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## **Abstract**

L2 acquisition is a complicated process in which many parameters intertwine. Reported strategy use in L2 learning has been extensively researched in relation to factors that are likely to determine it, such as positive attitudes towards EFL learning. In this paper, we investigated another potential determinant of reported strategy use, international orientation, based on the concepts of international posture (Yashima 2009) and ideal L2 self (Dörnyei 2005), alongside attitudinal factors (importance and enjoyment of learning) and environmental factors (parents' EFL knowledge). Based on quantitative data from 329 Greek secondary school students, we employed confirmatory factor analysis to test whether international orientation fully or partially mediates intended learning effort as illustrated by strategy use. We concluded that international orientation partially mediates parents' EFL knowledge, as assessed by their children, and attitudes to language learning to predict motivated strategy use. We discuss pedagogical implications of our findings.

Keywords: international orientation; learning attitudes; parents' EFL knowledge; language learning strategy; high school students

## **Introduction**

In present-day reality, globalization has contributed to the frequent transnational economic and cultural exchanges between people from all parts of the world, people of diverse national

identities. The widespread use of the internet has given rise to a global culture that comprises the outer circle of the composite socio-cultural identity construct (Erez & Gati, 2004). In this globalised world, English has emerged as an international language, “a medium of intercultural communication” or a lingua franca (Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Jenkins, 2007).

Against this backdrop, the concept of international posture was developed by Yashima (2000, 2002) to reflect an individual’s approach to or avoidance of intercultural communication whether for vocational or mere friendship purposes. Similarly, ideal second language (L2) self (Dörnyei, 2005) formulates the forces that shape learners’ possible visions of their future selves when they are engaged in language learning. Taken together the two concepts, international posture and ideal L2 self, indicate the learners’ openness to foreign cultures and their vision of themselves working or co-existing harmoniously with people of different cultural backgrounds, using English to communicate with them. In other words, both concepts reflect a reconceptualization of L2 motivation in learning English as a foreign language (EFL), which in the present study we call international orientation.

Admittedly, L2 acquisition is a complicated process in which many parameters are likely to intertwine. Reported strategy use in L2 learning has been extensively explored as it has been found to associate with learners' actual or perceived language proficiency across most cultural contexts (Chamot & El-Dinary, 1999; Lai, 2009; Nisbet, Tindall, & Arroyo, 2005; Psaltou-Joycey & Kantaridou, 2009). More specifically, reported frequency of language strategy use has been examined in relation to various factors that are likely to determine it, such as positive attitudes towards learning EFL (Azarnoosh, 2014; Platsidou & Kantaridou, 2014). International orientation as a form of motivation could be another determinant which has not been studied yet. In this paper, we attempt to investigate how international orientation (based on international posture and ideal L2 self), alongside attitudinal factors (such as importance and enjoyment of learning) and environmental factors (parents’ EFL knowledge)

pertinent to L2 learning are interrelated to affect reported learning strategy use in EFL. Specifically, we test the hypothesis that international orientation mediates the effects of the aforementioned factors on learning strategy use.

### **International Orientation**

The theoretical approach of the present paper belongs in the different attempts in the literature to develop a socio-educational model of language learning motivation, providing a bridge between Gardner's (1985) integrativeness concept, and its antecedents, Yashima's (2009) international posture and Dörnyei's (2005) L2 motivational self-system. We propose an overarching term, international orientation, to denote that both international posture and ideal L2 self share a positive predisposition to other cultures and constitute strong L2 learning motivating forces. In the following sections we explain how this integrated concept relates to L2 learning strategy use.

In Gardner's (1985) socio-educational model L2 motivation is influenced either by integrativeness, the wish to identify with the target language speech community, or by instrumentality, the need to use L2 for utilitarian purposes such as studies or work promotion. While in the Canadian bilingual context integrativeness was a stronger motivating force than instrumentality, in the EFL context the significance of an instrumental orientation has long been established (Dörnyei, 1990; Kormos & Csizér, 2014; Masgoret & Gardner, 2003). The challenge for the Gardnerian approach stems from the fact that English has acquired the status of a lingua franca or Intercultural language (Öz, 2015; Sifakis, 2004), a medium of communication across different cultures.

A concept that reflects this function of English as means of intercultural communication, is Byram's (1997) intercultural communicative competence that describes the

individual's ability to communicate effectively with interlocutors of different cultural backgrounds, deploying his/her intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes. To reflect the reality of the English language no longer being tied to a particular native-speaker language community, Yashima's (2009) approach was to propose the concept of international posture, to describe an individual's positive outlook towards an English-speaking international community.

### *International posture*

International posture is based on the concept of intercultural communication competence, which includes 'openness to different perspectives, adaptability, empathy, tendency to approach people who are different and non-ethnocentric attitudes' (Yashima, 2009, p. 146). It reflects an individual's international outlook, an openness to other cultures that functions as a facilitator of language learning.

According to Yashima (2002), international posture comprises four component dimensions: (i) Intercultural Friendship Orientation, indicating the learner's interest in different cultures, her openness and tolerance; (ii) Interest in International/ Vocational Activities, indicating the learner's willingness to study and work abroad, (iii) Interest in Foreign Affairs, indicating interest in getting informed about goings-on in different parts of the world, and (iv) Approach Avoidance Tendency/Intergroup Approach, indicating the learner's intercultural communication competence.

Yashima's (2002) research revealed a virtuous circle between international posture, motivation to learn, foreign language proficiency and self-confidence. Amounting to a favourable predisposition to the international community, international posture increases the language learners' motivation to learn, their prospects of L2 proficiency, and ultimately their self-confidence (Yashima, 2002). Self-confident learners take more chances and seek

opportunities to practice the language and successful learning outcomes spur them on even further. International posture was also found to encourage self-initiated communication of high school students both within the educational context and outside it (Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide, & Shimizu, 2004). Kormos and her colleagues have shown that international

posture, among other motivational factors, are prerequisites for the use of self-regulatory strategies (Kormos & Csizér, 2014) and motivated learning behaviour by EFL learners (Kormos, Kiddle, & Csizér, 2011). Kormos and Csizér (2014) have found that both international posture and instrumentality affect the secondary school EFL learners, while it is instrumentality that prevails for tertiary education students and adult populations. In turn, the ideal L2 self-concept feeds into intended learning effort in the form of self-regulatory strategies: opportunity, time management and satiation control in their case.

The relative strength of the international posture components in predicting L2 motivation and linguistic achievement varies according to the culture of the participants. For example, Intercultural Friendship Orientation (that relates to the use of language to get to know people from different cultures) was the strongest predictor of L2 motivation for the Japanese tertiary student population (Yashima, 2002), while for the South Korean student population, the strongest subscale was Intergroup Approach Avoidance Tendency, which reflects the relative confidence interacting with English language users (Courtney, 2008). These findings highlight the fact that, in explaining the aspects of L2 motivation, the ethnolinguistic context is an important parameter.

### *Ideal L2 self*

A similar endeavor to conceptualize motivation for language learning is Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System that comprises the constructs of ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self and the L2 learning experience (within and outside the classroom) (Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei & Csizér, 2002; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009). The theory builds on developments both in linguistic research (Gardner, 1985) and developments in psychology of the self, namely Markus and Nurius's (1986) theory of possible selves and Higgins' (1987) self-discrepancy theory. The ideal L2 self is promotion-focused and comprises an individual's aspirations and dreams, while the ought-to self is prevention-focused and relates to duties and responsibilities imposed upon the individual by others or by the individual's moral code or standards (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009). They both stand for representations of the possible future selves; the former under a positive, favourable light and the latter under an undesirable one. They may both move the individual forward through the pleasure and enjoyment gained from a positive experience or the internalisation of the responsibilities and duties imposed by the social environment. Due to its prevention focus, ought-to L2 self has been found in the literature to be less compatible with international posture (Yashima, 2009) and thus it was not included in the proposed construct, international orientation.

In the context of L2 learning, the *ideal L2 self* is a positive guide, an elaborate, plausible and vivid image of a linguistically competent person, able to communicate with English language users effectively. Regarding its role in the learning process, Kormos and Csizér argue that "the ideal L2 self is one of the best predictor variables of how much energy students are willing to invest in language learning" (2014, p. 284). As a driver of L2 learning, the ideal L2 self would instigate an effort on the part of the learner to minimize the discrepancy between his current and future self (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009). Ideal L2 self is also related to attitudes towards language learning since learners with strong ideal L2 self and

positive learning attitudes will exhibit greater efforts towards language learning (Taguchi, Magid, & Papi, 2009).

In view of the above, it appears that learners' international posture is related to their ideal L2 self in the sense that awareness of relationship to the world enables them to visualise their "English using selves" (Yashima, 2009, p. 147). A higher level of international posture indicates strong likelihood of generation of possible English-speaking selves, the student envisaging himself as using the language to communicate with English language users/people of other cultures, reading the news in English, studying or working in a foreign country. These ideal selves of an individual functioning in a foreign context involve English language proficiency and can constitute strong incentives for English language learning (Yashima, 2009).

### **Attitudes to language learning**

Attitudes are favourable or unfavourable predispositions (Ajzen, 1988) to specific aspects of language learning, such as the specific language, or the target language community, and they stimulate motivation. In Gardner's (1985) socio-educational model, attitudes to the L2 community are among the antecedents of motivational behaviour. In Dörnyei's (2001; Dörnyei & Otto, 1998) action model of motivation, intrinsic pleasure and value of language learning are among the motivational influences in the preactional phase (i.e. antecedents) of motivational behavior. Based on this, in the present study we assessed attitudes with two variables: (i) importance of EFL learning and (ii) enjoyment of language learning as reported by learners. Enjoyment can be cultivated in the foreign language classroom through group work and autonomy-building activities which capitalize on adolescents' vivid imagination to increase the ratio of positive over negative emotions in the language learning process (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014).

Research has shown that attitudes towards language learning determine the learning process and/or the learning outcome. For instance, in a recent study (Platsidou & Kantaridou, 2014), perceived importance of EFL learning and enjoyment of learning students experience in the process were found to determine both reported language strategy use and perceived proficiency in English. Attitudes to language learning address the affective side of foreign language learning, alongside motivation, interests, learners' beliefs, needs, expectations, and prior experiences (McKenna, Kear, & Ellsworth, 1995). Some researchers (e.g., Savignon, 1983) argue that affective variables contribute more to foreign or second language learning than do aptitude, intelligence, method of teaching used in the classroom, or time spent learning the language. Wong and Nunan (2011) found that effective learners rate themselves higher in English proficiency and enjoy learning English more compared to ineffective learners, but they do not differ in their perception of the importance of English. Based on their overall study results, the authors find that it is attitudinal factors and assumption of responsibility for learning that differentiate less effective learners from more effective ones (Wong & Nunan, 2011).

### **Parents' EFL knowledge**

Foreign language learning is also influenced by environmental factors such as parental or peer influence (Gardner, Tremblay, & Masgoret, 1997). Learner's motivation can be influenced by societal norms as these are reflected in the family and perpetuated by formal education and the media. According to the sociocultural theory, mere participation in cultural, linguistic, and historically formed settings, such as family life and peer group interaction, and in institutional contexts like schooling fundamentally mediate our mental functions/processes (VanPatten & Williams, 2007).

More specifically, it is claimed that family expectations and the amount of expected support that learners may get from the family (and/or school) shape their motivation as to which goal or intention to pursue and how to sustain energy during the process (Dörnyei, 2001). In their investigation of L2 learning motivation, Kormos et al. (2011) found that parental encouragement plays an important role in determining motivated learning behavior via affecting learners' knowledge orientation, learning attitudes, international posture, ideal and ought-to-L2 self.

One can assume that students whose parents speak English live in an environment conducive to learning English and these parents set an example for their children to follow. Thus, we consider the influence of mothers' and fathers' knowledge of English as their own children perceive it and we examine how it interacts with international orientation and learning attitudes to determine reported frequency of language learning strategy use.

### **Language learning strategies**

In the past 40 years there has been a large body of literature in EFL learning examining the process of language acquisition from the learner's viewpoint, with the aim of determining what components of the language learning and practicing behavior contribute (positively or negatively) to language proficiency. In this literature, the appropriate use of language strategies has been consistently associated with high actual or perceived language proficiency across most cultures and ages of learners studied (Green & Oxford, 1995; Lee & Oxford, 2008; Liu, 2013; Platsidou & Sipitanou, 2015; Su, 2005; Wong & Nunan, 2011). Over the years there has been a trend to incorporate language learning strategies into the broader concept of self-regulation where they validly belong along with other self-regulatory mechanisms (Dörnyei, 2005). Despite its theoretical fuzziness (Dörnyei, 2005; Ellis, 1994; Weinstein, Acee, & Jung, 2000), language learning strategy research continues to hold its

vigour through reformulation or reconceptualization of its field in accordance with developments in L2 motivation and educational psychology (Gu, 2012; Ranalli, 2012; Rose, 2012).

Many learning strategy classifications have been developed to explain language acquisition process. One of the most prominent is Oxford's (1990) system of six categories which includes memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective and social strategies. These six categories of strategies are assessed with the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) (Oxford, 1990) which one of the most widely used strategy questionnaires in the world. Compared with earlier research into language learning strategies, the SILL represents a reliable measure of the variety of strategies reported by language learners (Hsiao & Oxford, 2002).

It should be noted that Oxford's (2011) more recent Strategic Self-Regulation (S<sup>2</sup>R) model of language learning proposes a different classification of the wide variety of tactics used by L2 learners into two levels (strategic and metastrategic) and three dimensions (cognitive, affective and sociocultural-interactive) aptly incorporating research developments in educational psychology and language learning literature. Nevertheless, there has not yet been any revised instrument to measure frequency of strategy use in the context of the S<sup>2</sup>R, as the theory mostly emphasises the quality of language learning tactics used by learners in an effort to theoretically classify them.

The systematic study of the relation between language learning strategy use and motivational parameters began in the mid-1990's. Gardner et al. (1997) suggest there is a two-way relationship between motivation and strategy use. Green and Oxford (1995) describe it as an "ascending spiral" whereby motivation to language learning leads students to active strategy use resulting in improved performance, which in turn increases motivation and

strategy use. Empirical evidence (MacIntyre & Noels, 1996) report that affective variables (such as attitudes and motivation) were found to influence the use of learning strategies.

### **Aim and hypotheses of the present study**

In the present study, we investigated how international orientation, positive attitudes towards L2 learning (such as importance of learning English and enjoyment of learning) and parents' EFL knowledge affect the frequency of reported language strategy use in EFL learning, that is, motivated learning behavior. To test the above, we built two alternative hypothesized models, based on the literature reviewed earlier. In the first model, we assumed that international orientation, positive attitudes towards language learning and parents' EFL knowledge would directly predict reported strategy use. In the second model, we hypothesized that international orientation would mediate in the prediction of learning strategy use; namely, positive attitudes and parents' EFL knowledge would affect international orientation (Kormos et al., 2011) which, in turn, would predict reported learning strategy use.

### **Method**

#### ***Participants***

For the purpose of this study, secondary-school level students were chosen as they have enough metacognitive experience to monitor their learning and, thus, provide reliable self-reports (Efklides, 2009). Data were collected from 329 students recruited from two secondary public schools of Thessaloniki, the second larger city of Greece. There were 118 1st grade students (35.9%), 110 students of the 2nd grade (33.4%) and 101 students of the 3rd grade (30.7%) of junior high school (see Table 1). The age range of the sample was 12 to 16 years,

with a mean of 13.85 (SD = .908). In the total sample, 157 were males (47.7%) and 172 females (52.3%); in each grade the two genders were almost equally represented.

[Table 1 near here]

In the Greek educational system, EFL instruction begins at the third grade of primary education, ages 8-9 (in 80% of state schools, although for the remaining 20% English is taught from the first grade, as part of a pilot programme) and continues throughout secondary education. Specifically, at 1<sup>st</sup> grade of junior high schools EFL instruction starts at A2 level and reaches B1 to B2 level at 3<sup>rd</sup> grade (Council of Europe, 2001). Greek students in state secondary education schools are exposed to two teaching hours per week based on assigned textbooks designed by the Greek Pedagogical Institute. Language learning strategies are included in the textbooks in relation to the four skills to ease student comprehension. Overall, the textbooks refer to language learning strategies either in the introductory or self-assessment section but do not coherently or extensively focus on their practice or consolidation. In addition to state EFL teaching, the majority of Greek students also receive additional EFL tuition in private language schools, although this tendency has declined recently due to the economic crisis.

### ***Research Instruments***

A set of inventories and measurements was administered to the students in order to assess their reported frequency of language learning strategy use, international posture, ideal L2 self, attitudes towards learning EFL and parents' EFL knowledge. Inventories and measurement are presented below.

### *SILL-29*

To measure the reported frequency of language learning strategy use, a short version of the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) (Oxford, 1990) was administered to the participants. SILL-29, the adapted version of SILL, has been translated, tested and validated for younger populations in the Greek context (Gavriilidou & Mitits, forthcoming; Petrogiannis & Gavriilidou, 2015). As those studies have shown, the SILL-29 comprised 29 items grouped into six categories of learning strategies (memory: 4 items,  $\alpha = .619$ ; cognitive: 6 items,  $\alpha = .770$ ; compensation: 4 items,  $\alpha = .621$ ; metacognitive: 7 items,  $\alpha = .849$ ; affective: 3 items,  $\alpha = .559$ ; and social: 5 items,  $\alpha = .769$ ). Respondents had to answer using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (never or almost never true of me) to 5 (always or almost always true of me). Item means were computed for each of the six categories with higher scores indicating more frequent use.

### *International Posture Inventory*

For the needs of the present study, the International Posture Inventory (IPI, see Table 2) was designed based on Yashima's (2009) relevant instrument. IPI comprised 16 items; 10 were adopted or modified from Yashima's (2009) research to address younger populations and six more items were added to measure acceptance of foreign customs (e.g., foreign cuisine, handicraft, travel) by the youth. Respondents had to answer using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (never or almost never true of me) to 5 (always or almost always true of me).

### *Ideal L2 self measurement*

Four items out of the five from the Japanese version of the Motivational self-system questionnaire (Taguchi et al., 2009) were used to assess the students' ideal L2 self projections (e.g., "I can imagine a situation where I am speaking English with foreigners", "I imagine

*myself as someone who is able to speak English").* The fifth item (*"The things I want to do in the future require me to use English")* was considered to overlap with the fourth (*"Whenever I think of my future career, I imagine myself using English")*, thus, it was not included in our questionnaire. The ideal L2 self questionnaire was answered on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (never true for me) to 5 (always true for me).

#### *Attitudes towards learning measurement*

To measure attitudes towards language learning, two items from the SILL background questionnaire were used (Oxford, 1990). Specifically, the items assessed, respectively, students' perceived importance of learning English as a foreign language (using a scale ranging from 1: not that important to 3: very important), and enjoyment of learning foreign languages (answering a Yes / No question).

#### *Parents' EFL knowledge measurement*

Parents' EFL knowledge was estimated by two items, in which students were asked to rate their mother's and father's knowledge of English on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (none) to 4 (very good). Higher scores indicate higher level of parents' EFL knowledge.

#### ***Procedure***

After submitting a detailed description of the study to the Ministry of Education, permission to carry out the research in public junior high schools was granted. In the next step, the school headmasters were contacted and their consent was asked. Finally, informed consent was asked and obtained by the students' parents by having them read and sign a document explaining the study aims and design. Students voluntarily participated in the study and no credits or other incentives were provided.

### ***Data analysis***

Since IPI was designed for the needs of the present study, initially, a principal component analysis with varimax rotation was performed to explore the latent structure of the inventory for this sample. In the next step, confirmatory factor analysis was employed using the EQS 6.1 software to test the direct relations and the mediation models. To this end, the Satorra-Bentler scaled  $\chi^2$  and the Robust estimation procedure were used.

### **Results**

As principal component analysis revealed, three factors emerged explaining 45.94% of the total variance (see Table 2). The first factor, *openness to foreign cultures*, included nine items indicating a positive attitude towards foreign cultures. The second factor, named *vocational and academic utility*, included three items reflecting a vocational or academic interest in the utility of English as an international language. Finally, four items, mostly negatively phrased, loaded on the third factor indicating an *avoidance-to-foreignness tendency*. As shown in Table 1, internal consistency of the first two factors is satisfactory, whereas the third factor presents low reliability. Consequently, the third factor was not included in further analyses.

[Table 2 near here]

Then, confirmatory factor analysis was performed to test for the direct relations and the mediation model, respectively. The statistics of the model assuming direct relations suggest that it does not fit the data well [CFI = .831, RMSEA = .109 (CI90% .096-.121) and SRMR = .072], while the mediation model had considerably better indices. In the latter model, however, certain paths had not statistically significant loadings and were thus removed. The final model that fitted the data best (which is presented in Figure 1) partly

confirmed the initial hypothesis, as it supports the partial mediation of international orientation.

Regarding the statistics of this model, the Satorra-Bentler scaled  $\chi^2$  was significant [ $\chi^2(61) = 194.44, p < .000, \chi^2/df = 3.2$ ]; due to the quite large sample, model fit assessment was based on the remaining goodness-of-fit-indicators provided in the analysis. Specifically, RMSEA = .083 (CI90% .070–.095), SRMR = .053, and CFI = .904 indicate an adequate model fit (Iacobucci, 2010; Kline, 2005). All path loadings were statistically significant. Inspection of Figure 1 shows that the two subscales of the international posture, openness to foreign cultures (IP1) and vocational or academic utility (IP2), as well as the ideal L2 self load on a first-order factor representing international orientation. Importance of learning English and enjoyment of language learning load on a first-order factor representing positive attitudes towards learning EFL. Father's and mother's knowledge of English load on a first-order factor representing parents' EFL knowledge. The two latter factors affect international orientation, with the attitudes towards language learning presenting higher loading than the parents' EFL knowledge factor. In turn, international orientation affects reported frequency of strategy use; in other words, the former factor mediates the way parents' EFL knowledge and learning attitudes predict reported strategy use. Finally, learning attitudes also predict reported strategy use in a direct way, although this loading is low (albeit significant).

[Figure 1 near here]

## **Discussion**

In this study, we investigated how perceived motivational (international orientation), attitudinal (attitudes towards learning ESL) and environmental parameters (parents' EFL knowledge) predict reported frequency of language strategy use in EFL learning. We tested two models of hypothesized causal relationships among four sets of variables: International

orientation (which was defined by two component dimensions, international posture and ideal L2 self), positive attitudes towards language learning (measured by how students perceived importance of learning English and their enjoyment of language learning), parents' EFL knowledge and frequency of language learning strategy use as reported by the students. The two models tested, respectively, for (a) the direct prediction of the reported frequency of strategy use by the former three parameters, and (b) the mediation of the international orientation for learning attitudes and parents' EFL knowledge in predicting strategy use.

Due to ill statistic indices, we rejected the model assuming direct effects and we concluded that a partial mediation model fitted our data best. This shows that the Greek lower secondary education students in our study who felt the importance of speaking EFL and enjoyed EFL learning, displayed greater openness to foreign cultures and developed a higher level of ideal L2 self, visualizing themselves interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds. In turn, those students expended more effort in learning the language, as indicated by language strategy use. This means that positive attitudes towards EFL learning, coupled with the presence of English knowledge in the family create favorable conditions for the development of international orientation.

As regards parental influence, in the model presented in Figure 1, mothers' and fathers' knowledge of English contributed equally to L2 learning. This indicates the importance of both parental role models in the formation of L2 motivation orientations. Of the attitudinal factors, the contribution of perceived importance of learning English to motivated language use, as demonstrated by the use of language learning strategies, was much higher than perceived enjoyment of language learning. This may indicate that, at this point of L2 goal-directed development, the adolescent students of our sample rely more on extrinsic motivation (importance of English) rather than intrinsic (enjoyment of learning) in their formation of language learning attitudes. It might also be a consequence of the Greek school learning

environment which emphasizes academic excellence and perseverance rather than creative engagement with learning (Gkonou, 2013).

Concerning the motivational variable of international orientation, the ideal L2 self subscale contributed more than the international posture to motivated language use. Of the international posture components, openness to foreign cultures (IP1) was stronger than vocational or academic utility (IP2), possibly due to the fact that Greek young adolescents of 12 to 15 years have not yet started contemplating and planning their career (Maniatis, 2012).

Finally, concerning the language learning strategies, five out of six categories of strategies had similar loadings on the factor representing the reported frequency of language learning strategy use, while the category of compensation strategies loaded considerably lower. Compensation strategies were often found not fitting into the same pattern of reported use or change with proceeding age as did the other five categories. Specifically, prior studies (see Platsidou & Sipitanou, 2015) indicated that elementary and middle school students reported considerably lower frequency of compensation strategies compared to other strategy categories. On the other hand, in contrast to the other strategies, the reported frequency of compensation strategy use increased with age, especially in the middle school years. This nonconformity of the category of compensation strategies is also reflected in the lower loading this variable has on the factor representing the reported frequency of strategy use. Compensation strategies often fall within the area of communication or language use or coping strategies (Cohen, 1998), which further develop and contribute to overall language learning as the need for independent social interactions increases while the learners grow older and more mature.

Motivation is a multifaceted concept in which various motivational components interact to affect the learning outcome (Dörnyei, 2001; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009). In this case, the reported frequency of learning strategy use can be considered an indication of

autonomous learning (Benson, 2007), in the sense that the more conscious learners are in using language strategies, according to their self-reports, the more autonomous their L2 learning process is. As previous studies on language learning have shown, autonomous learning can be motivated by positive self-related beliefs such as self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997), international posture and ideal L2 self (Kormos & Csizér, 2014), positive attitudes towards learning EFL (Platsidou & Kantaridou, 2014), and parental encouragement (Kormos et al., 2011).

The results of the current study reveal the vital role of international orientation in predicting the reported frequency of learning strategy use. Environmental motivational parameters such as parents' EFL knowledge and positive learning attitudes affect the reported frequency of strategy use indirectly via international orientation rather than exerting a direct effect. Parents' EFL knowledge and positive attitudes (to a greater extent as respective loadings show) affect international orientation and this, in turn, affects reported strategy use. It must be noted that attitudes towards L2 exert both an indirect (as described above) and a direct effect on the reported strategy use factor, although the direct effect is considerably lower (although statistically significant). These findings suggest that international orientation can be a key factor in affecting the frequency of the learning strategy use aspect of L2 learning process. As Kormos and Csizér (2014, p. 293-294) have put it, "strong international and instrumental orientations seem to enhance learners' views of themselves as successful language users and, in turn, positive self-image acts as an important prerequisite for investing effort in language learning". Similarly, Azarnoosh (2014) reports that the best predictor of motivated learning effort of Iranian secondary high school students is attitudes to learning English (rather than their attitudes to the L2 community) and instrumentality or utility of English for academic or professional goals.

Language learning is by definition a long-term goal (Dörnyei, 2001) which will inevitably be influenced by a variety of factors either supporting or diverting it. Ushioda (2001) classifies the various factors affecting language learning (academic interest, desired levels of L2 competence, short-term or long-term personal goals, positive learning history, external pressures/incentives) into causal, i.e., deriving from a continuum of L2-learning and L2-related experiences, or teleological, i.e., directed towards short-term or long-term goals and future perspectives. The potential international orientation of the adolescent learners of our sample falls within the teleological factors (Dörnyei, 2001), as positive attitudes to EFL learning and the importance of learning English in particular assume a more prominent role in its formation. The students' parents' EFL knowledge falls within the causal factors for sustaining or not the long-term goal of language learning (Ushioda, 2001). Faced with diverse goals and interests at this sensitive age, adolescent learners rely on the potentially supportive environment of the family in order to prioritize their goals. The successful parental role model in language learning thus serves as a regulating factor along their language learning process (Bernaus, Wilson & Gardner, 2009; Dörnyei, 2001). In Greece, where family ties are quite strong despite mothers' widespread employment, research has shown that the family's socio-economic status significantly affects students' EFL proficiency (Mattheoudakis & Alexiou, 2009), with special emphasis on established EFL certificates (Angouri, Mattheoudakis, & Zigrika, 2010). At the same time, informal language learning opportunities at home and the living environment as well as the usefulness of the target significantly affect students' foreign language achievement (Dendrinou, Karavas, & Zouganeli, 2013).

### ***Study Limitations***

A methodological weakness that should be noted is related to parents' EFL knowledge which was only measured as reported by their children rather than variables assessing actual parents'

EFL knowledge or encouragement to their children as they learn ESL. Similarly, frequency of strategy use and international orientation were assessed solely by learners' self-reports rather than by actual ways of measurement. The above constitute a general limitation to this study as it is possible that actual measurements could lead to different patterns of effects and interactions than the ones obtained by self-reports. On the other hand, in many occasions, self-efficacy beliefs have a stronger influence on the motivation to perform a particular action than actual skills or knowledge (Bandura, 1997) and this may be true for the L2 learning as well. Future research which will combine observed with reported measures of the above variables may shed more light in how they intertwine to explain L2 learning processes.

Another methodological weakness that should be noted is related to the part of the Motivational self-system questionnaire (Taguchi et al., 2009) we used. Admittedly, the selection of the four items to measure ideal L2 was rather arbitrary, since the questionnaire was not tested before on Greek students.

### **Pedagogical and Teaching Implications**

This study attempted to draw attention to the contribution of international orientation in learning EFL. The more an individual sees herself as a global citizen, one who is likely to travel, study and work abroad, is open to foreign ideas, cultures and people, and is adaptable to new situations, the more motivated she will be to learn English and to use language learning strategies to facilitate her learning. This international orientation of the adolescents may take the form of a powerful future guide and becomes stronger when it is supported by a parent with knowledge of the target language, in this case English. If the parents serve as a model for general behavior for the child, they will also serve as a model for an individual's linguistic identity. Let alone that the presence of a parent speaking the language may present opportunities of language practice. It must be noted though that, as Taguchi et al. (2009)

argue, parental involvement might have a negative influence as well, due to the high demands parents place on the children, especially in family-oriented societies such as Japan, China and Iran.

In addition, our study draws attention to the significance of enhancing international posture and ideal L2 self of the learner. To this end, a sociocultural component in the L2 syllabus will provide students with grounds for identification in order to reinforce their ideal L2 selves. Activities that provide opportunities for developing the international layer of cultural identity (Erez & Gati, 2004) would work to this direction. Gregersen and MacIntyre (2014) provide a wealth of activities in this direction to capitalize on learners' abilities in the classroom environment. Given that ideal L2 self was found to be more strongly conducive to the students' international orientation, self-enhancement activities (Sampson, 2012) might prove beneficial in highlighting in students the significance of having an English-speaking future self, make them aware of the distance between their current and future selves and foster self-regulatory behaviour.

Teachers could take steps to develop the learners' cross-cultural awareness, enhancing their sense of their own culture (Kantaridou & Papadopoulou, 2014; Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002), exposing them to other cultures to develop their tolerance of the other. Suggested areas to be studied or researched by students could be the gift-giving etiquette, work schedules across countries, cross-cultural meeting and negotiation norms. This will raise their awareness of and acquaint students with different world views providing them secondhand experience of behaviours and norms in different parts of the world. Teachers may invite exchange students in class or use web resources to cultivate cross-cultural competencies. Porto and Byram's (2015) study to promote intercultural citizenship within the framework of foreign language teaching is an excellent case in point.

In conclusion, teachers could seek opportunities to promote contact with foreign speakers, either through participation in student exchange programs, or through use of computer assisted facilities (skype conversation or e-mails). This area should be further developed in the Greek educational milieu, since Greece is among the European countries which make the least use of European student exchange programmes in lower secondary education (Dendrinios et al., 2013).

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Junior high school grades	Males	Females	Total
1st grade	60	58	116
2nd grade	56	54	110
3rd grade	41	60	101
Total	157	172	329

Table 1.  
Description of  
the participant  
students

Table 2. Factor analysis and Cronbach  $\alpha$  of the IPI

Items	Factor		
	1	2	3
8. I'd like to participate in a volunteer activity concerning foreigners in our community.	.683		
18. I participate in/ visit bazaars organized by different ethnicities.	.664		
7. I'd like to participate in a European student exchange program.	.642		
17. I talk to my friends and family about events and situations in foreign countries.	.632		
4. I often read and watch news about foreign countries.	.550		
12. I like to taste foreign cuisine (food from foreign countries) .	.518		
1. I wouldn't mind sharing my house with a foreign student.	.483		
13. I like to travel to foreign countries and collect traditional souvenirs.	.481		
20. I often communicate with foreign friends on Facebook in English.	.410		
10. I'd like to work in a foreign country.		.863	
11. I am interested in a good job and that can only happen abroad.		.855	

6. I'd like to study abroad.	.826		
3. I don't think what's happening abroad affects my daily life.		.730	
9. I'd like to live in this city even when I work.		.586	
5. I'd rather avoid the kind of work that sends me abroad frequently.		.535	
2. I try to avoid talking to foreigners if I can.		.513	
Variance explained	19.4%	15.80%	10.72%
Cronbach <i>a</i>	.76	.87	.48

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**Figure caption**

Figure 1. The partial mediation model