orientations are measured using the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) (Gardner, 1985a). This scale includes 19 subscales measuring variables concerning language learning. Orientations were measured using 7-point Likert-scale type items. This is a scale that reflects points varying from positive (e.g., strongly agree) to negative (e.g., strongly disagree). In the AMTB, four items referred to integrative orientations and four items referred to instrumental orientations. The original scale also included a dichotomously scored (yes/no) item which identified orientations either as instrumental or integrative. There have been a large number of research projects that have used all or parts of the AMTB (Gardner, Tremblay, & Masgoret, 1997).

Gardner's original research focused on learners of French located in the bilingual setting of Canada. This is a very particular language-learning situation. The learners were aiming for native speaker competence and had plenty of opportunity for immersion in the target language. In other language learning settings, native speaker competence is generally not the goal and there is little chance for immersion in the language and culture. This is the basis for the main criticisms of Gardner's theorizing and has lead to much debate since the 1990s (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; Dörnyei, 1990; Oxford & Shearin, 1994).

The most controversial aspect of Gardner's work in motivation is the concept of integrativeness. There has been much discussion concerning the terms integrativeness, integrative motive, and integrative orientation. Essentially, they all reflect some degree of identification with, and interest in, the culture of the target language group. The concept does not appear in any other motivational theorizing, for example, education. One of the main areas of contention is that integrativeness (or integrative motivation or integrative orientation) applies to all language learners. For example, it is questionable whether learners in foreign language settings learning a language as a compulsory school subject can be motivated by issues relating to the target language culture (Dörnyei, 2003). In Gardner's latest book, he defends this position by describing an integratively motivated individual as having "an open and accepting

orientation toward the other language community ... favourable attitudes toward the language learning situation and a heightened motivation to learn the language" (Gardner, 2010, p. 202). For further insights into this discussion, Au presents an early critique of Gardner's work (Au, 1988), Masgoret and Gardner (2003) present a meta-analysis of studies conducted by Gardner and his associates that focus on the issues of motivation and orientations, and Gardner (2010) provides an in-depth response to criticism of his theorizing.

Subsequent to Gardner's initial work, studies have identified numerous orientations reported by language learners in different settings. For example, Clément and Kruidenier (1983) found four common orientations: instrumental, friendship, travel, and knowledge. Yashima and colleagues put forward the idea of international posture as a possible orientation. This orientation reflects an interest in international issues and identification with an international community (Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide, & Shimizu, 2004). Noels and colleagues investigated second language learning orientations in light of Deci and Ryan's (1985) conceptualization of intrinsic and extrinsic orientations. This is discussed further below.

Self-determination theory (SDT) is one of the most influential theories of motivation across a number of disciplines, from management to sport. This theory was put forward by Deci and Ryan (1985). They define self-determination as "the process of utilizing one's will" (Deci, 1980, p. 26). This framework has been applied to language learning settings by Noels and colleagues (Noels, Clément, & Pelletier, 2001; Noels, Pelletier, Clément, & Vallerand, 2000, 2003). In the SDT framework, a distinction is made between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. An extrinsic orientation, like Gardner's instrumental orientation, reflects a utilitarian or pragmatic reason for learning the language, while an intrinsic orientation refers to pleasure derived from engaging in the activity. However, it differs from Gardner's concept in that, according to Noels, self-determination is represented as a continuum with amotivation at one end representing non-self-determination, and intrinsic orientation at the other end representing self-determination. Extrinsic orientations are multifaceted and are located between the two ends of the continuum (Noels, 2001, p. 49).

Within the SDT framework, extrinsic motivation refers to external reasons for learning the language. These are classified as external, introjected, identified, and integrated regulation. External regulation refers to a reason, such as, learning a language to get a job. An introjected regulation may be informed by perceived rewards or punishments, such as,

learning the language to gain respect from others. An identified regulation refers to the perceived value and usefulness of the activity, such as, learning the language because it will be generally useful for one's future. An integrated regulation refers to motivational orientation that is assimilated with given goals, for example, wanting to be perceived as a cultured person (Noels, et al., 2003; Ryan & Deci, 2000). In SDT, an intrinsic orientation is classified as being driven by: a desire for knowledge (intrinsic–knowledge), a feeling of achievement (intrinsic–accomplishment) or by enjoyment experienced (intrinsic–stimulation) (Noels, 2001).

In research that focuses on extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, Likert-type scales are generally used to measure orientations. Noels developed the Language Learning Orientations Scale (Noels et al., 2000) which comprised 21 items divided into seven subscales measuring the following orientations: amotivation, external regulation, introjected motivation, identified regulation, intrinsic motivation–knowledge, intrinsic motivation–accomplishment, and intrinsic motivation stimulation.

Noels and colleagues (2001) compared integrative orientations to the STD framework and found that integrative motivation was linked to self-determined forms of motivation and was similar to an intrinsic orientation. However, they claim that the two orientations should not be equated as an integrative orientation is more aligned with issues of social identity and target group contact (Noels, 2005). Another study found integrative and intrinsic orientations to be similar but statistically distinct in a sample of Korean EFL learners (Pae, 2008).

Until recently most motivation theorizing in language learning has focused on the unique characteristics inherent in language learning. For example, there are strong connections between language learning and identity as is evident from the chapters in this volume (see Morita, Chapter 3; Ushioda, Chapter 5). However, in many contexts a foreign language is learned, and taught, as a regular school subject. This is particularly true of English, with many students studying English from primary school through to university. For example, in China students study English throughout their education. They study English at high school (sometimes even from primary school). They need to pass an English test to enter university, to graduate from their first degree, to enter a postgraduate programme, and to gain employment. In such cases, the focus is on classroom learning, and it seems logical to consider theorizing in motivation from mainstream education outside the field of language learning.

One of the prevalent motivational frameworks in mainstream school education is goal orientation theory. This theory addresses orientations in classroom learning. Implicit within this theory is the possibility of manipulating student goal orientations with the view of improving achievement. The two main orientations within this framework are task goals (also known as mastery or learning goals) and performance goals (also known as ego goals) (Ames & Archer, 1988). A task goal reflects an interest in learning and is akin to intrinsic motivation. So, a learner with a task goal orientation would be motivated by learning tasks and achievement for its own sake. The focus of the task goal oriented learner is on developing competence. A performance goal reflects a comparison to others (Urdan, Ryan, Anderman, & Gheen, 2002). The focus of a performance goal oriented learner is on displaying competence. In recent theorizing, a performance orientation has been divided to reflect positive and negative perspectives. A performance-approach goal orientation reflects a desire to outperform others, and a performance-avoid goal orientation reflects a desire to avoid failure or appearing ignorant (Smith, Duda, Allen, & Hall, 2002). Research in this area consistently finds that task goals are related to a positive motivational profile (Midgley, 2002). In language learning, Woodrow proposed a model of adaptive learning and found that students who reported a mastery goal orientation were more likely to have high self-efficacy, use metacognitive language learning strategies and to have a high level of English speaking skills (Woodrow, 2006). As with the previously discussed orientations, task and performance goals are usually measured using a quantitative Likert-type scale, for example, the Patterns of Adaptive Learning Scale (Midgley et al., 1997).

Research into orientations has, to date, been mostly quantitative based on self-reports. Some studies followed a pattern of eliciting reasons for learning a language from learners using open questions and then used this as the basis for developing instrumentation (Cid et al., 2009; Noels, 2001). Cid et al. developed the Foreign Language Attitudes and Goals Survey (FLAGS) based on qualitative data.

Sample study

In order to focus on goal orientations, data were taken from a larger study that presented a model of adaptive learning for English for academic purposes (EAP) learners in Australia (Woodrow, 2008). Adaptive learning refers to motivational characteristics of successful learners. High achieving learners tended to have a profile that included

internal type motivational orientations (task goals), high effort, high self-efficacy, low anxiety and use of metacognitive learning strategies.

The participants in this study were enrolled on intensive English courses prior to entering Australian universities for full-time study. This group of learners is very large and very specific. Reflecting globalization and the emergence of English as a lingua franca, a degree from a university in an English-speaking country is highly prized in many regions. The number of international students at universities in the USA, UK, Canada, and Australia increases annually and represents a substantial percentage of the overall student body in many universities. As such, there is a need to investigate the learning characteristics of this emerging and important group of language learners.

The methodological approach used in this study may be viewed as typical of research into goal orientations. Although the study presented here is small, it represents the essence of methodological approaches of larger more complicated studies, such as those that use structural equation modelling. The research is cross-sectional. This means that data were collected on one occasion and thus present a snapshot of the motivational orientation of the participants at the time of data collection. The participants completed a questionnaire about their orientations and took part in an assessment of oral performance.

The data analysis provided a description of the orientations of the cohort and examined the relationships between the orientations and language performance.

This study has three aims. First, to find out which goal orientations are reported by the group of EAP learners; second, to find out which goals, if any, are related to English language learning and third, to see whether the learners report single or multiple goals.

The study used goal orientations from theorizing in language learning and education. The language learning perspective used Gardner's integrative and instrumental orientations as measured by the AMTB (Gardner, 1985a). The education perspective used task and performance goals as measured by the Patterns of Adaptive Learning Survey (PALS). The performance goals were divided into performance-approach and performance-avoid goals (Midgley et al., 1997). Table 13.1 presents examples of the items used to measure the orientations. Language performance was assessed using an International English Language Testing Service (IELTS) type oral assessment.

The participants were 275 students studying EAP prior to entering Australian universities for undergraduate or postgraduate degrees. While the cohort included students from more than 20 countries, the majority

Table 13.1 Examples of items used to measure goal orientations

Type of orientation and item				
Task goal orientation				
An important reason why I study English is because I like to learn new things.				
Performance-approach goal orientation				
Doing better than other students in this class is important to me.				
Performance-avoid goal orientation				
One of my main goals is to avoid looking like I can't do my English language learning tasks.				
Integrative goal orientation				
Studying English is important to me because I will be able to participate more freely in the activities of other cultural groups.				
Instrumental goal orientation				
Studying English is important because I think it will be useful in getting a good job.				
Measured on 5-point Likert scale:				
1	2	3	4	5
not at all true of me		Somewhat true of me		very true of me

of the students came from Confucian heritage countries such as China, Japan, and Korea.

The participants were given a questionnaire that assessed their motivational profiles. The goal orientations were measured using 5-point Likert-scale items based on how true or untrue the statements were to the participant. The data were entered into SPSS and analysed descriptively in the first instance. The items and descriptive statistics are presented in Table 13.2.

The results indicated that most important orientations reported by the learners were instrumental, integrative, and task goal orientations. It is interesting to note that both educational orientations and language learning orientations were reported. This shows that classroom-based educational orientations are relevant to learners of language. This cohort reported instrumental goal orientations the most. This is understandable as the participants all intended to continue their studies and so English played an important role in their future.

In order to investigate the relationship between the orientations and language performance, a correlation analysis was performed. The correlations are presented in Table 13.3.

Table 13.2 Numbers, means, and standard deviations for goal orientations

Item	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Task goal orientation			
Want to get better at English	275	4.41	0.76
Like tasks can learn even if mistakes	273	3.93	0.96
Interested in English work	275	3.81	1.07
Like to learn new things	275	3.70	1.19
Like tasks really need to think	273	3.41	1.00
Performance-approach goal orientation			
Feel successful if do better than others	270	3.21	1.32
Want to do better than others	274	2.84	1.34
Feel good only one to answer teacher	274	2.81	1.43
Other students think good at English	274	2.24	1.11
Like to show teacher better than others	275	2.15	1.13
Performance-avoid goal orientation			
Important avoid embarrassing self	266	2.96	1.16
Avoid looking like can't do tasks	273	2.78	1.25
Do not look like can't speak English	273	2.63	1.18
Others won't think poor at English	272	2.58	1.21
Avoid looking stupid	273	2.06	1.14
Integrative orientation			
To be at ease with native speakers	274	4.46	0.74
Meet and converse varied people	275	4.36	0.86
Participate cultural activities	275	4.09	0.97
Understand Western culture	274	3.73	1.21
Instrumental orientation			
Need English for future career	275	4.79	0.61
Need English for studies	274	4.63	0.81
Need English for good job	274	4.55	0.79

The correlations indicate that goal orientations are related to each other. This suggests that the learners may have more than one orientation for learning English. For example, a learner can be integratively and instrumentally orientated at the same time. This supports Pintrich's notion of multiple goals (Pintrich, 2000). The correlation between performance-avoid goal orientation and task goal orientation is an interesting result because they are positively related to each other. Most previous research has indicated that these two goal orientations are negatively or unrelated to each other (Midgley et al., 1998). However, some recent studies that have focused on the contextual influences on goal orientations reported similar findings (Barron & Harackiewicz, 2001).

Table 13.3 Correlations between goal orientations and oral performance

Orientation	Task	Perf. approach	Perf. avoid	Integrative	Instrumental	Oral
Task	1.00					
Perf. approach	0.14[a]	1.00				
Perf. avoid	0.25[b]	0.48[b]	1.00			
Integrative	0.61[b]	0.17[a]	0.31[b]	1.00		
Instrumental	0.14[a]	0.30[a]	0.23[b]	0.24[b]	1.00	
Oral	0.23[b]	−0.02	−0.23[b]	0.10	0.05	1.00

[a] Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level
[b] Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

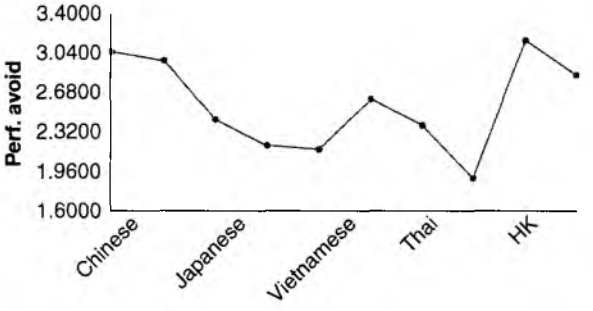

Figure 13.1 Chart of performance-avoid goal orientations and ethnicity of learners

One factor that has been found to influence goal orientations is ethnicity. Salili, Chui, and Lai (2001) found an effect for ethnicity using a Chinese sample. The study upon which this chapter is based reported a significant effect for ethnicity resulting from a MANOVA analysis ($V = 0.35$, $F(27,72) = 3.59$. $p < 0.001$). The analysis suggested that learners from Confucian heritage cultures are more likely to adopt performance-avoid goals than learners from Europe or South America (Woodrow, 2008). Figure 13.1 shows the mean scores for performance avoid goal orientations of the learners.

The other relationship of interest is that between integrative and task goal orientations indicating an overlap in these constructs. The correlations indicate that 37 per cent ($R_2 = 0.61 \times 0.61$) of task goals can be explained by integrative goals. In a similar light, Noels and her colleagues found that intrinsic motivation correlated with integrative

orientation and suggested that this was due to both being indicative of self-determination (Noels et al., 2001).

When the motivational orientations were examined in relation to oral performance, a task goal orientation was found to be positively related to oral performance, and a performance-avoid goal was negatively related to the oral performance. The correlations were significant but rather small. Interestingly, none of the other orientations were found to be related to oral performance. So, even though this group were integratively and instrumentally motivated, this had no direct effect on their oral performance. This shows that not only are education goal orientations relevant to this group of language learners, but that they can predict language performance, and are therefore important to understand.

The study presented in this chapter used correlations to analyse goal orientations. This approach of examining the relationship between one variable and another is typical of goal orientation studies. Correlational analysis is the basis of more complex analysis such as factor analysis and path analysis. However, it is only one such method that can be used. It is important to note that while correlational analysis can indicate relationships between variables, it does not capture the direction of the relationship nor can it be interpreted as a cause and effect relationship.

Future direction for research

Recent research in language learning has focused on the dynamic nature of motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009). This suggests that motivation does not remain the same but is influenced by the teaching and learning context. For example, a learner's preference for a teacher or method can enhance or inhibit motivation. Language learning is a lengthy process often taking many years. To get a deep insight into the dynamic and shifting nature of motivation, longitudinal and in-depth qualitative studies are necessary. In particular, there is a need for this type of research into goal orientations as most previous research has been cross-sectional. The shifting adoption of multiple goal orientations is an area that would also benefit from such a methodological approach.

English plays an increasingly important role in the world. This role is certain to impact on the orientations to learn the language. Most children and young adults outside English-speaking countries study English as a compulsory school subject and often competence in English is seen

as a desirable characteristic for school leavers in the job market. In a similar vein, with the ease of communication, Western culture in terms of music, films, and celebrities has become more widespread. Thus, for some young people, learning English may be seen as 'cool.' There is a need for further insights into motivational orientations in light of English as a lingua franca.

Finally, there is a need for further research into task and performance goals in language classroom settings. The study in this chapter shows these orientations are applicable to language learning; however, more research is needed. For example, even though a small number of learners in this study reported performance-avoid goals, these were related to poor language performance. Research is needed to investigate how learners can be persuaded to not adopt these goals.

Considerations for pedagogy

The most important point about goal orientations from a pedagogical perspective is that student goal orientations are related to learning behaviours, for example a task goal oriented student is likely to exert effort to master the learning task (Anderman & Maehr, 1994), and it is believed, that to some extent, personal goal orientations can be influenced by classroom and school goals. So, an exam focused course with an emphasis on comparison of student performance is likely to result in a performance goal orientation in students (Anderman, Patrick, Hruda, & Linnenbrink, 2002).

In any group of language learners, goal orientations are likely to differ. Some learners learning a language as a school subject may not even be aware of their reason for learning the language. It is important for the teacher to investigate these goals at a class level. In his book on implementing motivational strategies, Dörnyei (2001) suggests that individual goals can be discussed at a class level and then group goals negotiated. He also recommends that these goals are discussed periodically to revise goals as orientations fluctuate over time.

Making activities and materials relevant to learner orientations is important. These should reflect learner preferences and interests. For example, teenagers may respond to computer games or popular music while EAP learners may respond to a high level of subject specificity. Making materials as relevant as possible to learners' preferences and interests is much more likely to activate motivation, which in turn will enhance language learning.

Suggested further reading

Gardner, R. C. (2010). *Motivation and second language acquisition: The socio-educational model*. New York: Peter Lang.

This is Robert Gardner's latest publication about his socio-educational model of second language acquisition. The book reports on many research projects that have used the ATMB throughout the world. It also includes in-depth discussion of the integrative orientation, integrative motivation and integrativeness, and counteracts criticism levelled at the theory from different perspectives.

Noels, K., Pelletier, L. G., Clément, R., & Vallerand, R. J. (2003). Why are you learning a second language? Motivational orientations and self-determination theory. *Language Learning*, 53(suppl. 1), 33–63.

Kimberly Noels has researched and published widely about the application of self-determination theory in language learning. Her co-authors are recognized scholars in the field of SDT, who have researched in a number of disciplines. This article is perhaps the most cited source for SDT in language learning. The authors present a thorough discussion of orientations as conceptualized in SDT in language learning. The research presented in the article focuses on the structure of SDT goal orientations. In the paper they present an instrument to measure language learning goal orientations from a self-determination perspective.

Schunk, D. H., Pintrich, P. R., & Meece, J. L. (2008). *Motivation in education: Theory, research and applications* (3rd ed.). Chapter 5, pp. 183–207.

This book is a core educational psychology text that has been recently updated. In this chapter, a synthesis of research into goal orientations is presented together with references to key research. The major strength of this reading is the excellent section on classroom implications. It includes suggestions on how to facilitate task (mastery) goal orientations and promote positive motivation in learners in the classroom.

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14

Self-directed Learning: Concepts, Practice, and a Novel Research Methodology

Richard Pemberton and Lucy Cooker

Introduction

Self-directed learning is a concept with immediate relevance to language learning and one that has been discussed extensively within the educational psychology literature. In many respects, self-directed learning represents a point of intersection for many of the psychological constructs that have been considered in other chapters. For example, when we look at self-directed learning we may observe learners taking the initiative in setting their own goals, developing learning strategies or employing various learning styles. An examination of self-directed learning offers a highly practical window through which to view actual individual behaviour and how it may be shaped by the various psychological constructs covered elsewhere in this book.

The reader who is unfamiliar with the idea of self-directed learning may have an intuitive sense of what it might involve but be unclear as to how it differs from similar concepts such as learner autonomy and self-regulated learning. With the practice of self-directed language learning being as common as ever but the term itself less prevalent in the language education field than in the 1990s, it seems an opportune moment to introduce the concept to new readers.

In this chapter, we aim to clarify some of the concepts relating to self-directed learning, and in particular focus our discussion on how self-directed learning and the increasingly mainstream notion of learner autonomy are related. We then give examples of how self-directed language learning can be applied in educational contexts and introduce a novel way in which it can be researched.

For the sake of simplicity we refer to self-directed learning (SDL) throughout rather than to self-directed language learning (SDLL). It should be clear from the context whether the concept we are referring to is generic or specific.

Where does 'Self-Directed Learning' come from?

The term 'self-directed learning' came to prominence in the 1970s in the fields of adult education in North America and foreign language teaching in Europe, inspired by diverse factors such as humanistic psychology (e.g., Carl Rogers) and the student activism of the 1960s (see Gremmo & Riley, 1995).

In the field of adult education, Malcolm Knowles (1975) published *Self-directed learning: A guide for learners and teachers*, popularizing the concept in North America. Meanwhile in the early 1970s, the concepts of learner autonomy and SDL were being developed in Europe through the Council of Europe's Modern Languages Project and the Centre de Recherches et d'Applications Pédagogiques en Langues (CRAPEL) at the University of Nancy in France. From the CRAPEL, and particularly through its director Henri Holec, and later, Philip Riley, the theory and practice of learner autonomy, SDL, and self-access language learning spread around the world, particularly across Europe, Mexico, Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, and Japan.

What is SDL?

What SDL is

'Self-directed learning' appears a simple enough concept. As the term suggests, it refers to learning that is directed by the learner rather than by someone else. Indeed, most studies of adult SDL have focused on the process of planning, conducting and evaluating learning activities – the technical or methodological aspects of taking responsibility for learning. Thus, Knowles (1975, p. 18) defined SDL as:

> ... a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes.

However, several writers within the adult education field have taken a broader approach to SDL, focusing also on the learner's personality or

preference for self-direction (Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991) or an internal change that takes place in the learner (Brookfield, 1986). Thus, the psychological aspects of taking responsibility for learning have often been considered as a component of SDL. Candy (1991, p. 23) also classifies SDL according to learning activities and personal attributes, but further divides each aspect into two. He categorizes learning activities into learner control (a mode of organizing learning within formal education) and autodidaxy (informal self-instructed learning that is conducted outside of institutions), and personal attributes into what he terms self-management (the psychological willingness or capacity to take responsibility for learning) and personal autonomy (a philosophical ideal). Using different terms, in Garrison's (1997) model of SDL, the element of motivation was added to self-management (learner control of goals, resources, methods, etc.) and self-monitoring (reflection on cognitive and metacognitive processes). (For more on motivation and goals for self-directed learning, see Deci & Ryan [2000] and the chapters in this book on 'motivation' by Ushioda, Chapter 5, and 'goal orientations' by Woodrow, Chapter 13.)

Yet further aspects of SDL are addressed in the adult education field, such as critical, emancipatory, and political dimensions which move beyond the methodological and the psychological to the collaborative transformation and control of learning systems (for summaries, see, e.g., Benson, 2011; Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007).

In the field of language teaching and learning though, SDL tends to have a much narrower (and indeed, simpler) definition: "learning that is carried out under the learner's own direction" (Benson, 2011, p. 37). This definition has much in common with the process definitions in the early adult education literature. Holec (1996, p. 90), for example, stated that:

> Learning a language by self-directed learning... is learning by taking one's own decisions with respect to the objectives to achieve, the resources and techniques to use, evaluation, and management over time of the learning programme, with or without help from an outside agent.

Learner autonomy tends to be defined separately from SDL in the language education literature, and not as a sub-component of it. Thus, Holec defines autonomy as the capacity "to take charge of one's learning" (1981, p. 3) and self-direction as "knowing how to realize that capacity" (1985, p. 188). Similarly, Benson (2011, p. 37) defines SDL as

"something that learners are able to do more or less effectively, according to the degree that they possess this capacity [autonomy]." Learner autonomy then is seen as a prerequisite for SDL to be effective. However, autonomy does not automatically lead to SDL: a learner might have the capacity to take charge of their learning, but decide that actually the way they prefer to learn is for a teacher to be in total control.

Smith (2003) makes a useful distinction between 'weak' and 'strong' learner autonomy. The goal of the weak form is to train students for SDL – as envisaged by the teacher – with a focus on strategy use. In contrast, the goal of the strong form is enhancement of SDL through a negotiated syllabus and exercise of the learner's already existing autonomy. Drawing on Smith's work, we suggest that SDL also ranges between a weak and a strong form. The strong form is SDL underpinned by learner autonomy in which the learner is truly self-directed as encapsulated in the definitions given above. In the weak form, the learner is required to carry out SDL, even potentially against their will.

In its strong form, we may argue that SDL is the vehicle through which autonomy is manifested as a concrete, measurable construct. In a more colloquial sense, autonomy is the grist to the SDL mill. In this chapter, we are writing about SDL in its stronger form, as a manifestation of learner autonomy, while conscious that learner control is a continuum and dependent on many factors.

We hope that the above has started to provide a sense of what SDL is, or rather how it is generally perceived and will be understood in this chapter. Let us now clarify what SDL is not.

What SDL is not

First, SDL is not the same as individualized learning. If a teacher changes the sequence, difficulty and pacing of a series of tasks, for example, to suit a particular learner, then the individualized or 'personalized' learning programme that the learner follows will be teacher-directed, not self-directed.

Second, SDL does not necessarily mean learning on your own. Learning is recognized as a fundamentally social process and effective self-directed learners make full use of opportunities to interact with other learners, friends, teachers, experts, and so on. Equally, learning on your own (e.g., distance learning) does not necessarily mean that you are engaged in SDL. The key factor is whether you are controlling the learning process or not.

Third, SDL is not the same as 'self-regulated learning' (SRL). The term SRL developed from the concept of 'self-regulation,' which was

strongly influenced by Albert Bandura's theories of social learning and self-efficacy (see Mercer's Chapter 2 on 'self-concept'). SRL applied self-regulation to formal educational contexts, combining Bandura's theories of learning from the social context with John Flavell's theories of thinking about thinking (see Anderson's Chapter 12 on 'metacognition'). It has been defined as involving "the active, goal-directed self-control of behaviour, motivation and cognition for academic tasks by an individual student" (Pintrich, 1995, p. 5). To put this into simple human terms, Pintrich (1995) gives us model examples of self-regulated learners such as "Tom, who keeps up with assignments" and "Diane, who plans ahead" (pp. 3–4).

Another key SRL researcher, Zimmerman (1998), has argued that there are three stages of SRL: forethought (including teacher-directed and self-directed goal-setting), performance control (including verbalizing strategies aloud), and self-reflection. Thus, both SRL and SDL involve the learner being to some degree in control of planning, carrying out, monitoring and reflecting on their own learning. What then is the difference between the two terms?

One difference is the extent of the learning involved. Much SRL practice has involved short-term academic tasks (e.g., employing set strategies for paragraph- or essay-writing) rather than the longer-term language-learning projects that have tended to characterize SDL. Another difference is that in SRL there tends be an emphasis on instructing students so that they can carry out and internalize a desirable strategy. As Loyens, Magda, and Rikers (2008) point out, in SRL the learner may not be able to set their own tasks. By contrast, in SDL, the learner typically chooses not only the strategies to use (e.g., transcribing a stretch of L2 speech and comparing the transcript with that of a native or fluent speaker), but also the type of learning activity they want to carry out (e.g., watching movies).

Is there a place for SDL in formal educational settings?

One risk with supposed SDL programmes within formal education is that the major control may rest with the teacher. As Benson (2011, p. 113) puts it:

> If goals and content are other-determined, self-direction at the level of methods may be reduced to a choice of the most appropriate method of completing tasks that lack authenticity in terms of the learner's own perceived learning needs.

Another risk is that a learning programme may give the learner the opportunity to plan, carry out and evaluate their learning, but the learner may have no wish to exert such control.

Is there a place, then, for SDL in formal educational settings? We believe that there is, despite the tensions involved between enabling learners to take control of their learning and meeting institutional constraints in regards to assessment, and so on. In this section, we give examples of what we regard as effective SDLL projects at various stages of the formal educational system that have been successfully facilitated by teachers.

At the secondary school level, and over a period of many years, Dam (1995) worked together with the learners in her English classes in Denmark to develop a learning environment which was jointly directed by both the teacher and learners. In these classrooms, planning, dialogue, evaluation and the keeping of logbooks were crucial factors as the learners became increasingly more able to take charge of their own learning (see also 'annotated bibliography' below). In another example, Trebbi (1995) divided the time for her secondary French classes in Norway between SDL, whole class discussions about 'learning to learn,' and taught sessions. As in Dam's classes, learners were responsible for setting objectives, evaluating their learning and planning their homework.

At the tertiary level, there have been various attempts to incorporate SDL projects into the curriculum or as components within compulsory taught courses. For example, the optional, yet credit-bearing SALC Module programmes in the self-access learning centre at Kanda University of International Studies in Japan are ten-week programmes involving approximately 30 hours of student time. Students plan their learning, complete a weekly learning diary, meet learning advisers on a regular basis, and write a final evaluative report of their learning progress (Cooker & Torpey, 2004).

At the adult education level, four-month courses for adult migrants at Trinity College Dublin were based around a collaboratively developed version of the European Language Portfolio, which was designed to help learners set personal goals, identify topics for the course, and assess their own progress (Little, 2009).

At the end of the chapter, we will highlight the factors involved in all of the above programmes – factors that we believe are crucial in effectively supporting SDL within formal educational settings. First, though, we turn to the question of the type of research that is needed if we are to

provide convincing and useful accounts of the learning that takes place in such programmes.

Directions for research in SDL

Key figures in the SDL field (e.g., Benson, 2011; Brookfield, 2009; Candy, 1991; Merriam et al., 2007) have called for research that:

- goes beyond self-report data such as from questionnaires, interviews and learning diaries, particularly where there is only one source of data, and where the data is collected at one point in time
- incorporates mixed methods, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches, so that it can be clearly seen where findings converge or diverge
- involves longitudinal studies, so that we can start to see how SDL may change over time, and how it may be affected by particular factors.

Within the field of language education, Benson (2011) has also called for research into the important, but under-researched area of out-of-class learning, where much L2 learning and use takes place.

Self-report data are known to be affected by how the respondent feels and what the respondent can remember at the time. They are also believed to be open to bias according to the image that the participant wants to represent and the result that the researcher wants to hear. Such data thus need to be viewed critically, to be examined and passed back to the participant to see if that is what they really meant, and to be viewed alongside data from other sources, such as observation of learning behaviour.

One type of self-report that continues to be popular within the adult education SDL field is the Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scale, first developed by Guglielmino in 1977. Despite its widespread use, this particular questionnaire has come in for considerable criticism in terms of its construct validity and applicability to specific contexts (Benson, 2011, pp. 94–95; Candy, 1991, pp. 151–155). More importantly, the use of a Likert-scale questionnaire as a single research tool suggests that researchers may have picked on an easily testable instrument 'because it is there,' rather than building up a more complex picture of the learning that takes place within a particular context. As Dinsmore, Alexander, and Loughlin (2008, p. 405) argue after analysing over 250 SRL studies, it is difficult for "broad-brush measures" to "capture the dynamic

interplay of person, environment and behavior that is the hallmark of self-regulation." The same is even truer for SDL.

An example of current research into SDL

One example of recent research into SDL which combines quantitative and qualitative research approaches in a highly integrated way is a study using Q methodology. Henceforth referred to simply as Q, this is a research methodology which originated from psychology in the first half of the twentieth century. It has since been used in many social science disciplines, but there are as yet no published accounts of its use in applied linguistics research. Q combines several qualitative elements, such as interviews and document analysis, with the quantitative element of factor analysis. Its strength is that it enables the researcher to investigate subjective notions, such as perceptions, viewpoints and beliefs, in a much more systematic way than is possible using 'typical' qualitative research methods. (For a comprehensive overview of Q, see Watts & Stenner, 2012.)

The second author of this chapter used Q as part of her doctoral studies on the assessment of language learner autonomy. Language learner autonomy was operationalized as having seven elements: learner control, metacognitive awareness, confidence, learning range, critical reflection, motivation, and information literacy. Four of the elements match Garrison's (1997) model of SDL mentioned earlier. These seven elements were further broken down into constitutive parts, many of which are commensurate with the processes of needs analysis, goal setting, materials selection, strategy choice and learning evaluation, identified by Knowles (1975) in his definition of SDL given earlier in this chapter.

The purpose of this Q study was to investigate tertiary-level language students' perceptions of the outcomes of learning a language outside the classroom without the direct support of a teacher. In order to make this interpretation of SDL more concrete for the participants, it was exemplified as learning at home using the Internet, or learning in a more formal environment, but away from the structured classroom, such as in a self-access learning centre. By focusing on the manifestation of autonomy through SDL, the goal for the study was to use the findings to develop a means by which language students could formatively assess their own autonomy as learners.

Q comprises seven discrete stages which formed the procedure for the study. The methodology has been discussed in further detail elsewhere

(Cooker & Nix, 2010, 2011), so here we will simply provide an overview and a brief description of each stage.

Procedure

Stage 1: Identify a range of opinions about the subject and create a collection of statements

Statements were compiled from:

- a detailed search of the literature;
- written statements from groups of learners and teachers;
- pilot interview data;
- postings from an online learner autonomy discussion forum.

This collection of 124 statements formed a bank of viewpoints about the possible outcomes of studying in out-of-class language learning environments (e.g., "Learning without the encouragement of a teacher makes me a bit more lazy" and "Learning at my own pace means I am learning more successfully").

Stage 2: Select 40–60 statements from the collection

In Q, it is standard procedure for a total of between 40 and 60 statements to be used for participants to sort according to a pre-arranged format (see stage 4 below). In order to reduce the total number of statements from 124, those statements where the meaning was duplicated in another statement were discarded, as were any ambiguous statements. Three experts in the field were asked to provide feedback on statements they considered to be irrelevant to the topic and these were also discarded. The remaining statements were systematically categorized according to two models: one of generic learning outcomes and one of language learner autonomy and were then selected proportionately to the total number of statements in each category. In Q, selecting statements in this principled way is known as the 'sampling' of the opinion range and is similar to the sampling of participants from a larger population. In effect, in Q, it is the statements which are randomly sampled rather than the participants. The total number of statements selected as a result of this sampling process was 52.

Stage 3: Select participants – 'people who have something to say' about the topic

The participants in the study were 30 language learners who had been identified in interviews as having had experiences of SDL learning, in other words, language learning without the direct support of a teacher.

All the participants were university students studying at least one foreign language. Ten were at university in Hong Kong, ten in Japan, and ten in the UK.

Stage 4: Participants rank order selected statements
Each participant was given a set of cards with one of the statements on each card. They were asked to rank order the cards from −5 to +5 in the grid pattern shown in Figure 14.1 and according to the following instruction:

> Think about the ways you have developed since studying English outside the classroom without the direct support of a teacher (e.g., in a self-access centre or using the Internet). Sort the statements according to 'most like me' and 'least like me'.

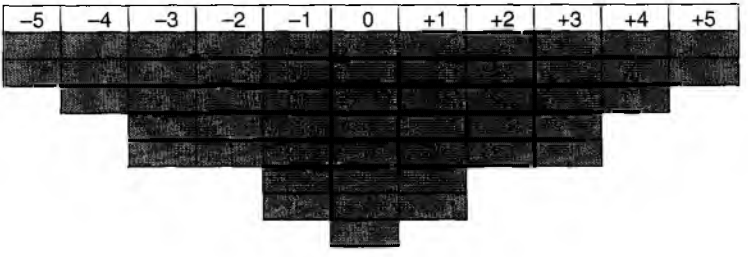

Figure 14.1 Q methodology sorting grid

Participants were asked to place two cards in the −5 and +5 positions, three in the −4 and +4 positions, and so on (see also Figure 14.2).

Stage 5: Interview participants about ranking statements
Once the participant had placed all the cards on the grid, they explained their reasons for choosing the ranking position for the cards in an interview session.

Stage 6: Analyse the patterns of statements
The patterns of statements gathered during the card-sorting process were then analysed on dedicated Q software using Q factor analysis techniques. This process is known as 'by-person' factor analysis, as opposed to the more common 'by-item' factor analysis, typically used in psychology when analysing psychometric tests. In Q, the factors derived from the data illustrate typical viewpoints of those who have sorted the cards.

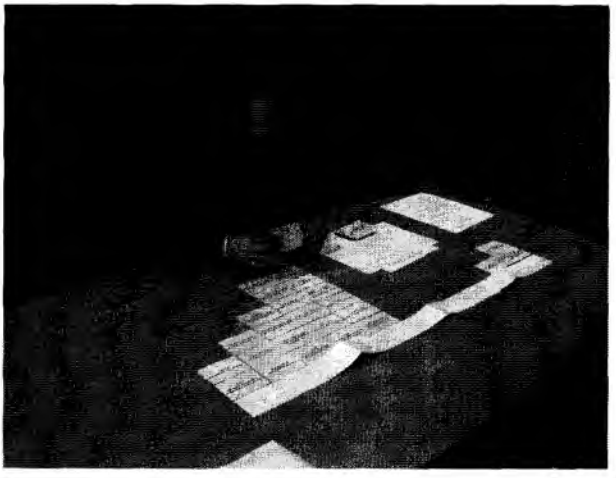

Figure 14.2 A participant sorting (rank ordering) the statements onto the grid pattern

Stage 7: Interpret the factors generated

In the final stage, the prototypical factors generated in stage 6 were interpreted using the data from the qualitative interviews in stage 5. Through an iterative process typical in qualitative research, the interviews were used to layer meaning on the prototypical factors, according to the opinions and viewpoints of the participants. The final results of this process were narrative descriptions of fictional representative card sorters whose viewpoints were encapsulated in the prototypical factors.

Findings

Six factors were generated from the card sort data and these represented the views of 29 out of the 30 participants who took part in the study. These six factors were interpreted as 'autonomy modes.' These modes are transient, and dependent on time, place, mood, and target language. They are distinct from each other and are characterized by the range of self-reported opinions and behaviours from the small group of participants involved in this study. Other autonomy modes may well exist; in that sense this study was exploratory rather than explanatory. An example of one autonomy mode – which we have termed 'passionate socialite' – is given below.

The language learner as 'passionate socialite': a narrative interpretation

One autonomy mode is described as socially motivated and having an overall sense of enthusiasm and a passion for language learning.

Characteristics of learners who affiliate to this mode include a keenness to find opportunities to use the language they are studying for the increased social interactions which language learning will afford them. In other words, there is a close connection between communication in the real world and developing language proficiency. Learners in this mode also enjoy learning without the direct control of a teacher because they are able to learn in ways that interest them: they derive particular enjoyment in learning using the Internet, films, music and books. They find learning in these ways to be fun, and thus report that they are less likely to need encouragement from a teacher. Indeed, their passion for learning the language is considered a powerful intrinsic motivating force. In contrast, when they perceive the subject matter as more serious, and for learners affiliating to this mode 'grammar' is often perceived in this way, they like to have the support of a teacher.

Learners who are part of this mode may well be very people-centred. In addition to wanting to learn the language in order to communicate with others, they describe an enhanced desire to learn the language as also being other-oriented: they want to make others proud of them, or to use their language proficiency skills to get a good job in order to repay parents for their time at university, or simply to enjoy the process of communicating with others. They are also willing to learn with other people, and thus enjoy the process of collaborative learning.

While these learners tend to like having control over aspects of their learning environment such as where they study, they are also prepared to take risks and make mistakes and then use their developing linguistic awareness to learn from those mistakes. This propensity for linguistic risk taking, and the fact that they may well consider themselves too lazy to review their own language use, may be symptoms of 'living in the moment,' and thus not approaching their language learning in an analytic way. This perceived lack of analytic ability extends to the language use of others: they do not feel confident in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of other people's language.

Application of findings

The findings from this study have been used to develop a tool for the formative assessment of learner autonomy as necessary for effective SDL. By identifying their current autonomy mode, learners are able to consider possible weaknesses in their self-directed learning approach. In the above example of the 'passionate socialite,' this may be the need to spend more time reviewing their language learning and use, or the need to consider a more analytic approach to language study.

The opportunity for learners to be able to formatively assess their own autonomy is important not just because such assessments in themselves have been proven to have a beneficial effect on learning (e.g., Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall, & Wiliam, 2003), but because the ability to self-assess and to progress from this assessment is at the core of successful SDL initiatives (e.g., Lamb, 2010).

Implications for SDL research

Q can make a potentially valuable contribution to future research on SDL. In his analysis of future research directions in SDL, Brockett (2009) recommends that researchers should use different research methods to investigate the foundations of self-direction and to find new ways to measure self-directedness. The study above demonstrates the value of Q in these terms. Specifically, Q enables the researcher to harness subjective notions in a methodical way, embracing both the rigour of statistical analysis and the richness of verbal data.

Although Q is often used, as in this study, to identify shared ways of thinking from among a particular group, it can also be used with individuals. For example, an individual may be asked to sort the same statements on many occasions over a long period of time. Or individuals may be asked to sort the statements according to different instructions, such as how much the statements resemble themselves in the past, themselves now, their ideal future selves and so on.

In the study reported on here, it was found that one further benefit was the positive reaction that participants had to the research method. Eight of the participants made unprompted comments such as "Oh it's interesting! I had a very good experience" and "I really enjoyed this activity" after the card-sorting procedure and follow-up interview. Several also commented on how the experience had helped them think about their own learning:

> This is very meaningful... I don't know my pattern of learning languages and this interview helped me to understand myself... I don't know why I do these thing but now I know.

Considerations for pedagogy

Looking back now to Holec's (1996) definition of SDL that we quoted earlier, what are the implications for teaching if the learner makes decisions about every stage of a learning programme? How can the teacher

support this decision-making, within a formal educational context? Earlier we looked at several examples of successful SDL programmes within formal settings. Let us now highlight some factors that are essential for such courses to be a success. Holec lists three elements: learning-to-learn training for the learners, appropriate resources, and training for the staff.

One form of learning-to-learn training involves helping learners become aware of different learning strategies (e.g., Ellis & Sinclair, 1989) and styles, along the lines of the tool for formative assessment of learner autonomy mentioned above (see also Chapter 10 by Cohen and Chapter 11 by Griffiths in this volume). Other forms of training involve preparation for and practice in needs analysis, planning, reflection and evaluation. Some approaches are teacher-directed, others learner-directed; some preparatory to an SDL programme, and others integrated with the programme itself.

Appropriate resources for SDL will include authentic materials, materials constructed by learners, lists of learning suggestions (e.g., "how to use subtitled films to improve listening comprehension"), multimedia equipment and learning resource centres. Staff will also need to be trained in the appropriate knowledge and skills required for supporting/facilitating SDL (e.g., in counselling/advising or in knowledge of relevant materials, equipment, learning strategies, etc.).

To the above three elements we would add three more: an appropriate balance between structure and choice, sufficient time for the programme, and institutional support for SDL.

As we have mentioned, choice must be genuine and give the learner control over goal setting, content and evaluation (as in the four examples of institutional SDL described earlier) and not merely over pace and strategies. At the same time, within formal institutions, with their inbuilt power relationships, there will need to be structures in place (e.g., to complete tasks by a certain date, to attend a set number of meetings with an adviser). Such constraints do take away from the freedom of the learner, but without them, the learner in an institutional setting, with grades and credits on their minds, may simply not take advantage of the opportunities for SDL provided.

However, time for SDL projects is often severely constrained within formal curricula, particularly when SDL components are incorporated into courses. This can have a major impact, and the most successful programmes are often those where SDL processes are supported over months and years. Finally, it is vital for SDL to become part of the culture of the school or department. Otherwise any SDL innovation will die as soon as the innovator leaves.

The above six elements may not all be feasible within a given context (although Holec [1996, p. 90] calls the first three "sine qua non prerequisites"). But it is surprising how much damage to an SDL programme one missing element can cause. If we are serious about helping our students take control of their own language learning, then we owe it to them to ensure that all pieces of the jigsaw are in place.

Suggested further reading

Candy, P. C. (1991). *Self-direction for lifelong learning: A comprehensive guide to theory and practice.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

This is a comprehensive and well-written survey of the SDL literature in adult education. An excellent starting place for readers interested in SDL concepts from outside the language education field.

Dam, L. (1995). *Learner autonomy 3: From theory to classroom practice.* Dublin: Authentik.

Using a selection of data collected over 15 years in a Danish school, this book takes you inside the author's English class to show what happens as the teacher and learners move from a teacher-directed to a teacher-/learner-directed environment. An honest and unique account of supporting SDL in the classroom.

Benson, P. (2011). *Teaching and researching autonomy in language learning* (2nd ed.). Harlow: Longman.

This book provides wide-ranging coverage of the theory and practice of learner autonomy and self-directed language learning. The budding researcher is likely to find the section on 'Researching autonomy' particularly helpful.

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15

Group Dynamics: Collaborative Agency in Present Communities of Imagination

Tim Murphey, Joseph Falout, Yoshifumi Fukada, and Tetsuya Fukuda

Introduction

In this chapter, we focus on the importance of groups in the language learning process and consider how several of the constructs addressed in other chapters of this book function together in group contexts. The general tendency within research in both educational psychology and second language education has been to regard the individual as the principal unit of investigation, but here we hope to make the case for a complementary recognition of the role of groups in understanding behaviour and learning. In order to do this we first consider some of the literature relating to the concept of group dynamics. In this chapter, we take an intentionally broad view of this concept, which we use as an umbrella term to include, what have been called in the literature, community practices, cooperative practices, and collaborative practices. We then support this discussion of the literature by presenting a research study that we believe offers a pedagogically accessible framework for both teachers and researchers to understand language learning groups.

Overview of the research

In this overview, we will first describe a growing recognition in the literature of the importance of sociocultural factors on human behaviour, an acknowledgement that individuals do not think or act in isolation from others. We will then consider some of the implications this has for language education. In the next section, we will look at our understanding

of groups and how individuals participate in groups. In the final part of this review, we will look at the role of groups in learning, giving special attention to understandings of the concept of agency and how these can be applied to group behaviour.

The social turn

A good place to begin our discussion of the role of groups in learning is with one of the most significant theories of learning of the twentieth century, Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory. Sociocultural Theory has attracted a considerable amount of interest and detailed discussion (for an overview of sociocultural theory and second language learning see Lantolf & Thorne, 2006), and one of its fundamental tenets is the importance of social learning. Vygotsky's (1981) general law of cultural development states that:

> Any function in the child's cultural development appears twice or on two planes. First it appears on the social plane, and then on the psychological plane. First it appears between two people as an interpsychological category, and then within the child as an intrapsychological category.
>
> (p. 163)

The importance of socialization in the language learning process was identified by the ethnographer Watson-Gegeo, who wrote in *TESOL Quarterly*:

> The substitution of socialization for acquisition places language learning within the more comprehensive domain of socialization, the lifelong process through which individuals are initiated into cultural meanings and learn to perform the skills, tasks, roles, and identities expected by whatever society or societies they may live in.
>
> (1988, p. 582)

Watson-Gegeo's observations foreshadowed what is known as 'the social turn' in second language acquisition (SLA). Traditionally, SLA has focused on individual learners and on what appear to be individual differences and the effect these have on learning outcomes. However, many researchers in recent years, such as David Block (2003), have challenged this individualist view. This movement assigns a more central role to the social group and the acts of socialization within applied linguistics in general and SLA in particular. Many of the concerns of

group dynamics are reflected in the principles underpinning this social turn (Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003; Ehrman & Dörnyei, 1998; McCafferty, Jacobs, & DaSilva Iddings, 2006).

The distinction between theories of learning that focus on individual cognition and those that emphasize sociocultural factors is an important one. In recent years, however, there have been attempts to integrate both perspectives, and such approaches are referred to as sociocognitive. One sociocognitive approach, proposed by Atkinson (2010), is of particular interest to our discussion of language learning group dynamics. Atkinson introduces the concepts of 'extended cognition' and 'embodied cognition' to SLA. Extended cognition implies that our thoughts are "inextricably tied to the external environment" (p. 599). The environments in which we live contribute crucially to our thoughts and activities. The concept of extended cognition questions a strict separation between the mind and the environment, arguing that elements of the external environment can be seen as extensions of the mind itself. This 'extension' naturally includes other people, their actions, and language.

Embodied cognition "views cognitive activity as grounded in bodily states and actions" (p. 599), in other words, the context is internalized by the individual and the way it is internalized can change our moods, physiology, and ability to think in different ways. We refer to this as 'context-in-person.' This sociocognitive view of extended and embodied cognition can be seen in key pedagogical concepts, such as the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1962). It is also seen in concepts of particular relevance to language learners, such as imitative learning (e.g., shadowing, Murphey, 2001; near peer role modelling, Murphey & Arao, 2001), and small group interaction (e.g., cooperative learning, Johnson & Johnson, 1998). (See glossary for an explanation of these terms.)

Cognition seen as extended and embodied can both enrich and problematize practice. Rather than the traditional SLA focus on what to learn, a person-in-context relational view (Ushioda, 2009) focuses more on who is learning, with whom, where, when, and why. With this approach, the agency of learners, a concept we discuss in more detail later in the chapter, becomes an important aspect of our teaching, as learners are then seen as unique individuals with their own identities, histories, goals, and intentions. This view "capture[s] the mutually constitutive relationship between persons and the contexts in which they act – a relationship that is dynamic, complex and non-linear" (ibid. p. 218). For language learners, a key element of the 'context in which they act' is the learning group.

Understanding groups

We now turn our attention to how groups have been theorized in the literature, and more specifically to how individuals belong to groups and how group membership affects learning behaviour.

> Groups... are a defining characteristic of human life, a reflection of our inherently social nature, a product of our natural proclivity to cooperate to satisfy wants and needs and to avoid the anguish resulting from isolation and failure to establish positive social relationships.
>
> (Nelson & Murphey, 2011, p. 81)

Although groups are an inevitable and intrinsic aspect of the human experience, not all groups function successfully. As Dörnyei and Murphey (2003, p. 4) observe, a learning group tends to take on a life of its own, with its internal dynamics being a major factor in its success. Understanding these dynamics is essential to understanding how we learn.

Good group dynamics can bring their members a sense of 'belongingness,' the fundamental human need to be accepted by others (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), when there are shared feelings of mutual care and support. In her extensive review of the related research, Osterman (2000) summarizes that feelings of acceptance in the classroom, as opposed to exclusion and rejection, are more likely to lead to feelings of security and well-being in students, who also exhibit autonomous and self-regulated behaviours. Students who feel a sense of belonging among their classroom peers have a stronger sense of identity and are willing to accept social norms and teacher authority; have greater interest and engagement in academic activities with a corresponding record of higher academic achievement; are more helpful towards and considerate of others, even those outside of their friendship groups; are less likely to misbehave, disengage from learning activities, or quit school; and are more cooperative in learning and communicating, fostering further developments of their ideas and having an increased appreciation of the members within their classroom community.

Communities of practice

Arguably the most popular model of group and collaborative work in recent years is the communities of practice model proposed by Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998). In a community of practice, community identity is continually being shaped by its members and their

experiences of working or learning together. Motivation to share common practices comes from three modes of belonging to that community: engagement, imagination, and alignment (Wenger, 1998). Engagement is interaction situated in a specific space and time. With imagination, we can visualize our own trajectories, from where we have been to where we are heading. Imagination also gives us an understanding of how our engagement is situated within the world around us (Wenger, 1998). Alignment represents the regulation of our behaviours in order to fit into our immediate social environments to the degree that we wish to identify ourselves with other people and their practices; the desire we have to belong to a certain group affects how we behave (Finkel & Baumeister, 2010).

A community of practice can form in a classroom. However, students do not necessarily attend a class with the intention of belonging to a community; they are often more immediately concerned with earning credits in order to graduate and perhaps learn something useful for their future careers. Classroom practices may not invite much engagement or imagination from the students other than to envision what might happen should they manage or fail to align by following rules, doing homework, or passing exams. Additionally, certain individuals may feel excluded from belonging to communities of practice through the organizational practices of educational institutions, such as those that focus on preparing for performance-based outcomes (i.e., high-stakes tests) rather than on developing a community of belonging (Osterman, 2000). Quinn (2010) further critiques institutional practices that position learners outside dominant communities of practice through policies such as restricting enrolment to classes based on grade point average (as a reward), or holding students back for not having pre-requisites.

Imagined social capital and imagined communities

Many students can become disenfranchised from formal education. Quinn (2010) argues that an important way for them to reconnect with social learning is through what she calls their 'imagined social capital.' She explains this concept as "the benefit that is created by participating in imagined or symbolic networks" (p. 68). Quinn draws on case studies with university dropouts, homeless adults, and at-risk youths of low socio-economic status, describing how they were able to transform their identities by imagining their engagement in future social networks of professionals, and thus re-engage with present social networks of learners. By imagining their belonging to a network of professional and social

contacts in the future, they could find ways of belonging to communities in the present that help them to continue to develop their identities and learning. The lack of imagined social capital can be shown by the sentiments of a school administrator from an impoverished district, who spoke of the students – "their gifts are lost to poverty and turmoil and the damage done by *knowing that they are written off by their society*. Many of these children have no sense of something they belong to" (italics ours, quoted in Kozol, 1991, pp. 33–34).

For language learners, Norton (2001) indicates that a very similar concept, imagined communities, can be crucial for engagement in the classroom. The extent to which teachers can affirm learners' imagined communities might profoundly affect their investments – their reasons, ways, and efforts (see Morita, Chapter 3, this volume) – in learning the second language (Fukada, 2009). Norton stresses this may be difficult for teachers, for each learner has unique experiences and investments, and teachers often incorporate pedagogical practices aimed more at invoking participation rather than imagination. With these insights, Norton suggests including – alongside increasing practice and capabilities using the L2 – the imagining of moving from the margins towards the centre of a social network. This further suggests a pedagogy that situates practising and imagining within an accepting social circle of peers as a means to engender better group dynamics.

Emotional contagion

"Group learning is underpinned by several strands of research, all premised on the belief that learning in groups offers a richer variety of benefits than learning by oneself" (Nelson & Murphey, 2011, p. 81). Belonging to a group offers access to resources that are not available to individual learners. A group is more than a mere collection of disparate individuals. Within a group, cognitions and emotions seem to be inextricably linked to each other and are themselves changed through social exchanges (Carlston, 2010, pp. 86–88; cf. Damasio, 2010). Hatfield, Cacioppo, and Rapson (1994) describe the interdependencies of primitive emotional contagion as "the tendency to automatically mimic and synchronize facial expressions, vocalizations, postures, and movements with those of another person and consequently, to converge emotionally" (p. 5). They stress that "an important consequence of emotional contagion is an attentional, emotional, and behavioral synchrony that has the same adaptive utility (and drawbacks) for social entities (dyads, groups) as has emotion for the individual" (ibid., p. 5). Emotional contagion certainly plays a key role in group dynamics and language

learning psychology, consistent with Imai's (2010) assertion that the social aspects of emotions in groups of learners can promote emotional development and learning.

Collaborative agency

At the beginning of this chapter we argued that the social turn in SLA requires teachers to devote more attention to enhancing the agency of learners. The concept of agency is essentially concerned with the capacity for people to make choices and to act on them. Agency is often discussed in terms of individuals, yet Nelson and Murphey (2011) identify a trend in the literature towards regarding agency as being situated within a specific context. In a review of the literature on agency in language learning, they note Candlin and Sarangi's (2004, p. xiii) conceptualization of agency as "the self-conscious reflexive actions of human beings." To this basic definition, they point out that agency additionally includes "the ability to assign relevance and significance to things and events" (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, p. 142), and that agency is always realized in a context with others. This is consistent with Lantolf and Pavlenko's (2001, p. 148) observation that agency is "unique to individuals and co-constructed" but "never a 'property' of a particular individual; rather, it is a relationship that is constantly co-constructed and renegotiated with those around the individual and with the society at large."

This idea that agency is constantly co-constructed and renegotiated allows us to think of agency as collaborative. It also indicates how positive group dynamics and belonging to communities might provide more opportunities for these co-constructions and negotiations to take place. Social psychologists Forsyth and Burnette (2010) note, "On a practical level, much of the world's work is done by groups, so by understanding groups we move towards making them more efficient" (p. 524), in other words more agentic.

Researching groups

While group counselling and education research usually publishes qualitative case studies and action research regarding group dynamics, business community research more often involves quantitative economic data juxtaposed with responses to work-related satisfaction scales. However, there are also mixed method studies in all fields. There has been extensive research into communities of practice (Wenger, 1998), with the business world continually researching how teams might work more

efficiently (Harvard Business Press, 2009; Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). In education there has been extensive research into cooperative and collaborative group work (see Nelson, 2009 for a comprehensive literature review). Although the importance of group dynamics is widely recognized in language learning (Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003), there has been little empirical research in the field. We believe that one reason for this might be the lack of a clear research framework, which is why we are proposing present community of imagination as a possible unit of analysis. (See discussion for the theoretical outlines.)

Our group dynamics study

The purpose of our study was to explore the relationships between students' group interactions on three motivational time frames of their L2 learning: past, present, and future. We conducted this study with 466 Japanese undergraduates in 25 departments at six Japanese universities.

We explored learners' perceptions of their pasts through what we refer to as Antecedent Conditions of the Learner (ACL), which could be thought of as academic emotional baggage. These represent motivational predispositions deriving from the individual learner's views of past experiences with a specific academic subject (Murphey & Falout, in press). We looked at the present, their current investment in L2 learning, through learners' own assessments of their efforts to use and learn the L2 both in class and out of class. We employed the concept of possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986), the images individuals have of what they may one day become, to understand learners' perceptions of their futures.

In the first of three steps, we administered a pre-survey questionnaire (Appendix 15A) consisting of multiple 6-point Likert-scale questions to measure:

(1) their ACL levels, meaning their perceptions of previous English learning experiences (items a–f);
(2) the extent of their investment in learning English inside and outside the classroom (items s–x, after the first 3 weeks of classes);
(3) the strength or clarity of their English-related possible selves in the contexts of their future careers and their everyday lives (items k–n).

We adopted this quantitative approach in our study as we were keen to statistically measure possible changes in these three factors and their interrelationships across one semester.

Second, during the semester, each teacher frequently conducted pair or small group activities to increase students' opportunities for studying or practising English together to learn ways of communicating in English from each other. In addition, we organized various activities to help the participants visualize their possible selves related to English and to share their visions with their classmates. (For details of these activities, see Fukada, Fukuda, Falout, & Murphey, 2011.)

Third, at the end of the semester, we administered a post-survey questionnaire using the same questions as in the pre-survey questionnaire and compared the mean scores of their responses.

Results

Pre-survey results

The results (Figure 15.1) indicate that many of the participants were able to visualize relatively well how they would be using English in their future, and that the average perception of their past English learning experiences was moderately positive. They were relatively eager to participate in class activities, although they were not practising English autonomously outside the classroom at the beginning of the semester.

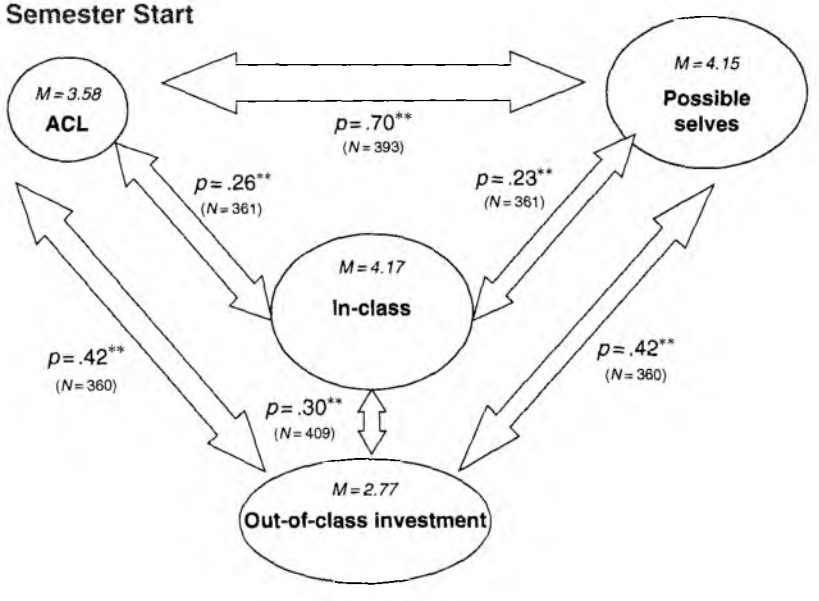

Figure 15.1 Semester start measurements

** Correlation is significant at $p < 0.01$

The relationships among the three factors indicate that the students who had positive past perceptions of English learning could visualize more clearly how they would be using the language in their future lives and careers. The pre-survey results also showed that those whose past learning experiences were positive or who visualized clear L2 possible selves were inclined to practise English autonomously outside the classroom, but not necessarily inside the classroom. That is, even if the students had positive perceptions towards English or clear L2 possible selves, they still might participate passively or even negatively inside the classroom.

Post-survey results

The post-survey results (Figure 15.2) imply a strong relationship between participants' ability to form more positive ACLs, that is perceptions of their own pasts, and the sharing of each other's possible selves, social interaction, and learning from each other within their groups. Concomitant with these motivational increases, the correlations between their perceptions of past English learning experiences, in-class

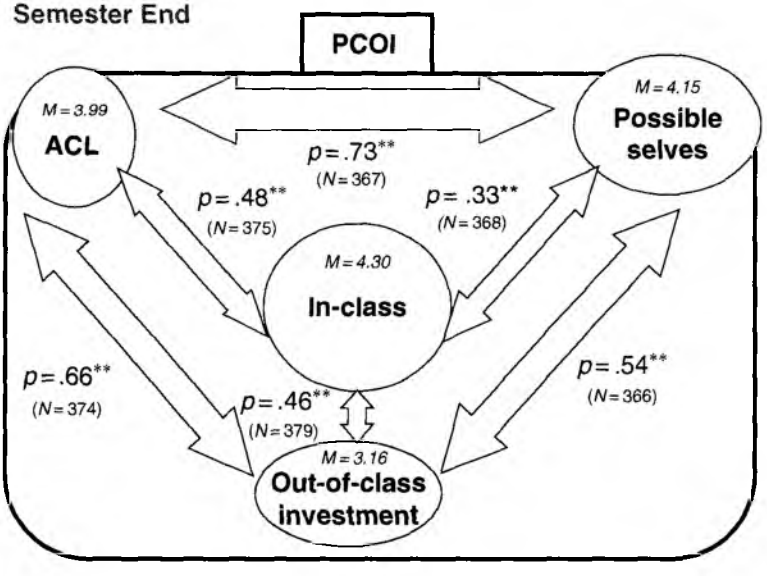

Figure 15.2 Semester end measurements
** Correlation is significant at $p < 0.01$

investment, out-of-class investment, and possible selves became much stronger.

Discussion

Concerning individuals learning within social contexts and across time, Murphey and Falout (in press) proposed that when individuals learn in social contexts across time, the past and future do not exist separately, but only merge into the continually evolving now. Figure 15.3 shows learners' pasts and futures emerging from participation in present communities of imagination and some of the activities we used to access these 'pasts,' 'presents,' and 'futures.' (e.g., we asked the students to share their past English learning experiences through Language Learning Histories; in the present, they were required to keep learning records of their learning [action logs], and for the future, they participated in an imaginary class reunion ten years [ten-year reunion] after graduating

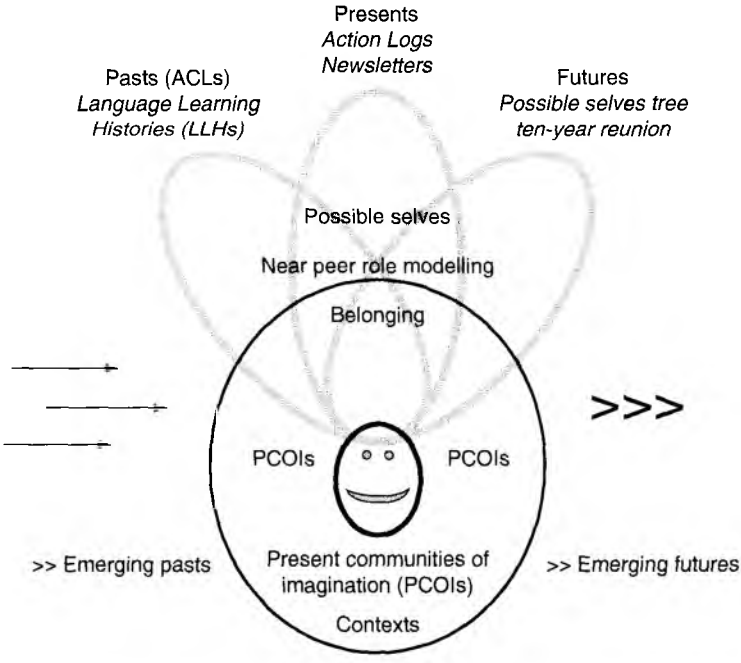

Figure 15.3 Three overlapping mind times situated in emerging contexts
From Murphey & Falout (in press).

from college.) We can only conceptualize our pasts and futures from 'now.' Each time we tell someone about our past, it is apt to change somewhat because we are 'now' different and interpret things differently from how we did even just moments before. For this reason, we have chosen to employ the term 'emerging pasts.' Of course, our futures are made from thinking of possibilities and things that actually happen in the ever-evolving present, thus emerging presents and futures. While originally designed to look at individual differences, this schemata (Figure 15.3) of individual learning fits well if overlapping on top of the groupwork study (Figure 15.2). The figure shows a self-emerging out of the past and moving into the future, investing effort in a present learning context, a classroom of peers.

We believe that, by focusing on the three time periods that influence student learning, the concept of a present community of imagination offers teachers, researchers, and students a pragmatic framework for understanding group dynamics. Imaginatively working together, for example, on composing their language learning histories, their daily action logs, or a ten-year class reunion activity, creates belonging and the thrill of collaborative agency (Murphey, 2010). These activities place the focus on the students, their lives and reactions to real-life events. We feel conceptualizing a class in this way is especially useful for teachers wishing to actively stimulate more participation (agency and belonging), thus improving group dynamics. Below, based on our understanding of the literature and emerging from our ongoing research, we list some key characteristics of learning groups seen as present communities of imagination:

- Present communities of imagination exist in degrees from destructive to unproductive, and from productive to ecstatic.
- They are composed of those in your presence at any point in time.
- They include both your imagined and lived social capital.
- Using imagined social capital it is possible to create present communities of imagination out of animals, nature, objects, and so on, as children naturally do.
- Present communities of imagination can dynamically change with any member's own body states (embodied cognition) and contact with the external environment (extended cognition).
- People in the same group are not necessarily experiencing the same present community of imagination, as each person can experience things differently. Signs that they are experiencing similar present

communities of imagination stem from rapport signals such as similar facial expressions, movements, and vocalizations, as with emotional contagion.

The concept of a present community of imagination, with its emphasis on participation and engagement with others through imagination, has clear roots in the communities of practice model, which we selected as our model of group behaviour. It also has clear, though perhaps more indirect, links with some of the other constructs discussed in the literature review. It is our hope that by highlighting the temporal dimension, how our belonging to groups is situated in time, connecting past and present, the concept of a present community of imagination may offer a further possible window through which both teachers and researchers can investigate and understand group dynamics.

Implications for research and teaching

We think that the concept of present communities of imagination can help us act more purposefully as teachers to address students' pasts, presents, and futures – all within our unfolding present groups. In other words, they have pedagogical accessibility. This offers a holistic framework for investigating micro, macro, and proleptic psychological development. This framework may be observed, stimulated, and better understood by research and recordable by teachers through possibly accounting for socio-historical, environmental, and personal factors across time. We find that the concept of present communities of imagination aligns well with other key theories, both from within and without SLA, such as Atkinson's (2010) description of embodied and extended cognition, Ushioda's (2009) person-in-context relational view, Hatfield et al.'s (1994) emotional contagion, and Vygotsky's (1981) general law of cultural development.

Accessing student experiences and aspirations could help teachers adjust to their students':

- ACLs, the baggage students bring to the classroom and the impact it might have on their present and future learning (e.g., language learning histories, Murphey, 1999);
- the present activities and their reception (e.g., action logging, Murphey, 1993; friends, Murphey, 1998);
- what we might do to help students foresee a bright, inviting future (e.g., possible selves activities, Fukada et al., 2011), which might

inspire them to act in ways that realize these new goals in collaboration with others.

Student thinking and behaviour depends crucially on the present communities of imagination in the classroom, the advantages created by interactions within groups. It also depends on the affordances available, mainly other members of the learning group, and learners' propensity to reframe the negative as positive, and their willingness to model engagement and to allow their dreams to become contagious. This simultaneously requires and creates good group dynamics.

Teachers as leaders in these communities are positioned to have substantial influence through their choice of class structures and activities, particularly in encouraging students to interact in ways that allow for creating positive emotional and aspirational contagion, and sharing learning strategies. Indeed, it could be said that the effective management of present communities of imagination in the macro structures and in the micro relationships is a teacher's most crucial role.

We foresee action research possibly using present communities of imagination to continually:

- promote better learning by accessing beneficial ACLs and finding ways to reframe unhelpful experiences;
- refine understandings of how we might improve in- and out-of-class investment;
- promote imaginative and multiple possible selves to ensure hopeful futures.

The sample study above suggests that all three aspects can be stimulated within the affordance of classroom present communities of imagination to co-constructively enhance group dynamics, producing conditions more favourable for L2 acquisition. The study also reminds us of some of the limitations of this kind of quantitative research; this approach allows us to test hypotheses and make certain generalizations. However, we learn little of the actual processes that can contribute to or harm good group dynamics, the characteristics of present communities of imagination we noted earlier, for example, rapport signals such as similar facial expressions, movements, and vocalizations. Investigating these actual processes calls for novel, trans-disciplinary approaches to research (see Atkinson, 2010; Lee, Dina, Joaquin, Mates & Schumann, 2010; Porges, 2011, Quinn, 2010) that link fields and create new understandings.

Conclusion

Human agency stems from our ability to take more control over how we use our minds, benefit from our collaborators, help others, and take advantage of the opportunities available in the emerging present. While the past is over, its conditioning of and usefulness in the present is far from finished. When groups reprocess the past they give it meaning in the emerging presents. While the future is not here yet, it is forever here in the present as the present projects into the future and determines greatly what will happen to a group that dares to push the envelope. These are the emerging pasts and futures that shape group dynamics.

"The events of inner experience, as emergent properties of brain processes, become themselves explanatory causal constructs in their own right, interacting at their own level with their own laws and dynamics" (Sperry, 1982, p. 1226). By imagining we create neural networks that have substance, and sharing our imagination spurs the growth of neural networks in ourselves and others. Thus, belonging to groups – whether imagined or lived – gives us more agency and allows us to do things that we cannot do alone.

Appendix 15A Questionnaire

Pre/Post-survey

Name:_____ Number:_____

Date:_____ Gender: M/F Major: _____

TOEIC:_____ TOEIC Bridge:_____ Eiken Grade:_____

INSTRUCTIONS: Please answer the following questions about your English learning. Circle the level of your agreement with the statements. **(1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Slightly disagree, 4 = Slightly agree, 5 = Agree, 6 = Strongly agree)**

(s) I regularly used English in class with my classmates this semester. 1/2/3/4/5/6

(t) Even if the teacher were not close to me, or could not hear me, I still spoke English with my classmates in class this semester. 1/2/3/4/5/6

(u) This semester, I made an effort to speak more English with my classmates outside of class. 1/2/3/4/5/6

(v) I supported my classmates and we supported each other's English learning reciprocally, and/or talked about our English-related future careers outside of class. 1/2/3/4/5/6

(w) This semester, I made an effort to speak more English with other people (high-school friends, English teacher at language school, parents, etc.) outside of class. 1/2/3/4/5/6

(x) This semester, other people and I supported each other's English learning reciprocally, or talked about our English-related future careers outside of class. 1/2/3/4/5/6

(a) Generally, I think that I enjoy learning English in class. 1/2/3/4/5/6

(b) Generally, I think that I enjoy learning English out of class. 1/2/3/4/5/6

(c) I like studying English now. 1/2/3/4/5/6

(d) Even if English was not a compulsory subject, I would choose to study it. 1/2/3/4/5/6

(e) I am confident in learning English now. 1/2/3/4/5/6

(f) I like studying or practicing English with friends or classmates. 1/2/3/4/5/6

(k) To what extent would you like to use English in **your daily life** *after graduation?* Not at all Very much 1/2/3/4/5/6

(l) To what extent would you like to be using English in **your daily life** *in 20 years?* 1/2/3/4/5/6

(m) To what extent would you like to get a **job** using your English abilities *after graduation?* 1/2/3/4/5/6

(n) To what extent would you like to be using English in your **work** *in 20 years?* 1/2/3/4/5/6

(o) Could you describe in your own words a possible job, or jobs that you might have using English? What exactly would you be doing in the job and how would you use your English? Give as many details as possible.

N.B. Items in this survey are not ordered alphabetically due to combining items from earlier versions of our surveys without re-lettering them.

Suggested further reading

Atkinson, D. (2010). Extended, embodied cognition and second language acquisition. *Applied Linguistics*, 31(5), 599–622.

Introducing a sociocognitive approach, Atkinson shows how people think and learn, not alone within their own minds, but rather through accessing and connecting with cognitive tools, social practices, and the people around them in their social world. He illustrates the extended and embodied cognition of a young Japanese learner of English interacting with her aunt.

Pritchard, A., & Woollard, J. (2010) *Psychology for the classroom: Constructivism and social learning*. New York: Routledge.

Starting with an overview of social constructivist and other related theories/concepts, this book introduces some empirical evidence of the effect of students' interactions/collaboration, then provides us with varieties of pedagogical approaches and strategies to realize social constructivist-based learning.

Quinn, J. (2010). *Learning communities and imagined social capital: Learning to belong*. New York: Continuum.

Children, youth, and adults of all ages utilize imagined resources – what Quinn calls imagined social capital – to make meaning of their own lives, and their own lives meaningful. Critiquing learning communities as places that exclude rather than include many from education, Quinn explains the power of imagined social capital for individuals to keep learning and find belonging in the real world. She illustrates this with several in-depth studies of marginalized youth from the UK.

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16
Conclusion: Final Remarks

Sarah Mercer, Stephen Ryan, and Marion Williams

Introduction

In compiling this book we have strongly encouraged each author to bring their own perspectives on their respective topic. Our aim is to include a range of theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches that provide an up-to-date and comprehensive picture of thinking about language learning psychology. There are many different ways of understanding and approaching the psychology of the language learning experience and clearly not all questions can be answered using the same approach. However, despite the variety and individuality of the different chapters, some common themes emerge, which are suggestive of the direction in which the field as a whole is moving. In this final chapter, we would like to bring together some of these themes and consider possible future developments in the field.

Looking at interconnections

While encouraging individuality and a diversity of approaches in the writing of each chapter, we were also anxious not to convey the impression that we view psychology in terms of isolated, discrete constructs. One of the first challenges we faced was striking the balance between a need to organize the chapters logically and a wish to highlight the ways in which the various constructs are interlinked. Indeed, one of our principal objectives with this book is to bring together a range of concepts that have often been discussed separately in order to explore their commonality. Several of the contributors discuss the ways in which the various constructs considered in the book are in fact interdependent and function together in combination. For example, Cohen's Chapter 10 on

strategies refers to the "close-knit intersection of styles, strategies, and motivation" in respect to specific L2 tasks. He emphasizes that research can benefit from examining the relations between variables rather than considering each in isolation, and he shows how strategy use only makes sense when considered in combination with other psychological constructs.

Ryan and Mercer (Chapter 6) note that in the past there has been a strong tendency for researchers to isolate and analyse discrete variables. With respect to the concept of mindsets, they argue that it may be more appropriate to consider how mindsets connect with aspects of motivation such as self-efficacy, goal setting, attributions and other specific beliefs. They suggest that mindsets might be more appropriately examined in their entirety rather than by analysing the various component parts in a piecemeal fashion (Robins & Pals, 2002). Similarly, Ushioda (Chapter 5) considers how motivation relates to a person's entire complex system of motivation, behaviours, interactions, and experiences. She invokes a dynamic systems perspective on motivational processes which renders the notion of discrete, individual variables meaningless. As she explains, "processes of motivation, cognition and emotion and their constituent components interact with one another and the developing context, thereby changing and causing change in non-linear and unpredictable ways, as the system as a whole restructures, adapts and evolves."

Related to this, some of the chapters remind us of the dangers of conceptions of causality. When considering affect, MacIntyre and Gregersen (Chapter 8) stress that the interrelations between psychological constructs are interesting, but there is a need to reject simple cause-and-effect models. Instead they consider how variables interact in context-dependent, non-linear ways. In his discussion of personality, Dewaele (Chapter 4) concludes in a similar vein; "no single factor is a fool-proof predictor of success in SLA and we need to map out the myriad of – often unquantifiable – factors that are interlocked."

Interest in looking at combinations of constructs mirrors concerns that have been expressed elsewhere recently. For example, Dörnyei (2010) points to some of the advantages of researching conglomerates of factors in combination rather than looking at them in isolation. In particular, he suggests taking a tripartite view which looks at combinations of cognitive, affective, and motivational factors. In sum, these chapters add to this call for research to focus on combinations of psychological factors in a way that captures the complexity of these interlocking systems.

Looking at context

Another dimension highlighted by several of the contributors is a recognition of how psychological constructs interact with and are mediated by contexts, the experiences of an individual, and the nature of the interactions an individual is involved in. Many of the contributors express a need to consider the dialectical relationship between individuals and their various personal and social contexts. For example, Morita (Chapter 3) reports on a study which focuses on the situated nature of a learner's identity and the way in which this is constructed through classroom interactions and socialization processes. She argues in favour of a model of identities as situated, which views them not as pre-determined but as dynamically constructed.

Several of the chapters also expand the notion of context. In the past there has been a danger in some studies of considering context as a fixed, static, unidimensional entity (Funder, 2001). However, some of the chapters indicate a growing recognition of the multidimensional and dynamic nature of contexts. For instance, in her discussion of self-concept, Mercer (Chapter 2) extends understandings of 'situatedness' to include a consideration of multiple levels of context, interpersonal interactions and temporal dimensions. As a part of situatedness, she also includes intra-personal considerations of self in relation to other aspects of the individual's psychology, cognition, and the physical self. Similarly, Ushioda (Chapter 5) also emphasizes the social, physical, and temporal nature of contexts and the need to consider their multidimensional nature when considering learners' motivation. The links between temporal social contexts are discussed by Murphey et al. (Chapter 15), who highlight the importance of learners' interpretations of their own pasts and visions of their futures in shaping their approaches to working and cooperating with others as part of a learning group. They remind us that a considerable amount of human activity, and especially language learning activity, takes place in groups, and we can only truly understand people's current interactions with other group members when we understand how they interpret previous experiences and envisage themselves in the future. The interconnected nature of the relationships between the individual and the learning group is a point further reinforced by Woodrow (Chapter 13), who observes that individual goal orientations can be influenced and shaped by wider classroom or school goals.

A related concept evident in the chapters is the domain-specificity of constructs that may have different characteristics in different domains,

for example, anxiety (MacIntyre & Gregersen, Chapter 8) or self-concept (Mercer, Chapter 2). In other words, anxiety for foreign language learning is different from anxiety for maths; and anxiety for speaking differs from that for writing. This suggests that research is also needed that examines the possible effects of specific parameters such as the unique character of particular languages or differences across different skill domains within a language.

In general, there is strong consensus across all the chapters that psychological constructs cannot meaningfully be abstracted from their multiple contexts, and that all research needs to attend to their situated nature. In the future, research in the field could aim for a greater understanding of the multidimensional nature of contexts, and the ways in which contexts interrelate with individuals, groups, and communities of learners.

Looking at dynamics

Several contributors also note a growing interest in the dynamic nature of psychological constructs and the way in which these can vary across contexts and also time. As such, some of the chapters adopt more process-oriented perspectives which concentrate on dynamics and change. For example, MacIntyre and Gregersen (Chapter 8) take a process-oriented view of anxiety and show how this fluctuates through highs and lows over different timescales. They suggest that there is a need for research methods that are especially suited to studying ongoing processes as they change over time. Yashima (Chapter 9) also notes in her consideration of willingness to communicate (WTC) that more recent studies have begun to focus on the situational and dynamic aspects of the construct as well as the moment-to-moment dynamics of WTC. This suggests that the field of language learning psychology would benefit from investigations into any changes over time and place in order to better appreciate the variability of constructs.

Looking at complexity

Essentially, all of the strands emerging from the chapters appear to indicate a development towards complexity perspectives. The key themes that arise, involving combinations of variables, the situated nature of constructs, and their dynamic nature, are all themes found in complexity theories. As such, it may be possible to conceive of language learning psychology as representing a complex dynamic system, an approach consistent with developments elsewhere in applied linguistics

(Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008). Ushioda, in Chapter 5, defines this as being "an evolving system containing multiple interconnected components, whose adaptive behaviour emerges organically from the interactions of these components."

Dörnyei (2009, p. 194) argues that learner individual differences "are not stable but show salient temporal and situational variation, and are not monolithic but are complex constellations made up of different parts that interact with each other and the environment synchronically and diachronically." He concludes that the traditional view of individual differences research needs to move beyond the examination of the impact of any one variable to a consideration of "the way by which the complex system of all the relevant factors works together." He argues that research into individual differences may best be reframed from a dynamic systems perspective. The chapters in this book certainly support this view and we would suggest that future research in the field of language learning psychology could profit from exploring the potential of complexity perspectives.

Looking at methodological diversity

One aspect of this book that clearly reveals the vitality of the field is the range of methodological approaches presented. It is apparent that the challenges of addressing some of the more recent theoretical issues are encouraging a more creative approach to research, which entails a greater openness to innovative research design and methods. The chapters in this book report on questionnaires and quantitative analyses, qualitative interviews, narrative studies, case studies, and mixed methods, as well as some lesser known approaches such as Q methodology (Pemberton & Cooker, Chapter 14) or the idiodynamic method (MacIntyre & Gregersen, Chapter 8). As we stated at the outset, we feel that there is no single way to understand language learning psychology or to ask questions about it. While psychology research has traditionally been dominated by quantitative studies, it is evident from these chapters that there are now more studies that consider the situated nature of constructs, and these have generated a wave of more qualitatively oriented studies. Indeed, increased sensitivity to context has also had an impact on quantitative studies. For example, when constructing questionnaires, both Hsieh (Chapter 7) and Griffiths (Chapter 11) discuss the need to adapt such research tools in ways that are sensitive to particular learners and contexts.

With respect to the emerging complexity perspectives in the field, research will need to engage with a variety of different methods,

as one method alone is unlikely to yield sufficiently complex and comprehensive answers. MacIntyre and Gregersen (Chapter 8) suggest that it would be helpful to combine qualitative and quantitative approaches in mixed method studies in investigating affect. As Yashima (Chapter 9) explains in respect to research on WTC, as research moves away from the quantitative origins of the educational psychology field, there will be a need for considerable methodological innovation and diversification.

As editors we have been guided by our belief that, in order to meet the challenges posed by increasingly complex perspectives on psychology, researchers will need to be creative in developing a range of methodologies; this echoes Dörnyei's (2007, p. 277) observation that "maintaining an open and flexible frame of mind and remaining as free as possible of paradigmatic dogmas" is becoming a prerequisite for good research. Of course, this is easier said than done. Few researchers are fortunate enough to have the opportunity to develop the necessary expertise in a wide range of research techniques. For this reason, as others have commented (MacIntyre, Noels, & Moore, 2010), we envisage a future research environment characterized by collaboration, as researchers pool resources in order to apply the most appropriate tools to their immediate research interests.

Looking at future directions for research

Considering the issues raised in the individual chapters, we would like to offer some suggestions of possible directions for the field in the coming years. In terms of the focus of research, we envisage a growth in studies exploring the complexity of language learning psychology, for example, by looking at the interrelations between different dimensions of psychology and considering the potential dynamics of these relationships. The field would also benefit from further studies exploring the situated nature of language learner psychology by extending notions of situatedness and engaging with the multidimensionality of contexts and domains. In line with such contextualized understandings, we also feel that research investigating collective psychologies beyond the individual, for example, in terms of relationships, groups, and communities of practice, will have much to contribute to broadening our understandings of relationships between individuals and others and the role of group psychologies.

As has been discussed above, in order to meet the empirical challenges of investigating this complexity, situatedness and dynamism,

researchers will need to develop a broad range of research methodologies and be receptive to methodological and paradigmatic diversity. Finally, we would also seek to encourage more classroom-based research with a view to enhancing pedagogical practice and indeed hope that all research in the field will explicitly consider the practical relevance of their findings.

Looking at pedagogy

One of our concerns has been to reflect on the implications of the research and theoretical models provided in the chapters for language teaching. As an applied discipline, applied linguists must consider the relevance of their findings for practice. Indeed, Griffiths (Chapter 11) poses a question in respect to styles as to how an understanding of a psychological construct can best be applied to enhance learning and teaching. We would argue that this is a key question that all researchers must ask. MacIntyre and Gregersen (Chapter 8) make an important point when they draw attention to the tendency in much of the academic literature to make general, well-meaning suggestions for teaching that are not translated into action. In this final section, we conclude with what may be the most important issue of all: how to convert the theories and research into action.

One framework that we feel offers great potential for incorporating psychological insights into pedagogical practice is the theory of mediation or mediating learning experiences (MLE) proposed by Reuven Feuerstein (Feuerstein, Klein, & Tannenbaum, 1991; Williams & Burden, 1999). One of the basic tenets of his theory is a fundamental belief that anyone, of any age, can become a fully effective learner. If we, as teachers, do not begin with such a belief about the plasticity of the human mind, we will set limits on our expectations of our learners. Another key dimension of Feuerstein's approach is that, like Vygotsky and Bruner, he believes that an individual's learning is shaped by interactions with other significant people in their surroundings. He refers to these as 'mediators' and the experiences they provide as 'mediated learning experiences.'

Feuerstein's theory of mediation is essentially concerned with empowering learners with the skills they need to tackle problems and function effectively and independently as learners. He identifies a number of different ways in which a teacher or other adult can mediate. The first three are all concerned with significance of the learning task. The teacher needs to help learners to be aware of why they are carrying out the

task, how it will help them beyond the immediate time and place, and exactly what needs to be done. In this way, learners approach tasks in a focused and self-directed way. Teachers can further enhance the significance of the learning experience if they encourage and develop in their learners: a sense of competence; an ability to control and regulate their own learning, thinking and actions (see also Anderson, Chapter 12); goal setting skills; an internal need to respond to challenge; and, an ability to recognize and assess change in themselves. Finally, teachers need to also encourage cooperation, respect for individuality of learners, and a sense of belonging to a community.

We feel that this framework offers a sound basis for pedagogical practice that reflects many of the insights offered in the chapters in respect to learner psychology. To conclude, we would now like to offer further concrete suggestions and advice for practitioners. While each of the contributors provides implications specific to their particular construct, there is considerable overlap, and the resulting list is a compilation of recommendations given by the different authors. Rather than seeing this as a pedagogical recipe list, we hope that teachers will consider the relevance of these for their own learning situations.

- Try to create a positive emotional environment, a sense of security and belonging to a community, with positive group dynamics and interactions, where learners assume a central role, collaborate, take responsibility, and are respected as individuals.
- Help learners develop a positive, yet realistic, self-concept and positive self-efficacy beliefs, in other words, feelings of competence in respect to tasks and language learning in general.
- Encourage a sense that through hard work and practice anyone can improve their abilities in a foreign language.
- Foster internal feelings of control; help learners to see success as due to factors over which they have control, and help them to take control.
- Teach learners strategies for developing their language skills independently by integrating strategy instruction with language instruction.
- Recognize that individuals are different. They will have different personalities and also use different learning styles, and teachers need to allow them to use a style that suits their individual preferences, while retaining some style flexibility.
- Help learners to develop metacognitive awareness. Foster the ability in learners to plan, to set their own targets for improvement, to assess their own learning, and reflect on their learning.

- Support learners in setting their own language learning goals, engage them in negotiating group goals, and foster mastery goal orientations, that is, the wish to increase knowledge or skill, rather than to look better than classmates.

As Pemberton and Cooker aptly point out in Chapter 14, all of these points need to become a part of the classroom and whole-school culture. Thus, the school principal is a key figure in facilitating the development of an educational culture that allows for and promotes such approaches to learning.

Final note

As we outlined in Chapter 1, we share a belief that the most effective way to improve pedagogy is through an understanding of the thoughts, motives, and emotions of learners. We hope that this book has inspired you to engage with this field and/or incorporate psychological insights into your teaching practice.

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Glossary

Academic discourse socialization: a process by which newcomers to a particular academic community become increasingly competent in the respective ways of knowing, speaking, and writing as they participate in various practices of the specific academic community.

Affective variables: a term covering the non-cognitive factors that may influence second language acquisition, which are connected to emotions and feelings (these may include boredom, anxiety, shyness, embarrassment, or low self-esteem). The dividing line between cognitive and affective variables is not sharp and in practice the two are intertwined.

Affordances: the perceived resources and opportunities for learning in contexts with which the learner can interact and engage.

Agency: the capacity to act within the world, influenced by what one perceives as being available in one's surroundings.

Ambivert: an individual exhibiting tendencies of both extraverts and introverts. An ambivert may simultaneously enjoy social interaction while valuing time spent alone.

Anxiety: a feeling of nervousness and unease that can have physical manifestations, such as shortness of breath or increased heart rate.

Attributional feedback: providing learners with information about the causes or reasons for successes and failures.

Attributions: a learner's explanations of the reasons for particular events, such as perceived success and failure experiences.

Belongingness: a fundamental psychological need to feel like a valued member of a social group.

Big Five personality dimensions: five broad personality dimensions that have been widely used to describe human personality: extraversion-introversion; neuroticism; openness to experience; conscientiousness; agreeableness.

Cognitive style: refers to individual preferences in how individuals perceive, remember and organize information.

Collaborative agency: the capacity of pairs or groups to act meaningfully and effectively in the world.

Community of practice: a set of relations among a group of people sustained by their mutual engagement in specific practices or activities in a specific domain. A community of practice is also defined by ongoing negotiations

among its members with varied degrees of expertise (e.g., newcomers, old-timers).

Complex dynamic system or dynamic systems theory (DST): an evolving system containing multiple interconnected components, whose adaptive behaviour emerges organically from the interactions of these components.

Conscientiousness: one of the superordinate traits in the 'Big Five' personality model, with conscientious individuals tending to be both hard-working and reliable.

Consciousness: the sensations, perceptions, ideas, attitudes, and feelings that an individual is aware of at a given time.

Controllability: refers to the extent to which an individual feels the cause of the outcome can be controlled or not.

Domain: represents a field or area. A specific level of measurement is not implied as it can be as specific as a language skill area or as broad as a subject level.

Dynamic systems theory: (see complex dynamic systems).

Embodied cognition: cognitions which are triggered or stimulated by, or co-occur with, body movement, gestures, routines, and so on.

Emotional contagion: the contagious nature of emotions, based on the idea that emotions can spread through social interaction.

Emotional intelligence: an ability to recognize the meaning of emotions and their relationships, and an ability to reason and problem-solve on the basis of them. Emotional intelligence is involved in the capacity to perceive emotions, assimilate emotion-related feelings, understand the information of those emotions, and manage them.

Entity theory: a belief that certain aspects of the human condition, such as intelligence or ability, are fixed within the individual and cannot be changed or developed.

Extended cognition: cognition that may be created, stimulated, or aided by elements external to the individual.

Extraversion-introversion: one of the 'Big Five' personality dimensions; it is largely concerned with the extent to which individuals derive satisfaction from activities inside or outside the self. Extraverts tend to be more outgoing, whereas introverts often appear more reflective.

Extrinsic motivation: the kind of motivation where one engages in an activity as a means to some other outcome or reward.

Extrovert: an alternative spelling of 'extravert.' In the psychology literature 'extravert' and its variants are usually preferred.

Foreign language (classroom) anxiety: the anxiety experienced when learning or using a foreign language: a term that encompasses the feelings of worry and negative, fear-related emotions associated with learning or using a language that is not an individual's mother tongue. (See also anxiety.)

Frame of reference: set of beliefs and perceptions in a context that an individual uses to interpret or think about a construct.

Group dynamics: the interrelations between individuals within groups and how these interrelations affect the formation, performance, and dissolution of these groups.

Ideal L2 self: the L2-specific facet of one's ideal self, that is the possible future self one desires to become as a second language user.

Identity: individuals' sense of who they are in relation to a particular social context or community of practice. Since identity is constructed interactionally across time and space, it can be multiple and fluid.

Identity negotiation: individuals' attempts to construct or change their roles, positions, or sense of self within a particular social context or community of practice.

Imagined communities: a term that, within the field of second language education, is used to describe how learners aspire to belong to or participate in certain communities, which may exist entirely in the imagination of the learner.

Imitative learning: the natural capacity to imitate what others are doing and to learn behaviours through doing so.

Incremental theory: a belief that aspects of the human condition, such as intelligence, can be developed by the individual through focused effort or practice.

Instrumental orientation: reasons for learning the L2 pertaining to the potential pragmatic benefits and value of being proficient in the language.

Integrativeness: refers to a positive interpersonal/affective disposition towards an L2 group and the desire to interact with members of that community. It also includes the desire to identify with that community.

Intrinsic motivation: the kind of motivation where one engages in an activity because it is inherently interesting, enjoyable or personally rewarding.

Investment: the degree to which an individual is prepared to 'invest' time, energy and resources into learning a foreign language in the expectation of gaining some 'return' in the form of social capital.

L2 self-confidence: the amount of confidence an individual perceives him/herself as having when using the L2. Self-confidence can be either a short-term 'state' or a more enduring 'trait.'

Language learner strategies: thoughts and actions consciously chosen and operationalized by language learners to assist them in carrying out a range of tasks from the onset of learning to the most advanced levels of target-language performance.

Lay theories: the 'implicit' or 'folk' beliefs and ideas that are used to inform the decisions people make in their everyday lives.

Learned helplessness: a state in which learners, through repeated past experience, have come to believe that they are incapable of accomplishing tasks and that they have little control in affecting the outcome. This feeling often leads to feelings of hopelessness and passivity.

Learner autonomy: a readiness to take control of one's own learning, which involves the ability to act independently and in cooperation with others in the service of one's own learning purposes.

Learning styles: individual preferences and habits regarding learning and cognition.

Legitimacy: status that allows newcomers and other members access to community resources and opportunities for learning or active participation in community practices. Individuals may be granted different degrees of legitimacy due to social relations of power.

Locus of causality: refers to the extent to which the individual feels that a certain outcome is due to internal or external causes.

Mastery goal orientation: (also task goal orientation) this refers to a reason for learning informed by a desire to develop competence in the learning area and reflects an intrinsic interest in the subject and in learning.

Metacognition: awareness of one's cognitive processes, also referred to as thinking about one's thinking

Motivational cognitions: beliefs, goals, self-perceptions, and thinking patterns that shape engagement in an activity.

Native language linguistic coding difficulties: the difficulties a native speaker of a language experiences in using the language to code information.

Near peer role modelling: role modelling of people similar to ourselves in some way, such as age or ethnicity. It is usually considered psychologically easier than modelling people who are perceived as being dissimilar.

Neuroticism-emotional stability: one of the 'Big Five' personality dimensions, based around the individual's tendencies to experience negative emotions, such as anger or anxiety.

Non-verbal cues: information gained from the context and manner in which an interaction between people takes place that is not based on actual language used, for example, vocal inflections, the pace and volume of speech, gestures, mannerisms, tone of voice, body positioning, and movement.

Ought-to L2 self: the L2-specific facet of one's ought-to self, that is the possible future self one feels one ought to become to meet others' expectations and avoid potentially negative consequences.

Perceived competence: individuals' perceptions of their ability to do something or achieve a specific goal.

Perfectionism: a belief or tendency to want to be perfect. With respect to language learning, perfectionist students would have an implausibly strong desire to speak flawlessly, with no grammatical or pronunciation errors.

Performance goals: an orientation to engage in tasks to demonstrate one's competence or ability in relation to others.

Personality: a broad concept which is usually defined in terms of an individual's personal, emotional, and/or behavioural traits.

Person-in-context relational view: the view that in order to more fully understand a person (or what they say), we need to understand the context (where, when, with whom, etc.) in which the person is situated.

Positionality: positions that individuals occupy or roles that they play in a particular social context or community of practice. This construct is often used interchangeably with related constructs such as roles, membership, and positioning.

Positive psychology: a field of psychology devoted to understanding positive experiences including personal well-being, contentment, and satisfaction in the past; hope and optimism for the future; and flow and happiness in the present.

Possible selves: future-projected views of the self that can involve both desirable and undesirable images and may induce behaviour directed respectively towards or away from these images.

Present community of imagination (PCOI): the people and artefacts around you at any time and place which contribute to/mediate (if you are open to it) your ability to imagine and think.

Remembering versus experiencing selves: the 'remembering self' draws conclusions about the personal implications of events some time after the event is over. The 'experiencing self' takes into account or monitors reactions to events as they happen.

Risk-taking: a lower-order personality trait linked to tendencies to engage in or avoid behaviour that may have possibly dangerous or harmful consequences.

Self-concept: a person's beliefs about themselves in a specific domain including cognitive and affective dimensions.

Self-determination theory: this motivation theory identifies two main orientations: an intrinsic orientation driven by an internal reason for engaging in an activity and an extrinsic orientation driven by an external reason.

Self-directed learning: learning that is planned, carried out and evaluated under the learner's own control, with or without help from others.

Self-efficacy: an individual's perception of or belief about his/her capabilities to complete a specific task successfully.

Self-esteem: a person's global sense of worth.

Self-regulation: the process by which the learner activates learning processes and regulates their own learning such as setting goals, attending to instruction, using memory strategies, using resources, managing time, and seeking assistance as needed.

Social turn: the general SLA research community's shift (following other social sciences) from research focusing on individuals in isolation to one that looks at individuals in context and within groups as well as how knowledge and skills are co-constructed through socialization processes.

Sociocognitive: an approach to psychology that attempts to integrate both cognitive and sociocultural factors.

Sociocultural theory (SCT): a theory concerned with how individual minds develop in social groups and internalize the tools and practices afforded by their environment through activities.

Strategies: (see language learner strategies).

Task goal orientation: (see mastery goal orientation).

Tolerance/intolerance of ambiguity: a lower-order personality trait linked to perception and dealing with how an individual responds to and deals with ambiguous stimuli.

Willingness to communicate: the readiness to initiate communication, especially speaking, when free to do so.

Some useful research terms

The following section contains many of the technical research terms found in this book. It is in no way intended to represent a comprehensive or definitive inventory, but is rather meant as a helpful, supplementary resource. The whole area of research methods and techniques can be highly controversial, with interpretations and definitions of specific terms varying greatly. We have endeavoured to be as neutral and uncontroversial as possible in the definitions we provide here.

Attitude/motivation test battery (AMTB): a well-established questionnaire developed by Gardner (1985), which has been widely used in L2 motivation research.

Bias: statistics are said to be biased when they systematically fail to measure a given parameter. Individual errors caused by chance are inevitable and should be cancelled out across a large enough sample; errors caused by bias will not.

Case studies: case-study research tends to focus on generating rich, highly detailed descriptive accounts. Cases may be individuals or contexts or groups of individuals. Such research is often, although not exclusively, qualitative and longitudinal.

Correlational analysis: statistical analysis that examines the relationship between one variable and another. This is usually reported according to the strength of the relationship from +1 to –1 and supported by a level of significance (usually $p = <.05$). The closer to +/–1 the coefficient is the stronger the relationship, with 0 representing no relationship between the two variables analysed.

Covariance: tells us how much two variables change together. (See also variance and structural equation modelling.)

Cross-sectional research: this is research that utilizes a one-off data collection technique such as a questionnaire, thus providing a snapshot of responses to questions at a given moment in time.

Dependent variable: this is the target variable, the variable that 'depends' on other factors. Experiments are usually designed to measure the relationships between variables the researcher can control, independent variables, and the effect they have on the dependent variable. (See also independent variable.)

Ethnography (or ethnographic approach): a research methodology that aims for a holistic understanding of a specific sociocultural context or group. Ethnographic research is normally conducted over an extended period of time and often uses observations and interviews as its primary data collection methods.

Factor analysis: is a statistical procedure used to reduce the number of variables submitted to the initial analysis to a few essential core factors.

Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale: a 33-item Likert-scale instrument developed by Horwitz et al. (1986) that has been widely used to research foreign language anxiety.

Grounded theory: an approach to qualitative research that allows theories to emerge from an analysis of data, rather than using data to confirm or refute hypotheses.

Independent variable: this is a variable that is not changed by other variables measured by a research instrument. For example, if factors contributing to test performance were being investigated, then actual test performance would be the dependent variable and factors contributing to that performance, such as age and gender, would be the independent variables.

Mixed-method study (or research): research involving both qualitative and quantitative data, often using combinations of different data sources and forms of analyses.

Myers-Briggs type indicator: probably the most widely employed personality test. This instrument indicates personality type across four implicit dichotomies: Extraversion-Introversion, Sensing-Intuition, Thinking-Feeling and, Judging-Perceiving. Personality type is indicated through the various permutations of preferences allowed by the test.

Normal distribution: many statistical techniques assume that the distribution of scores obtained for a given variable is normal. By normal, it is meant that the highest frequency of scores occur around the midpoint with higher and lower scores occurring less frequently. A simple visual representation of normal distribution is the Bell Curve.

Psychometric properties: these tell us how accurately measurement instruments, such as questionnaires, tests, and personality assessments, measure the construct they are intended to measure.

Q methodology: a specific research methodology that has its own precise procedure combining qualitative and quantitative elements based on factor analysis. It is used to reduce the number of overall viewpoints in a systematic way.

Random assignment: is used in experimental design to ensure that any differences between groups examined are not systematic but simply due to chance. Participants may be assigned to experiment groups through the use of simple procedures such as tossing a coin or the drawing of lots.

Rasch Model: this is a mathematical model which determines the relationships between test-takers' ability and difficulty in test items.

Stimulated recall interviews: post-event interviews where participants are provided with a stimulus (typically a recording of the event) as a focus for their retrospective reflections.

Structural equation modelling (SEM): a powerful analytical technique that is used to test hypothesized relationships among multiple constructs and variables by examining variance and covariance among the observed variables. Major applications of structural equation modelling include causal modelling and path analyses as well as confirmatory factor analyses.

Triangulation: using a variety of data-gathering techniques, research methods and analytical approaches and/or sources, typically a combination of quantitative and qualitative measures, to increase confidence in the interpretation of the results of the research.

Variance: tells us to what extent values in a dataset differ from the mean. The most common expression of variance reported in research is standard deviation. (See also variance.)

Verbal report: consists of three kinds of data collection approaches: think-aloud, self-observation, and self-report. Think-aloud is characterized by the stream-of-consciousness disclosure of thought processes while the information is being attended to. Self-observation entails the inspection of specific language behaviour, either introspectively (i.e., within 20 seconds of the mental event) or retrospectively.

Author Index

Subject Index