The Psychosocial Adjustment of ESL/EAP Students in the UK

Lee Hawkes
April 2013
Introduction: “Psycho-social”?

Psycho

Feelings
Emotions
Identity

Social

Friends
Activities
Languages
Why care?
Why care?

The Department for Business Innovation & Skills (2011)
Why care? EAP:

Introduction: Why care?

(Street, 1995; Lea & Street, 1998; Duff 2010)

(Academic) Literacy

Cultural epistemology

Cultural ontology

Cultural identity
Why care? ESL:

- Cultural awareness
- Socio-linguistic competence
- Confidence

(Noels & Clement, 1996; Masgoret & Ward, 2006)
“Student perceptions of their experiences have taught us that their interactions with native speakers may be far less intense and frequent than was once assumed...” (Freed, 1998)
Existing Research

Japanese students in US: happier when NSs are accommodating

(Imamura, Zhang, & Harwood, 2011)
Existing Research

Singaporeans in Australia: Extroverts good (Ward, Leong, & Low, 2004)

Existing Research

Chinese students in London: disappointed with accent/dialect

(Tuneja, 2008)
Background: Existing Research

Group-Level Variables

- Society of Origin
  - Political Context
  - Economic Situation
  - Demographic Factors

- Group Acculturation
  - Physical
  - Economic
  - Social
  - Cultural

- Society of Settlement
  - Attitudes
    - Ethnic Attitudes
  - Social Support
    - Larger Society
    - Ethnic Society

Individual-Level Variables

Factors Prior to Acculturation
- Age, Gender, Education
- Motivation and Expectation for Overseas Sojourn
- Language Proficiency and Other Skills
- Personality

Factors During Acculturation
- Length of Time
- Coping: Strategies & Resources
- Social Support
- Societal Attitudes: Prejudice & Discrimination
Background: Marginalisation

Marginalisation

‘Acculturative stressors’ (Smith & Khawaja, 2011)

‘Maladaptive strategies’

Berry, 1997
Background: Marginalisation

Integration

(Berry, 1997)
# UK students’ perceptions of the French

(Coleman, 2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>French</th>
<th>Year 1 students (n &gt; 4,618)</th>
<th>Year 4 students (n &gt; 2,184)</th>
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## Background: Marginalisation

### UK students’ perceptions of the French

(Coleman, 2001)

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<td>Impatient</td>
<td>58.4%</td>
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<td>Efficient</td>
<td>83.2%</td>
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<td>Helpful</td>
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<td>Tolerant</td>
<td>55.7%</td>
<td>43.3%</td>
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<td>Patient</td>
<td>44.6%</td>
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<td>Friendly</td>
<td>88.1%</td>
<td>78.2%</td>
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<td>Logical</td>
<td>72.8%</td>
<td>63.3%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good humoured</td>
<td>79.3%</td>
<td>71.3%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Perceptions of the French, ctd.. (Riley, 2008)

“lack of a greeting or eye contact, explicit remarks about their accent or linguistic incompetence, being kept waiting and lack of interest” (p.223)

“little objective difference in respect of these factors between the treatment meted out to native and non-native clients” (p.223)

“the French don’t find one another rude, in fact they think of themselves as being politer than many other nationalities” (p.220)
## My Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>2011</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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</table>
Research: EAP1

1. Please circle the number which indicates to what extent you agree with the following statements:

1 = Completely Disagree 9 = Completely Agree

- I am studying in the UK (both the IFE and my future degree) because...
  - 1
  - 2
  - 3
  - 4
  - 5
  - 6
  - 7
  - 8
  - 9

- I would like to improve my informal spoken English.
  - 1
  - 2
  - 3
  - 4
  - 5
  - 6
  - 7
  - 8

- I would like to improve my formal, written academic English.
  - 1
  - 2
  - 3
  - 4
  - 5
  - 6
  - 7
  - 8

- I want to learn about, and interact with, British society and British culture.
  - 1
  - 2
  - 3
  - 4
  - 5
  - 6
  - 7
  - 8

- I want to meet people from other countries and learn about their culture.
  - 1
  - 2
  - 3
  - 4
  - 5
  - 6
  - 7
  - 8

- My parents told me to...
  - 1
  - 2
  - 3
  - 4
  - 5
  - 6
  - 7
  - 8

- I want to improve myself.
  - 1
  - 2
  - 3
  - 4
  - 5
  - 6
  - 7

2. Please choose the answer which best describes how you feel:

How much do you feel a part of, or connected to, British society?
(a) Not at all
(b) A bit
(c) A lot
(d) Completely

How much would you like to integrate into British society?
(a) Not at all
(b) A bit
(c) A lot
(d) Completely

How interested are you in British culture, British people and British society?
(a) Not at all
(b) A bit
(c) A lot
(d) Completely

What is the main reason you are doing the IFE?
(c) To improve my academic skills
(d) To get into a better university
(c) To have new experiences
(d) To learn new things

How do you feel about the level of your informal, spoken English?
(a) Very bad
(b) Not good enough
(c) Not bad
(d) Very good

How do you feel about the level of your formal, written English?
(a) Very bad
(b) Not good enough
(c) Not bad
(d) Very good

How would you describe your life outside of the university?
(a) Disappointed
(b) Sometimes unhappy
(c) Mostly ok
(d) Very happy

Thank you for taking the time to participate.

1.00

Please return to:

Mr. Lee Hawkins, Queen Mary, University Of London, Francis Bancroft Building 1.24, Mile End Road, London E1 4BS
Phone 020 7882 2826, Fax 020 7882 7925, Email l.hawkins@qmul.ac.uk

Don't talk much with Flatmates
Feels normal, talking to them/hers happy
Marginalisation:

1. ‘Sat at the baby table’
2. ‘Not good enough’
3. ‘Later, but not now’
## Use of English Questionnaire (3/3)

Please answer the questions below by circling the relevant number.

<p>| | | | | | | | |</p>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How many days per week do you have conversations in English when you are not in class?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How confident do you feel speaking English outside of class? (0=not at all, 7=extremely)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. How many days per week do you listen to/heard English being spoken outside of class?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. How much do you understand when you hear English being spoken outside of class? (0=nothing, 7=everything)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. How many days per week do you read in English for fun or out of general interest (like websites or newspapers)?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. How much do you understand when you read English for fun or out of general interest? (0=nothing, 7=everything)</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. How many days per week do you write/type in English in non-academic contexts (such as on Facebook or Twitter)?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. How confident do you feel writing/typing in English in non-academic contexts? (0=not at all, 7=extremely)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. How confident do you feel speaking English in class and with teachers? (0=not at all, 7=extremely)</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>10. How much do you understand when your teacher/lecturer speaks (in English)? (0=nothing, 7=everything)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. How much do you understand when you read academic texts? (0=nothing, 7=everything)</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. How confident do you feel writing academic English? (0=not at all, 7=extremely)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

I consent for this information to be used for research purposes by Queen Mary, University of London. I understand that participation is optional, that my anonymity will be preserved, and that I am free to opt-out of this research at any time. Signed:

__________________________
IELTS scores and contact, confidence and competence (2012)
### Questionnaire for London ESL students

**PLEASE ONLY DO THIS QUESTIONNAIRE IF YOU HAVE BEEN HERE MORE THAN 2 WEEKS, AND WILL BE HERE IN TOTAL MORE THAN 4 WEEKS**

1. How old are you?
   - A. 16-20
   - B. 21-25
   - C. 26-30
   - D. 31-35
   - E. 36-40
   - F. 41+

2. What gender are you?
   - A. Male
   - B. Female

3. What English level are you?
   - A. A1
   - B. A2
   - C. B1
   - D. B2
   - E. C1
   - F. C2

4. How long have you been in London?
   - A. 2-4 weeks
   - B. 1-3 months
   - C. 3-6 months
   - D. 6-12 months
   - E. 1-2 years
   - F. 2+ years

5. How long will you be in London in total?
   - A. 2-4 weeks
   - B. 1-3 months
   - C. 3-6 months
   - D. 6-12 months
   - E. 1-2 years
   - F. 2+ years

6. Where are you from?
   - A. Europe
   - B. Middle East/Central Asia
   - C. Far East/East Asia
   - D. Africa
   - E. South/Central America
   - F. Other

7. Why did you choose to come to London (compared to New York, for example)?
   - A. It’s close to my country
   - B. I have friends here
   - C. It has a good reputation
   - D. I like the English accent/dialect
   - E. Other

8. What is the main reason you are studying English here?
   - A. To get a better job
   - B. Studies/university
   - C. Learn British/western culture
   - D. Personal interest
   - E. To get a visa
   - F. Other

9. Who do you live with?
   - A. (Alone)
   - B. Partner
   - C. Family
   - D. Flatmates
   - E. Host family
   - F. Other

10. How many British friends do you have in London?
    - A. 0
    - B. 1
    - C. 2
    - D. 3
    - E. 4
    - F. 5+

11. What nationality are most of your friends in London?
    - A. The same as mine.
    - B. Different countries, but not British
    - C. British
    - D. I don’t have any friends in London

12. How often do you go to bars and restaurants in London, compared to before you came here?
    - A. A lot less often
    - B. Less often
    - C. The same
    - D. More often
    - E. Much more often

13. What language(s) do you use at home?
    - A. My first language
    - B. English
    - C. A mix of English and others
    - D. Other
    - E. I live alone

14. How often do you have conversations in English with native speakers?
    - A. Never
    - B. Once or twice a month
    - C. Once or twice a week
    - D. Most days
    - E. Every day

---

**Now please turn to the other side**
How old are you?

- 16-20
- 21-25
- 26-30
- 31-35
- 36-40
- 41+
What gender are you?

- Male
- Female
Where are you from?

- Far East/East Asia
- Europe
- South/Central America
- Middle East/Central Asia
- Africa
- Other
What English level are you?

- B1
- B2
- C1
- C2
How long have you been in London?

- 2-4 weeks: 30
- 1-3 months: 25
- 3-6 months: 20
- 6-12 months: 15
- 1-2 years: 10
- 2 years+: 5

Legend:
- 2-4 weeks
- 1-3 months
- 3-6 months
- 6-12 months
- 1-2 years
- 2 years+
How long will you be in London in total?

- 2-4 weeks
- 1-3 months
- 3-6 months
- 6-12 months
- 1-2 years
- 2+ years
Why did you choose to come to London?

- Accent
- Other
- Reputation
- Proximity
- Friends
How many British friends do you have?
How often do you feel nervous because you don’t know what to say?

- Never
- 1-2 times a month
- 1-2 times a week
- Most days
- Every day
How often do you feel nervous because you don’t know what to say?
How often do you feel nervous because you don’t know what to say?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Mode</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2-4 weeks</td>
<td>Once or twice a week</td>
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<td>1-3 months</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-6 months</td>
<td>Once or twice a week</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 months - 1 year</td>
<td>Most days</td>
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<td>1-2 years</td>
<td>Once or twice a week</td>
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<tr>
<td>2+ years</td>
<td>Most days</td>
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</table>
How often do you read and write in English?

- Never
- 1-2 times a month
- 1-2 times a week
- Most days
- Every day
How much do you think your English has improved since you arrived?

- It has not
- A bit
- Noticeably
- A lot
- Massively

Graph showing the distribution of responses.
How much do you think your English has improved since you arrived?
How much do you think you have learnt about Britain?
How much have you learnt about Britain?

- 2-4 weeks
- 1-3 months
- 3-6 months
- 6-12 months
- 1-2 years
- 2+ years
How happy are you, compared to before you came?

- Much less
- Less
- Same
- More
- Much more
How often do you feel stressed, compared to before you arrived?
How well do you think you understand British culture?

![Bar chart showing responses to the question about understanding British culture. The distribution is as follows: Not at all (blue bar), Not much (red bar), A bit (green bar), Well (purple bar), Very well (teal bar). The majority of responses fall under 'A bit'.]
How well do you think you understand British culture?
What do you think about British people?

- I hate them
- I don't like them
- They're okay
- I like them
- I really like them
What do you think about British people?
How healthy are you, compared to before you arrived?

- Much less healthy
- Less healthy
- The same
- Healthier
- Much healthier
How well do you sleep, compared to before you arrived?
How often do you feel ill, compared to before you arrived?
Summary

• No crisis
• Lots of English
• Learn about culture, language anxiety – no change for <1 year.
• ‘Fitting in’ – 1+ year
• (most students are not here for 1 year)
Example: Buying a beer

[pub in Liverpool Street Station, 5:00pm Thursday]
ME: (waiting)
BM: (looks me in eyes, raises eyebrows)
ME: (""
BM: yes please...
ME: pint of stella please mate
BM: pint of stella... (draws beer, gives it to me) four pounds twenty please mate
ME: (give him £5)
BM: thank you (sorts out change) 80 pence change cheers mate
ME: cheers
Example: Buying a beer

“The presumed background knowledge for communication, if culturally or socially relative, can prove especially problematic for L2 learners” (Loveday, 1981:123)
Example: Buying a beer

ACTORS: Me, barman
GENDERS: Male, male
AGES: Early 30s, late 20s
SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS: (same)
LOCALE: Train station pub
POWER DISTANCE: Minimal
RELATIONSHIP: Professional, anonymous
TIME: Limited
End

References


