

Second Language Acquisition

LG 376 — Semester 2, 2021 (Jan-May 2022)

CLASS 15: MOTIVATION

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Outline

- Recap: Learner language
- Motivation
 - Traditional approach
 - Antecedents of motivation
 - L2 motivational self system
- PsychoPy: Group work
- Looking ahead: Week 16

Recap

Changes in interlanguage development

- **Interlanguage (IL):** language system that learner constructs at each point in development (Selinker, 1972)
- Interlanguage changes (and grows) in **systematic** and **predictable** ways though changes are:
 - non-linear (u-shaped accuracy)
 - unevenly paced (rate of development)

Major findings have been documented in morphology and syntax

Patterned development of English morphemes

- Acquisition order of English morphemes
 - based on accuracy of suppliance (80 or 90%)
 - changes in accuracy not linear

Group 1:

-ing
plural -s
copula be

Group 2:

auxiliary be
articles

Group 3:

irregular past tense

Group 4:

regular past tense
third-person -s
possessive 's

Between-L1 trajectories:



possessive > plural -s & articles (Luk & Shirai, 2009)

Concept-driven emergence of tense & aspect

- Three broad phases in the acquisition of tense-aspect morphology
 1. *pragmatic means* (narrating story in chronological order)
 2. *lexical means* (using lexical items, e.g., adverbs)
 3. *morphological means* (using morphological markers, e.g., -ed)
- Morphology first used with matching verbs (**Aspect Hypothesis**; Andersen & Shirai, 1996)
 - -*ing* with activity verbs (*run, walk, sing, watch, etc.*)
 - -*ed* with achievement verbs (*meet, catch, find, etc.*)

Fossilization, really?

- Many purported cases of **fossilized** L2 learners
 - e.g., [Schumann's](#) Alberto, [Lardiere's](#) Patty, [Han's](#) Geng & Fong
- Problems with concept:
 - Very hard to conclusively demonstrate
 - Hard to verify optimal learning conditions
 - No consensus on cause(s)
 - Meanings: premature vs inevitable

Motivation

Setting the scene

- People differ greatly in how fast and how well they learn an L2
- Variability in rates, outcomes, and processes can be large
 - Julie → “native-like” in 2½ years (Ioup et al., 1994)
 - Wes → minimal English after 3 years in L2 environment (Schmidt, 1983)
- *Something in learners’ cognitive abilities, their motivations and their personal predispositions that could help explain such a wide variation?*

Setting the scene: Cognition, conation, affect

- Cognition: how information is processed & learned by human mind
 - Aptitude → cognitive construct (Chapter 7)
- **Conation**: how humans use will and freedom to make choices
 - ★ • Motivation → conative construct (Chapter 8)
- **Affect**: how humans feel toward information, people, objects, actions
 - Affect (Chapter 9)



Setting the scene: A word about L2 research

- L2 motivation research has been influenced by theories and methods from social psychology
- Research contexts are narrow and limited to North American settings
 - Bilingual contexts of Canada in particular
- English is by far the most studied language in L2 motivation
 - 73% of 416 L2 motivation research about English (Boo et al., 2015)

The traditional approach



- **Socioeducational model** → Motivation narrowly defined:
 - Effort (Motivational intensity)
 - Enjoyment (L2 learning attitudes)
 - Investment (Desire to learn L2)
- Motivational quantity measured by Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) questionnaire
 - Seven-point Likert scales (“strongly agree” [7] to “strongly disagree” [1])

AMTB questionnaire: Example

No	Items	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	I wish I could speak many foreign languages perfectly.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	My parents try to help me to learn English.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	I don't pay much attention to the feedback I receive in my English class.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	I don't get anxious when I have to answer a question in my English class.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	I look forward to going to class because my English teacher is so good.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	Learning English is really great.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	If Iran had no contact with English-speaking countries, it would be a great loss.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	Studying English is important because it will allow me to be more at ease with people who speak English.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9	I have a strong desire to know all aspects of English.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10	My English class is really a waste of time.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11	I would get nervous if I had to speak English to a tourist.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Let's try a different motivation questionnaire. Click on [this link](#)

Integrativeness as an antecedent

- **Antecedents**: variables that contribute to increases or decreases in motivational quantity (motivational substrates)
- **Integrativeness** = interest in learning L2 in order to come closer to target community
 - Favorable attitudes toward NSs of the L2
 - General interest in FLs
 - Integrative orientation

Other antecedents

- **Antecedents**: variables that contribute to increases or decreases in motivational quantity (motivational substrates)
- **Orientations** = the reasons for learning an L2
 - Instrumental reasons (e.g., getting a better job)
 - Knowledge (e.g., knowing more about the world, culture)
 - Travel
 - Friendship
 - Integrative orientation

Expanding contexts

- *Is integrativeness the most important antecedent?*
 - Early in L2 learning in **EFL contexts**, instrumental types of orientations and classroom attitudes may be more important
 - Attitudes in Japan: **International posture** (Yashima et al., 2004)
 - Interest in international vocation/activities (“I want to work at the UN”)
 - Intercultural approach tendency (“I would share an apt with X students”)
 - Interest in foreign affairs (“I often talk about X in other countries”)

Expanding contexts

Questions:

- What motivated you learn Spanish? Japanese? German?
- What got you through the first rough patch?
- Are they integrative, instrumental or attitudinal reasons?

L2 motivational self system



- Application of Self-Discrepancy Theory in social psychology
 - **Possible selves**: we have current self and a self we'd like to become
 - Successful learners negotiate steps to reduce discrepancy
- L2 motivational self system:
 - L2 users will invest time & efforts in learning an L2
 - if they can see themselves as future speakers of the L2; and
 - if they can execute plans to close gaps b'w current and future images

L2 motivational self system



- Three key constructs shaping motivation:
- ★ • **Ideal L2 Self**: Who do I want to become?
 - Internal desires and wishes; “a speaker who can do A and B in X and Z”
- **Ought-to L2 Self** : Who should I be to meet external expectations?
 - External pressures; “a good student who passes the test”
- **L2 Learning Experience**: What’s the impact of learning experience?
 - School/curricular/instructional experience (positive & negative)

Thompson and Vásquez (2015)

- **Question:** How do the three FL teachers (Vera, Alex, and Joe, all of whom are non-native speakers of the languages they teach) express ideas of Ideal and Ought-to selves?
- **Method:** Audio-recorded interviews (each ~ 75 mins) where participants provide narrative data:
 - Earliest experience with FLs
 - Reasons for becoming a teacher
 - Experiences with respect to their NNS status

Thompson and Vásquez (2015)

- **Method:** Analysis centered on “path to proficiency” narrative in each participant
- Identifying motivation “stories” from the narrative of each participant
 - **Vera:** studied Spanish in high school; described her learning of Spanish as successful; studied Italian in immersion context
 - **Alex:** failed to learn French and Spanish in high school; went to China to teach English and study Chinese
 - **Joe:** studied German as part of school curriculum; completed Ph.D. in German

Thompson and Vásquez (2015)

- Several aspects of L2 motivational self system in the narrative data
 - Ideal L2 self
 - *Vera* → bilingual speaker [internal desire]
 - Ought-to L2
 - *Alex* → getting good at Chinese to land a good job and to prove others wrong [external requirement]
 - L2 learning experience
 - *Joe* → positive experience in language class and role model

Thompson and Vásquez (2015)

- The “I” dimension is emphasized in each person’s ideal self
 - “I want to be a bilingual speaker or an anti-stereotypical American”
 - “I want to visit those places”
- The “Other” dimension is also key in forming ideal selves
 - Role models (language teachers in Joe’s case)

Thompson and Vásquez (2015)

- **Psychological reactance:** a desire to go against societal norms (or what other people say)
 - Alex's case: Chinese TA disparaging him
 - Joe's case: Standing out from native German speakers

PsychoPy: Group work

Next week...

- **Topic**: Social dimensions of L2 learning
 - How is L2 learning mediated by social contexts?
 - How are social contexts investigated in L2 research?
- **Reading**:
 - No reading! 🎉
- **Assignments**:
 - Draft submission of final paper (End of week)