



Integrativeness in Malaysia: The socio-educational model in a modern Asian context

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Numerous theoretical approaches to the analysis of second language learning (SLL) have been proposed. For updated coverage of prominent and distinctive second language motivation (SLM) approaches such as the L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS) (Dornyei, 2005), the self-determination approach (Noels, Clement, & Pelletier, 1999), complexity theory (Larsen-Freeman, 1997), directed motivational currents (Dornyei, Muir, & Ibrahim, 2014), willingness to communicate (MacIntyre, Clement, Dornyei, & Noels, 1998), and positive psychology (MacIntyre & Mercer, 2014), to name a few, readers are referred to the recent Palgrave handbook on language motivation (Lamb, Csizér, Henry, & Ryan, 2019b). The richness and theoretical variety of these approaches to the analysis of second language learning attests to the complexity and vibrancy of the field. Dornyei's L2MSS, in particular, which holds that intended effort in SLL is related to a learner's ideal L2 self (the 'L2-specific facet of one's ideal self'), ought-to L2 self (L2 'attributes ... one believes one ought to possess') and L2 learning experience ('situation-specific motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience') (2005, pp. 105–106), has been used in 'countless empirical studies' (Lamb, Csizér, Henry, & Ryan, 2019a) and has generated

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'extraordinary interest' (Csizér, 2019, p. 87). The present research does not question the validity of existing approaches, which are evidence of the diversity of the field.

1.2. Integrativeness

Integrativeness is an important part of Gardner's (1985) socio-educational model, which proposes, among other things, that success in language learning tends to be influenced by attitudes towards outgroups and languages (1985, p. 146). Integrativeness may be understood as a language learner's willingness to adopt characteristics of a target language group (Gardner, 2010, p. 3), and is measured in the socio-educational model by attitudes to the target language community, interest in foreign languages and integrative orientation (Gardner, 2012, p. 217). A recent 343-page anthology focusing on integrativeness and the socio-educational model (Al Hoorie & MacIntyre, 2020) constitutes evidence that at least some researchers are continuing to theorize about, utilize and reflect on Gardner's work. Proposed connections between the socio-educational model and/or integrativeness and Seligman's (2011, pp. 16–25) PERMA (positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment) framework (Gregersen, MacIntyre, & Ross, 2020), social decisions such as the naming of new family members in multi-cultural societies (Cila & Lalonde, 2020) and the L2MSS (Claro, 2020) are intriguing, a point also made by Gardner (2020, p. 5), and suggest that integrativeness and the socio-educational model could be taken in new directions in future. Strikingly, it is even suggested in the anthology that the continued interest in integrativeness attests to the fact that the construct is still relevant, to such a degree, in fact, that even now, it 'simply cannot be ignored' (Dornyei, 2020, p. xxi). However, before the model and its most enigmatic construct (Dornyei, 2005, pp. 94–95) is further developed or explored, it seems important to acknowledge and explore prominent criticisms. Several important theoretical and empirical objections to integrativeness have been raised in the literature, and the combined weight of such concerns has, despite responses by Gardner and colleagues (e.g. Gardner (1988); Masgoret and Gardner (2003); Gardner (2010)), tended to assign to integrativeness a somewhat uncertain status. If the construct is still relevant, and thus still potentially able to contribute to a better understanding of SLL, its uncertain status is clearly problematic, since it would appear unwarranted to sideline a still-relevant construct. A number of influential theoretical and empirical objections to integrativeness are explored below.

1.3. Theoretical objections to integrativeness

One prominent theoretical criticism of integrativeness claims that English is losing its connection with English-speaking cultures and may now be linked with globalization itself, and that as such, a desire to integrate into particular cultures becomes less relevant (Lamb, 2004, p. 3). The argument is that since (in this view) the functioning of integrativeness depends on the existence of clearly distinguishable social groups connected to specific languages, and since English may now be linked not with particular cultural or geographic communities but rather with a 'spreading international culture' (p. 5), it is difficult to see how, for English in non-SLL contexts, integrativeness could operate. The implication is that integrativeness requires a clearly defined local target language community, and that in the absence of such a community, it loses relevance as a contributor to language achievement. The two core claims, i.e., that English learners no longer desire to integrate into specific linguistic communities, and that English has lost or is losing its connection with English-speaking countries, have been much repeated. The argument may be summarized as claiming that 'the desire to integrate loses its explanatory power' as 'English loses its association with particular ... cultures' (p. 3).

However, integrativeness does not necessarily involve a desire to integrate, but rather an openness to adopting characteristics of another language community (Gardner, 2006, p. 247). Further, the claim that English has lost or is losing its association with its cultures of origin is not persuasive. Multiple sources attest to the robust nature of the language-culture link, claiming, for example, that languages embody the beliefs, history, values and cultures of their creators (Tsui & Tollefson, 2017, p. 2), that languages index cultural values and assumptions and are therefore inextricably interlaced with their creating cultures (Brody, 2003, p. 40), that languages incorporate worldviews (Whorf, 1952, p. 169), and that languages symbolically represent peoples, since they arise from their cultural and historical backgrounds and represent their approach to life and ways of thinking and living (Jiang, 2000, p. 328). The mere use of a cultural artifact (e.g. a language) in a context not involving members of cultures which created that artifact (e.g. a conversation in English between two non-native speakers of English) can hardly be said to sever or even appreciably weaken the very strong links between the artifact (here, English) and its cultures of origin (here, English-speaking cultures).

A second important theoretical criticism of integrativeness proceeds from the observation that many learners of international languages learn them for use as *linguae francae* in contexts not involving native speakers. Coetzee van Rooy, noting that her earlier study of South African learners of English indicated that English was often learnt in that context as a *lingua franca*, implies that attitudes towards native speakers may not be relevant in such contexts (2006, p. 446). This argument has been much echoed in the literature. Kormos and Csizer, for example, claim that since many learners learn international languages to communicate with other non-native speakers of those languages, integrativeness for such learners 'has no relevance in today's world' (2008, p. 330). Yashima states that in Japan, English is used to communicate with people who speak English, including Africans and Asians, and that although numerous Japanese learners want to interact with native English speakers, they do not particularly want to identify with them (2009, p. 145). The objection, as far as it relates to English, may be summarized as a claim that since many students now learn English in international environments to communicate with other non-native speakers of the language with no thought of identification with native speakers (i.e., as a *lingua franca*), integrativeness 'has no relevance' for many such learners (Kormos & Csizer, 2008, p. 330).

However, little evidence for this claim is provided. The statement that English is often used as a *lingua franca* does not of itself indicate that processes of integrativeness are not occurring within the psyche of the learners. It is possible that even in *lingua franca* situations the very words, grammar, and sounds being used could trigger affective reactions (attitudes) which could affect motivation.

This could certainly be debated from a theoretical or empirical angle, but is difficult to assess without discussion. In addition, the unnuanced equating of integrativeness and identification which sometimes seems to be associated with this argument is problematic. Although Gardner has used forms of the term 'identify' in discussing integrativeness, he has also stated that the term 'integrativeness' was selected in part precisely to distinguish it from 'identification' (Gardner, 2006, p. 247), which suggests that the terms are not interchangeable. Although they share some conceptual territory, they differ significantly. Further, the identification discussion relates to just one of the components of integrativeness (integrative orientation). Integrativeness in the socio-educational model includes attitudes to the language community and interest in foreign languages, not only integrative orientation. A low or even very low score on one component does not indicate a lack of integrativeness, since the learner might (for example) score highly on the other two components. Thus, even if integrative orientation were now less relevant, this would be far from indicating that integrativeness has become irrelevant. The relationship between integrativeness and identification is an important one (see for example Dornyei (2005, pp. 73–103)), and cannot be addressed in depth here. As such, further discussion of this issue taking relevant argument, theory and evidence into account would appear called for.

A third important theoretical criticism of integrativeness is that since learners in foreign language learning (FLL) contexts may have little (direct) experience of relevant target language communities they may not have sufficiently well-developed attitudes towards them for those attitudes to be salient (Dornyei, 1990, p. 49). This argument has been much repeated in the literature and appears to have been worded more strongly over time. For example, in 1994 it was stated that FLL learning could not logically relate to attitudes towards a TLC where learners have minimal contact with the members of that TLC (Clement, Dornyei, & Noels, 1994, p. 420), while in 2009 it was stated that integrativeness or integrative orientation 'does not make much sense' and 'does not have any obvious meaning' when the target language is taught in schools in FLL environments where learners lack meaningful contact with speakers of the language (Dornyei, 2009, pp. 23–24). Such statements appear to almost assume the matter has been settled; the extent to which this is accurate will be explored below. Essentially, this claim suggests that many learners in FLL situations lack sufficient experience with the target language community to have attitudes towards it, which suggests that their attitudes to that community are not likely to contribute significantly to their achievement (Dornyei, 1990, p. 49).

However, attitudes to language communities may presumably be analyzed in the same way as attitudes to other attitude objects. Relatively recent theorization of attitudes by Eagly and Chaiken (1998, pp. 269–270) suggests that attitudes are tendencies to react evaluatively to attitude objects and can be developed through indirect as well as direct experience with such objects, and appears to imply that even a single experience may be enough for an attitude to be formed, and that once formed, attitudes may be activated by the mere presence of attitude objects through preconscious processes. This implies that attitude formation does not require direct or ongoing experience with attitude objects, and that attitude salience does not require conscious awareness. It follows that from a theoretical perspective, (a) individuals can form attitudes to language communities even when there is limited contact, and (b) attitudes can influence individuals even when they are unaware of them. Given the global presence of English and its cultural artifacts today, it appears highly unlikely that most English language learners would lack salient attitudes to English-speaking groups, even if they lack direct or meaningful contact with them, and even if they are unaware of such attitudes. Thus, it appears highly likely that even learners lacking direct or frequent contact with English speakers and English-speaking communities would have the attitudes required for integrativeness to operate.

Further theoretical objections to integrativeness could be added, such as, to name a few, those of Lukmani, who stated that her participants showed little inclination to identify with English-speaking Indians, wanting rather simply to attain the better living conditions linked with that community of speakers (1972, pp. 269–270); Au, who claimed that the proposed connection between integrativeness and achievement lacks generality (1988, p. 90); Sung, who implied that the concept of integrativeness may not apply in countries where learners may lack meaningful access to the TLC (2013, p. 379); and Prasangani, who claimed that since globalization has altered learners' desire to psychologically attach to native language communities, the drive to integrate with their cultures is outdated (2014, p. 24), and that Gardner's concept of integrativeness is 'increasingly being seen as less significant' (p. 25).

1.4. Empirical objections to integrativeness

Integrativeness levels have been reported to be low or absent in some samples. Although some studies appear to conflate integrativeness, integrative orientation and integrative motivation and to suffer from other conceptual and/or methodological difficulties, they have been influential and require acknowledgement. Space limitations prevent a thorough discussion of such studies, but two highly relevant articles will be discussed below.

One highly cited study (Warden & Lin, 2000) identified the presence of a small number of motivational groupings among which an 'integrative motivational group' was not observed (p. 544). The main claim of interest to the present discussion is that since according to the factor analysis the items assessing integrative orientation (Qs 12, 13 and 14) did not load clearly onto a single factor but loaded instead onto factors labeled 'instrumental' or 'required', an integrative orientation was not present. The conclusion was that Taiwanese students of English may be 'ill served by the integration orientation used in EFL education' (p. 544). However, even if this were the case, and even if integrative orientation was altogether absent in this sample as claimed, low levels of integrative orientation on their own go little way towards establishing low levels of integrativeness, since integrativeness is made up of three separate components, all of which should be investigated if claims are made about levels of integrativeness. In addition, it is possible that the failure of the items to load onto an integrative orientation factor may have been due not to a lack of integrative orientation but to the wording of the items. As such, the degree to which this study attests to a lack of integrativeness (or even integrative orientation) is unclear.

Another highly cited study which has been used to support the view that integrativeness is less relevant in some samples (Clement & Kruidenier, 1983) claims, among other things, that (i) language orientation research has yielded conflicting results; (ii) integrative and

instrumental orientations can presumably be placed at opposite ends of a continuum (iii) integrative orientation has been said to be a more important determinant of success in second language learning than instrumental orientation and (iv) four orientations were present in study samples (instrumental, travel, friendship and knowledge) (pp. 273–274, 286). However, (a) no reason is given for focusing solely on orientations; (b) no reason is given for assuming that a learner could not be both integratively and instrumentally oriented; (c) orientations are not suggested by Gardner's model to be determinants of success in second language learning; and (d) the four 'orientations' could be viewed as reasons, not orientations, and could generally be classified as either integrative or instrumental, avoiding the need to multiply orientations, points similar to those made by Gardner (e.g. 2010 (pp. 11–18)). In discussing Gardnerian integrativeness, it seems appropriate to acknowledge all components of integrativeness (i.e., interest in foreign languages and attitudes to the target language community, not just orientations), and also to highlight the proposed link between integrativeness and motivation. Also, defining an integrative orientation as an 'intimate affective bond' (p. 287) appears to be something of an overreach. Integrative orientation may be defined as learning a language to interact with, learn about or come closer to a language community (Gardner, 1985, p. 54). It does not appear to require intimate bonds. Although the concept requires further discussion, pending such discussion, the characterization proposed in Table 1 appears workable. Finally, the suggestion that integrative orientation may apply only in dominant linguistic groups learning the language of minority groups in their immediate environments (Clement & Kruidenier, 1983, p. 287) depends on an excessively narrow definition of integrative orientation (as noted above) and excludes the arguably equally important notions of attitudes to the language community and interest in foreign languages. Despite having been cited in discussions questioning the relevance of integrativeness (e.g. Dornyei (2005, p. 95)), then, the claims of the article in relation to integrativeness and integrative orientation appear to be open to debate.

1.5. Support for integrativeness

Despite the objections outlined above, the concept has continued to find support. One international study meta-analyzed 75 studies involving 10,489 participants and concluded that the analysis provided overwhelming support for the positive nature of the relations between integrativeness and achievement (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003, p. 197). Another international study involving 1,473 students in eight cohorts learning English as a foreign language in four countries (Croatia, Romania, Spain, and Poland) found that the correlations in the cohorts between integrativeness and achievement were significant (0.28**, 0.39**, 0.22**, 0.32**, 0.20*, 0.30**, 0.35** and 0.37**) (Gardner, 2006, p. 256). A third study, despite calling for a reconceptualization of integrativeness, noted that integrativeness 'stood out in terms of its overall significance and ... impact on the criterion measure' (Dornyei & Csizer, 2002, p. 453). A fourth study of attitudinal data from 14 countries reported that students from countries as diverse as Saudi Arabia, Switzerland and Japan desired to use English to communicate with other people in the world and to understand their cultures, and to socialize with and understand other people, especially those from English-speaking countries (Al Harthy, 2017). A fifth study found that feelings of openness towards or closeness to English speakers were connected to the English proficiency of Mexican immigrants in the USA (Albarracin, Cabedo Timmons, & Delany Barmann, 2019). A sixth study involving 20- to 30-year old Iranian military personnel (N = 164) reported a mean agreement level on a scale of one to five with an integrative orientation item ('My motivation to learn English in order to communicate with English-speaking people is ...') of 3.10 (SD = 1.51), an attitudes to the language community item ('My attitude towards English-speaking people is ...') of 2.85 (SD = 1.26), and an interest in foreign languages item ('My interest in foreign languages is ...') of 4.17 (SD = 1.03), for a total integrativeness score (calculated by the present authors) of 3.37 (Jodai, Zafarghandi, & Tous, 2013, pp. 9, 24). A seventh study, despite arguing against an ongoing role for integrativeness or integrative orientation in Japan, reported a mean agreement level of 3.92 out of 7 with an item indicative of integrative orientation ('I am studying English to learn about foreign culture'), and a mean agreement level of 3.86 out of 7 with an item indicative of interest in foreign languages ('I am

Table 1

Terms and definitions provided by Gardner.

Term	Definition
Attitudes towards the language community	'evaluative reactions towards the [target] language group' (Gardner, 1985, p. 46)
English speaker	'native English speaker' (Gardner, 2010, p. 117)
English-speaking countries	'cultural [communities such as] the U.S.A., Canada, Great Britain etc.' (Gardner, 2010, p. 117)
Integrative orientation	'learning a ... language ... to learn about, interact with, or become closer to the ... language community' (Gardner, 1985, p. 54)
Integrativeness	'openness (willingness or ability) to take on features of another community' (Gardner, 2010, p.3)
Interest in foreign languages	'interest in or tolerance to other groups in general ... focused on the issue of language' (Gardner, 2010, p. 117)
Target language community	'English-speaking communities in general' (Gardner, 2010, p. 117)

learning English to be able to watch movies in English without subtitles') (Richard & Uehara, 2012, p. 69). Finally, several Malaysian studies suggest that integrative orientation continues to be associated with success in second language learning, even in modern non-SLL contexts (e.g. Muftah & Rafic-Galea, 2013). Despite shortcomings in some of these studies, such as a tendency to conflate integrativeness and its measures, among other things, the evidence they contain is at the very least suggestive, and appears to indicate that despite sustained and widespread criticism, the concept of integrativeness may still be relevant and useful.

1.6. Research problem

The overview above suggests that despite sustained criticism of integrativeness and its components, and despite the fact that most current approaches exclude integrativeness since they do not consider it to be a significant element of the motivational make-up of the majority of global learners of English, at least some researchers have continued to fruitfully use at least some elements of the concept. The status and utility of Gardnerian integrativeness is therefore unclear. Is Gardnerian integrativeness now merely historical, as the writings of Prasangani (p. 24) and others would suggest, or can it continue to be used, even in non-SLL English-learning contexts? Before re-examining the relationships proposed by the model, it appears important, in addition to engaging with prominent criticisms, to explore the potential continued utility of integrativeness (and, by extension, of the socio-educational model) by measuring the level of attitudes indicating integrativeness among modern non-SLL English language learners, since evidence of robust levels of such attitudes would provide a stronger rationale for continued research in this line. As such, the present research focuses not on proposed relations between integrativeness, motivation and achievement, but rather on the status and potential utility of integrativeness and the socio-educational model.

1.7. Research question

What is the level of integrativeness in this modern Malaysian sample, as measured by attitudes to the learning situation, interest in foreign languages and integrative orientation?

2. Method

2.1. Sample

The participants in this research were 15- to 16-year-old upper secondary school students studying English in national high schools in Malaysia (pilot study N = 170, main study N = 278). Participating schools were located in the Klang Valley. Purposive sampling was used to select the schools. To avoid classroom-level effects, entire cohorts (all Year 10 students in participating schools) were used.

2.2. Instrument

The instrument used in this study was based on the International AMTB (Gardner, 2004) since, among other things, it is authored by the field's foremost integrativeness researcher, its items are expressly designed for gathering attitudinal and motivational data from English language learners in international contexts, and it has been shown to have adequate reliability and validity (Gardner, 2006, p. 245). The International AMTB was adapted to produce a briefer, more focused, and more culturally appropriate instrument which would (a) be able to be completed more quickly; (b) ideally produce higher quality data due to more attentive participation; and (c) be more acceptable to education personnel. Of the 22 International AMTB items assessing integrativeness, two appeared redundant and one did not appear to be clearly related to its dimension. These items were removed. The remaining 19 items were modified for clarity, length, focus and context. To achieve more thorough and even coverage, one item based on a 1985 AMTB item and four new items based on descriptions of integrativeness in the literature were added. The adapted instrument contained 24 items, with 8 items measuring each dimension.

2.3. CVI analysis

The twenty-four items resulting from the above process were subjected to CVI analysis, which involves asking content experts to evaluate items for relevance and clarity, calculating CVI and Kappa scores for each item ((Lynn, 1986); (Polit & Beck, 2006)), and modifying or excluding items in line with expert suggestions. Five items were modified slightly based on expert feedback, while the remaining 19 items were assessed as clear and relevant by the experts. The output of the analysis was 24 items with validity confirmed by expert feedback.

2.4. Design and measurement

This study employed cross-sectional, questionnaire-based data. The three independent variables (the components of integrativeness) were measured by five items. Item scores were summed and averaged to derive dimension scores, while dimension scores were summed and averaged to derive integrativeness scores.

2.5. Translation

A Malay version of the instrument was produced in order to ensure understandability (Gardner, 2010, p. 129). Advice in the literature recommending a focus on equivalence of meaning and backtranslation was followed. Output was reviewed and adjustments were made until the Malay items appeared to adequately approximate the English ones.

2.6. Testing

The pilot study instruments were tested on a small number of persons similar in relevant characteristics to the target group ($N = 10$ for each version) to identify any problems with the wording, layout, instructions or other issues. Minor adjustments to the layout and wording were made based on the feedback of test participants. The interpretations of 'English speaker' and 'English-speaking country' reported by most test participants appeared to approximately align with the definitions given in Table 1.

2.7. Data collection

Data were collected by the lead researcher with the help of school personnel. Terms such as 'English speaker' and 'English-speaking country' were left to the participants to interpret for themselves, since it was felt that researcher-provided definitions may have triggered unintended historico-political associations (Gardner, 2010, p. 117). Students were encouraged to select whichever instrument they felt more comfortable with.

2.8. Data screening, descriptive statistics and exploratory factor analysis

Completed forms were visually inspected for completeness and suspicious response patterns such as straight lining, diagonal lining and alternate extreme responses. Forms missing more than 5% of the required information or exhibiting suspicious response patterns were removed to prevent contamination of the dataset. Descriptive statistics such as response rates and the means and standard deviations of variables of interest were calculated. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed to test the construct validity (Ruscio & Roche, 2012).

3. Results

While pilot study results are often omitted in favor of main study results, in this case the pilot study results were important for the instrument refinement process, since the selection of items for the main study instrument was based on EFA. As such, selected pilot study results are reported below.

3.1. Pilot study results

196 questionnaires were collected and screened, of which 26 were removed due to missing data, out-of-range values and/or suspicious response patterns, leaving 170 valid cases. Internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) values for ALC, IFL and INO and their items were acceptable, as were composite reliability, communalities and AVE values. The statistical tests indicated that the data were suitable for factor analysis. EFA using principal component analysis (PCA) was performed to test the construct validity. For INO, the KMO level was 0.754 and the Bartlett's Sphericity Test was significant ($\chi^2_{(28)} = 151.419$, $p < 0.05$). EFA (PCA) indicated that the first component of INO accounted for 30.045% of total variance (eigenvalue = 2.404). The highest-loading items, INO2 ($\lambda = 0.595$), INO3

Table 2
Convergent validity results for items assessing ALC, IFL and INO.

Construct	Item	Outer loadings		Cronbach's alpha (scale)	CR	AVE
		initial	modified			
ALC	alc1	0.782	0.807	0.712	0.711	0.839
	alc2	0.513	deleted			
	alc4	0.748	0.813			
	alc5	0.739	0.769			
	alc7	0.337	deleted			
INO	ino2	0.710	0.708	0.770	0.782	0.845
	ino3	0.750	0.747			
	ino5	0.818	0.820			
	ino7	0.700	0.701			
	ino8	0.625	0.629			
IFL	ifl1	0.677	0.677	0.784	0.789	0.853
	ifl2	0.815	0.815			
	ifl4	0.688	0.691			
	ifl6	0.769	0.768			
	ifl8	0.707	0.706			

($\lambda = 0.738$), INO5 ($\lambda = 0.668$), INO7 ($\lambda = 0.674$) and INO8 ($\lambda = 0.519$), were retained, while the lowest loading items, INO1 ($\lambda = 0.479$), INO4 ($\lambda = <0.3$), and INO6 ($\lambda = 0.322$), were removed. For ALC, the KMO level was 0.629 and the Bartlett's value was significant ($\chi^2_{(28)} = 141.128, p < 0.05$). EFA (PCA) indicated that the first component of ALC accounted for 27.100% of total variance (eigenvalue = 2.168). The highest loading items, ALC1 ($\lambda = 0.484$), ALC2 ($\lambda = 0.717$), ALC4 ($\lambda = 0.567$), ALC5 ($\lambda = 0.549$) and ALC7 ($\lambda = 0.551$), were retained, while the lowest loading items, ALC3 ($\lambda = 0.424$), ALC6 ($\lambda = 0.421$) and ALC8 ($\lambda = 0.367$), were removed. For IFL, the KMO level was 0.713 and Bartlett's value was significant ($\chi^2_{(28)} = 300.783, p < 0.05$). EFA (PCA) indicated that the first component of IFL accounted for 34.638% of total variance (eigenvalue = 2.771). The highest-loading items, IFL1 ($\lambda = 0.655$), IFL2 ($\lambda = 0.708$), IFL4 ($\lambda = 0.741$), IFL6 ($\lambda = 0.654$) and IFL8 ($\lambda = 0.658$), were retained, while the lowest-loading items, IFL3 ($\lambda = 0.580$), IFL5 ($\lambda = <0.3$) and IFL7 ($\lambda = <0.3$), were removed.

3.2. Main study results

Of the 298 forms collected, 20 were removed during screening due to incompleteness or suspicious response patterns, leaving 278 forms. 91.4% of students were aged 15, while 8.6% were aged 16; 50.4% were male, while 49.6% were female; and 56.8% were Malay, while 22.3% were Chinese, 16.9% were Indian, 2.9% were indigenous and 1.1% identified as 'other'. Convergent validity analysis was performed to assess the statistical validity of the items. Relevant results are reported in Table 2.

Precise levels of agreement with items will vary from cohort to cohort, but the wording of items is important, since it should closely align with underlying theory. As such, indicators are reported in the Appendix, along with indicator means. All scales had five items and a midpoint of 3.

One-way repeated analysis of variance (ANOVA) and a one-sample *t*-test were used to determine the statistical significance of the means and compare the mean for each component with the mid-point of the scale ($M = 3$). ANOVA indicated significant differences among the subscales ($F = 30.882, p < 0.001$). The mean of interest in foreign languages ($M = 3.99, SD = 0.66$) was significantly higher than the means of the two other subscales and the mid-point of the scale ($t = 28.44, p < 0.001$). There was no significant difference between the means of integrative orientation ($M = 3.71, SD = 0.61$) and attitudes to the language community ($M = 3.78, SD = 0.53$). The mean level of integrativeness ($3.83 (SD = 0.60)$) was significantly higher than the mid-point of the scale (Table 3).

4. Discussion

This discussion summarizes and interprets the findings, discusses them in light of previous studies and contextual factors, and explores their implications for theoretical objections to integrativeness, the status and utility of integrativeness and the socio-educational model, research in this area, and the reconceptualization of integrativeness as an ideal L2 self.

4.1. Summary and interpretation

The findings may be summarized by stating that mean levels of agreement for all measured constructs, including integrativeness ($3.83, SD = 0.60$), fell between 3 and 4 on 5-point Likert scales. These results are interpreted as indicating that the students had a moderately positive attitude towards English-speaking countries, a strong interest in foreign languages, a moderately strong desire to learn English to learn about or communicate with English speakers, and a medium to strong level of openness to adopting features of the target language community. It bears highlighting that although these students were neither in an SLL context, which according to Oxford and Shearin (1994, p. 14) is a context in which the target language is used as the main language of communication by the majority of people, nor members of a majority group learning a language of a minority group, which according to Clement and Kruidenier (1983, p. 277) may be necessary for integrative orientation, they still displayed a moderately strong inclination to acquire English to learn about or interact with English speakers and/or their culture (integrative orientation). Important insights emerging from this study, then, are that integrative orientation may not depend on being a member of a dominant social group learning a minority language, and that robust levels of integrativeness can exist in modern non-SLL cohorts learning English.

4.2. Comparison with previous studies

The findings contrast with those of Clement and Kruidenier, who found that a 'pure' integrative orientation (i.e., one not mixed with other desires) emerged only among English speakers learning Spanish and concluded that integrative orientation may require majority language learners learning the language of a minority group in their environment (1983, p. 287). They also contrast with the findings of Warden and Lin, who were unable to identify an integratively oriented group at all and suggested that although English is important to Asian learners, its importance does not revolve around interacting socially with Westerners (2000, p. 544). However, the

Table 3
Mean comparisons for subscales of integrativeness (ANOVA).

Subscale	Mean	SD	F value	p value
Integrative orientation	3.71	0.61	30.882	<0.001
Attitudes to the language community	3.78	0.53		
Interest in foreign languages	3.99	0.66		

findings build on the results of studies cited in the introduction to this article which tend to indicate the continued presence of integrativeness in modern samples. Such results, despite problems with the theorization and measurement of integrativeness in many studies (e.g. defining integrativeness as integrative orientation, among other things), tend to suggest that integrativeness, elusive as it is, may still be present in modern non-SLL learner samples.

4.3. Contextual factors

Contextual factors such as the characteristics of the cohort, the features of the society and aspects of the educational context may have influenced these findings. Indeed, social influences on attitudes are proposed by the socio-educational model. The diversity of Malaysian society, which contains segments differing markedly in religion, culture, socio-economic status and ethnicity (Dali & Nordin, 2010, p. 267), makes generalizing about the features of the society difficult, but may tend to foster openness to outgroups due to the need to cooperate and interact in daily life. Malaysian teachers, parents and society may have tended to foster relatively open attitudes to outgroups and languages among the students of this cohort, which may have influenced the findings of this study by leading students to indicate relatively strong agreement with items measuring integrativeness. Participating schools were non-exclusive, which suggests that participants were drawn from various socio-economic segments. Schools were located in a highly urbanized region in close proximity to the national centers of industry and government, suggesting that participants may have had more open social and language-related attitudes, relatively speaking, than students in rural communities, due the stronger presence of English in their environment. As for the educational context, the ethnic heterogeneity of the schools may, like that of the society, have tended to foster relatively open attitudes towards other ethnic groups, which may in turn have tended to promote positive or at least accepting attitudes towards other communities and languages in general.

4.4. Implications for theoretical objections to integrativeness

These findings tend to call into question theoretical predictions that integrativeness may be low or even absent in modern non-SLL English learning contexts due to (1) a weakening of ties between English and its native speakers, (2) the use of English as a lingua franca and/or (3) a lack of salient English-speaking communities in learners' environments. A tendency to not associate English with native English speakers or English-speaking countries was not observed among the participants, who seemed to associate English with its native speakers and English-speaking countries. Neither the widespread use of English as a lingua franca in Malaysia nor the lack of clearly salient communities of English speakers in the environment led to low or absent levels of integrativeness. This implies that, whether for reasons such as those proposed in the introduction or for other reasons, prominent theoretical objections to integrativeness may require reevaluation, and may not be quite as persuasive as previously thought.

4.5. Implications for the status and utility of integrativeness and the socio-educational model

Suggestions of a potential ongoing relation between integrativeness and motivation have not been conclusively rebutted, and it appears at least plausible, based on, for example, (a) the meta-analysis presented by Masgoret and Gardner (2003), (b) the findings of the present study and (c) the theoretical discussion presented in the present article, that such a relation may still exist. That is, the presence of robust levels of attitudes indicating integrativeness in an ethnically mixed cohort of participants learning a non-minority language in a modern non-SLL setting, coupled with the theoretical discussion presented in this article and other empirical evidence, suggests that the status of integrativeness may require reevaluation. The present findings do not speak directly to the utility of integrativeness, since data regarding the relation between integrativeness and motivation is not presented. However, the presence of integrativeness in this sample is highly suggestive and indicates that the utility of integrativeness is still an open question. In relation to the relevance and utility of the socio-educational model, these findings, while again not speaking directly to the question, are at the very least suggestive, since if integrativeness is still relevant and perhaps useful, then the socio-educational model may also still be relevant and useful, since its status and utility is closely linked to the status and utility of integrativeness, or perhaps to integrative orientation, which multiple studies appear to have taken as the most important component of the construct, although as argued in the present article, such a view appears problematic, as it appears more reasonable to measure all construct components.

4.6. Implications for research in this area

One general implication of the discussion and findings presented in this article is that the socio-educational model and integrativeness, despite having been subjected to much criticism over the years, may well have continued explanatory power and relevance. The finding of integrativeness in this modern Malaysian cohort is difficult to reconcile with prominent objections suggesting that for theoretical reasons the construct has become or is becoming less relevant. If moderate to high levels of integrativeness are still being found in modern international learner samples, then since relatively recent international results indicate an ongoing connection between integrativeness and grades (Gardner, 2006), it is at the very least possible that integrativeness continues to be related to motivation and thence achievement, even in modern samples, even in non-SLL contexts, and even with English as the target language. A second general implication relates to the conceptualization and measurement of integrativeness. Although numerous studies (e.g. Clement and Kruidenier (1983)) have tended to conceive of integrativeness as integrative orientation, it would appear more reasonable, when testing Gardnerian integrativeness, to test all its components, i.e. attitudes to the learning situation, interest in foreign languages and integrative orientation, since all components are part of

integrativeness. A third general implication is that the conceptualizations of the English speaker and the target language community appear to require clarification. The term ‘English speaker’ is beyond the scope of this article to address due to space limitations. However, in relation to the target language community, it may be noted that the International AMTB, unlike the 1985 AMTB, which refers to specific language communities such as French Canadians and the European French, refers to ‘English-speaking countries’ (item 7), ‘tourists’ (item 11) and ‘native English speakers’ (item 27) (Gardner, 2010, pp. 117,126). The reason given is that ‘No one cultural community ... is mentioned by name because the focus is on attitudes toward English speaking communities in general’ (p. 117). This new focus has major implications for the conceptualization of the target language community, and engaging with it may lead to an updated, clearer, and more theoretically justified conceptualization. It may also be worth noting that such a focus contrasts sharply with a previous focus on the target language community as ‘a distinguishable, other-language community in a country’ (Gardner, 2019, p. 30). Such communities may be less relevant for integrativeness in non-SLL contexts than previously supposed.

4.7. Implications for a proposed need to reconceptualize integrativeness as an ideal L2 self

These findings have implications for a proposed need to reconceptualize integrativeness in non-SLL environments as an ideal self (Dornyei, 2005). If lack of a physically present clearly identifiable target language community is not an obstacle to the formation of the attitudes necessary for integrativeness, as the present findings suggest, then a reconceptualization of integrativeness as an ideal L2 self may not be necessary. Note that this line of reasoning does not question the potential existence or impact of an ideal L2 self. Rather, it simply proposes that the ideal L2 self may be thought of as a distinct construct, rather than a reinterpretation of integrative orientation. The decoupling of the ideal L2 self from integrativeness suggests that each construct may be assessed on its own merits as a proposed contributor to motivation or motivated behavior (and in the case of the socio-educational model, to achievement), and that there is no need to consider integrativeness as having been superseded by the ideal L2 self. The two constructs, though historically and conceptually related, are quite distinct, and can presumably coexist.

4.8. Limitations

Limitations of this research include the non-random nature of the sampling, the fact that participants were recruited from just a few schools, the fact that the research was conducted only in the Klang Valley, Malaysia, the non-inferential nature of the statistical analysis and the fact that quantitative research is, of its nature, unable to provide insight into the reasons for the findings. A further limitation is that two versions of the instrument were used; however, reasonable steps were taken during the translation phase (see above) to ensure approximation of meaning. While some argue that languages exert considerable influence on thought (e.g. Boroditsky (2001, p. 18)), others note that prompts can evoke different reactions even among speakers of the same language due to, for example, different life experiences (e.g. Ji, Zhang, & Nisbett, 2004), suggesting that true equivalence may be impossible. As such, the issue should be borne in mind but is not regarded as significantly compromising the results. A potentially significant limitation in interpreting the findings is the fact that the terms ‘English speaker’ and ‘English-speaking country’ were not defined for participants, for reasons given above. Against this, as noted, during the pre-test phase, participant comprehension of these terms was enquired into, and interpretations provided by participants appeared to align approximately with the definitions provided in Table 1. Nevertheless, since the definitions of the terms were not specified by the researchers during data collection, the results should be interpreted with some caution. Future studies may choose to articulate the ways in which the participants are requested to interpret the terms, but such a decision should be made only after considering the potential advantages and disadvantages of such an approach. Finally, all items were phrased in the positive direction due to a request by the relevant educational authorities, which may suggest some risk of bias. However, this risk was minimized by encouraging students to be careful and honest, by assuring them that they were free to disagree with the items, and by indicating that their opinions would be used for research purposes only.

5. Conclusion

This article reported on attitudinal data collected from Malaysian high school students which appear to indicate the presence of integrativeness and its components in a modern Asian non-SLL setting. The findings were discussed in view of selected studies, the socio-linguistic environment of modern Malaysia and several important theoretical objections to integrativeness which would tend to challenge the ongoing relevance and utility of integrativeness as a theoretical perspective. The study data indicate the existence of integrativeness in a modern non-SLL sample, which goes some way towards supporting the ongoing relevance and potential utility of integrativeness and the socio-educational model. As such, further research of a rigorous nature would appear warranted to broaden and deepen scholarly understanding of this research area. Such investigations could, naturally, proceed in parallel with studies adopting other approaches. There is no requirement that success in language learning be theorized or researched in just one way.

Author statement

The first author designed the study, carried out the data collection and analysis, and wrote the draft and final manuscript. The second author supervised the statistical aspects of the research. The third author supervised the non-statistical aspects of the research.

Appendix

Descriptive statistics for items measuring integrative orientation.

Item	Mean	SD
Learning English helps me meet and chat with English speakers	3.63	0.86
Learning English helps me understand the way of life of English speakers	3.60	0.90
Learning English helps me understand the point of view of English speakers	3.72	0.82
Learning English helps me understand the feelings of English speakers	3.83	0.82
Learning English helps me understand the opinions of English speakers	3.79	0.85

Descriptive statistics for items measuring attitudes to the language community.

Item	Mean	SD
It would be a pity if Malaysia had no communication with English-speaking countries	4.15	0.77
The colonial history of Malaysia is an important part of our current Malaysian identity	3.88	0.84
I would like to know more English speakers	3.63	0.86
Most English speakers can be trusted	3.36	0.88
Most English speakers seem friendly	3.87	0.81

Descriptive statistics for items measuring interest in foreign languages.

Item	Mean	SD
I wish I could speak many foreign languages well	4.25	0.84
Learning foreign languages is enjoyable	3.97	0.87
I am interested in foreign languages	3.89	0.95
I like the sound of foreign languages	3.93	0.97
It is important for Malaysians to learn foreign languages	3.92	0.86

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