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A systematic narrative review of International Posture: What is known and what still needs to be uncovered

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ABSTRACT

The field of research investigating motivational variables in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is large and varied. An emerging variable, International Posture, can be summarised as a revised form of Gardner's (1985) construct of integrativeness, updated by Yashima (2002). To further the understanding of International Posture, we conducted a systematic review of the literature. Data from 66 studies were extracted and four themes emerged from the literature, namely, the design/definition of International Posture, the measures used to quantify International Posture, its position in the nomological network of language learning motivation, and its purported malleability. The narrative review discusses each theme with a specific focus on future research. Overall, International Posture was found to be a valid and useful variable for directly explaining the motivation and indirectly explaining the proficiency of the EFL learner, although further research is needed to confirm the underlying design and measurement of the variable.

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1. Introduction

Globalisation has created an increasing need to communicate with others outside of one's own country. This need for cross-border communication has been met more and more with the use of English, which can now be considered a global language (Crystal, 2003). This rise in the use of English has not been driven by the need of non-native speakers to communicate with native speakers but rather by the need for a common tool for communication between individuals from all language groups (Ushioda, 2006).

The spread of English across the world has been such that it is commonly assumed that non-native speakers of English outnumber native speakers (Bolton, 2002), which raises the question of the ownership of the language. As the use of English has increased and taken on its own form in non-native contexts, one researcher stated, "English no longer exclusively represents the culture and nationality of native English-speaking countries" (Sung, 2013, p. 377). In addition, when the subject of the ownership of the English language has been broached with non-native learners, it has been found that many of these learners do not believe that English belongs to any one native English-speaking country or group (Lai, 2013). This recent notion of the non-ownership of a language has created a necessity to re-examine the fundamental theories on which the motivational literature on the learning of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is based.

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Gardner's (1985) influential socio-educational model of second language acquisition (see Fig. 2) states that when an additional language is learnt, the learner may be motivated by *integrativeness* — a need to meet and communicate with members of the language community. However, in the case of English as an 'ownerless language', or as a language without any one specific, identifiable 'owner', there is no specific community with which language learners can aspire to meet and communicate (Yashima, 2002).

Yashima (2002) addressed this issue by introducing International Posture. International Posture was conceptualised to replace the motivational desire to meet and communicate with a specific language community by offering an imagined international community (Yashima, Zenk-Nishide, & Shimizu, 2004). This desire to communicate with an imagined community may prove to be a useful motivator within EFL learning, as International Posture has been positively linked, directly or indirectly, to several desirable outcomes in language learning motivation such as the Willingness to Communicate (Yashima, 2002; Yashima et al., 2004), the Ideal L2 Self (Kormos & Csizér, 2008), and language proficiency (Yashima, 2002; Yashima et al., 2004). International Posture can therefore be seen as a positive motivational construct that is beneficial for the language learning student to have. In addition, the inclusion of International Posture in motivational studies of language learning may provide important additional insights into the impetus to learn in the EFL context. Research conducted on International Posture during the last decade has increased the understanding of the motivating power of an imagined international community, and results have been promising with respect to outcome variables. However, a clear consensus on the definition and measurement of International Posture is lacking, as well as a clear understanding of the antecedents of this variable.

For this article, we conducted a systematic literature review in order to collate and evaluate the development and measurement of International Posture, its position in the nomological network of language learning motivation, and its distinctiveness as a construct in an attempt to review and address the current gaps in the literature. The research questions guiding the literature search can be summarised as follows:

1. What is the working definition of International Posture, and how was it developed and designed?
2. What instruments are used to measure and quantify International Posture?
3. What position does International Posture hold within the nomological network of language learning motivation?
4. Is International Posture malleable?

The aim of the review is to develop a comprehensive understanding of International Posture and its role in English language learning by summarising the existing literature. In addition, the summarised literature is also aimed towards providing a useful guide for the direction of future research.

2. Method

2.1. Search strategy

We conducted a comprehensive narrative review of the literature using four computerised databases (PsychINFO, PsychARTICLES, ERIC, and Google Scholar). The search and review strategy that we utilised in this study followed the PRISMA guidelines (Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, Altman, & the PRISMA Group, 2009). Articles published in English in peer-reviewed journals as well as doctoral dissertations that included some measure or mention of International Posture were identified by using the keywords ("*International Posture*" AND "*language learning*").

The search was conducted in November 2018 and resulted in 1575 articles being identified through the use of the keywords; 194 duplicates were removed, and 1381 article Titles and Abstracts were read to determine their relevance to the research questions. We selected a total of 83 articles to review because they mentioned the definition, measurement, or malleability of International Posture and/or International Posture was included in a multivariable study. Articles were excluded from the study if they did not include any empirical findings on International Posture because the focus of the current study was on the empirical design, measurement, and nomological network of International Posture. Therefore, 17 non-empirical studies were excluded for falling outside the scope of the study. The selection process used for this study, which resulted in 66 articles being included in the review, can be seen in Fig. 1.

2.2. Review strategy

The article titles, main findings, variables measured, and type of International Posture measure used were extracted from the 66 articles identified in the literature search and entered into a spreadsheet. Data sorting was based on the research questions, with multiple studies providing information on more than one research question. All applicable results were extracted from the 66 research studies. A specific focus was additionally placed on tabulating all variables that have significant relationships with International Posture in order to establish the nomological network. Moreover, all variants of measures used to measure International Posture were noted. A full list of the 66 articles included in the review can be found in the supplementary material in the online version of this article.

The research questions and subsequent literature review yielded four areas of focus for this study: the development and design of International Posture, the measures used to quantify the variable, its nomological network, and its malleability in

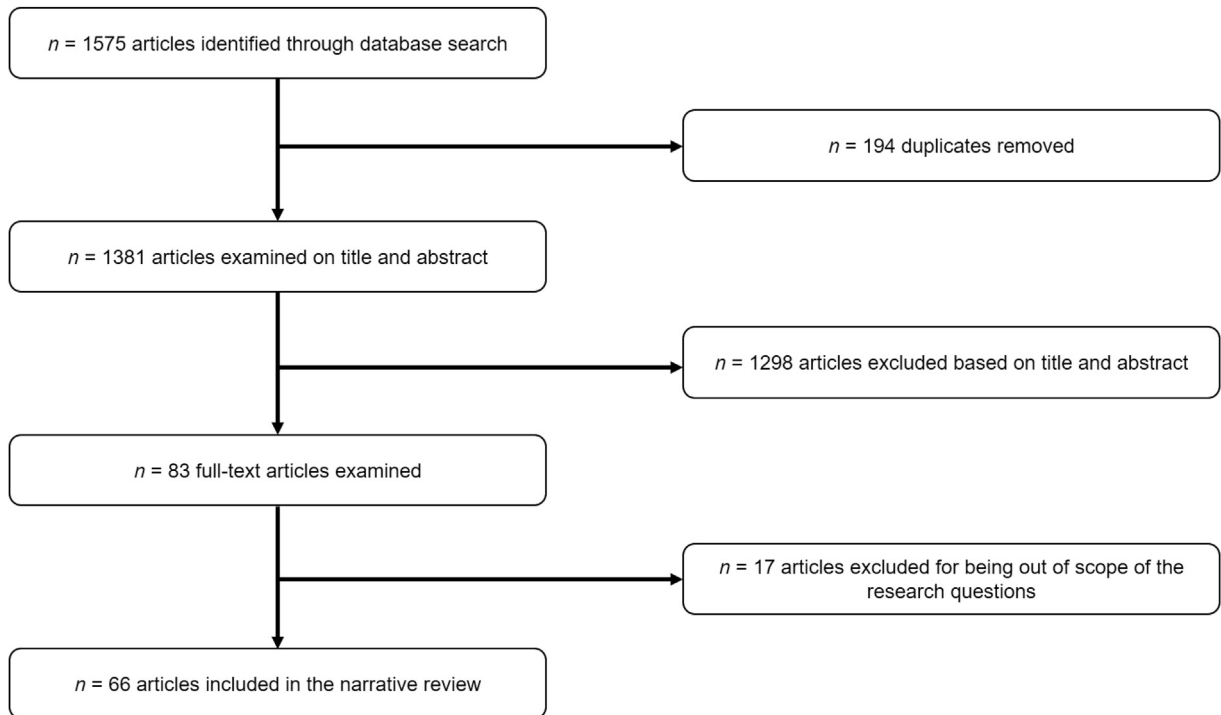


Fig. 1. Selection process of the narrative review.

the English language classroom. All four of these focus points are discussed in the narrative review, with an emphasis placed on known gaps in the existing literature.

3. From integrativeness to International Posture

In Gardner's (1985) socio-educational model of second language acquisition (see Fig. 2), a distinction is made between instrumental and integrative motivation in second language acquisition. The *instrumental motivation* of a language learner represents the motive to learn a language in order to achieve a tangible goal or reward, where this goal or reward may be a class grade, a test score, or any other concrete outcome. For instance, Gardner and MacIntyre (1991) operationalised instrumental motivation by offering \$10 for a superior grade on a language test. However, *integrative motivation* includes the concepts of motivation, learning attitude, and *integrativeness*, where integrativeness can be defined as the extent to which the language learner identifies with the target language group (Gardner, 1985). Integrative motivation is therefore the motivation of the language learner to assimilate into the target language group and does not represent the motivation of the language learner to achieve any specific, tangible goal or reward.

As far as EFL learning is concerned, studies examining the role of integrativeness in explaining language learning motivation yielded mixed results. Several international studies have found that integrativeness is a rather weak or nonexistent motivational factor in the EFL context, including Taiwan (Warden & Lin, 2000), South Africa (Coetzee-Van Rooy, 2002), Botswana (Magogwe, 2007), Japan (Irie, 2003; Yashima, 2002), and Hungary (Kormos & Csizér, 2008; Nikolov, 1999). However, the concept has been found to be a meaningful factor for EFL learning in several empirical studies of language motivation research (see MacIntyre, Baker, Clément & Donovan, 2002; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996), frequently for participants in Canada who had the goal of acquiring French as a second language. The transferability of the concept of integrativeness from the Canadian French L2 context to a global EFL context can therefore be seen as questionable.

In addition, the distinction between instrumental and integrative motivation has also been problematic in the EFL context. Gao, Zhao, Cheng, and Zhou (2004) and Kimura, Nakata, and Okumura (2001) found that English learners' motivations in China and Japan, respectively, were more complex than the juxtaposition of integrative and instrumental orientations allowed for. In a qualitative study, Lamb (2004) found no distinction between the two constructs in EFL learners in Indonesia and suggested that the two concepts should be considered in unison. Integrative motivation may therefore be problematic when considered as a separate EFL learning motivational factor but may provide insight into the motivational process when considered in conjunction with instrumental motivation.

Yashima (2002) addressed the concerns regarding integrativeness and the differentiation between the instrumental and integrative motives through the conceptualisation of International Posture. International Posture includes both friendship

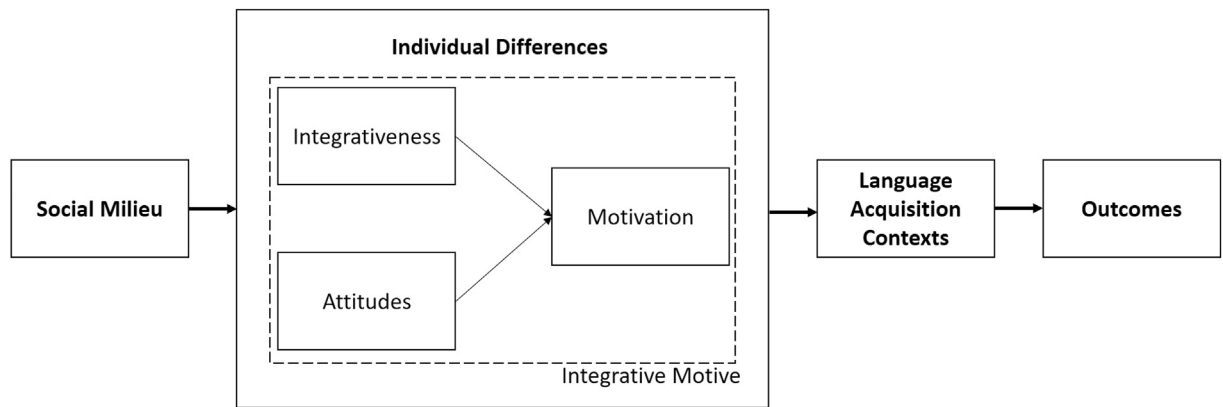


Fig. 2. Operational formulation of the 1985 Socio-Educational Model. Adapted from *Social Psychology and Second Language Learning: The Role of Attitudes and Motivation* (p. 153), by R. C. Gardner, 1985, London: Hodder Arnold.

and vocational interests and thus combines the integrative and instrumental orientations into a single construct. International Posture is defined as an “interest in foreign or international affairs, willingness to go overseas to stay or work, readiness to interact with intercultural partners, and openness or a non-ethnocentric attitude toward different cultures” (Yashima, 2002, p. 57). Beyond Gardner’s (1985) original construct of integrativeness, Yashima also drew inspiration from Norton’s (2001) concept of the imagined community. In the EFL learning context, learners who have high International Posture will envision an imagined international community that they can belong to and participate in by learning and using English. Furthermore, by having this concept of participating in the imagined community as a long-term goal of EFL learners, the problematic objective of achieving native fluency is replaced by the objective of achieving fluency to the extent that one can communicate internationally.

The emphasis on English as the intended target language that is used to participate in the imagined international community—and thus inherent to the definition of International Posture—also ought to be stressed. There are several studies in which International Posture has been considered a motivational variable for language learners acquiring a language other than English. Such studies have included Spanish (Anderson, 2012), Arabic (Kong et al., 2018), Mandarin (Lee, 2018; Xie, 2011), Japanese, and Korean (Siridetkoon, 2015) as the intended target language. The core concepts that led to the development of International Posture as a variable, namely, the lack of support for the integrative motive in the EFL context as well as the concept of imagined international communities, rests on the inclusion of English and its position as a global language. To extend the motivation of International Posture to the learning of other languages implies that these languages share a similar position to English as a global language and can also not be associated with a specific nationality or culture—an implication that would need to be supported by the research literature on the language in question. In turn, language learners acquiring a language associated with a specific culture or nationality may have a motivation to specifically communicate with and form part of this language community. However, this motive describes the concept of integrativeness and not International Posture as the authors defined the concept in this article.

Thus, based on the articles included in this narrative review, International Posture can be seen as a revised form of Gardner’s (1985) construct of integrativeness, updated to reflect the unique situation of English as a global language in which the integrative and instrumental orientations cannot be differentiated and in which the target group that a learner must integrate into has changed from a specific native-speaking group to an abstract international community.

4. Measures of International Posture

Over the past decade and a half, several measures have been used to operationalise International Posture. These diverse measures indicate that the conceptualisation of the variable differs greatly from one research study to the next. The following section will provide an overview of the questionnaires that have been used to measure International Posture and provide commentary on the lack of consensus with regard to the structure of International Posture.

International Posture was first measured by Yashima (2002) as part of a study examining Willingness to Communicate in the Japanese EFL context. The questionnaire they used was designed to capture the motivational desire to meet and communicate with English speakers and form part of an imagined international community. The multidimensional construct of International Posture was quantified through four subscales, namely, *intercultural friendship orientation*, *interest in foreign affairs*, *intergroup approach-avoidance tendency*, and *interest in international vocation/activities*.

However, the operationalisation of International Posture has undergone three major changes in Tomoko Yashima’s studies (see Yashima, 2002; Yashima, 2009; Yashima et al., 2004), as the theoretical foundations and multidimensionality of the variable have become clearer through additional research (see Table 1). Major changes include the removal of the *intercultural friendship orientation* subscale from the 2004 and 2009 measures, as well as the increase in the reliability of *interest in foreign*

Table 1
Measures of International Posture in Yashima's Studies

Subscale	Yashima (2002)	Yashima et al. (2004)	Yashima (2009)
Intercultural Friendship Orientation	$\alpha = .85$	—	—
Interest in Foreign Affairs	$\alpha = .67$	$\alpha = .63$	$\alpha = .76^a$
Intergroup Approach-Avoidance Tendency	$\alpha = .79$	$\alpha = .73$	$\alpha = .80$
Interest in International Vocation/Activities	$\alpha = .73$	$\alpha = .62$	$\alpha = .79$
Having Something to Communicate	—	—	$\alpha = .78$

Note. α = measure of internal consistency.

^a The number of items in the subscale increased from 2 to 4 in the Yashima (2009) measure.

affairs in the 2009 measure, which is most likely due to the expansion of the number of items in the subscale from two to four. In addition, the 2009 updated questionnaire also expanded the measure to include a new fourth subscale: *Having something to communicate to the world*. Yashima (2009) found that the urge to communicate to the perceived international community is tied to the EFL learner's interest in communicating about a certain topic or opinion.

Most notable, however, is the change in the International Posture measurement model in the 2009 measure, such that Yashima (2009) proposed that “the four subscales represent different manifestations of International Posture” (p. 156). These different manifestations can be categorised into an *attitudinal/behavioural propensity* and a *knowledge orientation* of the EFL learner towards the international community (see Fig. 3).

The changes made to the measurement of International Posture in Yashima's work may limit the comparability of the findings across the studies that have used the different versions of these measures. This in turn may result in differences in the nomological network of International Posture, depending on which measure is used.

Other attempts have been made to develop a measure of International Posture that is separate from the work of Tomoko Yashima. These questionnaires include a smaller number of total items, no specific subscales, and no clear structure of the multidimensionality of International Posture as proposed in Yashima (2009) (see Ali, Wyatt, & Van Laar, 2015; Csizér & Kormos, 2009; Weger, 2013).

Csizér and Kormos (2009) defined their International Posture scale as “students' attitudes to English as an international language” (p. 103) and included items such as “I would like to be able to communicate with people from other countries” (p. 117). The items from this scale seem to clearly measure an attitudinal motivational construct regarding the use and prevalence of English internationally as determined by the language student. The construct does not seem to address several of the multidimensional aspects of International Posture, as defined by Yashima (2009), including *interest in international vocation/activities* and *interest in international news*. Instead, the construct can be likened to the more unidimensional subscale of *intercultural friendship orientation*, which was included in the Yashima (2002) measure of International Posture and included items such as “Learning English will allow me to get to know various cultures and peoples” (p. 66).

The scale proposed by Ali et al. (2015) measures a construct called “International Posture and Learning L2 for Local Purposes” with items derived from an exploratory factor analysis. This variable shares similarities with the scale by Csizér and Kormos (2009) and the *intercultural friendship orientation* subscale by Yashima (2002) in that it also focusses on building international sociocultural relationships. Yet, the variable considers the sociocultural friendship potential of English in both national and international contexts for the English language learner in the same scale by including items such as “I want to learn English to travel to non-native English speaking countries for work” and “I want to learn English to interact with people in my country” (Ali et al., 2015, p. 81). English is therefore seen in this context as a communicative tool both within and across borders—which differs from the hypothesis about English proposed by Yashima (2002, 2009) as a purely international lingua franca.

The items proposed by Weger (2013) were also the result of an exploratory factor analysis on L2 motivational questionnaires, such that the majority of the items that were analysed were derived from the longitudinal work by Dörnyei, Csizér, and Németh (2006). This measurement of International Posture defines the construct as a “broad desire for multilingualism” in both a general and work-specific context (Weger, 2013, p. 94). Examples of items included in this scale are “I would like to get to know more Americans” and “After I finish learning English, I would like to start learning another language” (p. 96). The items suggest a multidimensionality to the variable of International Posture, yet still differ from the Yashima (2009) postulation because a broader construct of multilingualism is included in the definition. This multilingualism includes English yet extends beyond English as just a lingua franca. In addition, the Yashima (2009) subscales *having something to communicate to the world* and *interest in international news* do not seem to be represented in this measure of International Posture.

An additional concern regarding the measurement of International Posture is the practice of including the measure in models of motivation along with separate measures of instrumental and integrative motivation. Yashima (2004) indicated that International Posture comprises the dual goals of learning English—the utilitarian goal of mastering the language for instrumental reasons and the integrative goal of mastering the language in order to communicate internationally. The idea of having the dual concepts of instrumental and integrative orientations in one construct is fundamental to the definition and development of International Posture. Yet, several research studies have been conducted in which International Posture was hypothesised to be a separate motivating factor from instrumental motivation and/or integrative motivation (see Kormos &

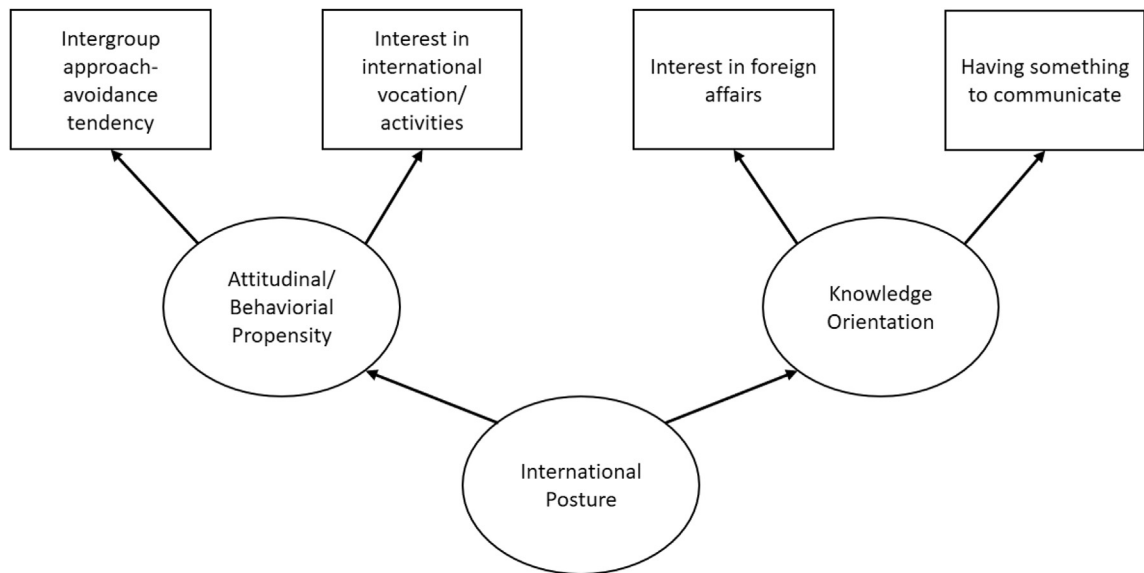


Fig. 3. Operationalisation of International Posture. Adapted from 'Motivation, Language Learning and the L2 Self' by Z. Dörnyei and E. Ushioda (Eds.), *International Posture and the Ideal L2 Self in the Japanese EFL Context* (Yashima, p. 157), 2009, Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Csizér, 2008, 2014; Munezane, 2013; Xie, 2011). These models further confound the intention of the design of International Posture and may create additional issues in terms of the discriminant validity of the variables in question. There is thus a need for clarity regarding the measurement of International Posture and its separation from and/or inclusion of integrative and instrumental orientations. The diverse measures of International Posture indicate that the conceptualisation of the variable differs greatly from one research study to the next. This complicates comparisons between studies in which International Posture forms part of the larger nomological network of English language learning motivation as there is no clear consensus in terms of the structure of the variable.

5. The nomological network of International Posture

Although a relatively new variable within language acquisition motivational research, several studies over the past decade have shed light on the possible antecedents and interrelationships of International Posture and other motivational language acquisition constructs. The following section will detail the variables indicated in the nomological network of International Posture, with an emphasis placed on the known gaps in the literature and implications for future research.

5.1. Antecedents

5.1.1. Demographic factors

Demographic factors have been found to explain significant variance in the motivational variables in foreign language learning studies, as well as in the acquisition of foreign languages (see Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015, for a comprehensive overview). To some extent, differences in International Posture have been found across demographic factors such that differences in scores have been found for gender, age, and socioeconomic status (SES).

Gender differences in International Posture scores were found in only two of the studies that are part of this systematic review. Islam (2013) reported significant differences in the scores of men and women in a Pakistani sample, with men scoring significantly higher on International Posture than their female counterparts. In turn, Birdsell (2014) reported that women scored significantly higher on International Posture than men and attributed the finding to the unique cultural expectations of male and female language students in the Japanese sample they used. It may therefore be the case that the gender differences found in International Posture reflect the cultural environment of the language being learnt to a greater extent than they reflect true differences between gender groups. However, future research on the impact of gender and the cultural environment on International Posture may provide much needed additional insights.

Age differences have also been noted in International Posture. Kormos and Csizér (2008) reported lower scores for adolescents in comparison with university students in young adult and adult language learners. Attributing this difference to the developing self-image of adolescents, further research is required to understand the role of age in the conceptualisation of International Posture. It should be noted that we found no other studies that replicated or contrasted these results.

The SES of the English language learner may additionally affect International Posture. In a study of Chilean adolescent EFL learners, [Kormos and Kiddle \(2013\)](#) found higher International Posture for students with higher SES. As the use of English in a non-native English speaking country may be constrained by the SES of the learner, the motivational factors may likewise be affected. As the majority of studies regarding International Posture have been conducted on language learners from high SES schools and universities, the role of SES and International Posture is not yet clear in the available literature.

Due to the small number of studies reporting on demographic differences in International Posture scores, no clear conclusion can be drawn regarding whether certain EFL learners would be predisposed towards developing higher and more beneficial levels of International Posture.

5.1.2. Previous learning experiences and learning attitudes

Beyond demographic factors, the previous language learning experiences and attitudes of language learners have been found to have a medium-sized effect on International Posture.

Both English language learning experiences in the immediate environment and previous learning experiences may influence International Posture. [Peng \(2015\)](#) found that the language learner's satisfaction with the immediate English language learning experience significantly predicted International Posture. In addition, several studies have found that previous experiences with intercultural contact with other speakers of English predicted and/or improved the International Posture of language students ([Aubrey & Nowlan, 2013](#); [Nishida & Yashima, 2017](#); [Ockert, 2015a](#); [Yashima & Zenuk-Nishide, 2008](#)). EFL learners who participated in student exchanges or intercultural communication may therefore develop higher levels of International Posture than their stay-at-home compatriots.

Separate from language learning experiences, the language learner's attitude towards the enjoyment and usefulness of English language learning was also found to predict International Posture ([Kormos, Kiddle, & Csizér, 2011](#)). This attitude towards learning English has been found to be a particularly strong predictor of International Posture, as [Iwamoto \(2011\)](#) and [Kong et al. \(2018\)](#) found medium to large regression coefficients between a positive attitude and International Posture. In addition, a handful of studies found support for the inclusion of personality factors as antecedents of International Posture. [Lin \(2018\)](#) and [Ghonsooly, Khajavy, and Asadpour \(2012\)](#) both found significant pathways between Openness to Experience and International Posture in a structural model of EFL learning motivation. [Lin \(2018\)](#) also found significant relationships between International Posture and the personality factors of Conscientiousness and Agreeableness, with [Fallah and Mashhady \(2014\)](#) providing additional support for the hypothesised relationship between Agreeableness and International Posture. However, it should be noted that with regard to all personality factors mentioned previously, the standardised regression coefficients were small on an absolute level ($\beta = 0.16$ to 0.18 ; $p < .05$; [Lin, 2018](#)), indicating that personality may be only a minor antecedent of International Posture. Future research clarifying the effect of personality as an antecedent of International Posture is therefore needed.

Given the small number of studies indicating possible antecedents, it is evident that the nomological network of International Posture is still relatively unidentified and should be a research priority in order to maximise the benefits of higher International Posture in EFL learners. In particular, it is the opinion of the authors that the expansion of research on the question of gender and the cultural environment, as well as personality, as antecedents of International Posture may be promising areas for future research.

5.2. Other motivational constructs

The first conceptualisation of International Posture by [Yashima \(2002\)](#) involved the inclusion of the construct in a structural model of motivational language acquisition variables. Thereafter, International Posture has been included in numerous studies and models of EFL learning. As such, there is an established nomological network of interrelationships between International Posture and other motivational constructs. Here, Willingness to Communicate, Ideal L2 Self, Motivation to Learn, and proficiency will be discussed as possible positive outcome variables linked to the development of higher International Posture in EFL learners as previous research has focussed on these variables.

5.2.1. Willingness to communicate

Willingness to Communicate (WTC) in the language being learnt has emerged as an important variable in studies on the motivation to acquire a foreign language over the past three decades. WTC can be defined as the likelihood of the language learner to communicate in the language being learnt across varying situations ([MacIntyre & Charos, 1996](#)). The concept of WTC was shown to be a complex variable, with differences being found in WTC inside and outside of the language classroom (see [MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, & Conrod, 2001](#)), as well as on the trait/state level (see [MacIntyre, Babin, & Clement, 1999](#); [MacIntyre & Legatto, 2011](#)).

[Yashima \(2002\)](#) expanded upon [MacIntyre and Charos' \(1996\)](#) model of WTC in the first operationalisation of International Posture. This inaugural study of the variable indicated that International Posture predicted Willingness to Communicate in EFL learners on a trait level, which has since been replicated in several studies ([Aliakbari, Kamangar, & Khany, 2016](#); [Ghonsooly et al., 2012](#); [Matsuoka, 2005](#); [Ulu, Weiwei, & Yu, 2015](#)). Thus, the higher the positive attitude towards the international community and the need to use English to form part of this community, the more likely the language student is to be willing to communicate in English across a range of situations.

International Posture's predictive relationship with WTC has also reflected the complexity of the WTC construct. Peng (2015) found that International Posture predicted WTC both inside and outside the classroom, and Aubrey (2010) demonstrated the influence of International Posture on state-level WTC. It would therefore seem that International Posture predicts WTC at both the state and trait levels, although the state-level relationship may be less clear. No correlation could be found between state-level WTC and International Posture when state-level WTC was measured by the number of utterances in the English language classroom (Collins, 2013).

The inclusion of WTC in the nomological network of International Posture seems a given, although the limited number of studies prohibits further analysis on whether or not the full complexity of WTC should be included in this predictive relationship. However, International Posture's positive predictive relationship with WTC does attest to the potential positive outcomes that higher levels of International Posture can have in EFL learners.

5.2.2. *Ideal L2 self*

The L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2009) can be used to introduce the concept of possible selves to motivation research in the foreign language classroom. A student learning an additional language may create imagined possible selves as speakers of this additional language. An idealised version of these possible selves (termed the Ideal L2 Self) can provide motivation for language learning as the student attempts to narrow the divide between his or her current perceived self and his or her ideal self in terms of language learning and proficiency.

Yashima et al. (2004) first argued for the inclusion of the Ideal L2 Self in the nomological network of International Posture because it was theorised that EFL students who have a motivation to belong to an imagined international community might also visualise an English-using "self". Since this theoretical postulation, several studies have confirmed a statistically significant moderate positive relationship between International Posture and the Ideal L2 Self (Kormos & Csizér, 2008; Munezane, 2013; Nishida, 2013; Peng, 2015; Yashima, 2009). Students with higher International Posture are therefore able to develop clearer visions of possible English-using selves, which may result in beneficial learning behaviours (Yashima, 2009).

5.2.3. *Motivation to learn*

The socio-educational model by Gardner (1985) theorises that integrativeness influences the learner's motivation in language learning. As International Posture is a revised form of integrativeness, it therefore seems a foregone conclusion that motivation should be included in the nomological network. Indeed, several studies have found support for this notion, with Yashima (2002) and Yashima et al. (2004) finding a predictive relationship between International Posture and motivation, where motivation was measured by the motivational intensity and the desire to learn English in EFL students. In addition, several studies have found large regression coefficients between measures of language learning motivation and International Posture (Elwood, 2011; Fallah & Mashhadly, 2014; Kim, 2004; Munezane, 2013), with Poupore (2013) finding that International Posture was significantly moderately correlated with both pre-task motivation and post-task motivation.

5.3. *Proficiency in language*

Unlike the motivational constructs or antecedents included in the nomological network, it is difficult to establish a direct relationship between proficiency in English and International Posture, and as such, the relationship has been indicated by only a dotted line in the depiction of the nomological network (see Fig. 3). Of the articles we analysed for our systematic review, only three studies could be found that confirmed a direct relationship. Mystkowska-Wiertelak and Pietrzykowska (2011) found a positive but weak correlation in one subsample, whereas Kim and Kim (2016) found significant moderately positive correlations between International Posture and English proficiency for three cohorts of Korean EFL high school learners. In turn, Iwamoto (2011) found a significant difference in International Posture mean scores across different proficiency groups, with students in the higher proficiency group having significantly higher International Posture mean scores. Rather than a direct relationship, the case for including proficiency in the nomological network of International Posture can be made in that International Posture may indirectly influence proficiency through motivated learning behaviour and other motivational variables (see Matsuoka, 2005; Yashima, 2002; Yashima et al., 2004). The relationship between International Posture and proficiency has been severely under-researched, and the majority of studies have not included a proficiency measure of English in the scope of the research. Further research is therefore needed to establish whether International Posture may have an indirect, possibly moderating, influence on proficiency in the target language.

The antecedents and the other motivational constructs discussed in this section are depicted in the proposed nomological network of International Posture (see Fig. 4). The nomological network of International Posture and the numerous studies that have expanded upon and re-examined the variables that build this network paint a promising picture of the validity and usefulness of including International Posture as a variable in EFL motivation research. This usefulness may be further extended by using the concepts of International Posture in the EFL classroom in order to increase the International Posture of EFL students.

6. The malleability of International Posture

The depicted nomological network demonstrates that International Posture can be a key variable in the English language acquisition process. International Posture has a positive predictive relationship with several significant factors in the

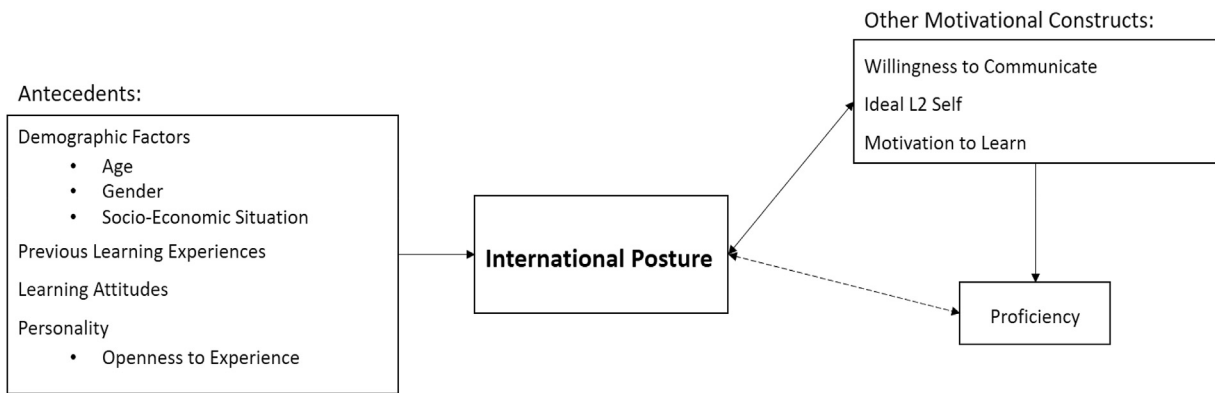


Fig. 4. The nomological network of International Posture.

motivation of English language learners, as well as a possible indirect effect on proficiency in English. This brings the malleability of International Posture into question because an increase in International Posture in an English language learner might result in an additional increase in other motivational factors and perhaps even an increase in proficiency.

International Posture has been shown to be malleable in several studies. For instance, [Aubrey and Nowlan \(2013\)](#) and [Aubrey \(2015\)](#) demonstrated that students who had frequent intercultural contact experienced a significant increase in International Posture. Students who participated in study abroad programmes also experienced a significant increase in International Posture average scores, with small to medium effect sizes (see [Geoghegan, 2018](#); [Lee, 2018](#); [Meyer, 2008](#); [Nowlan & Wang, 2018](#); [Yashima & Zenuk-Nishide, 2008](#)). The use of technology may also ease the means by which direct contact can be made with other English speakers. [Ockert \(2015a, 2015b, 2017\)](#) demonstrated that Japanese students showed an increase in International Posture after they communicated several times with Australian students in English in online video chats. Direct contact with an international community may therefore be beneficial for the development of International Posture as it creates a visible goal to get EFL learners invested in learning ([Hayashi, 2013](#)).

However, direct contact with an English speaker does not necessarily have to occur in order to increase the International Posture of EFL students. The study by [Yashima and Zenuk-Nishide \(2008\)](#) included a group of EFL students who did not participate in intercultural interactions or student exchanges, but these students also showed a marked increase in International Posture. This increase in International Posture was attributed to the students' active participation in the community of practice and thus the further strengthening of their imagined international community. In turn, [Jiang \(2013\)](#) reported a significant decrease in International Posture and overall motivation after 12 months of EFL language learning. The International Posture levels of EFL students therefore seem to be susceptible to the influence of the teaching practices used in the EFL classroom.

[Yashima \(2007\)](#) recommended that classroom content and practices be linked to an imagined international community by utilising global study content. [Yashima and Zenuk-Nishide \(2008\)](#) further echoed this recommendation by proposing theme-based teaching that goes beyond exam preparation in EFL. This creation of a social context in the EFL classroom should therefore positively influence the International Posture of an EFL learner and could also support and develop the overall motivation of the learner ([Ushioda, 2006](#)).

Classroom practices can therefore be amended, and students can be encouraged to partake in intercultural experiences in order to increase International Posture and in turn positively influence the nomological network linked to International Posture. Thus far, a positive picture has emerged in terms of the potential outcomes associated with International Posture, further strengthening its inclusion as a motivational variable in EFL learning.

7. Conclusions, implications, and future research suggestions

With this narrative review, we set out to examine the development and definition of International Posture, its measurement, its nomological network, and its malleability in the English language classroom. Moreover, the narrative review was aimed at illuminating areas of future research and providing possible directions for future studies.

The research discussed in this article clearly demonstrates the viability of International Posture as a motivational variable in the EFL learning context, as it has been shown to directly and positively influence the outcome variables Willingness to Communicate and Ideal L2 Self as this narrative review has shown. Moreover, it is possible that International Posture may have an indirect positive effect on proficiency in the language being learnt. However, future research needs to establish the size and the directionality of this important relationship. In fact, a great deal still needs to be learned about the potential of International Posture as a variable that can further the understanding of motivation in EFL learning. As such, three key areas for further research can be identified in order to expand the body of knowledge on International Posture.

Firstly, common ground needs to be found in terms of the underlying design and operationalisation of International Posture. The design of International Posture by which it subsumes both integrative and instrumental motivation as proposed by Gardner (1985) needs to be re-examined and confirmed. Furthermore, a common operationalisation needs to be agreed upon. The measures currently in use are so diverse in terms of the underlying design and measurement intentions, to the extent that what is termed International Posture in one study might not be comparable to another. The measurement of International Posture should therefore be a focus of future research. There is a need to compare and contrast validity and reliability between the three multidimensional measures provided in the studies by Yashima (2002, 2009) and Yashima et al. (2004). Furthermore, an examination of validity should be extended to include the redesign of the measurement model by Yashima (2009) to separate the subscales into additional categories (see Fig. 4). In addition, research examining the psychometric properties and use of the unidimensional measures of International Posture (see Ali et al., 2015; Csizér & Kormos, 2009; Weger, 2013) is needed to establish the extent to which these unidimensional measures are comparable with the multidimensional construct envisioned by Yashima (2009).

This establishment of a base definition and measurement of International Posture should be accompanied by the second area of further research: to expand the nomological network. In fact, the antecedents of International Posture have been severely under-researched. The three demographic factors identified in the nomological network, in particular, are under-researched, and as such, future studies examining the influence of gender, age, and SES on the International Posture of the language learner is highly recommended. An examination of measurement invariance with regard to the possibility that gender and age influence International Posture scores may be a fruitful area for future research. Further studies are also needed to establish the possible relations between personality factors and International Posture, with a particular focus on confirming and replicating the findings that higher levels in a language learner's Openness to Experience and Agreeableness may result in higher levels of International Posture (Fallah & Mashhady, 2014; Lin, 2018). The relations between International Posture and other motivational factors should also be further investigated, with a specific focus on the ambiguous relationship between International Posture and proficiency in English. The relation between International Posture and proficiency in English can be seen as the true missing link in the prevailing literature, as an established direct or indirect influence of International Posture on proficiency development is needed to confirm International Posture's status as a variable of note in English language learning research.

Lastly, future research should include a further examination of the malleability of International Posture and the potential for International Posture training. Although the malleability of International Posture has been demonstrated, the extent of its malleability over time has yet to be established. Longitudinal and experimental designs for future research are therefore strongly recommended in order to empirically establish the extent to which International Posture is malleable in individual language learners. In addition, as the nomological network demonstrates that students with high International Posture have positive potential, and as such, the design of classroom activities to increase students' levels of International Posture can be beneficial to EFL learning as a whole. The incorporation of activities to expand students' International Posture in the curriculum and the benefits of these activities are strongly recommended as an area of interest to practitioners and researchers alike. Such research also needs to be extended to the role of the teacher in the classroom context in which International Posture development is influenced. Therefore, future research on the practical applications needed in the English language classroom in order to improve the International Posture of language learners is advised.

The narrative review presented in this article is not without limitations. As the review has specifically focussed on the measurement and the nomological network of International Posture, the decision was made to exclude qualitative research in the systematic search. As such, the theoretical contribution made by qualitative research efforts towards the development and definition of International Posture was not included. A narrative review of qualitative research in the field of International Posture is therefore recommended.

In summary, the expansion of knowledge on International Posture is sorely needed in order to understand the full extent of the potential and implications that International Posture may have for EFL motivational research. However, the rise of English as a global language provides ample opportunity to further the study of the unique aspects of language learning motivation within the EFL context. It was the aim of this narrative review to give readers an overview of the current state of the art and to identify areas for future research.

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Elouise Botes: Conceptualization. **Juliana Gottschling:** Supervision, Investigation. **Matthias Stadler:** Supervision, Methodology, Investigation. **Samuel Greiff:** Supervision, Writing - original draft, Project administration, Funding acquisition.

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Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2020.102232>.

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