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CHAPTER 7

Researching motivation: from integrativeness to the ideal L2 self

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Language teachers frequently use the term 'motivation' when they describe successful or unsuccessful learners. This reflects our intuitive belief that during the lengthy and often tedious process of mastering a foreign/second language (L2), the learner's enthusiasm, commitment and persistence are key determinants of success or failure. Indeed, in the vast majority of cases, learners with sufficient motivation *can* achieve a working knowledge of an L2, *regardless of* their language aptitude, whereas without sufficient motivation even the brightest learners are unlikely to persist long enough to attain any really useful language ('you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink').

Because of the central importance attached to it by practitioners and researchers alike, L2 motivation has been the target of a great deal of research in Applied Linguistics during the past decades. In this chapter I describe a major theoretical shift that has recently been transforming the landscape of motivation research: the move from the traditional conceptualization of motivation in terms of an *integrative/instrumental dichotomy* to the recent conceptualization of motivation as being part of the learner's self system, with the motivation to learn an L2 being closely associated with the learner's *'ideal L2 self'*. For space limitations I cannot provide a detailed review of the relevant literature (for recent summaries, see Dornyei 2005; Dornyei and Ushioda 2009); instead, my focus will be on illustrating how such a major paradigm shift has emerged through a combination of theoretical considerations and empirical research findings.

The starting point: 'Integrativeness' as a motivational factor

There has been a long-lived (and inaccurate) understanding in the L2 profession that language learning motivation can be divided into two main dimensions: *integrative motivation* and *instrumental motivation.* The former refers to the desire to learn an L2 of a valued community so that one can communicate with members of the community and sometimes even to become like them. Instrumental motivation, on the other hand, is related to the concrete benefits that language proficiency might bring about (e.g. career opportunities, increased salary). Thus, broadly speaking, it was thought that we learn a language either because we like it and its speakers or because we think it will be useful for us.

The integrative/instrumental distinction has been attributed (again somewhat inaccurately) to the influential work of Canadian social psychologist Robert Gardner (1985, 2001), who did indeed introduce these terms but whose theoretical motivation construct was much more elaborate than this simplistic duality. Furthermore, Gardner hardly ever discussed the nature and impact of instrumental motivation, because he was

almost exclusively interested in the interpersonal/emotional aspect of motivation that he termed 'integrativeness'. He characterized this motivational dimension as follows:

> Integrativeness reflects a genuine interest in learning the second language in order to come closer to the other language community. At one level, this implies an openness to, and respect for other cultural groups and ways of life. In the extreme, this might involve complete identification with the community (and possibly even withdrawal from one's original group), but more commonly it might well involve integration within both communities.
>
> (Gardner 2001: 5)

The concept of integrativeness/integrative motivation has become a popular and much researched concept in L2 research, but starting in the 1990s an increasing number of scholars began to raise issues about how generalizable the term was. In a multicultural setting such as Montreal, where Gardner first developed his theory, it made sense to talk about potential 'integration', but in learning situations where a foreign language is taught only as a school subject without any direct contact with its speakers (e.g. teaching English or French in Hungary, China, Japan or other typical 'foreign language learning' contexts), the 'integrative' metaphor simply did not make sense. In such environments what exactly would be - to quote Gardner (2001) - 'the other language community' that the learner would want to 'get closer to'? In many language learning situations, and especially with the learning of world languages such as English or French, it is not at all clear who 'owns' the L2, and this lack of a specific L2 community undermines Gardner's theoretical concept of integrativeness. This view has been shared by several scholars worldwide (e.g. Coetzee-Van Rooy 2006; Lamb 2004; Yashima 2000; for a review, see Dörnyei 2005), and, as a result, over the past decade I have been trying to find a broader interpretation of the notion that goes beyond the literal meaning of the verb 'integrate' but which also builds on the relevant knowledge and considerable body of research that we have accumulated in the past.

Towards the 'L2 Motivational Self System'

In 2005, I proposed a new motivation construct (Dornyei 2005) - the 'L2 Motivational Self System' - that builds upon the foundations laid by Gardner (1985) but which at the same time broadens the scope of the theory to make it applicable in diverse language learning environments in our globalized world. The proposed model, which attempts to synthesize a number of influential new approaches in the field (e.g. Ushioda 2001; Noels 2003), has grown out of a combination of empirical research findings and theoretical considerations (for a detailed description, see Dornyei, 2009). Let us look at these more closely, starting with the former.

Empirical findings pointing to the need to reinterpret Integrativeness

Over the past 15 years I have been heading a research team in Hungary with the objective of carrying out a longitudinal survey amongst teenage language learners by administering an attitude/motivation questionnaire at regular intervals so that we can gauge the changes in the population's international orientation. So far three successive waves of data collections have been completed (in 1993, 1999 and 2004) involving over 13,000 learners (for a detailed summary, see Dornyei et al. 2006). The survey

questionnaire targeted attitudes towards five target languages: English, German, French, Italian and Russian. It was originally developed in collaboration with one of Robert Gardner's closest associates, Richard Clement, and therefore integrativeness and instrumentality had a prominent place in it, but we also measured several other attitudinal/motivational dimensions, such as *Direct contact with L2 speakers* (i.e. attitudes towards actually meeting L2 speakers and travelling to their country), *Cultural interest* (i.e. the appreciation of cultural products associated with the particular L2 and conveyed by the media; e.g. films, TV programmes, magazines and pop music), *Vitality of L2community* (i.e. the perceived importance and wealth of the L2 communities in question), *Milieu* (i.e. the general perception of the importance of foreign languages in the learners' school context and in friends' and parents' views) and finally *Linguistic self-confidence* (i.e. a confident, anxiety-free belief that the mastery of an L2 is well within the learner's means).

In an analysis of the first two waves of the survey (Dornyei and Csizér 2002), we computed correlations of the various motivation components with a criterion measure, *Language choice*, which referred to the degree of the learners' desire to learn a particular L2 in the next school year. Correlation is a conceptually straightforward statistical procedure: it allows us to look at two variables and evaluate the strength and direction of their relationship or association with each other. To do so, we compute a 'correlation coefficient' between the two variables, which can range from -1 to +1, with a high correlation indicating a positive relationship, zero correlation no relationship, and a

	English/UK		English/US		German		French		Italian		Russian	
	1993	1999	1993	1999	1993	1999	1993	1999	1993	1999	1993	1999
Integrativeness	.43*	.33*	.43*	.33*	.47*	.43*	.42*	.44*	.43*	.43*	.25*	.32*
Instrumentality	.28*	.25*	.28*	.25*	.30*	.30*	.27*	.30*	.29*	.31*	.20*	.21*
Attitudes towards L2 speakers/community	.23*	.16*	.17*	.16*	.33*	.30*	.31*	.33*	.32*	.31*	.12*	.21*
Vitality of the community	.12*	.09*	.12*	.09*	.11*	.12*	.13*	.16*	.16*	.18*	.07*	.10*
Cultural interest	.14*	.09*	.12*	.10*	.20*	.17*	.20*	.21*	.26*	.23*	.12*	.17*
Milieu	.12*	.12*	.12*	.12*	.01	-.00	.03	.04	.01	-.00	-.05*	-.10*
Linguistic self-confidence	.07*	.06*	.07*	.06*	-.00	.01	.03	-.02	-.01	-.02	-.02	-.04
Multiple correlations	.44*	.34*	.44*	.34*	.49*	.45*	.44*	.46*	.45*	.45*	.27*	.34*

* $p < .001$

Table 7. 1 Correlations between the attitudinal/motivational **scales** and *Language choice* in the Dornyei and Csizer (2002) study

negative correlation an inverse relationship (Dornyei 2007). Thus, for example, learners' IQ is expected to have a high positive correlation with their mathematics grades and zero correlation with, say, the love of chocolate. Table 7.1 presents the results.

As can be seen in Table 7.1, three variables stand out consistently across the languages and the data points: *Integrativeness, Instrumentality* and *Attitudes towards L2 speakers/community.* This was, actually, to be expected given our previous understanding of L2 attitudes and motivation, but what surprised us was that when we computed multiple correlations (i.e. correlations between language choice and all the motivational variables together), the joint correlation was hardly higher than the correlation associated only with *Integrativeness.* For example, the correlation of the choice of English (UK) in 1993 was .43 with *Integrativeness and* .44 with all the altitudinal variables together. This suggested that *Integrativeness* played a principal role in determining the extent of a learner's overall motivational disposition.

To test the prominent position of *Integrativeness,* Dornyei et al. (2006) submitted the data from all the three waves of the survey to a more complex statistical procedure, *structural equation modelling* (SEM). SEM is very useful to interpret the relationship among several variables within a single framework. Its strength is that we can specify directional paths (i.e. cause-effect relationships) amongst the variables and SEM then produces various goodness-of-fit indices to evaluate the feasibility of the whole model. In conducting the analysis, we took each language and each year separately (so we computed separate models for, say, German in 1993 and French in 2004), but the various models converged and with minor variations produced the same overall result. Figure 7.1 presents the schematic representation of the final construct.

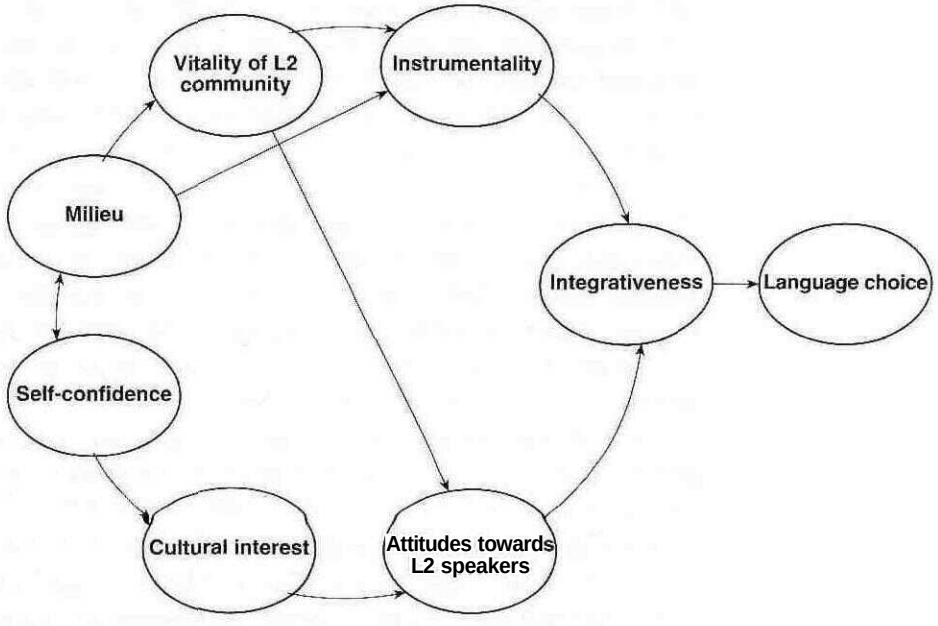

Figure 7.1 Schematic representation of the structural **equation model in Dornyei et** al.'s (2006) **study**

The final model that emerged from our study, presented in Figure 7.1, confirms our earlier observation based on correlation analysis that *Integrativeness* plays a key role in L2 motivation, mediating the effects of all the other attitudinal/motivational variables on the criterion measure *Language choice* (and we obtained exactly the same results with another criterion measure, *Intended effort to study the L2*). Curiously, the immediate antecedents of this latent variable were *Attitudes towards L2 speakers/community* and *Instrumentality*; thus, the three variables that the correlations in Table 7.1 highlighted emerged as the central motivational components in the SEM model as well, and the model also gave us an indication about how these variables related to each other and to the criterion measure. What is more, this was a very consistent finding because it applied to all the different target languages and all the three waves of our survey. The only problem was that what we found did not make much theoretical sense: 'Integrativeness' turned out to be the principal motivation factor in an environment where 'integrating' was not very meaningful (since there was nothing really to integrate into) and, furthermore, integrativeness was closely associated with two very different variables: faceless pragmatic incentives and personal attitudes towards members of the L2 community. It was clear that we needed a new theory to accommodate these findings.

Theoretical considerations

Parallel to conducting the empirical research outlined above, I became familiar with an intriguing new theoretical approach in psychology that looked particularly promising with regard to applying it to L2 motivation: the conceptualization *of possible selves.* First introduced by Markus and Nurius (1986), the concept of the possible self represents an individual's ideas of what they *might* become, what they *would like* to become and what they are *afraid of* becoming. That is, possible selves are specific representations of one's self in future states, involving thoughts, images and senses, and are in many ways the manifestations of one's goals and aspiration. From a motivational point of view, two types of possible selves - the ideal self and the ought self - seemed particularly relevant (Higgins 1987). The former refers to the representation of the attributes that someone would ideally like to possess (i.e. representation of hopes, aspirations or wishes), whereas the latter refers to the attributes that one believes one ought to possess (i.e. a representation of someone's sense of duty, obligations or responsibilities) and which therefore may bear little resemblance to desires or wishes. The motivational aspect of these self-guides was explained by Higgins's (1987, 1998) *self-discrepancy theory,* postulating that motivation involves the desire for people to reduce the discrepancy between their actual and ideal/ought selves.

This self framework not only made intuitive sense to me but it also seemed to offer a good explanation of our Hungarian findings. Looking at 'integrativeness' from the self perspective, the concept can be conceived of as the L2-specific facet of one's ideal self. If our ideal self is associated with the mastery of an L2, that is, if the person that we would like to become is proficient in the L2, we can be described in Gardner's (1985) terminology as having an integrative disposition. Thus, the central theme of the emerging new theory was the equation of the motivational dimension that has

traditionally been interpreted as 'integrativeness/integrative motivation' with the *Ideal L2 Self.*

Looking back at Figure 7.1, please recall that our Hungarian data showed that the immediate antecedents of the Ideal L2 Self in the model were *Attitudes towards the L2 speakers/community* and *Instrumentality.* Does this make sense? Yes it does: with regard to *Attitudes towards the L2 speakers/community,* we must realize that the actual L2 speakers are the closest parallels to a person's idealized L2-speaking self, which suggests that the more positive our disposition towards these L2 speakers, the more attractive our idealized L2 self. Or, to turn this equation around, it is difficult to imagine that we can have a vivid Ideal L2 Self if the L2 is spoken by a community that we despise. With regard to *Instrumentality,* because the ideal language self is a cognitive representation of all the incentives associated with L2 mastery, it is naturally also linked to professional competence that often requires the knowledge of the L2. Thus, to put it broadly, in our idealized image of ourselves we may want to be not only personally agreeable but also professionally successful.

We should note here, however, that from a self perspective the term 'instrumentality' can be divided into two distinct types. In conceptualizing the ideal/ought self distinction, Higgins (1987, 1998) highlighted a crucial difference between the two dimensions, a contrasting *approach/avoid* tendency: ideal self-guides have a *promotion* focus, concerned with hopes, aspirations, advancements, growth and accomplishments (i.e. approaching a desired end-state); whereas ought-to self-guides have a *prevention* focus, regulating the absence or presence of negative outcomes, concerned with safety, responsibilities and obligations (i.e. avoidance of a feared end-state). With this distinction in mind, we can see that traditionally conceived 'instrumentality/instrumental motivation' mixes up these two aspects. When our idealized image is associated with being professionally successful, 'instrumental' motives with a promotion focus - for example, to learn English for the sake of professional/career advancement - are related to the Ideal L2 Self. In contrast, instrumental motives with a prevention focus - for example, to study in order not to fail an exam or not to disappoint one's parents - are part of the Ought-to L2 Self.

The 'L2 Motivational Self System'

As we have seen above, both the empirical findings and the theoretical considerations seemed to support a reconceptualization of L2 motivation as part of the learner's self system. I have come to believe that the two elements discussed before, the ideal and the ought selves, are central components of this system, but I also felt that we needed to add a third major component, which concerns the direct impact of the learning environment (and which will not be discussed in this chapter in detail; for reviews, see Dornyei 2001; Manolopoulou-Sergi 2004). Accordingly, I proposed (Dörnyei 2005) that the 'L2 Motivational Self System' was made up of the following three components (for more details on the self approach, see Dornyei 2009; Dornyei and Ushioda 2009):

- *Ideal L2 Self,* which is the L2-specific facet of one's 'ideal self. If the person we would like to become speaks an L2, the *'ideal L2 self* is a powerful motivator to learn the L2.

- *Ought-to L2 Self*, which concerns the attributes that one believes one *ought to* possess to meet expectations and to *avoid* possible negative outcomes.
- *L2 Learning Experience*, which concerns situated motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience (e.g. the impact of the teacher, the curriculum, the peer group, the experience of success).

Validating the L2 Motivational Self System

Over the last two years my research students - Stephen Ryan, Tatsuya Taguchi and Michael Magid - and I have been conducting large-scale survey research in Japan and China to validate the L2 Motivational Self System (for details of the surveys, see Ryan 2009; Taguchi et al. 2009). We believed that if we can support the main tenets of the theory by data coming from foreign language contexts that are very different from the Hungarian learning environment that the L2 self approach originated from, this would be a powerful validity argument of the construct. The studies did indeed confirm that our assumptions were correct; in the following I present some of the key findings: (a) correlations between traditional *Integrativeness* and the *Ideal L2 Self* to check whether the two constructs can indeed be equated; (b) correlations of *Integrativeness* and the *Ideal L2 Self* with criterion measures to see which variable does a better job at explaining motivated behaviour; (c) correlations between aspects of *Instrumentality* and the *Ought-to L2 Self* to check whether traditional instrumentality can indeed be divided into two distinct types.

The relationship between the Ideal L2 Self *and* Integrativeness

Table 7.2 presents correlations between *Integrativeness* and the *Ideal L2 Self*, in three different East Asian surveys involving over 5,300 participants, each consisting of different subsamples. As can be seen, there are substantial positive correlations in every subsample, suggesting that the two variables do indeed tap into the same underlying construct domain. The average correlation across the subsamples is .54, which is very high in L2 motivation research. These consistent results leave no doubt that the two concepts are very closely related.

Table 7.2 Correlations between *Integrativeness* and the *Ideal L2 Self*

	Total sample	*University students (non-English majors)*	*University students (English majors)*	*Secondary school pupils*	*Adult learners*
2,397 Japanese learners (Ryan forthcoming)	.59	.54	**.53**	**.61**	
1,586 Japanese learners (Taguchi et al. forthcoming)	**.63**	**.63**	.48		
1,328 Chinese learners (Taguchi et al. forthcoming)	.51	.46	**.46**	**.66**	**.53**

Note: **All** figures are **significant at** the $p < .001$ level.

The correlation of the Ideal L2 Self *and* Integrativeness *with* Intended effort

Table 7.3 presents the correlations of *Integrativeness* and the *Ideal L2 Self with Intended effort* in the same samples as in Table 7.2. These figures allow us to compare which variable does a better job at explaining the criterion measure, effort. Although *Integrativeness* does a consistently good job at accounting for the variance in the criterion measure, the *Ideal L2 Self exceeds* it in all but one subsample. The average variance (which is the average of the squared correlation coefficients) explained by *Integrativeness* across the different samples is 32 per cent, which can be considered high, but the same figure for the *Ideal L2 Self is* 42 per cent, which is almost 30 per cent higher!

		Total sample	*University students (non-English majors)*	*University students (English majors)*	*Secondary school pupils*	*Adult learners*
2,397 Japanese learners (Ryan forthcoming)	*Ideal L2 Self*	.77	.74	.71	.75	
	Integrativeness	.65	.61	.54	.71	
1,586 Japanese learners (Taguchi et al. forthcoming)	*Ideal L2 Self*	.71	.71	.61		
	Integrativeness	.63	.64	.49		
1,328 Chinese learners (Taguchi et al. forthcoming)	*Ideal L2 Self*	.55	.52	.51	.69	.51
	Integrativeness	.52	.47	.53	.63	.44

Note: All figures are significant at the $p < .001$ level.

Table 7.3 Correlations of *Integrativeness* and the *ideal L2 Self* with *Intended effort*

The case of Instrumentality

Table 7.4 presents correlations that allow us to examine whether *Instrumentality* can indeed be divided into two types as outlined above. The data are drawn from Taguchi et al.'s (2009) Japanese and Chinese samples where the promotion and the prevention aspects of *Instrumentality* were measured separately. If Higgins's (1987, 1998) promotion/prevention distinction applies to our data, then we would expect to find higher correlations of the *Ideal L2 Self* with *Instrumentality-promotion* than with *Instrumentality-prevention*, and the *Ought-to L2 Self* should display the opposite pattern. This is exactly the case in Table 7.4. Furthermore, if the promotion and the prevention aspects are separate from each other then we would not expect a high correlation between them, and indeed both correlations are modest (with even the higher one explaining less than 12 per cent of the variance). Thus, these figures provide unambiguous confirmation that the traditionally conceived 'instrumental motivation' can indeed be divided into two distinct types: one relating to the Ideal L2 Self, the other

to the Ought-to L2 Self. These two types are only moderately related to each other and show a distinct correlation pattern with the two self dimensions.

Table 7.4 Correlations between the *Ideal L2 Self*, *Instrumentality* and the *Ought-To L2 Self* in Taguchi et al. (forthcoming) Japanese and Chinese samples

	Ideal L2 Self		*Ought-to L2 Self*		*Instrumentality-promotion*	
	Japan	*China*	*Japan*	*China*	*Japan*	*China*
Instrumentality – promotion	.63*	.46*	.28*	.45*	–	–
Instrumentality – prevention	– .01	-.13*	.53*	.63*	.34*	.26*

* $p < .001$

Conclusion

This chapter discussed a major theoretical shift that has been taking place within the field of L2 motivation research. I described how a new paradigm has emerged from both theoretical considerations and research results, and then presented the main components of the newly proposed 'L2 Motivational Self System'. In the second part of the chapter I provided empirical data from three different surveys involving over 5,300 participants to validate the new construct. The correlational results clearly indicated that: (a) *Integrativeness* and the *Ideal L2 Self* tap into the same construct, but the *Ideal L2 Self* does a better job at explaining variance in the criterion measures; (b) the traditionally conceived concept of *Instrumentality* mixes up two types of pragmatic motives (with a promotion vs. a prevention focus) that show a rather different relationship pattern with the *Ideal* and the *Ought-to L2 Selves*. These results are all in accordance with the proposed theory and thus provide a strong validity argument for it. We should reiterate here that in the current study the third main component of the 'L2 Motivational Self System', the *L2 Learning Experience*, was not measured.

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