ENGLISH LANGUAGE ATTITUDES AND MOTIVATION AMONG ADULT MIGRANTS IN AUSTRALIA

Silvia Ratcheva
BA in English Philology
(Sofia, Bulgaria)

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DECLARATION

I hereby certify that the work embodied in this thesis is the result of original research and has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other University or Institution.

(Signed): ........................................................................................................... (Candidate)

Date: ...........................................................................................................
To the migrants in Newcastle

for their courage, kindness, and unconditional participation

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# CONTENTS

**Page No.**

1  PROJECT ORIGIN AND THEORETICAL PRELIMINARIES ................. 2

1.1 Origin of the Project .............................................................. 2

1.2 Social Psychological Approaches in the Field of SLA ............ 4

1.2.1 Social Identity Theory .......................................................... 6

1.2.2 Lambert’s Social Psychological Model .................... 8

1.2.3 Gardner’s Socio-Educational Model ........................... 8

1.2.4 Clément’s Social Context Model ............................... 10

1.2.5 Intergroup Approach to SLA ................................. 11

1.2.6 Ethnolinguistic Identity Theory ................................. 12

1.2.7 Schumann’s Acculturation Model of SLA .................. 13

1.3 Main Constructs and Research Questions in the Present Study .............................................................. 15

1.4 The Status of the Social Psychological Approaches in the Field of SLA .......................................................... 18

1.4.1 The Theorists ............................................................. 19

1.4.2 The Middle Ground ..................................................... 21

1.4.3 The Pluralists ............................................................. 23

1.5 Layout of the Thesis .............................................................. 24

2  THE AUSTRALIAN SOCIAL MILIEU .............................................. 27

2.1 Diversity, Immigration Policy, and English Language Instruction ............................................................. 28

2.1.1 Multiculturalism in Australia ...................................... 30

2.1.2 Critiques of Multiculturalism in Australia .................. 32

2.2 The Needs Based Studies ...................................................... 32

2.2.1 Methodological Issues ............................................... 33

2.2.2 Some Findings .......................................................... 34

2.3 Ethnic Language Maintenance Research .......................... 38

2.4 Converging Evidence ......................................................... 41

2.5 Newcastle – Demographics .............................................. 45

3  THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK .................................................... 47

3.1 Gardner’s Socio-Educational Model of SLA ...................... 47
8.2 Main Analyses ................................................................. 196
  8.2.1 The Present Sample’s Motivational Orientation .......... 196
  8.2.2 Do Migrants at Different Lengths of Residence
       Differ on Motivation Variables? .............................. 200
  8.2.3 What is the Relationship among Motivation,
       Acculturation, and English Language
       Proficiency Measures? ............................................. 204
8.3 Brief Chapter Summary .................................................. 221
9 CONTRIBUTIONS, LIMITATIONS, IMPLICATIONS ....................... 223
  9.1 Integration ................................................................. 223
  9.2 Contributions ............................................................ 226
    9.2.1 Understanding the Minority Group’s Attitudes ....... 226
    9.2.2 Understanding Integrativeness .............................. 227
  9.3 Limitations ............................................................... 229
  9.4 Implications ............................................................. 232
    9.4.1 Research on Fossilization ................................. 232
    9.4.2 English as a Second Language (ESL) Teaching ...... 233
    9.4.3 Policy ................................................................. 236
REFERENCES .............................................................................. 238
APPENDICES ............................................................................. 248
  Appendix A1: Information Sheet ..................................... 248
  Appendix A2: Questionnaire .......................................... 250
  Appendix B: Countries of Respondents’ Origin ............... 275
  Appendix C1: 1997 Version of the Socio-Educational
               Model .............................................................. 276
  Appendix C2: Gardner et al.’s 1997 EFA Results .......... 277
  Appendix C3: Gardner et al.’s Correlation Analysis
               Results ............................................................. 278
LIST OF TABLES

Page No.

Table 1  Converse Sets of Conditions Facilitating Second Language Acquisition and Ethnic Language Maintenance .................. 12
Table 2  Characteristics of the ASLPR ............................................. 109
Table 3  Number of Migrant and Australian Friends ......................... 122
Table 4  Means and Standard Deviations for Central Variables .......... 126
Table 5  Australian Adaptation Scale by Subscales .......................... 131
Table 6  Preliminary Reliability Coefficients for the Main Subconstructs ................................................................. 144
Table 7  Pattern Matrix (Oblimin Rotation) of Factors Underlying the Scale for the Target Australians ......................... 154
Table 8  Pattern Matrix (Oblimin Rotation) of the Factors Underlying the Australian Behavioural Stereotype Scale .............. 156
Table 9  Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Coefficients for the Attitude Variables .......................................................... 158
Table 10  Means (Standard Deviations) of the Positivity Index across the Four Targets and the Australian Behavioural Stereotype (ABS) as a Function of Respondents’ Region of Origin .......................................................... 171
Table 11  Means (Standard Deviations) of the Positivity Index across the Four Targets and the Australian Behavioural Stereotype (ABS) as a Function of Length of Residence .................................................. 177
Table 12  F and p Values for Linear and Quadratic Components in the Relationship between Attitudes toward the Four Targets and the Australian Behavioural Stereotype (ABS) and Length of Residence .............................................................................. 179
Table 13  Bivariate Correlations between Attitude Variables and Measures of English Language Proficiency .......................... 184
Table 14  The Motivation Construct by Subconstructs ...................... 191
Table 15  Intercorrelations among Major Motivation Variables ............ 194
Table 16  Bivariate Correlations Between the Higher Order Motivation Variables and Measures of English Language Proficiency ............................................................................... 195
Table 17  Rotated Component Matrix (Varimax with Keiser Normalisation) of the Factors Underlying the Motivational Orientation Measure ................................................................. 198
Table 18  Means (Standard Deviations) of Selected Motivation Variables as a Function of Length of Residence (LOR) .............. 202
Table 19 Rotated (Varimax) Matrix of Factors Underlying the Acculturation and Motivation Measures .................................................. 206

Table 20 Sum Aggregate Scores by Variables and Cronbach’s alpha coefficients ...................................................................................... 208

Table 21 Intercorrelations between the Aggregate Scores ...................... 208

Table 22 Bivariate Correlations of the Aggregate Scores with English Language Proficiency ................................................................. 210
## LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1.</td>
<td>Constructs of interest in the present study.</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.</td>
<td>Factors comprising SLA domain based on the theorists’ views.</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.</td>
<td>Factors comprising SLA domain based on Towell &amp; Hawkins (1994).</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.</td>
<td>Factors comprising SLA domain based on Norris &amp; Ortega (2003).</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.</td>
<td>The Socio-Educational Model of SLA – representation based on Gardner’s 1985, 1992, 1995 &amp; 2000 work.</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 6.</td>
<td>Factors in Psychological Distance – based on Schumann (1976b).</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 7.</td>
<td>Factors in Social Distance – based on Schumann (1976a, b.).</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 8.</td>
<td>Chain of causality in SLA – based on Schumann’s 1978 &amp; 1986 comments.</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 9.</td>
<td>Noels et al.’s (1996) work translated in terms of Schumann’s acculturation theory.</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 10.</td>
<td>The unidimensional model of acculturation.</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 11.</td>
<td>Bidimensional model of acculturation based on Berry (1997).</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 12.</td>
<td>Factors and indicators for the acculturation construct in the present study.</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 13.</td>
<td>Maio &amp; Olson’s (2000a: 434) function-structure model: “motivations moderate the effects of beliefs, feelings, and experiences on attitudes”.</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 14.</td>
<td>Theories in motivational psychology (based on Dörnyei’s 2001 overview).</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 15.</td>
<td>Varying degrees of involvement with micro-context and macro-context factors in SLA motivation research.</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 16.</td>
<td>Dimensions of motivation in the present study.</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 17.</td>
<td>Origins of respondents by geographical region. NAMESCA = North Africa and the Middle East, and Southern and Central Asia; S &amp; C America = South and Central America.</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 18.</td>
<td>Respondents in groups by period of arrival in Australia.</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 19.</td>
<td>Proportion of the sample in occupation categories.</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 20. Level of education before arrival in Australia. The numbers in parenthesis indicate the years of schooling necessary for the completion of that level................................................................. 120

Figure 21. Speaking proficiency scores ($M = 6.82$, $SD = 1.80$; $N = 123.00$). Measurement was on a 12-point scale (expanded ASLPR) and higher scores indicate higher proficiency. The reported mean translates into ASLPR level 3 “Minimum vocational proficiency”................................................................. 124

Figure 22. Listening proficiency scores ($M = 6.94$, $SD = 1.77$; $N = 123.00$). Measurement was on a 12-point scale (expanded ASLPR) and higher scores indicate higher proficiency. The reported mean translates into ASLPR level 3 “Minimum vocational proficiency”................................................................. 125

Figure 23. Reading proficiency scores ($M = 6.80$, $SD = 1.93$; $N = 123.00$). Measurement was on a 12-point scale (expanded ASLPR) and higher scores indicate higher proficiency. The reported mean translates into ASLPR level 3 “Minimum vocational proficiency”................................................................. 125

Figure 24. Writing proficiency scores ($M = 6.46$, $SD = 2.07$; $N = 123.00$). Measurement was on a 12-point scale (expanded ASLPR) and higher scores indicate higher proficiency. The reported mean translates into ASLPR level 2+ “Minimum social proficiency +”. ........................................................................................... 125

Figure 25. Positivity ratings for the four targets. The error bars represent the standard error of the mean. All pair-wise comparisons are statistically significant, all $p$s < .001. The scores range between 1 and 5 and higher scores indicate more positive attitudes....................................................................................... 164

Figure 26. Ratings on the Intelligent-cultured and Amiable dimensions as a function of target (all $p$s < .001). The error bars represent the standard error of the mean. The scores range between 1 and 5 and higher scores indicate more positive attitudes..................................................................................................... 165

Figure 27. Positivity ratings for the four targets and the Australian Behavioural Stereotype (ABS) as a function of length of residence. Measurement is on a scale of 1 to 5 and higher scores indicate more positive attitudes. Means with different subscripts along the lines are statistically significantly different ($p$s < 0.05). NC = Native Country, ABS = Australian Behavioural Stereotype................................................................. 178

Figure 28. Persistence, Effort, Confidence with English and Attitudes toward the English language instructor as a function of length of residence. All scores are standardised. Data points with different scripts along the lines are statistically significantly different ($p < .05$). ............................................................................... 203
Figure 29. Path model of the five aggregate scores as predictors of ASLPR speaking scores (* p < .05; ** p < .01). Coefficients are standardised beta coefficients............................................................. 211

Figure 30. Path model of the five aggregate scores as predictors of ASLPR listening scores (* p < .05; ** p < .01). Coefficients are standardised beta coefficients............................................................. 212

Figure 31. Path model of the five aggregate scores as predictors of ASLPR reading scores (* p < .05; ** p < .01). Coefficients are standardised beta coefficients............................................................. 213

Figure 32. Path model of the five aggregate scores as predictors of ASLPR writing scores (* p < .05; ** p < .01). Coefficients are standardised beta coefficients............................................................. 214

Figure 33. Path model of the five aggregate scores as predictors of self-rated speaking scores (* p < .05; ** p < .01). Coefficients are standardised beta coefficients............................................................. 217

Figure 34. Path model of the five aggregate scores as predictors of self-rated listening scores (* p < .05; ** p < .01). Coefficients are standardised beta coefficients............................................................. 218

Figure 35. Path model of the five aggregate scores as predictors of self-rated reading scores (* p < .05; ** p < .01). Coefficients are standardised beta coefficients............................................................. 219

Figure 36. Path model of the five aggregate scores as predictors of self-rated writing scores (* p < .05; ** p < .01). Coefficients are standardised beta coefficients............................................................. 220
SYNOPSIS

The present investigation is a project in applied linguistics which looks at second language acquisition (SLA) from a social psychological perspective. The study is cross-sectional correlational by design and draws on two social psychological models of SLA, namely: Gardner’s (1985) socio-educational model and Schumann’s (1978) acculturation model of SLA. The structured interview and survey methods were used to elicit the attitudes toward the speakers of Australian English and the motivation for learning English among first generation non-English speaking adult migrants who were permanent settlers in, or citizens of, Australia. The Australian Second Language Proficiency Ratings (ASLPR) scale was used as a global and unobtrusive measure of English language proficiency. The study situates the socio-educational and the acculturation models within recent developments in attitude, acculturation, motivation, and SLA theory; explores the differences in attitudes and motivation as a function of respondents’ ethnic background and length of residence; and examines the relationship among the various acculturation, motivation and English language proficiency measures. The recurring themes are those of conceptual complexity, of integrativeness which is usually understood in SLA as the learners’ social integration and psychological identification with the speakers of the target language, and of the impossibility to separate the social from the individual level of analysis in SLA research. The results help to understand the evaluations and stereotype that migrants hold of Anglo-Australians and the values that underlie them. The results also lend support to the proposition (e.g. Dörnyei, 2005) that an alternative interpretation of the concept of integrativeness in SLA is possible. The findings could be informative to those involved in policy making and in delivering education to migrants.