

Gender differences in L2 Motivation: A reassessment

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Abstract

Along with aptitude, motivation is the primary determiner of learning outcomes in second language (L2) learning. Widely regarded as an activity especially suited to girls, empirical studies from different sociocultural contexts have, with few exceptions, revealed systematic gender differences in L2 motivation. In particular, gender differences are most apparent in relation to establishing an affinity with other L2 speakers, the ability and willingness to identify with the values associated with L2 ethnolinguistic communities and a lack of ethnocentricity. Together these attributes have been categorized as integrativeness (Gardner, 1985). Explanations for observed gender differences vary and, other than a general recognition of the impact of social norms and gender role expectations, no overarching theoretical explanation has yet been attempted. Given the recent paradigm shift in the conceptualization of L2 motivation from a social psychological approach based on identifications with other groups of speakers, to one based on the learner's internal identification of a future language speaking 'self', a timely opportunity is presented to review previous findings. Following an initial discussion of the paradigm shift in L2 motivation theory and the role of gender in conceptions of the self, the literature on the gender gap in integrativeness is reviewed through the lens of self-related theories. A tentative explanation for observed differences that synthesizes the results of previous research and is theoretically consistent with a self approach is proposed. Drawing on the work of, amongst others, Jordan, Kaplan, Miller, Stiver and Surrey (1991), Markus and Kitayama (1991) and Cross and Madson (1997) it is suggested that gender differences can be understood in relation to processes involving the construction and construal of selves, where the selves of males are characterized by independence whilst those of females emphasize interdependence.

Introduction

In recent years a change has taken place in the way in which second language (L2) learning motivation is conceptualized and understood. Signalling a break from a long tradition of research rooted in social psychology, the direction now pursued by a majority of L2 motivation researchers positions theories of the self and identity at the forefront of enquiry. In essence, the change of direction involves a shift from a perspective in which motivation is regarded as deriving from the individual's identification with an external reference group (i.e. a community of L2 speakers), to one where it is understood in terms of an internal identification of a future desired state (L2 competence) within the person's self-concept (Dörnyei, 2009). Thus, whereas the focus of research was previously directed towards individuals' attitudes to, perceptions of and degree of affiliation with the community/communities of speakers associated with the L2, the current empirical approach involves accessing individuals' self-based conceptions as future speakers/users of the target language.

As will be discussed in the sections that follow, whilst the paradigm shift recently witnessed has, primarily, been driven by processes of globalization that have resulted in ever-increasing ethnolinguistic diversity, meaning that traditional models and concepts need to be rethought (Coetzee-Van Rooy, 2006), there is also a realisation that, in increasingly complex social realities, a self-approach enables greater flexibility in adapting to local conditions and avoids problems inherent in the identification of objectively-defined reference groups. Furthermore, because within L2 research, the social psychological direction has generally forged its own path with relatively little influence from other branches of theory, a self-based approach opens up opportunities to draw on the breadth of research that has been conducted within mainstream personality psychology (Dörnyei, 2009; MacIntyre Mackinnon and Clément, 2009). For gender, a topic that, relative to its importance, has received little attention from researchers interested in L2 motivation (Dörnyei and Csizér, 2002) this means that a substantial body of empirical enquiry into gender differences can be considered anew from a self-perspective. In this chapter my aim is thus to respond to the opportunity now presented by reviewing previous findings on gender differences and reconsidering them in the light of theories of gender from personality psychology in the hope of being to "map out new conceptual linkages by taking the self as the starting point" (MacIntyre, Mackinnon and Clément, 2009; 50). In so doing, I draw encouragement from Dörnyei's belief that a "self perspective does not invalidate the results accumulated in the field of L2 motivation research

in the past”, and that previous findings can be revisited and “receive a new meaningfulness within the self framework” (Dörnyei, 2009; 38).

L2 motivation and the concept of integrativeness

Until recently research in L2 motivation was dominated by the work of the Canadian researcher, Robert Gardner and his colleagues. Central to Gardner’s thinking was that learning a language is a unique experience that requires the learner to interact not just with a formal system of knowledge, but also with the cultural practices of the language speakers (Gardner, 2001). In one of the earliest empirical studies it was found that ethnocentrism and poor achievement were correlated, meaning that learners who had pejorative or prejudiced attitudes towards foreign people, and who made invidious comparisons with the ethnolinguistic target community, were likely to do less well in L2 learning than their more tolerant counterparts (Lambert, 1961). Over time, Gardner’s studies drew him to the conclusion that L2 attitudes were a direct product of the learner’s identification with the culture and speakers of the target language community and that the strength of the language learner’s identification with the L2 community would be the decisive factor in attitude formation, which, via motivation, would be the strongest determinant of learning outcomes. Based on these results, Gardner developed the concept of integrativeness, which he describes as the learner’s “willingness or ability to identify with other cultural communities” (Gardner 2001).

As Dörnyei (2009) explains, Gardner’s theory of integrativeness derives from a parallel drawn with the L1 concept of ‘social identification’, a theory which explains how young children attempt to imitate the sound sequences of caregivers and, in so doing, receive positive reinforcement in the form of parents’ verbalisations which, in turn, fuels language development. In an L2 context the concept of social identification was extended to an entire ethnolinguistic community where it was theorised to function in a way that would generate and sustain long-term motivation to continue learning (Gardner and Lambert, 1972). However, by the advent of the new millennium, a question that had begun to trouble a number of L2 motivation researchers (Dörnyei and Csizér, 2002; McClelland, 2000; Lamb, 2004; Warden and Lin, 2000; Yashima, 2000) concerned the ways in which it might be meaningful to talk in terms of integrative motives when the language being learnt – invariably English – could not be proximately associated with a specific ethnolinguistic group or community of speakers. The essence of the problem lies in the fact that the concept of integrativeness relies on the assumption of an identifiable and available L2

community. However, as Ryan explains, for vast numbers of language learners around the world “not only are notions of contact with an English-speaking community dissimilar to those envisaged by Gardner, but the concept of that community itself is an altogether more vague, abstract entity” (Ryan, 2009; 124). Simply put, the question is with whom are learners of global languages such as English supposed to identify?

In addition to this problem, another emerging factor around the time of the millennium has also contributed to undermining the conceptual power of integrativeness. Today, in many countries around the globe, English is not only an inescapable presence in daily life but, increasingly, is being educationally reframed as a basic social competence and core curricular skill. Indeed, it is not uncommon that, alongside L1 literacy and mathematics, English today forms an important constituent of early years programs. Thus the question needs to be asked as to whether it continues to be meaningful to apply a conceptual framework that is based on a group-level identification with a definable community of L2 speakers? Instead, since young people are now likely to develop global identities which are increasingly likely to incorporate “English-speaking globally-involved version[s] of themselves” (Lamb, 2004, p 3) a self-based approach makes it possible to engage both with the diversity of contextual settings and the multidimensionality of the learner’s identity (Coetzee-Van Rooy, 2006).

From attitudes to selves

As a result of the growing dissatisfaction with integrativeness, the challenge for L2 motivation researchers was thus to develop a new approach “comprehensive and robust enough to be applicable to a wide range of language learning contexts yet with the capacity to remain sensitive to specific situations and individual idiosyncrasies” (Ryan, 2009; 137). The first attempt to explain the findings of empirical research using a self approach was made by Dörnyei and Csizér (2002). In a large sample of Hungarian secondary school pupils, they found that their data supported an interpretation that could be based on an identification, not with an external reference group, but of an ‘L2-speaking self’ within the individual’s self-concept. Using structural equation modelling, Dörnyei and Csizér discovered the presence of a key latent variable that mediated the effects of all of the other attitudinal variables on two important criterion measures, namely ‘intended effort’ and ‘language choice’. Further, and even more interesting, was that one of two main antecedents was ‘attitudes towards L2 speakers’. In addressing these findings in his book-length analysis of individual differences in L2 acquisition, Dörnyei (2005) argues that an identification within

the self is fully compatible with the direct relationship of the discovered latent variable, ‘attitudes to L2 speakers’, since L2 speakers are the closest parallels to the individual’s conception of herself as a future L2 speaker. As a consequence, Dörnyei argues, “the more positive our disposition toward these L2 speakers, the more attractive our idealized self” (Dörnyei, 2005; 102).

Theories of the self and their application in L2 motivation

In advocating that L2 motivation can better be understood by adopting a self-based approach, Dörnyei identifies theories of possible selves and future self guides as of particular importance in that they concern the interface between cognition – in the form of self-schema and self-systems – and channels of purposeful behaviour. Two avenues of theory are identified as being of particular relevance, Markus and Nurius’ (1986) theory of possible selves and Higgins’ (1987) theory of self-discrepancy, in that both bridge between conceptions of the self and self-regulated behaviour and thus focus on motivational processes. In Dörnyei’s reconceptualisation of integrativeness (Dörnyei and Csizér, 2002) and his subsequent development of the L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2005) these complementary theories form twin theoretical foundations.

In Markus and Nurius’ (1986) theory of possible selves focus is directed on the individual’s conception of her self in the future. Possible selves are a type of self-conception constructed from the images we carry of ourselves in future states and represent hopes, wishes, desires, aspirations and fantasies, thus creating a spectrum of possible life outcomes. In this way, possible selves create contexts within which current selves are evaluated. In their research Markus and Nurius identify three main types of possible selves; “ideal selves that we would like to become”, “selves we are afraid of becoming” and, finally, “selves that we could become”, (Markus and Nurius, 1986; 954). Whilst the first two of these three categories represent extremes on the spectrum, namely the best and the worst possible outcomes respectively, the third functions in a default capacity. The importance of possible selves for theories of motivation is that, in forming a context in which current selves can be evaluated, behaviour is directed towards positive future conceptions (hoped-for possible selves) and away from potentially negative outcomes (feared or undesired possible selves).

In Higgins’ (1987) theory of future selves focus is placed on the functions of self-guides that regulate behaviour in relation to an idealised future self. Here there are two key components, an *ideal self*, and an *ought self*. Whilst the former relates to attributes that the individual would ideally like to possess, the latter concerns those attributes that it is felt ought to be possessed in order to conform to

the expectations of others. Thus, whilst the *ideal self* encompasses hopes, desires, aspirations and wishes, the *ought self* includes self-experienced obligations, duties to others and perceived moral responsibilities. In terms of the effect of the ideal and ought selves on motivation, Higgins argues that the individual behaves in a manner accordant with a desire to reduce the discrepancy between the here-and-now self and her future ideal and ought selves.

The L2 Motivational Self System comprises three dimensions; an ideal L2 self, an ought-to L2 self and the L2 learning experience (Dörnyei, 2005). The *Ideal L2 Self* represents the L2-specific component of the individual's overall 'ideal self'. Thus, if the type of person we would like to become speaks an L2, our ideal L2 self will function as a powerful learning motivator in terms of our desire to reduce the discrepancy between our actual and our ideal selves. It is this component that encompasses the affective domain accounted for by integrativeness. Also included here are the motives that Gardner identifies as being by nature instrumental (Gardner, 1985).¹ The *Ought-to L2 Self* concerns the attributes that one believes that one should possess in order to meet social expectations and avoid possibly negative outcomes, whilst the *L2 Learning Experience* concerns situated, 'executive' motives related to the immediate learning environment (Dörnyei, 2005: 106).

Even though the paradigm is still in its infancy, a number of studies have already delivered compelling evidence of the value of a self-approach, and, cumulatively, provide strong evidence of conceptual validity. (Al-Shehri, 2009; Csizér and Kormos, 2009; Kormos and Csizér, 2008; Taguchi, Magid and Papi, 2009; Ryan, 2009). In particular, it would appear that the affective domain that is central in learners' conceptions of ideal language-speaking selves shows good correspondence with the emotional identification that forms the core of integrativeness (Macintyre, Mackinnon and Clément, 2009; Ryan, 2009). From the perspective of gender divergences, the observed coherence between the two constructs is of particular interest for two reasons. First, when the literature on gender differences in L2 motivation is reviewed, it is striking how frequently observed differences in integrative motives are not matched by similar differences in other domains, such as instrumental motivation. This would suggest the presence of deep-rooted differences in the ways in which females and males conceptualise situations that involve identifying and communicating with a yet-to-be-discovered other. The second point of interest is that research on gender differences has been largely non-systematic and, when gender has been included

¹ In Gardner's theory, instrumental motivation concerns the pragmatic utility of learning the L2 as manifested in concrete benefits, such as improved employment and higher education prospects that knowledge of a second language can bring. Although not as thoroughly theorized as integrativeness, nor indeed as prominent a component in Gardner's conceptualization of motivation, instrumental motivation has nevertheless often formed a major focus of empirical investigation.

as a variable, it has rarely been a primary focus of investigation. Together with the fact that the study of L2 motivation has developed in relative isolation from other fields of motivational research, this has meant that it has been difficult to offer overarching explanations for empirical findings of gender differences. Now, as a result of the shift to a self-based approach, a timely opportunity arises to review previous research and to consider gender differences in the context of well-established theories of gender in mainstream personality psychology.

Gender differences in the construction and construal of selves

Although the investigation of sex differences in constructs such as self-esteem and empathy has a long history in psychological research, it is only in recent decades that attempts have been made to explain these differences in terms of the social construction of gender (Josephs, Markus and Tafarodi, 1992). An early recognition of differences in the identities of women and men was made by Bakan (1966) and is encapsulated in his agency/communion theory. In Bakan's theory individuals are said to differ in degrees of agency. Whilst those individuals who are categorized as high in agency tend to display traits associated with independence and autonomy, those categorized as high in communion display a greater concern for interaction with others and engagement in communal projects. According to Bakan, men are inherently disposed to an egotistic, autonomous and agentic 'centering' of the self that is manifested in the display of greater instrumentality and self-assertion. Women, on the other hand, are theorised as having an inherent disposition toward a social and communal 'centering' which finds manifestation in the desire to develop and maintain relations with others.

Whilst recognising the divergences in women's and men's self-concepts predicted by the theory of agency, researchers sceptical of the biological essentialism inherent in Bakan's ideas prefer to regard such differences as a consequence of the social construction of gender. From a constructionist perspective, the underlying assumption is that self-definitional processes differ between females and males, thus leading to the emergence of different self-concepts (Josephs, Markus and Tafarodi, 1992). In this regard, the pioneering work of Gilligan (1982) and Miller (1986) provide important points of departure in attempts to understand divergences in the make-up and functioning of women's and men's self-concepts. For both, the point of reference for their research, and indeed their feminist agenda, is that, having evolved in patriarchal societies, Western psychology constructs theories of human development that are prefaced on male characteristics and which, relative to men, position women as emotional and dependent. In their concern to develop research directions that can better

account for women's experiences, the aim, as Miller makes clear, has not been to reject accepted theories of the self, but rather to "sharpen and articulate what is useful from them and to develop new concepts and models that better represent women's lives" (Miller, 1991). At root lies the notion of a fundamental and socially constructed definition of the self that differs between women and men. Whilst for men the construction of the self privileges separation and uniqueness, women's selves are defined by involvement with others.

In a development of the idea that the identities of women and men differ in the nature of their construction, Gilligan (1982) and Miller (1986) have argued that, to a greater extent than is the case for men, women's identities are developed in the context of relationships where affiliation and maintenance are central. Drawing on these ideas and with the aim of developing a more coherent framework with which to challenge traditional conceptions of the self founded on male experience, Jordan and her colleagues (1991) proposed a theory of the "self-in-relation". Acknowledging that the construction of women's selves takes place primarily in relational processes, this, they argue, creates a problem in that women are regarded as lacking the prized attributes of autonomy and self-sufficiency that are characteristic of men. As a consequence, the investment women make in relationships, their greater emotional engagement with others and the relational ties that they develop are all regarded as indicators of "dependency". This, as for example Stiver (1991) explains, has consequences for maturational trajectories and adult identities in the sense of a significant asymmetry in developmental processes. Whilst, she argues, men gravitate from early attachment to separation, and on to individuation and autonomy where the achievement of independence is the ultimate goal, women move from attachment in a way that involves a continued connectedness with others. As a consequence, women continue to develop in the context of relationships, thus meaning that they can experience the goal of independence as lonely, alienating and unattractive.

In the same manner in which Jordan et al. (1991) challenge the gender normativity of Western psychology, Markus and Kitayama (1991), in their identification of cultural divergences in construals of the self, offer a compelling critique of its ethnocentricity. In common with the criticisms of the traditional notion of dependency made by Jordan and her colleagues, Markus and Kitayama identify two fundamentally different ways in which the self is construed; one where representations of relations with others form a composite part, a so-called *interdependent* self, and another where such relationships do not have a self-defining function and which they call an *independent* self. Whilst the latter is characteristic of American society, the former, they argue, is more characteristic of Asian cultures.

Differences in construals of the self have effects on behaviour and cognition. For those people who have independent selves, others are not centrally implicated in self-definitions, meaning that, in interaction, the individual is less conscious of and responsive to the thoughts and emotions of those around them. For those individuals who, on the other hand, have an interdependent construal of the self, social relations are characterised by attentiveness, responsiveness, an assumption of reciprocation and a belief in the existence of a mutual desire to maintain the relationship (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). Whilst the primary focus of Markus and Kitayama's research is on cultural divergences in self construals, they nevertheless make the point that the independent self-construal, generally characteristic of Americans, may be less true for women than for men. Thus, in concurring with suggestions made by Markus and Oyserman (1989), who discuss gender differences in relation to schemata of the self, they suggest that gender differences in self-concept domains are likely to stem from divergent self-construals.

In an important extension of this idea, Cross and Madson (1997), in an extensive review of the literature, describe how many gender-related behavioural differences can be understood by the systematic application of a self-construal approach. In order to understand such differences it is important, they argue, to be aware both of the ways in which the self has been created in social contexts governed by gender norms, and its function in directing appropriate responses in situations where gender-appropriate behaviour is expected. Specifically, they make the point that representations of others form part of the self and, because the boundaries between the self and others are porous, representations of other individuals and social contexts become important constituents of the self, particularly for individuals who have an interdependent self-construal. Consequently, gender differences that, previously, have been explained exclusively in terms of the operation of external social conditioning and norm-governed expectations, can also be understood as a function of divergent constructions and construals of the self.

In addition, and of particular interest in the context of gender differences related to language identities and the affective domain of L2 motivation, Cross and Madson (1997) make an important observation. Whilst explaining that behavioural differences among people with interdependent / independent self-construals may not necessarily be observable in situations involving interaction with non-self-relevant others, in situations where strong social conventions apply, or where social bonds or attachments are not implicated, this does not mean, they maintain, that in all situations involving impersonal relationships the effects of differing self-construals will not be at play. On the contrary, it could well be the case that, in such situations, people with interdependent self-construals may

nevertheless still be better equipped to establish, develop and maintain relationships. This is because such people – at a group level, women – are likely to be better attuned to the individual(s) with whom they interact:

Although we expect individuals with an interdependent self-construal to develop good non-verbal decoding skills because these abilities help foster and maintain close relationships with others, this does not preclude these individuals from applying these skills to other types of interactions or goals. /.../ Thus, the hypothesised differences among individuals with interdependent and independent self-construals may at times generalize to other situations, leading to gender differences that would not be directly predicted by this theory but are not inconsistent with it either. (Cross and Madson, 1997; 27)

Gender and possible selves

So far, the discussion of the effects of gender has taken place in the context of general theories of identity, the self-concept and the construal of self-concepts. Identities and self-concepts are overarching constructs or schema that comprise of a range of domain-specific self-conceptions that, in specific contexts and situations, mediate identities. In focusing on aspirations and related behaviours encapsulated in domain-specific self-conceptions, Markus and Nurius's (1986) theory of possible selves offers a more complex understanding of contextually-specific self-conceptions. Because the focus is on self-conceptions, as opposed to self-concepts, and because it targets both aspirations (hoped-for selves) and concerns (feared selves), it constitutes a particularly useful methodology for studying gender differences in specific aspects of individuals' identities (Anthis, Dunkel and Anderson, 2004).

In a review of the literature on the effect of gender on the development and content of possible selves, Knox (2006) suggests that the independent/interdependent self-construal dichotomy proposed by Cross and Madson (1997) can also be applied to domain-specific possible selves. In particular, she argues that gender differences have an effect on the ways in which possible selves are constructed and maintained. For example, in a study of possible selves using narrative techniques Segal, DeMeis, Wood and Smith (2001) found that women devoted more words to relationships than men, indicating greater concern with interpersonal relationships and communal themes. This result lends support to Knox's contention that women's possible selves are likely to be characterised by interpersonal qualities and that, in comparison to

males, are more likely to be commensurate with the performance of others in their environment (Knox, 2006; 63). In three studies that examined gender differences in the possible selves of older children (Shepard and Marshall, 1999) adolescents (Knox, Funk, Elliott and Greene Bush, 2000) and younger adults (Anthis, Dunkel and Anderson, 2004), differences in the content of feared selves were found. In particular, females' feared selves were found to be more strongly characterised by interpersonal relationships, a finding that is also supported by those of Ogilvie and Clark (1992).

In a similar vein, when conducting research into the effects of social comparisons made by high school and university students, Kimmelmeir and Oyserman (2001) found that the academic possible selves of girls had a pronounced interpersonal element in that they were more likely to be positively affected when they thought of someone of the same gender who was doing well at school, and more likely to be negatively affected when they thought of a same-gendered person doing badly. In analysing these results the authors refer to an explanatory framework developed by Markus and Oyserman (1989) in which the self-concept functions in a way that clarifies either uniqueness, separateness and agency (an independent self-focus) or connection, relations to others and an embeddedness in relations (an interdependent self-focus).

It is however, not only in terms of the development and maintenance of possible selves where gender can have an impact. As Knox (2006) makes clear, for females and males who have self-concepts that incorporate strongly traditional gender roles, opportunities to form possible selves in domains that have strong associations with the opposite gender may be limited, or indeed ruled out entirely. Further, Knox suggests that the effects of gender normativity are likely to be greater in relation to feared selves. For example, for some males an emotional, overly-sensitive or expressive feared self may motivate behaviour that precludes the overt expression of emotion. Thus in families with strongly gendered patterns of role assignment, the array of possible selves available to children, particularly girls, may be limited (Markus and Oyserman, 1989).

Some concluding remarks on gender and selves

Before moving on to review the literature on gender differences in L2 motivation, three important observations need to be made. First, it is important to be aware of the dyadic nature of the relationship between self-concepts, which have an overarching function, and more context-dependent self-conceptions. Construals of the self in specific domains are also likely to have a central and higher-order function in the construction of the individual's self-system whilst, at

the same time, overarching schemata may also function in ways that can determine the nature of context-related self-relevant processes (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). Such processes include the development and maintenance of specific possible selves (Knox, 2006). Thus, in any particular domain, the nature and outcomes of self-relevant processes are likely to be dependent upon both contextual factors, and the basis upon which the individual's self is defined (Markus and Oyserman, 1989).

Second, an important yet often overlooked aspect of the self-construal/self-in-relation approaches to understanding gender differences concerns the nature of relationships that are implicated in the construction of independent/interdependent selves. Because self-related research has largely developed in fields with an interest in clinical and risk-related issues (e.g. delinquency, eating disorders, risk-behaviours, sexuality, teenage parenthood etc.) focus has predominantly been directed towards experienced relationships, particularly those that involve closeness with significant others such as parents and spouses. However, we need to be aware that relational processes from which self-structures emerge are confined not only to actual relationships, but also extend to encompass "inner constructions of the relational process" (Kaplan, Gleason and Klein, 1991). This recognition is of particular relevance in the context of studying L2 motivation in that, when envisioning possibilities of developing relationships with others who speak the L2, many learners may lack experientially-based frames of reference. Thus the ability to conceive of and internally construct a relationship with a foreign other may well be dependent on the ways in which relational processes are internally constructed.

Finally, and at the risk of self-evidence, the point needs to be made that, in common with individuals living in cultures characterised, respectively, by independence and interdependence (Markus and Kitayama, 1991), not *all* women will develop interdependent selves, nor will *all* men develop dependent selves. Such a position would involve ignoring the individual as a self-reflective and intentional agent, the intersections between gender, ethnicity and other sociocultural factors, the effects of micro-contextual situational factors, and, not least, the fact that motivation emerges through a complex system of such interrelations (Dörnyei, 2008; Ushioda, 2009).

Gender differences in L2 motivation: Reviewing the findings on integrativeness

When examining the literature on gender differences in L2 motivation, two striking features emerge. First, very few studies that have included gender as a

variable have failed to find differences in at least some dimensions. Secondly, where gender differences have been found, results consistently reveal more pronounced integrative motives among females. Thus, in the overview that follows, whilst it would undoubtedly have been revealing to consider a range of different factors where gender differences have emerged – for example instrumental motives, attitudes to language learning and attitudes to the learning situation – attention is however restricted to differences that relate to the core affective domain of integrativeness.

In selecting to focus attention exclusively on integrativeness, three additional factors have been taken into consideration. First, as previously discussed, the concept of integrativeness has been the defining feature of L2 motivation theory and enquiry into integrative motives has dominated empirical study. Further, due to the dissatisfaction with the construct when applied in situations without an obvious L2 target community with which learners can identify, integrativeness has formed the focal point around which the development of the self-based paradigm has evolved (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009; Dörnyei and Csizér, 2002). In particular, integrativeness has been used as a referent in testing the conceptual validity of the ideal L2 self and, when comparisons between the two constructs have been carried out, strong correlations have been found indicating that both tap into the same pool of emotional identification (Ryan, 2009). Finally, as MacIntyre and his colleagues point out, a possible selves perspective and integrative motivation are not mutually exclusive and are better regarded as “complementary concepts that map much of the same phenomenological territory” (MacIntyre, Mackinnon and Clément, 2009; 43).

In a recent definition of integrativeness, Gardner explains that it involves “a genuine interest in learning the second language in order to come closer psychologically to the other language community”, which is reflected in “a favourable attitude toward the language community and an openness to other groups in general (i.e. an absence of ethnocentrism)” (Gardner, 2001; 12). This definition implies two broad dimensions. Whilst the first, ‘favourable attitudes to users of the language and their cultures’, involves the specific desire to identify with and “come closer psychologically” to speakers of the L2, the second is somewhat broader in compass and involves the capacity to be open-minded and a willingness and ability to decenter. However, when operationalised, both in the Attitude and Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) developed by Gardner (1985) and in numerous other instruments designed to measure L2 motivation, many of which are derivatives of the AMTB, the second element of the definition is often understated and more or less subsumed within the first. That is to say, as in the AMTB, many instruments lack a scale that measures ethnocentricity as a context-

independent variable.² Instead, the degree of ethnocentricity is implied in the respondent's assessment of the speakers of the target language, their culture and interest in foreign languages. Thus the AMTB includes items such as 'I would like to know more French Canadians' (attitudes to French Canadians scale) and 'I enjoy meeting and listening to people who speak other languages' (interest in foreign languages scale). Therefore, in the overview of the research literature that follows, studies where gender differences have been found will be reviewed and discussed primarily in relation to attitudes to L2 speakers, their languages, and the cultures and artefacts associated with L2 ethnolinguistic communities. This will be followed by an attempt to account for the findings in terms of divergences in the construction and construal of selves (Cross and Madson, 1997; Knox, 2006). Thereafter studies where gender differences did not emerge will be similarly examined and discussed. Finally, a number of conclusions will be made.

Favourable attitudes to users of the language and their cultures

In one of the earliest studies to include gender as a variable, Gardner and Lambert (1972), in a study of high school students in Louisiana (n=96), found that girls held more favourable views of French-speaking people than boys. In acknowledging their difficulty in explaining these results, Gardner and Lambert nevertheless make a point of underscoring their importance. Another study where gender differences were found was in the case study used by Spolsky (1989) to empirically explore the requirements for a general theory of second language learning. In a sample of pupils attending an English language-instructed school in a multi-ethnic community in Israel (n=293), Spolsky found that girls showed more favourable attitudes to Hebrew, the L2 they were learning, to Israel itself and to Israelis, the latter being operationalised in statements such as 'I'd like to know more' and 'they are considerate'. Although beyond the scope of Spolsky's project, he makes the point that these observed differences demand further research.

In a secondary school-based study from England (n=1091), Phillips and Filmer-Sankey (1993) found that, for all of the foreign languages in focus (French, German and Spanish) girls were more positive than boys in their attitudes towards the country and people of the language they were learning. In a scale measuring attitudes to contact with L2 speakers, items included 'I would

² Interestingly, in some of his earlier research Gardner used instruments that included scales that measured ethnocentricity. For example, in the early studies from the 1960s reported in Gardner and Lambert (1972) the instruments used contained an ethnocentricity scale that included items such as 'foreigners are all right in their place, but they carry it too far when they get too familiar with us' and 'it is only natural and right for each person to think that his family is better than any other'.

like to make friends with some young French people of my own age', 'I am not interested in meeting French people' and 'I would like to stay with a French family'. A similar result was obtained in another secondary school study from England where Williams, Burden and Lanvers (2002) found that among the pupils they surveyed (n=228), girls displayed greater integrative motives (operationalised in statements such as 'I'd like to meet French people') than boys. This was true for both French and German.

In a study from Northern Ireland Pritchard (1987) found that, among pupils in three selective post-primary schools (n=250) girls were significantly more enthusiastic about having the opportunity to learn a foreign language (in this case either French or German) than boys. Similar results were obtained in another Northern Irish study where Wright (1999) surveyed pupils in 12 post-primary schools (n=898) on their perceptions of antecedent factors theorized to underpin L2 attitudes. Here, in a regression analysis including a number of factors (school-type, inside- and outside-school factors) gender emerged as the strongest predictor of three attitude factors: 'attitudes towards speaking French', 'desire to learn about France' and 'perceptions of the French character'.

In a study using an instrument closely mirroring that developed by Gardner, Kizitelpe (2003) found gender differences in a sample of Turkish high school students (n=308). In the investigation of attitudes and motivation to learn English it emerged that girls had greater integrative motivation, more positive attitudes to British (although not American) speakers of English, and a greater general interest in languages. Similarly, in an examination of Japanese 7th grade students' L2 motivation, learning habits and parental support (n=296), Koizumi and Matsuo (1993) found gender differences on an 'interest and emotion' factor and on one measuring perceived utility and 'familiarity with English-speaking people'. This later factor is of particular interest in that, in addition to purely instrumental items (e.g. 'I need English to go up to high school or university') it also included items measuring respondents' interests in conversing with speakers of English ('I need English to converse and make friends with foreigners' and 'I would like to speak English if I met an English-speaking person outside school'). Once again, a similar result was obtained by Stewart-Strobelt and Chen (2003) in their US study where, among high school students learning Spanish, French, German and Russian (n=152), girls were found to be more interested in cultures associated with the target countries and in speaking with language users. Here, the widest variations in attitudes were found in response to two items; 'I am not interested in the culture of this language at all' and 'in the future I expect to converse with native speakers of this language'.

Another interesting study where gender differences in integrative domains were revealed was that carried out by Bacon and Finnemann (1992) who, in a

survey of US university students (n=938), found that women had higher levels of social interaction in Spanish. Despite believing that they did not have any greater opportunities to interact with native speakers of Spanish than men, women nevertheless reported having more Spanish-speaking friends and as having 'heard native speakers of Spanish' to a greater extent. In explaining these results, the authors suggest that the women in their study "may have engaged not only in a different kind of social behaviour, but also, were more active in seeking oral input" (Bacon and Finnemann, 1992; 490).

Sung and Padilla (1998) investigated the L2 motivation of public school students in California (n=591) to learning Chinese, Japanese and Korean and found, at both elementary and secondary levels, that female students had higher scores than their male counterparts on two scales. One was a combined instrumental/integrative scale (where items had a focus on participation in cultural activities of the language group, meeting and conversing with more people, being better able to understand and appreciate the art and literature of the culture, and being more at ease with speakers of the language), whilst the other was a personal interest scale (including the items 'I want to converse with my relatives', 'I want to converse with my friends' and 'I want to travel to countries where the language is spoken'). In accounting for these results, the analysis provided by the researchers is framed in terms of socialisation processes and the belief that "the advantage of female students in motivation to learn a new language has more to do with gender role modelling than with any female predisposition to learning languages" (Sung and Padilla, 1998; 215).

In by far the most extensive research to have been conducted on L2 motivation to date, Dörnyei and his associates (Dörnyei and Csizér, 2002; Dörnyei, Csizér and Németh, 2006; Csizér and Dörnyei, 2005) found gender differences across a range of different variables in two separate 13/14 year-old population samples (n= 4,765 and n=3,828). These included integrativeness which was modelled to reflect "a general positive outlook on the L2 and its culture" (e.g. 'how much do you like the people who live in these countries') as well as, additionally, a variable measuring cultural interest in terms of the appreciation of artefacts associated with the L2 and conveyed by the media (e.g. 'how much do you like the films/pop music made in these countries'). On both constructs, significant differences were found. In an extension of this research, and with the aim of discovering whether the Hungarian results obtained by Dörnyei's team might be replicable in an entirely different cultural context, Ryan (2009) developed a questionnaire that, among other constructs, included one that measured integrativeness. Items on this scale included, for example, the questions 'do you like meeting people from English-speaking countries?' and, 'would you like to become similar to the people of English-speaking countries?'. In Ryan's

sample of Japanese secondary- and tertiary-level students (n=2397) gender differences were found on a range of variables, with the greatest effect size achieved for integrativeness.

Finally, in a recent longitudinal study from Sweden (n=169) Henry (2009) found differences in compulsory school students' integrative motives in relation to English, with girls' motivation being stronger. Here the scale included items such as 'I think it would be fun to speak English if I were to travel to a country where people speak English' and 'at one time or another in my life I would like to live in a country where English is spoken'. Similar differences were also found on a scale measuring students' attitudes to foreign languages and which included the item 'If I were to travel to another country I would like to be able to speak to people in their language' (Henry, 2009) (see also Henry and Apelgren, 2008).

An openness to other groups

As mentioned previously, the second element in Gardner's formulation of integrativeness, an openness to other groups in general and absence of ethnocentrism, has rarely been operationalised as a separate variable in empirical enquiry where gender differences have been in focus. However, in a study of 12 – 14 year-old pupils' language attitudes (n=374) Morris (1978) found, on a scale measuring ethnocentricity and attitudes towards others and their languages, significant differences between the scores of girls and boys. In discussing these results Morris claims that girls are more outward looking and less ethnocentric, whilst Barton (1997) reviewing the same findings, makes the point that, as children move into adolescence ethnocentricity often intensifies as self-confidence diminishes, arguing that it is "unlikely that empathy with other peoples will figure highly on a male adolescent's agenda" (Barton, 1997; 13). Although neither contained a measure of ethnocentricity per se, the studies carried out by Dörnyei and his colleagues (Dörnyei, Csizér and Németh, 2006) and Phillips and Filmer Sankey (1993) discussed previously, could be interpreted as providing an indication of greater ethnocentricity among boys in that, irrespective of the different target languages that were in focus, girls had more positive attitudes to L2 speakers and cultures.

A re-examination through the lens of the interdependent/independent dichotomy

As Cross and Madson (1997), Jordan et al. (1991) and Markus and Kitayama (1991) have all argued, conceptual representations of the self differ between individuals who have independent and interdependent self construals. For those who have interdependent self construals, representations of others are inherent within the self, meaning that the self is understood and interpreted as being “connected to others”. Consequently, as Cross and Madson maintain, many gender differences in cognition, motivation, emotion and social behaviour can be understood in terms of divergent self-construals. In the context of the gender differences in integrativeness examined above, such an explanation would not be unreasonable. As demonstrated, females express not only a greater interest in L2 cultures, but also the desire to meet L2 speakers (Williams, Burden and Lanvers, 2002). Furthermore, in addition to being more at ease and having a greater familiarity with speakers of the language (Koizumi and Matsuo, 1993; Sung and Padilla, 1998), females also express a greater desire to establish interaction (Bacon and Finnemann, 1992) and to invest in communication (Stewart-Strobel and Chen, 2003; Sung and Padilla, 1998; 215), findings all of which correspond well with an interdependent self-construal that involves closer attention to others in the social world (Cross and Madson, 1997).

With regard to openness to other groups, the findings of Phillips and Filmer Sankey (1993) that females are more positive to foreigners is of interest in that, as Markus and Kitayama (1991) suggest, individuals with interdependent selves are more likely to be receptive to the presence and needs of others and more open to the idea of adjusting own beliefs and values. However, Markus and Kitayama also make the point that a heightened attention to others is most likely to be characteristic in relation to “in-group” members. This having been said, because in the context of L2 acquisition the unknown others (the “out-group” members) are speakers of the target language and function as representations of the L2 speaker that the learner aspires to become, a strict in-group–out-group distinction may not apply. Consequently the characteristic attributes associated with an interdependent self-construal may, in the context of L2 learning, also encompass a greater openness and sensitivity to other groups at a more general level. However, this remains an open question and needs to be addressed in future research.

Studies where gender differences did not emerge

Even though a majority of the research has revealed gender differences on measures of integrativeness, there are studies where differences between females and males did not materialise. In a Canadian study conducted by MacIntyre, Baker, Clément and Donovan (2002) with children in three grades of a junior high

school French immersion program (n=268), multivariate analysis of variance revealed no gender differences in relation to integrativeness. In the study an integrativeness scale was designed to capture the degree to which the respondent chose to learn French in an attempt to interact and communicate with French speakers. In accounting for these results, two factors may be of importance. First, the students were enrolled in a French immersion program and may not be representative of the total age-group population. Further, the boys are outnumbered by the girls by nearly 2:1 (m=96, f=188) thus meaning that there might well be a selection bias in favour of boys with positive attitudes and reasons for wanting to learn French (cf. Gardner and Lambert, 1972).

In two US studies conducted with compulsory school students, neither Cortés (2002) nor Ravid (1987) found any significant differences in integrativeness between girls and boys. In Cortés' study (n=209) although gender differences on a measure of integrative motivation were revealed, they were not of a magnitude to achieve significance. In Ravid's study (n=217), whilst an integrative orientation among the data gathered was confirmed using factor analysis, this was not tested separately. Instead, overall mean scores were analysed, the results indicating no differences between girls and boys. One possible explanation for the results of these two studies relates to home background. In Ravid's study the L2 being learnt was Hebrew and the participants, all of whom had Jewish backgrounds, were enrolled in complementary Hebrew schools in addition to their regular public education. In Cortés' study, whilst the L2s in focus, Spanish (learnt by 83% of the students) and French (10% of students) were a part of a regular curriculum, both schools were situated in areas with large numbers of Spanish speakers. Furthermore, over a third of the participants in the sample (35%) came from minority backgrounds, many of which were Hispanic. It is thus possible that, in these studies, heritage factors are at play, thus contributing to a greater homogeneity in the attitudes of girls and boys than is normally found in studies where the L2 is not encountered in the home or the social milieu. Indeed, in Cortés study, students who spoke another/other language(s) at home other than English scored significantly higher on integrative variables compared to those who only spoke English.

Finally, in a study carried out by Shaaban and Ghaith (2000) with a sample of students studying on an intensive English program at the University of Beirut (n=180), no significant differences in women's and men's integrative motivation were found. One possible explanation for this result may be, as Zughoul and Taminian (1984) have suggested, that in many countries in the Middle East there is a widespread perception, shared equally among females and males, that English represents a threat to the Arabic language and to Arabic cultures and identities. This is a contention supported by the results of a mixed methods study of the

language attitudes of Palestinian, Jordanian, Saudi and Libyan students enrolled at a US university where Suleiman (1993) found that none of his informants had recognizable integrative motives. Indeed, many expressed concerns about the possible impact of US culture, articulated for example by one male participant who said “I don’t wanna see the American influence affecting my culture and my people as far as their own uniqueness” (Suleiman, 1993; 116).

For all of these studies where gender differences on measures of integrativeness were not found, the results can perhaps be explained in terms of either selection factors (MacIntyre, Baker, Clément and Donovan, 2002; Ravid, 1987), sociocultural factors (Shaaban and Ghaith 2000) or indeed a combination of both (Cortés, 2002). In this respect, it is important to clarify that the theorized differences in the self-construals of females and males exist in the context of United States and are intended to function as a model to explain a broad range of behaviour in U.S. society (Cross and Madson, 1997). Indeed, as Markus and Kitayama (1991) explain, an independent self-construal should be regarded as characteristic of white middle class males with a Western European ethnic background and therefore is less likely to be descriptive of women in general, and women and men from other ethnic or socioeconomic backgrounds in particular. Thus, whilst it might be expected that similar gender differences might be found in societies with comparable social structures, material standards and belief-systems, extension of the theory to other social contexts may be problematic. In particular, relative to the research carried out in individualistic societies, such as the U.S., little research on gender differences has been conducted in collectivist societies. This having been said, in cross-cultural research involving both collectivist and individualist settings (Turkey and the U.S. respectively) Imamoglu and Karakitapoglu-Aygün (2004) found gender differences in the self-construals of females and males in both contexts, although the nature of the differences were not consistent between the two settings. Clearly, more research is needed to establish the extent to which theories of self-construals can be extended to different parts of the world and different sociocultural and socio-ethnic contexts.

Conclusion

Even though the investigation of gender differences has not been a major topic of interest in L2 motivation research, the studies that do exist demonstrate the presence of systematic differences, particularly in relation to integrativeness. As a result of the paradigm shift to a self-based approach, the possibility to draw on the research findings from mainstream psychology has become available, bringing

with it opportunities for new insights and understandings. As I have attempted to argue here, research on gender differences in the construction and construal of selves has the potential to provide a more comprehensive explanation for the differences between females and males that have been found in the core affective domain of L2 motivation that, hitherto, have remained unexplained or regarded in broad terms as the result of gender-role socialisation. In terms of future research within the self-based approach, Knox's (2006) assertion that women's possible selves are characterized by interdependence and encompass more interpersonal qualities than those of men is of particular importance. As Henry (2009) has argued, due to the central function of gender in self-definitional processes and the ways in which such processes have a pervasive and systematic effect on the interpretation of social information, in the new self-based approach to the study of L2 motivation the consideration of gender needs to be extended beyond that of a background variable. Gender is a key determinant in identity formation and therefore the investigation of differences in the ways in which females and males respond to the challenge of learning a new language needs to be promoted to the forefront of the research agenda.

Finally, two caveats need to be made. First, without further research into the effects of culture and ethnicity, the application in L2 motivation research of theories relating to gender differences in self-construals needs to be made with caution, particularly in contexts where social practices, hierarchies and ideologies differ from Western norms. Indeed, as MacIntyre, Mackinnon and Clément (2009) point out and Dörnyei (2009) acknowledges, one of the major challenges for future research using a possible selves framework is to account for cultural differences in the construction of the self. The second note of caution concerns the risk of over-reliance on singular explanations. Whilst theories relating to self-construal are undoubtedly of interest in attempting to understand and explain differences in L2 motivation, it must be stressed that self-construal divergence is not the only causal mechanism at play. Other factors, not least the effects of the interrelationships between different contextual layers in which the individual is situated, must also be taken into consideration. Bearing these two cautions in mind, it would nevertheless appear that, in the reconceptualisation of L2 motivation, the concept of self-construal can provide a useful construct in understanding differences in the affective identifications of women and men. Ultimately, the insights that might follow from an understanding of the effects of differing self-construals, could, in the context of the L2 achievement gap, be used productively to generate better understandings of the particular challenges that language learning presents for many boys.

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