



Predicting roles of linguistic confidence, integrative motivation and second language proficiency on cross-cultural adaptation[☆]

Baohua Yu^{a,*}, Huizhong Shen^{b,1}

^a City University of Hong Kong, Tat Chee Avenue, Kowloon, Hong Kong

^b Faculty of Education and Social Work, The University of Sydney, Sydney NSW 2006, Australia

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 1 November 2010

Accepted 30 November 2010

Keywords:

Linguistic confidence in L2

L2 proficiency

Integrative motivation

Cross-cultural adaptation

International students

ABSTRACT

This paper reported on the results of a questionnaire survey conducted with 198 Mainland Chinese international students across five different faculties in an Australian university studying for their bachelor, master and doctorate degrees. This research investigated the predicting effects of linguistic confidence in a second language (L2), integrative motivation and L2 proficiency on cross-cultural adaptation of Mainland Chinese international students in Australia. Results indicated that linguistic confidence in L2 was particularly important and L2 proficiency and integrative motivation were additionally important for both socio-cultural and academic adaptation for Mainland Chinese international students. In addition, differences in major study variables between faculties were examined and results indicated that students from the Faculty of Engineering and Information and those from the Faculty of Economics and Business respectively reported the highest and the lowest level of linguistic confidence, L2 proficiency and socio-cultural adaptation among the five faculties sampled. Implications to host institutions, host faculties, international students and future research were also considered in the paper.

© 2010 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Background

Studying in a multicultural environment has become overwhelmingly popular all over the world. Higher education in well-developed countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, have been receiving increasing numbers of international students mainly from Asian countries, particularly Mainland China in the past two decades (Marginson & McBurnie, 2004). Among English-speaking destinations, Australia was ranked as the third largest recipient of overseas higher education students behind the United States and the United Kingdom (Reserve Bank of Australia, 2008). Moreover, Australia hosted the highest proportion of international students in higher education tertiary type A programs in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which accounted for one-tenth of the world market for international higher education (Bradley, Noonan, Nugent, & Scales, 2008).

The population of international students in Australian higher education has been increasing with a tremendous speed, growing from 21,000 in 1989 to over 250,000 in 2007, among which over 80% of international students are from Asia, including 21% from Mainland China (Bradley et al., 2008). While international students made great contributions to overseas academic communities (i.e. enriching culture diversity and bringing financial income), they often encountered challenges in adaptation to new learning contexts, with many facing daunting linguistic and academic challenges (Devos, 2003; Leder

[☆] The paper was reviewed and accepted by the prior Editor-in-Chief, Dan Landis.

* Corresponding author. Present address: Institutional Analysis Group, City University of Hong Kong, Tat Chee Avenue, Kowloon, Hong Kong. Tel.: +852 3442 5316; fax: +852 3442 0139.

E-mail addresses: lucybh2@graduate.hku.hk, baohuayu@cityu.edu.hk (B. Yu), h.shen@usyd.edu.au (H. Shen).

¹ Tel.: +61 2 9351 6288.

& Forgasz, 2004; Skyrme, 2007). In a recent study of international students in Australia, Sawir (2005) identified a number of problems (e.g. linguistic confidence, English proficiency and motivation) international students had in coping with second language (L2) and highlighted that the lack of confidence in speaking L2 was one of the more serious learning difficulties facing international students.

L2 research (cf. Dörnyei, 2005; Noels, Clément, & Pelletier, 2001; Noels, Pelletier, Clément, & Vallerand, 2000) consistently supported that motivation was a vital factor determining a learner's success in learning languages. Moreover, integrative motivation was often believed to be more powerful than instrumental in a successful Second Language Acquisition (SLA) (Dörnyei, 1990; Gardner & Lambert, 1959, 1972). Research on motivation and adaptation also showed that integrative motivation played a very important and positive role in determining a successful socio-cultural/academic adaptation (Yu, 2010).

Previous research identified that difficulties with L2 and the target culture affected both academic and social-cultural adaptation (cf. Robertson, Line, Jones, & Thomas, 2000). However, there was little empirical research identifying what kinds of L2 variables were critical in cross-cultural adaptation, and even fewer showing how L2 variables affected cross-cultural adaptation. This research, for the first time, examined three L2-related variables in a single study, namely linguistic confidence, integrative motivation and L2 proficiency, and tested their predicting relationships with cross-cultural adaptation of Mainland Chinese international students in Australia.

2. Literature review

2.1. Cross-cultural adaptation of international students

Church (1982) argued that international students experienced difficulties elicited by the new culture in addition to the problems encountered by domestic students. In a similar way, more recent studies showed that international students encountered problems pertaining not only to socio-cultural adaptation, such as adjustment to social customs and norms (Schwarzer, Hahn, & Schröder, 1994), and psychological adaptation, such as feeling depressed, anxious, and lonely due to the loss of their social support networks (Sandhu & Asrabadi, 1994; Yang & Clum, 1995), but also academic adaptation such as worrying about their L2 proficiency and academic performance (Hayes & Lin, 1994; Kagan & Cohen, 1990; Ying & Liese, 1994). In the West, researchers in cross-cultural psychology have conducted a considerable amount of research on the acculturation of international students focusing on culture shock, socio-cultural adaptation and psychological adaptation, but little attention in this area has been directed to investigating students' academic adaptation.

The primary goal of most international students was to obtain good academic results in the foreign institutions. Academic issues were at the forefront of both these students' and their institutions' concerns. Research showed that academic success would impact significantly on students' socio-cultural adaptation and psychological well-being and vice versa (Li & Kaye, 1998). 'Cross-cultural adaptation' in this paper referred to international students' socio-cultural and academic integration with the target language group. These two related aspects were seen as the two indices for measuring adaptation of international students in this study. This conceptualisation combined Ward's notion of *socio-cultural adaptation* that referred to an individual's ability to fit in or negotiate interactive aspects of the new cultural environment (Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999) with Tinto's *academic adaptation* that referred to an individual's ability to be involved in positive educational outcomes (Tinto, 1993).

2.2. Relationship between second language proficiency and cross-cultural adaptation

Masgoret and Ward (2006) established an interactive model of the relationships between target language proficiency, communication competence, effective intercultural interaction and socio-cultural adaptation. Primarily, the core components of an international student's socio-cultural adaptation were language proficiency and communication competence, supplemented by effective intercultural interaction, which in turn constituted a part of the broader construct of socio-cultural adaptation. Good proficiency in the target language was the basis of successful communication among members of different ethnolinguistic communities (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2005). In a study abroad context, better language fluency was seen to be directly related to more interaction with members of the host culture and as such led to fewer socio-cultural adjustment problems (Ward & Kennedy, 1993). Other studies suggested that greater interaction with the host community would contribute to better competence in the host language (Clément, Noels, & Deneault, 2001). Ward (2004) concluded that target language skills helped establish social support and interpersonal relationships, which in turn facilitated adaptation.

Meanwhile, academic adjustment was also affected by L2-related factors for international students (Furnham & Alibhai, 1985; Holmes, 2000). In a recent review of empirical studies relating to international students' adjustment to their academic achievement in English-speaking universities, Andrade (2006) concluded that difficulty with English language and culture was the primary factor affecting academic and socio-cultural adjustment. It was plausible to propose that L2 proficiency was positively correlated to socio-cultural/academic adaptation.

2.3. Relationship between linguistic confidence in L2 and cross-cultural adaptation

Past L2 research attempted to find out why some individuals sought, whereas others avoided, L2 communication from psychological, educational, linguistic, and communicative approaches (Brown, 1991; Skehan, 1989; Tucker, Hamayan, & Genesee, 1976). Communication anxiety and perceived communication competence were found as two of the strongest

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

ISIArticles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات