The language learning motivation of Chinese postgraduate students in Ireland:

From the perspectives of Neo-Confucian learning philosophy

Ph.D Thesis

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Summary

This research explores the English learning motivation of a group of Chinese postgraduate students studying English at Trinity College Dublin. It aims to identify their language learning motivation through a Neo-Confucian learning perspective illustrated in *The Great Learning*. An additional aim is to explore the validity of a Neo-Confucian motivation construct, and therefore to bridge Eastern learning values with Western motivational approaches.

Chapter One introduces Neo-Confucian learning philosophy as the potential research scope for informing the conduct of this inquiry. It first examines the pertinent research and interpretations on the Confucian educational lens, through which, it specifies the research context by explaining two salient facets of this inquiry: Confucian heritage learning culture and Neo-Confucian perspectives. It then places the interpretative focus on Neo-Confucian learning concepts depicted in one of the Neo-Confucian canons, *The Great Learning*. Based on the previous studies discussing motivational aspects of the Neo-Confucian learning philosophy, a Neo-Confucian motivational construct is remodelled which consists of four components: Self-Cultivation, Self-Improvement, Self-Transformation and Sense of Responsibility. The presented motivational construct demonstrates a dynamic learning process underpinned with various motivational components and emphasises the interrelationships between the learner and his or her social identities. The chapter subsequently compares the construct is with some well-established Western motivation theories and argues the validity of using the construct in L2 motivation research.

Following this argument, Chapter Two reviews the L2 motivation theories and models respectively from social psychological, cognitive-situates and process-oriented perspectives. The latest development of the mainstream research angle in the L2 motivation research has indicated a paradigm shift in order to grasp the temporal and dynamic nature of language learning motivation in an increasingly interrelated learning context. Through a critical review of the relevant literature, the chapter indicates that Dörnyei and Ushioda's (2011) call for a temporal and relational view of studying L2 motivation are ideal for the modernised research context, and hence re-emphasises that a broader research perspective from a different discipline could be used in L2 motivation research.

Chapter Three focuses on the methodological design of the fieldwork. As this research aims to understand the motivational factors of a particular language learning group, as well as their potential temporal changes, the most appropriate research method can be a longitudinal mixed design. To respond to the call for a more relational and retrospective approach, qualitative data collection instruments including participant observation and focus group interviews were employed to perceive the interaction between the learners' learning context and their motivation, and to understand the learning process from learners' reflection. In addition, in order to collect the background information of the participants and to triangulate the qualitative data, a demographic questionnaire and an attitudinal questionnaire were respectively designed.

Chapter Four describes the research site and participants. It first gives an account of the function and purposes of the Centre for English Language Learning and Teaching and the English for Academic Purposes programme. Then, it illustrates how a group of eleven students was chosen as the core participants in this research and describes some characteristics of the participants such as gender, age, education background, employment experience and family background. Lastly, it provides an overview of the data collected over the ten-month fieldwork, which includes field notes from ten months in class observation, transcripts of four focus group interviews and attitudinal questionnaires administered at four times. The quantitative data are presented and analysed in descriptive statistics.

Chapter Five presents the use of coding as the analytical approach for qualitative data in this research. It provides a summary of the schematic of the coding process and reviews the relevant literature for the most appropriate coding methods. Overall, the analytical process contains two cycles of data coding and involves both bottom-up and top-down coding methods. The chapter outlines the methods used for data transcription and translation before the actual coding process, and delineates the specific coding approaches throughout the process. The themes emerged from this process were categorised and examined under the theoretical construct of this research.

The thematic categories emerged from the analytical process is interpreted and discussed in Chapter Six, which is divided into three sections. The first section reviews the research aim, theoretical framework and pivotal questions of the inquiry. The second section attempts to answer the first main research question by evaluating and comparing salient themes generated from the qualitative analyses. These themes were further grouped and interpreted in keeping with four sub-questions related to four components of the Neo-Confucian motivational construct. The last section concerns the longitudinal facet of this research, which compares the participants' data across four learning periods.

The major findings are presented and concluded in Chapter Seven. It summarises the main features of the four components in the Neo-Confucian motivational construct. The results of this inquiry indicate a successful application of Neo-Confucian motivational construct in the domain of L2 motivation, which proves that even at the present time, the ancient Eastern philosophical tradition has been yet influential in motivation studies. Following the conclusion, a summary of contributions is provided, and limitations and future implications are discussed.

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Glossary

CET	The College English Test is a national English test in China, which examines Chinese college students' English proficiency
Confucian Heritage Cultures (CHC)	The term refers to the cultures historically influenced by China and Confucianism (China, Japan, Korea and so on) and share similar educational values and practices.
Neo-Confucianism	Neo-Confucianism, also known as *lixue* (理学), mainly refers to the prominent metaphysic established by Confucian scholar Zhu Xi (1130-1200).
TEM	The Test for English Majors is a national English test in China examining the English proficiency of college students in English majors.
***The Great Learning* (*DaXue*)**	A piece of prose expounding the Confucian paradigm of self-cultivation and serving civil society, firstly collected in *The Book of Rites* (*Liji*). The classic is said to be composed by Confucian practitioners during Qin-Han (221 B.C.-220 A.D.) dynasties.
Three objectives and eight steps of practice	*The Great Learning* describes a series of three sequential aims and eight steps of practice for the achievement of the way of learning.

Introduction

This doctoral thesis investigates the English language motivation of Chinese students enrolled in one-year Master's programmes at Trinity College Dublin, in Ireland. These students, from what can be described as a Confucian heritage background, are also taking English for Academic Purposes (EAP) modules at the university in addition to their postgraduate studies. The aim of this work is to examine their language learning motivation from a Neo-Confucian perspective depicted in *The Great Learning*, and to explore the validity of a 'Neo-Confucian' motivation construct, developed from Keenan's (2011) interpretation of *The Great Learning* and Wong's (2014) Confucian model of motivation. These two theories form the conceptual framework of this research project which suggests integrating the study of language learning motivation with learners' cultural identities. In this introduction to the thesis, I present the background, theoretical approaches, research aims and questions, and methodological approaches for this research.

I. Background of the research

An increasing number of students from mainland China are studying in Ireland. According to the statistical information provided by CSSA (Chinese Students and Scholars Association) in Ireland, in 2015, more than 10,000 Chinese students were registered in Irish higher education, a majority of whom are enrolled in a Master's programme. These students have achieved their Bachelor degree in China and come to Ireland for a postgraduate qualification. The substantial presence of Chinese visiting students in Western universities gives rise to an increasing academic interest in Chinese learners (Biggs and Watkins, 2001; Jackson, 2008) and poses challenges for both sides in teaching and learning. Amongst the challenges, language problems are perhaps the most pressing (Zhang, 2008: 3).

Most Chinese visiting students studying in the West are considered to be 'academically hard working' and successful, highly motivated and determined (Jin and Cortazzi, 1993: 84). Nevertheless, in terms of their language ability, although students may have gained high English language proficiency test scores, some of them may still face language problems, especially in the productive skills of speaking and writing and in understanding a range of accents, especially non-standard phonology. Language use in the academic context remains as the major constraint over the course of their learning in the West (Cortazzi and Jin 1996; Huang and Brown, 2009; Jin and Cortazzi 1993; Jin and Cortazzi 1995; Spencer-Oatey, 2004). Being plunged into an unfamiliar learning environment, they may go through different stages of adjustment and challenges to their learning motivation. Notwithstanding the fact that a number of studies concerning Chinese students' overseas learning experiences, espeically the cultural aspect and langauge communication competence have been publised (Andrade, 2005; Edward and Ryan, 2006; Holmes, 2005), rather less attention has been paid to how these studentns' cultural identiy has influenced their learning motivation. A deeper understanding of the language learning motivation and

identity expansion of Chinese student sojourners before, during and after stays abroad will have implication for others who cross cultures and is of importance to both sojourners and educators (Jackson, 2008: 10).

II. Researching motivation

Motivation, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, is a broad term describing the reason for people to behave in particular ways. It entails a complex inner process which cannot be directly perceived. For centuries, researchers have attempted to develop constructs for an in-depth comprehension of motivation and its influences on human behaviour. These ongoing endeavours span a range of disciplines from philosophy to psychology, and stretch across a long period, from ancient China to Western modernity. The extended and extensive discussion of this term has resulted in abundant research under this topic, and yet confusion about its original meaning. Give this circumstance, there is no single integrative construct or theory that can be used to investigate motivation.

A main reason for the absence of such an all-embracing construct is perhaps related to the upsurge of Western psychological theories in relation to human motivation. Various competing theories situate human motivation into diverse interpretative contexts. For instance, one of the most influential theories is Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943, 1954 and 1958), which portrays a pyramid with five layers of human need. The five types of need in the hierarchy depict the sequence that human motivations normally go across, from basic needs such as safety and security through to belonging, self-esteem and self-actualisation. More recently, Deci and Ryan's (1985, 2000) self-determination theory is another mainstream model of human motivation. The theory pays a particular attention to the degree to which people's action is self-determined, identifying and categorising intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation and amotivation. Through the classification, the theory further places the explanatory focus on individual's innate growth propensities and inherent cognitive necessity.

However, similar macro views concerning an individual's self-growth have been long embodied in some Eastern philosophical perspectives. Confucianism, for instance, encompasses a self-development system, in which the key tenet is to achieve the utmost morality through a sequence of ethical or learning approaches. As is presented in the next chapter, the successor to Confucian identities, Neo-Confucianism learning philosophy, synthesises previous ideas and develops them into a 'self-cultivation' construct. The construct emphasises three motivational dimensions in the self-growth concept: a moral agent as the driven goal, a social being or interrelated individual and a dynamic process. These motivational dimensions comprise the notions of self-actualisation, self-realisation, self-transformation and sense of responsibility. Following the notions, Neo-Confucianism posits that the achievement of self-growth requires a specific learning process, one's inner wish for being improved and transformed, and one's social identity.

The perception of motivation in this research stems from a wide range of interpretations of Neo-Confucian learning philosophy, particularly, one of the Neo-Confucian canons, *The Great Learning* (Bashral et al., 2011; Cheng and Low, 2010; Hwang et al., 2012; Keenan, 2011; Kim, 2000; Wang, 2006; Wang and King, 2006; Wong, 2014). The script describes how to achieve the way of learning with a presentation of three guiding principles and eight sequential steps. Based on Keenan's (2011) interpretation of these approaches and Wong's (2014) Confucian motivational model, the present study attempts to synthesise diverse motivational expositions of Neo-Confucian learning philosophy and summaries a Neo-Confucian motivational construct which contains four components: Self-Cultivation, Self-Improvement, Self-Transformation and Sense of Responsibility.

III. Aims of the research

This research aims to integrate the evolving Western motivational theories of second language learning with Neo-Confucian learning philosophy to examine the English learning motivation of a group of Chinese postgraduate students studying at Trinity College Dublin. To be specific, it develops the Neo-Confucian motivational construct to describe these students' personal interest in language and language-related knowledge learning, their expectations and perceptions of language improvement, and their situated reflections on language experience prompting changes in values or beliefs. This research also explores participants' expectations to fulfil obligations in relationships to family members, organisations and communities. An additional purpose of the study is to identify the potential motivational change of the learners throughout their English learning in Ireland, and to further understand in what way those Confucian heritage learners preserved or lost this cultural identity, which is of significance in deciphering the influence of culture or community identity on language learning motivation.

IV. Research questions

In order to achieve these aims, two main research questions were articulated as follows:

> RQ1: What factors motivate Chinese postgraduate students to select and to keep attending optional English for Academic Purposes classes at Trinity College?

This first research question contains four subquestions:

> RQ1a: What kinds of personal interest have encouraged them to learn English as a second language? (Self-Cultivation)
>
> RQ1b: Has the expectation or perception of language improvement influenced their decision to learn English in this optional class? (Self-Improvement)
>
> RQ1c: Has students' language experience influenced their values or beliefs in English language learning? (Self-Transformation)

RQ1d: How do students plan to fulfil role obligations in relationships with their improved English language skills? (Sense of Responsibility)

The second research question addresses the longitudinal aspect of the study:

RQ2: Is there any observable motivational change in students during their English learning period in Trinity?

This research focuses on a specific study group's language learning motivation and the conceptual framework is drawn from their own culture and is established through a critical summary of the relevant literature and previous studies. Hence, my research project is not about:

1) The interpretation of neo-Confucian philosophy

2) Motivation aspects of Western language learners

3) A comparative study of motivation between Eastern and non-Eastern language learners

V. Methodological approaches

To answer the above research questions, I employed mixed and longitudinal approaches to capture the dynamic system in the interaction of the students' motivation, cultural identity and learning context. The design of the empirical study involves three main instruments, namely, participant observation, focus group interviews and a questionnaire. Qualitative data gathered are analysed through Saldana's (2013) coding methods with the aid of a computer software, NVivo. Quantitative data collected are processed through descriptive statistics, triangulating the qualitative information captured from observations and interviews.

Chapter 1 Neo-Confucian motivational perspectives from *the Great Learning*

1.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the Neo-Confucian motivational construct which underpins the research. It begins with an analysis of the theoretical background of the Neo-Confucian educational lens, in which two salient aspects in the research context, namely, Confucian heritage learning culture and Neo-Confucian perspectives are investigated. Following this, the next section narrows the conceptual scope of this inquiry by focusing on Neo-Confucian learning concepts depicted in *The Great Learning*. In this section, a detailed analysis of *The Great Learning* and Neo-Confucian Self system are provided. The remainder of this chapter discusses the Neo-Confucian theoretical framework of this research. It first reviews the development of Neo-Confucian motivation framework in the previous literature. Based on the preceding interpretations, a comprehensive motivational construct is then summarised. Lastly, the construct was compared with the related Western motivational theories. Overall, the chapter aims to suggest that the revised Neo-Confucian motivational construct is a strong fit for researching the learning motivation of Confucian heritage learners in this study.

1.2 Neo-Confucian educational lens

Confucianism or Confucian philosophy acts as the most notable concept in the discussion of the educational traditions of East Asia (Hwang, 2013). Although it embodies a variety of disciplines ranging from politics to social ethics and date back to thousands of years ago, Confucianism, performing as the metaphysical premise, has significantly informed institutional and social schooling and the design and implementation of the examination system in East Asian countries (ibid.). However, social reforms and the gradual dominance of Western influence in the contemporary Asia have seemingly led to a discontinuity between this philosophy and current educational trends, and therefore some doubt has been cast upon its effect on the present-day learners (Hall and Ames, 1987). It comes as no surprise when that such a view was opposed by Confucianism practitioners and researchers who have conducted considerable studies explaining and attesting the strong influence of Confucianism on people's educational behaviours and values in the modern society of East Asian countries (Angle, 2009, 2011; Cheng, 2006; Nguyen, Cees, and Pilot, 2006; Tweed and Lehman, 2002; Yang, 2011).

These researchers have suggested an integration the 'classic ideal' of Confucianism and the innovations of external cultures and educational trends. Evidently, such an integration has not been fully achieved, not least at a theoretical level. Apart from much effort devoted to some research areas such as cultural studies and philosophy, there has been scarcely any empirical studies in the domain of modern education, let alone Applied Linguistics, using Confucian elements as the conceptual framework.

In the past two decades, many researchers have strived for reinterpreting the pedagogical substances and functions of Confucian heritage in contemporary contexts. For instance, Yao (1999, 2001) discussed the educational and moral influences of Confucian identity in the modern time. Cheng (2006) proposed a Confucian educational model for morality in the global context. Angle (2011) probed the educational moral of Neo-Confucianism from a psychological perspective. Tweed and Lehman (2002) also enquired into the phycological aspect by comparing Confucian and Socratic learning approaches. Tan (2005, 2007) and O'Dwyer (2003) examined the pragmatic and democratic nature of Confucian values related to individual's learning behaviours. Nguyen et al. (2006) and Yang (2011) investigated specific learning approaches in the context of Confucian heritage culture. These studies provide an insight into the modification of Confucian educational perspectives and prove its value of being a philosophical lens for reassessing the present-time learning context.

Given the fact that Confucian philosophy encompasses a broad categorical spectrum which involves a vast batch of educational discourses (Angle, 2011; Hwang, 2013), it is necessary and essential to focus the interpretation of such complex educational perspectives on a distinctive stance. Accordingly, amongst the various positions of discussing Confucian educational philosophy, this research employs Neo-Confucian perspectives (see Section 2.1.2), more specifically Neo-Confucian learning views depicted in *The Great Learning* (see Section 2.4), to situate the identity of this philosophical tradition into the analytical context of a group of Confucian heritage learners' motivational factors. The selection was encouraged by the call for a more dynamic and identity-situated slant in the L2 motivation study (Dörnyei and Ushioda 2011; Ushioda 1996), and literature and previous research (Bashral et al., 2011; Cheng and Low, 2010; Hwang et al., 2012; Kim, 2000; Wang, 2006; Wang and King, 2006; Wong, 2014) about motivational elements illustrated in the Confucian classics. In the following subsections, I first explain two salient aspects in the context of this study: Confucian heritage learning culture and Neo-Confucian perspectives.

1.2.1 Confucian heritage learning culture

Before progressing to the theoretical framework of this research, it is important to understand the cultural identities of the research participants. Scholars in cultural studies (Smith and Smith, 1999: 65; Volet and Renshaw, 1996: 206) suggest that individual's learning styles and preferences are much influenced by his or her cultural background, different pedagogical theories, cultural values, and therefore educational approaches can shape and affect people's ways of thinking and habits of learning. These educational approaches are 'determined by local social and political expediencies and historical developments' (McVeigh, 1995:3). In this regard, Confucian societies, referring to the countries or regions historically influenced by China and Confucianism (China, Japan, Korea and so on), share closely similar educational values or beliefs, which result in similar behaviours in educational practices. Even in the background of growing globalisation, individuals yet 'remain greatly influenced by their ways of cultural thinking' (Yang, 2011: 398).

With respect to collective characteristics of Confucian heritage learners, from a Western educational perspective, they are often seen as 'passive, respectful of and expecting structure and hierarchy from the classroom environment, teacher-centred rather than self-directed in learning and seemingly lacking in critical analytic skills' (Ramsay, 2005: 264). A vast quantity of studies concerning Confucian heritage learners have been carried out in the last three decades (Biggs, 1996; Dahlin and Watkins, 2000; Hu, 2002; Huang and Gove, 2012; Tweed and Lehman, 2002; Woodrow and Sham, 2001). The unanimous conclusions from this research are that these learners 'tend to be rote learners, are quiet in the classroom, expect structured tuition and are used to a teacher-centred learning style' (Zhang, 2008: 4). Meanwhile, as to the merits of this influence, much research has indicated that Confucian heritage learners perform exceptionally well in the group learning environment, which led to a contemplation of collectivist orientation on these learners, as interpersonal relationships is underlined in the value of Confucianism (Chan and Watkins, 1994; Biggs, 1990; Earley, 1989; Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005; Park, 2002; Sullivan, 1996; Tang, 1996). When it comes to Chinese learners, the student profile should be that of a hard-working young person, 'very competitive with others, listens to the teachers and studies privately by reading and processing knowledge within defined disciplinary rules and boundaries' (Turner, 2006: 28; Zhang, 2008: 4). Apart from good academic performance, a good student should also have 'good' moral behaviour (Education Law of the People's Republic of China, 1995; Regulations on the management of students in Higher Education Institutions, 2005).

However, these interpretations were lately considered as 'common misconceptions' and have been challenged by many researchers (Chalmers and Volet, 1997; Kember, 2000; Wang, Shen, Novak and Pan, 2009) arguing that 'motivation displayed by Chinese students is not well described by conventional definitions in psychological textbook' (Kember, 2000: 99). Further discussion ensued, indicating that such an apparent dichotomy cannot be simply ascribed to a successor or a new generation of Confucianism. In response to this argument, some researchers on educational studies attempted to answer this question through empirical studies. For instance, Shi (2006) conducted an empirical study collecting questionnaire from 400 Chinese high school students. The result indicated that there is little difference between contemporary Chinese students and their Western counterparts in some aspects such as being active learners and interacting more with their teachers, while some traditional characteristics still persist with Chinese student's examination affecting their views of English learning. Cheng et al. (2016) reported the findings of their studies comparing the role of social goals, teacher controlling behaviours and success or failure experiences in Chinese learners' motivation with that of Western learners. The outcome illustrated that some factors might entail different psychological meanings for learners in the two cultures, whereas the cognition for others might be parallel across cultures. At the same time, scholars on Neo-Confucianism (Ang and Low, 2012; Chuang, 2007; Wang, 2006) attribute this argument to the misinterpretation of Confucianism. For instance, they criticise the stereotype of connecting 'passive learners' with Confucian influences by elucidating that the idea of self-cultivation has long existed in Confucian learning philosophy. They also suggest that relevant research should be situated in the context of Confucian heritage learning culture to better understand this particular learner

group. Based on this suggestion, this research looks into language learning motivation of a group of Confucian heritage learners from the perspective of their cultural identities.

1.2.2 Neo-Confucianism

Confucianism has embodied a wide disciplinary scope over the course of its historical development. The interpretation and application of this metaphysical philosophy can be manifold. Bearing this in mind, this inquiry adopted Neo-Confucian perspectives as the vehicle of Confucian identity in the discourses on modern educational issues, such as learning motivation. Neo-Confucianism, also known as *lixue* (理学), mainly refers to the prominent metaphysic established by Confucian scholar Zhu Xi (1130-1200) in the third distinct subdivision[1] within Confucianism's development, which includes two major schools: Cheng-Zhu school and Lu-Wang school. Neo-Confucianism inherited the cognitive stream of Confucian identity from Confucius and Mencius, and developed it into 'the orthodox line of transmission of the way' (Zhu and Seong, 2005). During this time, Neo-Confucian scholars, typically, Zhuxi, synthesised the fundamental Confucian concepts by compiling The Four Books (Sishu), namely, *The Great Learning* (*Daxue*), *Doctrine of the Mean* (*Zhongyong*), *Analects* (*Lunyu*), and *Mencius* (*Mengzi*), as the Confucian canon to explore the human nature and way of behaviours. The reinterpretation of The Four Books functions as the philosophical framework of Neo-Confucianism.

In terms of educational discourses, Neo-Confucian views demonstrate the fundamental recognition of Confucian identity, which were structured around contexts of the ultimate life goal, political order, social reform and country governance, and involve mixed types of affairs, such as curricula, tutoring, learning, formal schooling, social education, pedagogical system and examinations (de Bary and Chaffee, 1989). Such a wide range of educational discourses included in Neo-Confucianism has produced a predicament for researchers to distil the essence from Neo-Confucian perspectives when discussing the relevant issues. Therefore, it important to define a particular focus for any the investigation of Neo-Confucian perspectives (Hwuang, 2013). This research underscores the principal concepts and values from a learning perspective, particularly depicted in *The Great Learning*, which has been the orthodox basis of virtually all the Confucian educational practices. In the next section, I discuss these concepts and values represented in *The Great Learning*.

[1] Confucianism, which was original from the teachings of Confucius (B.C. 551–B. C. 479), contains several distinct subdivisions within its development. The most notable subdivisions are: Mencius (B.C. 372? –B.C. 289?) school and Xun zi (B.C. 298? –B.C. 238?) school during the pre-Qin period, schools during the Han-Tang (B.C. 201- A.D. 907) dynasties and Cheng-Zhu school and Lu-Wang school during the Song-Ming (960-1644) dynasties.

1.3 Neo-Confucian learning concepts and values

Scholars agree that Neo-Confucian learning concepts and values have shaped the Chinese traditional ways of learning and still exert a profound impact on present Chinese education system. Informed by this context, learning has been considered for centuries as equally significant for both individual improvement and societal development (Wang, 2006: 2). Neo-Confucian learning philosophy comprises the notions of self-actualisation, self-realisation and self-transformation in which learning is deemed a sustainable process. Following these concepts, people are presumed to persistently participate in learning before coming to the phase of 'human perfectibility' (ibid.: 2). From this viewpoint, self-cultivation is perceived as an inherent value in Neo-Confucian learning philosophy (Wang, 2006:3), which was initially discussed in one of The Four Books, *Analects*. However, it is another piece of work compiled in the Confucian canon, *The Great Learning*, that sheds light on the examination of Neo-Confucian learning values. Amongst the pioneering works of Neo-Confucian learning tenets, Pratt's (1992: 309-311) interpretation argues that the Neo-Confucian learning values are centred around the concept of 'learning for one's self', which can be summarised as such:

- Learning as the acquisition of knowledge or skill from others
- Learning as fulfilment of responsibility to society
- Learning as an improvement for self
- Learning as a change in understanding of self or something external to self.

These four values are derived from the text of *The Great Learning*'s 'eight steps to personal cultivation' and 'social development' (Keenan, 2011: 41) and have constructed the learning purposes in the Neo-Confucian learning philosophy. Pratt's interpretation is commonly viewed as the inceptive discussion of the motivational framework of Neo-Confucian learning philosophy, in which the three foregoing objectives are respectively associated with self-cultivation, learning for responsibility, learning for improvement and learning for transformative perceptions about self (Wang, 2006; Wong, 2014). The original text of the Three Objectives and Eight Steps, and their translation are presented in Table 1[2]. In the following subsections, I place the interpretative focus on this Eastern motivation within the context of *The Great Learning*, and attempt to identify the meaning of 'self' underlined such interpretation.

[2] Legge (1893) and Ku's (1915) English versions of *The Great Learning* are taken as the authoritative translation for both Eastern and Western scholars. The use of Neo-Confucian terms in this research, such as Three Objectives and Eight Steps is directly influenced by their translation as well as Keenan (2011) and Wong's (2014) interpreted context.

The Way (*Tao*) of Learning	Three objectives	1. To glorify righteous behaviour	在明明德
		2. To transform the person	在亲民
		3. To attain utmost goodness	在止于至善
	Eight stages of practice	4. Investigating things (science and society)	格物
		5. Extending one's knowledge	致知
		6. Making one's intention sincere	诚意
		7. Rectifying one's mind	正心
		8. Cultivating one's self in all stages of life	修身
		9. Regulating one's family	齐家
		10. Ordering the country	治国
		11. Bringing peace to all	平天下

Table 1 The Neo-Confucian three objectives and eight stages of practice

1.3.1 Life purposes depicted in *The Great Learning*

The Great Learning originated as a piece of prose expounding Confucian paradigm of self-cultivation and serving the civil society, which was firstly collected in *The Book of Rites* (*Liji*). The classic is said to be composed by Confucian practitioners during Qin-Han (221 B.C.-220 A.D.) dynasties, and was later regarded as one of the foremost literature about educational theories in ancient China (Eno, 2010). Nevertheless, it was not until the rise of Neo-Confucianism that people began to assign a value to this work. Dating back to Song (960-1279) dynasty, Neo-Confucian scholars composed an array of works (e.g. *Gaizheng Daxue* by Cheng Ying and Cheng Hao; *Daxue Zhangju* by Zhu Xi) synthesising and practising these educational theories, culminating in the compilation of Confucian canon, The Four Books, that was to mould the ancient Chinese education, especially the examination system for the subsequent 600 hundred years. Positioned as the first of the classic set, *The Great Learning* was authorised as the official textbook for the imperial civil-service exam during Yuan-Qing (1312-1905) dynasties, which formed and normed Confucian conduct and self-cultivation models. With regard to the content of the manuscript, it expounds the interrelationship between 'individual self-cultivation and civil conduct in the social and political order' (Keenan, 2011: 37) with a presentation of three guiding principles (Three Objectives noted by Pratt, 1992) and eight sequential steps.

For Neo-Confucian, even Confucian, scholars and practitioners in the modern society, this work is perceived as the catechism of Confucian learning (Wong, 2014), in which a central tenet on how to achieve the way of learning is discussed. The practical approaches to this tenet appear in the original text as a string of motives, for example, glorifying righteous behaviours, gaining comprehension about excellence of knowledge, attaining utmost goodness, and bring prosperity and harmony to the world (ibid.). According to Wang (2006: 206), these motives can lead to an evolution of 'a highly systematic method of self-cultivation', and then to a transformation of a person. This interpretation was echoed by many Neo-Confucian learning studies (Cheng and Low, 2010; Chuang, 2007; Hwang et al, 2012; Ryan and Kam, 2007; Sun 2008; Trumbull and Rothstein-Fisch, 2011; Zhang; 2008), which, in general, summarise three major rationales for learning depicted in *The Great Learning*: 1) moral self-cultivation, 2) goal achievement and 3) lifelong learning. In addition, most researchers (Birch, n. d.; Eno, 2010; Keenan, 2011; Kim, 2000; Lai, 1998; Lim, 2011; Trumbull and Rothstein-Fisch, 2011) believe that there is a hierarchy in the learning process: All the practical approaches (Three Objectives and Eight Steps) should be accomplished in a logical sequence and one has to go across all Eight Steps to achieve Three Objectives. The explicit sequence of this process is provided in the following figure:

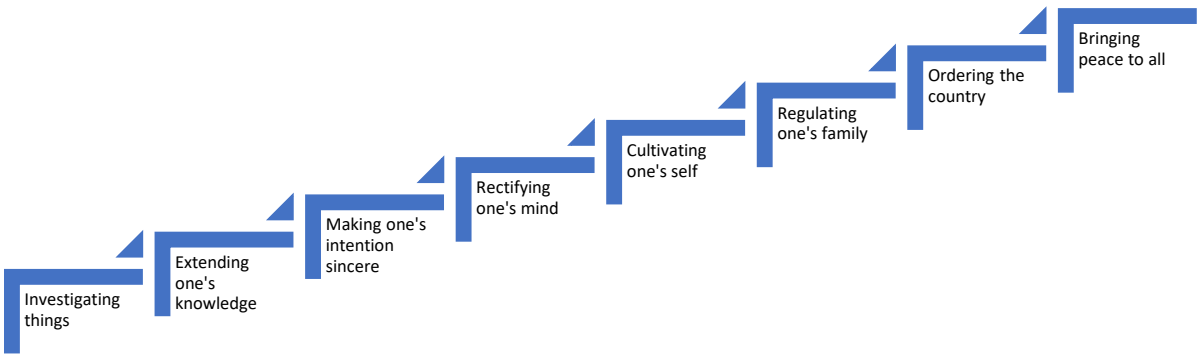


Figure 1 Sequential steps in The Great Learning

1.3.2 The concept of self in the Neo-Confucian learning philosophy

Before proceeding to the discussion of Neo-Confucian motivational constructs, it is important to comprehend one crucial term regularly seen in Neo-Confucian learning philosophy, namely, self. It has been posited that the word self stems from Western literature which, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, means 'that which in a person is really and intrinsically he; the ego; a permanent subject of successive and varying states of consciousness'. With this definition, researchers from different backgrounds have added diverse elements to the interpretation of this concept. In the modern Western philosophy, the word self is related to personal identity, which concerns 'the whole series of a person's inner mental states and sometimes, more restrictedly, the spiritual substance to which the philosophy says they belong' (Parkinson, 2012: 69). Following this mainstream concept, discussion about self

mainly involves three perspectives: metaphysical perspective, epistemological perspective and psychological perspective (Yao, 1996: 180).

Metaphysical perspective	Epistemological perspective	Psychological perspective
Constant and unchanging substance whereby individual is identified	Thinking or contemplating interior core terms as the soul or mind	The compound of feelings, emotions, memories, will and knowledge
Oppose to the rest of the world	Different from one's physical reality	A stream of various consciousness

Table 2 Three perspectives on self in the modern Western philosophy

The concept of self also plays a substantial function in Neo-Confucian learning philosophy, notwithstanding a general agreement that it is used and interpreted in a dissimilar way as that is discussed in Western philosophy and psychology. As claimed by Kwak et al. (2016: 2), the sustainable effectiveness of the Neo-Confucian concept of learning can be ascribed to 'the broader understanding of the self that goes beyond the individual self of the modern West'. The primary reference to the 'self' concept in Neo-Confucian learning philosophy was from the translation of the pronoun 'I' ('wu' or 'yu') in The Four Books. This pronoun functions as the subject ('I'), the object ('me') or the possessive (my) in Chinese syntax and subsumes a wide range of meanings from 'any part of one's self' to 'the whole of the parts' (Yao, 1996: 181). Accordingly, in the Neo-Confucian learning philosophy, self is to be involved in both active and passive forms of actions, in which it can be viewed as a moral agent, a social being and an active progress (ibid.).

Given this context, some Neo-Confucian researchers (Liu, 2004; Yao, 1996; Yao, 1999) interpret this Eastern 'self' idea as an ethical concept of which one is encouraged to consistently cultivate his moral character through a series of interactions with societal and virtuous causes. At the same time, another group of researchers (Hsu, 1985; Kwak et al, 2016; Tu, 1985) suggest a broader view of self by detaching the moral concern from the traditional context. Tu (1985: 251), for instance, argues that 'a characteristic Confucian selfhood entails the participation of the other and a dynamic process of spiritual development'. Liu (2004) proposes that the self in Chinese consciousness mainly refers to individual's role development in the interrelated society. Despite this disagreement, both types of interpretation depict the self in Neo-Confucianism as the commencement of an active process rather than a static and unchanged state, and two dimensions can be perceived in such a process view: 1) individual's identity develops with the timeline from the present to the future and 2) individual's identity is influenced by the amount of interaction with others (people, things and society). For Neo-Confucianism, the purpose of understanding the concept of self is to generate the 'Becoming' Conception of the Self, and to finally achieve the sagehood (Yao; 1996; Liu, 2004). The Becoming of the Self refers to individual's effort to conserve and fully develop the inner ethical awareness, which motivates individual's self-growing

process, while the Sagehood of the Self refers to the transformation of one's disposition and the realisation of the true self, which can be achieved through persevering learning and practising.

To sum up, the Neo-Confucian concept of self contains three major components: a moral agent (driven goal in none-ethical supposition), a social being (interrelated individual) and a dynamic process. The self-development process begins with the Confucian Self, through the Becoming of the Self and finally reaches Sagehood of the Self. A schematic diagram of this Self system is provided below (Figure 2). In the forthcoming sections, I use some terms of self to describe the motivational constructs of this research.

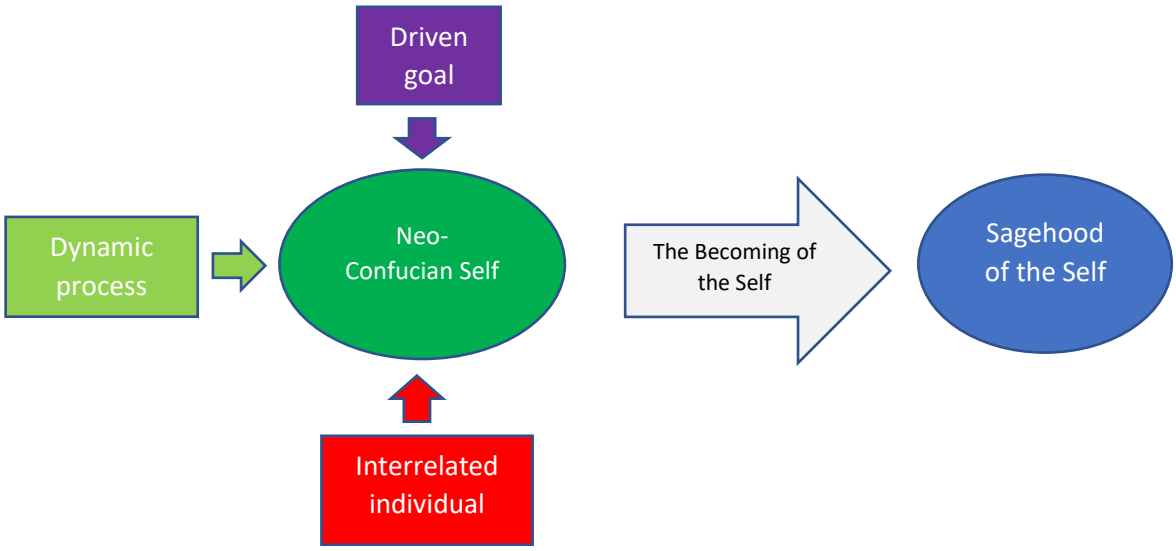


Figure 2 Neo-Confucian Self System

1.4 The development of Neo-Confucian motivation framework

As is noted in the preceding section, the self-concept in Neo-Confucian learning philosophy is embedded in a social-interrelated process driven by one's utmost goal in moral identity. To accomplish this goal, a considerable number of learning practices are consistently involved. In a sense, the core learning philosophy, particularly Three Objectives and Eight Steps in *The Great Learning*, can be viewed as motivational approaches to moral education in ancient China. This viewpoint was first proposed by James Legge in 1893. In his authoritative translation of *The Great Learning*, Legge (1893) labelled this work as a guide for learners and extrapolated that Neo-Confucian learning belief is very much similar to what is related as lifelong learning nowadays, which highlights and promotes a learning process throughout one's lifespan. Following Leggs's (1893) interpretation, researchers of Neo-Confucian and educational studies independently develop motivational models based on their research and perception of the text of *The Great Learning* (Bashral et al., 2011; Cheng and Low, 2010; Hwang et al., 2012; Kim, 2000; Wang, 2006; Wang and King, 2006; Wong, 2014). For instance, Wang (2006) used documental analysis explicitly comparing Neo-Confucian learning values with Maslow's need-based theory (1943, 1954). In this research, Wang interpreted the paragon of Neo-Confucian learning is an inner-guided process which is identical with Maslow's theory (Wang, 2006: 3). Wang and King (2006) compared

Neo-Confucian learning philosophy with Mezirow's theory of reflectivity and presented an integration model of Learning Through Critical Reflection (Wang and King, 2006: 9). The approach, from Wang's (2006) and Wang and King's (2006) research, of drawing inferences from Western and Eastern learning philosophy has been voiced by some scholars at the turn of the latest decade (Bashrat et al., 2011; Cheng and Low, 2010), by conducting comparative studies between Neo-Confucian learning motivation and relevant theories in other cultural philosophy. For instance, Bashrat et al (2011) drew a comparison between Neo-Confucian learning concepts and Islamic teachings from a stance on lifelong learning. The result indicates the concept of lifelong learning in both philosophies are 'desire and demand driven' in lieu of intrinsic motivation (Bashrat et al., 2011: 43). However, this disputes the findings of Cheng and Low's (2010) investigation, in which various teaching methods and ways of Neo-Confucian learning were examined. By analysing ways of teaching and learning such as be the role model, learn from others and generate simulations, they recognised that instead of being strictly incentive driven motivation, the desire to teach and serve is a non-incentive motivation (Cheng and Low, 2010: 681).

Despite the aforementioned variety of discussions about specific aspects of motivation and Neo-Confucian identity, some all-inclusive motivational framework also came into sight. Through a careful evaluation of previous literature and a chain of empirical studies, Hwang and his colleagues (Hwang et al., 2012: 219) constructed a Neo-Confucian model for assessing students' achievement motivation for academic behaviours in Confucian heritage society. In their model, achievement motivation is mainly displayed and examined in four categories: life goal, vertical distinctiveness, personal goal, and horizontal distinctiveness (Hwang et al., 2012: 232). The theoretical framework of Hwang et al.'s (2012) model as well as other foregoing studies derived from the constructive steps (Eight Steps) grounded in *The Great Learning*, in which according to Kim (2000: 109), the Neo-Confucian way of learning 'is nothing more than self-learning or self-cultivation'.

It is worth noting that, during interpreting and conceptualising the original text, most Neo-Confucian scholars undoubtedly arranged Three Objectives and Eight Steps in a progressive sequence (Kalton, 1988: 89; Eno, 2010; Keenan, 2011: 40-72) and suggest this sequence as a motivational 'ladder analogy' (Birch, n.d.). Yet, this supposition contradicts the mainstream interpretation of *The Great Learning* from Neo-Confucian scholars in mainland China (Li, Wang and Yang. 2012; Qian, Xu and Zhang, 2001; Shi, 2013; Yan, 2003), critiquing that the collation of Eight Steps in the original context define the relationships rather than their temporal order in practice. Such view was taken by Wong (2014) in her research about the motivation of working practitioners seeking a doctoral programme, in which she argued that Eight Steps should not be situated in a planned progression. She further imputed the misinterpretation to the stereotype of a hierarchical learning and teaching environment in China, under which learning is achieved through a sequence of 'give and receive' activities. Accordingly, Three Objectives and Eight Steps should be seen as eleven interrelated motivational concepts rather than progressive steps for learning (Wong, 2014). Based on an analytical review of previous research and her empirical study, she synthesised Keenan's (2011) interpretation of *The Great Learning* text with other

foregoing elucidations of motivational aspect of this text, summarising a Neo-Confucian motivational construct which contains four components: self-cultivation, self-improvement, self-transformation and sense of responsibility. Her Neo-Confucian motivational construct, along with other prior studies, indicates that Neo-Confucian learning philosophy can be used as a possible lens for the study of motivation, which subsequently inspired the conduct of the current inquiry.

1.5 Summary of Neo-Confucian motivational constructs

Whereas a more recent interest in Neo-Confucian learning philosophy has generated abundant discussions about motivational factors in individual's learning process, most of the research focuses on the theoretical interpretation of *The Great Learning* from one or some particular aspects. Given the situation that such a philosophical view is applied in a different domain in this empirical study, a Neo-Confucian motivational model encompassing all facets is exceptionally needed. Therefore, based on Keenan's (2011) interpretation of *The Great Learning* and Wong's (2014) Confucian motivational model, this study synthesises diverse motivational expositions of Neo-Confucian learning philosophy. It should be noted that the synthesis is completed through a critical summary of the relevant literature and previous studies, and no reinterpretation of the original text of *The Great Learning* is supplemented during the process. Overall, an ultimate Neo-Confucian motivational construct is summarised, which contains four central components: Self-Cultivation, Self-Improvement, Self-Transformation and Sense of Responsibility.

1.5.1 Self-Cultivation

Self-Cultivation has been viewed as the most influential concept in Neo-Confucianism, which is directly translated from the Neo-Confucian term *xiu-shen* (Ivanhoe, 2000; Hwang and Chang, 2009). The term entails a broad meaning of 'rectifying one's mind and nurturing one's character with a particular art or philosophy' (Hwang and Chang, 2009: 1110) and as a consequence, some scholars (Ivanhoe, 2000; Keenan, 2011) use 'self-cultivation' to describe the whole system of moral actions in human relations. However, when it comes to the specific learning approaches depicted in *The Great Learning*, such explanation is too vague to inform people's actual learning practice. As seen in Table 1 (Section 1.3), *cultivating one's self (self-cultivation) in all stages of life* is presented as one of the steps in the Neo-Confucian stages of practice. In response to this question, Neo-Confucian researchers turned to the text of *The Great Learning* for an illumination and reached a general conclusion that the interpretation of Self-Cultivation is established on the following three steps in the text within *The Great Learning*: investigating things, extending one's knowledge and cultivating one's self in all stages of life (Table 1). In this regard, Pratt's (1992: 309-311) interpretation of Self-Cultivation is 'the acquisition of knowledge or skill from others'. Hwang (2007: 84) explains it by directly quoting the original text 'when things are investigated, knowledge is extended'. Their views are voiced by more recent interpretations. Keenan

(2011: xxi) summarised Self-Cultivation as 'the way to generate virtue and knowledge'. Li (2013:113) elaborated the core idea of Self-Cultivation as acquire knowledge and skills based on the process of Eight Steps. In their views, Self-Cultivation contains a self-growth process in which people learn, examine, explore and understand new knowledge. People are considered commendable 'if self-cultivation and the extension of one's inherently relational self was as natural as self-cultivation developed' (Keenan, 2011: 62; Wang and King, 2006: 4). Based on these interpretations, Wong (2014) situated the concept in her empirical motivation study, through which she revealed the different types of motive for the self-learning process and proposed the influence of an individual's inherent character on this concept.

To sum up all these explanations, Self-Cultivation can be perceived as a learning process initiated from investigating things, acquiring knowledge, and then becoming self-cultivated (Wong, 2014: 132). Combined this perception with the situated context of this inquiry, the Neo-Confucian Self-Cultivation construct can be defined as such:

- The acquisition of the knowledge or skill from a formal or informal education
- The exploratory of a particular area related to one's profession or interest
- The passion of discovery

1.5.2 Self-Improvement

Self-Improvement includes, but is not limited to, the two objectives depicted in *The Great Learning*: to glorify righteous behaviour and to attain utmost goodness (see Table 1). In fact, the concept is commonly overlooked in theoretical interpretation of Neo-Confucian learning concepts due to the fact that most researchers considered the teachings in *The Great Learning* as a hierarchical progress of learning (Wong, 2014), which means that individual needs to continually surpass himself to achieve the utmost morality. Under such circumstances, if Self-Cultivation serves as the starting point for a dynamic learning process, Self-Improvement can be viewed as the entire process of learning. This relational view was reflected in Kim's (2000) discussion about Neo-Confucian self-learning perspectives, in which Kim (2000: 123) argued that the self-improvement and self-fulfilment serve as pivotal role in the learning concept, for they comprise 'commitment to one's self and requires persistence to continue and complete not giving up but aiming at self-establishment more than anything else'. Based on the qualitative data in her empirical study, Wong (2014: 133) further explained Kim's idea about Self-Improvement as 'to anticipate having a sense of self-accomplishment by completing certain tasks or difficulties'.

In light of all these, Self-Improvement acts a progressive role in Neo-Confucian motivational construct, which ensures the development of the learning activities. Given the specific context of this inquiry and illuminated by Wong's (2014) findings, the motivational scales of Self-Improvement construct are presented as follows:

- To improve oneself or one's performance in a particular area
- To have a sense of self-fulfillment
- To anticipate having a sense of self-accomplishment by completing certain tasks or difficulties

1.5.3 Self-Transformation

Self-Transformation is extracted from the following objectives and steps: 1) to transform the person, 2) making one's intention sincere and 3) rectifying one's mind (see Table 1). In the original text of *The Great Learning*, those three stages are described as advanced stages, implying a person has gone beyond the exceedingly difficult stage and transformed himself or herself to a 'new person' (Kalton, 1988: 88). Therefore, Self-Transformation can be perceived as the final destination of the learning process, or the Sagehood of the Self in the Neo-Confucian Self-system. Despite a general agreement on the existence of such concept in the Neo-Confucian learning philosophy, various interpretative perspectives were employed in describing Self-Transformation. Some researchers attempted to explain this concept from psychological theories (Ivanhoe, 2000; Tu, 1985; Wang, 2006). A representative figure is Wang (2006), who compared Neo-Confucian learning philosophy with Maslow's need-based theory and drew the conclusion that the idea of transforming one's self in Confucian learning values can be equally delineated by self-actualisation in psychology (although this move has been challenged by social-cognitive perspectives, e.g. Miller and Brickman, 2004: 9). Kalton (1988: 89) defines Self-Transformation as a transcendence 'through personal grasp'. Eno (2010: 82) relates Self-Transformation to one's innate character and describes it as 'making new self'.

However, given the sophisticated process involved in Self-Transformation as stated above, a more practical question has ensued: how can individuals judge whether they have been transformed? This critical question generates a consequent question: how can individuals be motivated by Self-Transformation? In answer to the first question, Pratt (1992: 311) argues that in light of Self-Transformation, learning is seen as 'a change in understanding of self' or 'externals to self'. This view was subsequently voiced by Wang and King (2006) and Wong (2014). Wang and King (2006) compared Neo-Confucian learning perspective with Mezirow's transformative learning theories, and suggested that Self-Transformation can be achieved through changes in inner experience. This inner change may often in relation with disorienting dilemmas in one's life (Mezirow, 1995). Wong (2014: 135) summarised the findings from her interviews and indicated that Self-Transformation happens when one has experienced a change in which the 'learning can help to change one's perspective on self'. In her view, this change refers to not only the predicaments in life but also any major events which had a positive influence on one's values and beliefs about self. According to these discussions, I attempt to answer the second question by remodelling Self-Transformation motivational scales as such:

- The changes one has experienced in which learning can help to change one's perspectives on self.
- The wish of being identical to the role model in a positive way.

In this regard, Self-Transformation can be viewed as both an ultimate stage in the learning process (e.g. the wish of being identical to the role model) and a way or motivation to achieve the ultimate stage (e.g. inner changes on one's self).

1.5.4 Sense of Responsibility

Inasmuch as the first three motivational components discuss the individual learning process from a vertical perspective, Sense of Responsibility concerns more on the interrelation between self and others, from a horizontal perspective. The last motivational component in the Neo-Confucian construct mainly draws the idea from last three steps in *The Great Learning*: regulating one's family, ordering the country and bringing peace to all (Table 1), which manifests the essence of Neo-Confucian learning doctrine. These steps expound the function and purpose of learning, and highlight that neither self nor learning exists on an individual level. One has to apply what he or she has learned to the relationships with family and civil society. In this regard, Neo-Confucian scholars believe that, unlike Western concepts of learning, Neo-Confucian learning is preached not only for one's self, but also for a sense of social and communal responsibility (Coopamath and Khan, 2011; Keenan: 2011; Li, 2013; Pratt, 1992; Wong, 2014). For instance, Pratt (1992:302) proposes the concept of 'learning as a fulfilment of responsibility to society' and attributes this to the strong bond to family and filial in traditional Chinese culture. Li (2013: 113) suggests the significance of learning is that learners 'are not only to seek inner self-cultivation and virtue, but also to contribute their learning back to society'. These interpretations concern that the standard for self-development is not derived simply from idealised awareness of personal autonomy but from societal roles (Wong, 2014). In a sense, the wish for practising one's learning in interrelationships can be viewed as a motivational aspect of Sense of Responsibility.

Apart from that, owing to the unanimous agreement that relationships between one's self and other play a pivotal role in the discussion of Sense of Responsibility, researchers and theorists have devoted much effort in understanding and defining the manifestations of these relationships in the Confucian heritage context (He, 1993; Lebra, 1976; Yang, 1993; Zhou, 2014). For instance, He (1993) used the term 'relationship dominance' to describe the fundamental characteristic of individual's behaviour in the Confucian heritage culture. As indicated in this term, interpersonal relationships exert an overwhelming impact on individual's social behaviour. Zhou (2014) further investigated Chinese people's strategies to respond the relationship dominance and argued that submissive strategies are universally adopted in Confucian heritage culture. One who possesses typical Confucian heritage features tends to be easily influenced by his or her social environment (Zhou, 2014: 111). This opinion was corroborated in Wong's (2014:135) study, in which some participants' learning choices were influenced by their family members and colleagues. Based on these preceding discussions, Sense of Responsibility in this motivation research can be defined as the expectation to fulfil role obligations in relationships, which consists of

two subcomponents: 1) relationships influence and 2) submissive response to obligations in one's future identities.

By way of conclusion, this section has examined the previous research and literature about Neo-Confucian motivational framework. In the light of these interpretations, a Neo-Confucian motivation construct is summarised, in which a dynamic learning process is captured. The construct consists of four components: Self-Cultivation, Self-Improvement, Self-Transformation and Sense of Responsibility. A schematic diagram of four motivational components in the learning process is provided below (Figure 3).

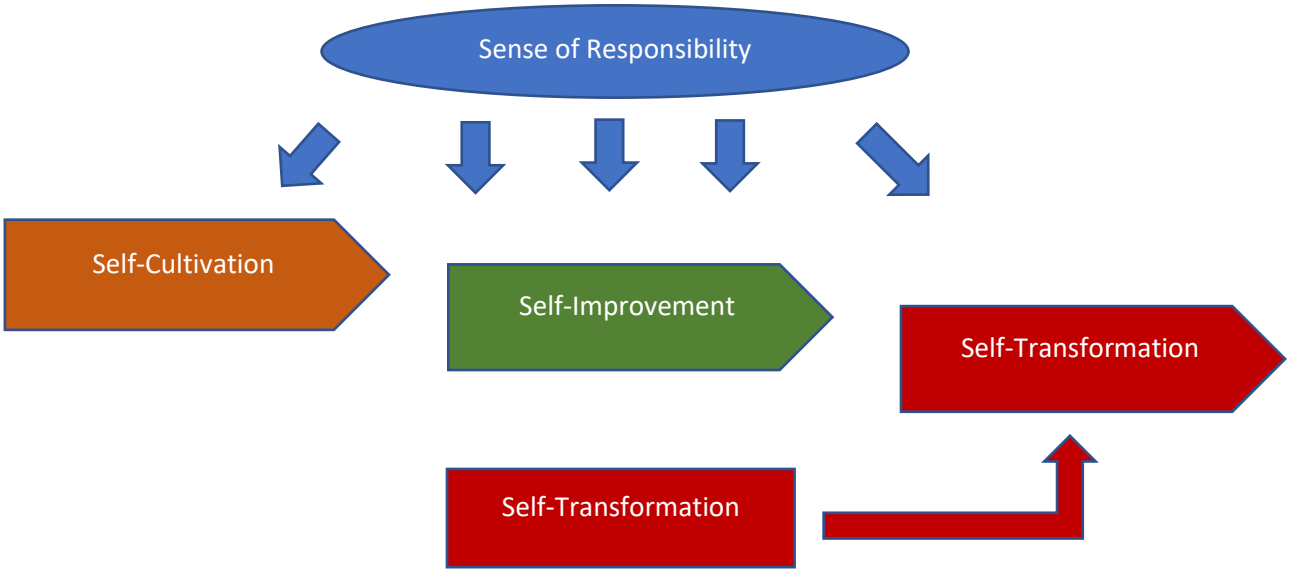


Figure 3 Neo-Confucian model of motivation

1.6 Neo-Confucian motivational constructs and Western motivation theories

As L2 motivation research has not involved Eastern philosophical perspective in its development, and because of the need to provide a sufficiently in-depth summary of pertinent motivational factors on participants' learning behaviour (Dörnyei, 2001b), before conducting the research, I carefully compared these four Neo-Confucian constructs with some well-known theories and models widely used in L2 motivation, seeking theoretical viability for their use. Similar actions have been carried out by some educational researchers in the past two decades (Ang and Low, 2012; Chuang, 2007; Coopamah and Kam, 2011; Kim, 2004). By examining various lifelong learning theories, Kim (2004) attempted to frame a Neo-Confucian view of life goals and achievement motivation. In a review of Confucian implications on nursing education in the UK, Coopamah and Kam (2011) compared Confucian learning style with the Western philosophy of nursing education, and suggested using Confucian learning philosophy as a theoretical framework for probing learning motivation. Similarly, Ang and Low (2012) employed both Neo-Confucian perspective and Maslow's need theory to investigate the values and

motivations of a group of Chinese Bruneian businessmen. The result, according to Ang and Low (2012), provides a prospect for bridging the Eastern and Western motivation theory. More recently, Wong (2014) created a Confucian motivation model in her empirical study to explore the motivation of adult learners. In her research, Wong (2014) compared Confucian motivational constructs with a number of motivation theories such as Maslow's (1943, 1954) Needs Theory, Self-Determination Theory (Deci and Ryan, (1985, 2000) and Csikszentmihalyi's flow theory (1997). As she indicated, most of the relevant Western theories and approaches focus on individual's self-growth, which can be reflected in Confucian motivational constructs (Wong, 2014: 51).

Apart from the previous comparative discussions, in this research, I reviewed the content of some well-established motivation theories used in Applied Linguistics in relation to the four components in the Neo-Confucian motivational construct. The mentioned theories include Bandura's social-cognitive theory, William and Burden's (1997) framework of L2 motivation, Self-determination theory and The L2 Motivational Self System. I compare and contrast Neo-Confucian motivational construct and the aforementioned theories in Table 3 below. I was aware of the fact that none of the parallel motivational components can be unquestionably interchanged in the table and the main reason for drawing this comparison is to illustrate the likelihood of exploring L2 motivation with Neo-Confucian learning philosophy. Nevertheless, based on what has emerged from the comparison, I would argue that Neo-Confucian motivation construct has encompassed most significant motivational factors identified by the Western theories.

<table>
<tr><th>Neo-Confucian motivational construct</th><th>Bandura's social-cognitive theory</th><th>William and Burden's framework</th><th>Self-determination theory</th><th>The L2 Motivational Self System</th></tr>
<tr><td>Self-Cultivation</td><td>Self-actualisation</td><td>Intrinsic interest, Attitudes</td><td rowspan="3">Intrinsic motivation</td><td>L2 learning experience</td></tr>
<tr><td>Self-Improvement</td><td>Esteem need</td><td>Mastery, Affective states</td><td rowspan="2">Ideal L2 Self</td></tr>
<tr><td>Self-Transformation</td><td>Physiological needs</td><td>Perceived value, Self-concept</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sense of Responsibility</td><td>Belongingness, social, and affiliation – love needs, safety and security</td><td>External factors e.g. significant others, the learning environment</td><td>Extrinsic motivation</td><td>Ought-to L2 Self</td></tr>
</table>

Table 3 Comparison of Confucian motivational constructs with Western motivation theories

1.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have illustrated how I decided and framed the conceptual premise for this research. I have adopted an Eastern philosophical perspective to explore the L2 motivation for a group of Confucian heritage learners. I have explained the rationale for selecting this perspective and provided the details of the theoretical context. I have narrowed the conceptual scope from Confucian educational lens to motivational frameworks depicted in one of the Neo-Confucian canon, *The Great Leaning*, and explained some Neo-Confucian terms within the context. I have described how I synthesised the previous Neo-Confucian motivational discussions into a motivational construct. Finally, I compared the Neo-Confucian motivational construct with some Western theories of human motivation. In the next chapter, I shift the interpretative focus on the L2 motivation research.

Chapter 2 Motivation research in second language learning

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the nature and flux of motivation research in the specific field of second language learning (L2). It begins with an exposition of the definition of L2 motivation. This is followed by an outline of three principal perspectives on language learning motivation. The remainder of this chapter reviews the development of mainstream L2 motivation theories across the past fifty years, exploring distinct periods of motivation research, and pinpointing key motivation theoretical perspectives. Throughout the discussion in this section, I point to a more dynamic and identity-situated system in the research of L2 motivation, within an ongoing paradigm shift in the present-day context of second language learning.

2.2 Defining L2 motivation

It is agreed that motivation, a construct originating in psychological studies, serves as a key factor in second language learning (Brown, 2007; Dörnyei, 2001b; Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei and Schmidt, 2001; Dörnyei and Skehan, 2003; Jacques, 2001; Ushioda, 2001). In the past five decades, the study of L2 motivation has grown. Yet, there is uncertainty and vagueness on the definition of the construct. According to Dörnyei (2001b), this is mainly because of its psychological feature, which is abstract and cannot be directly observed. Hitherto much effort has been devoted to identifying variables in this concept. Spolsky (2000: 158) proposes that motivation can be described from the perspective of individual's behaviour by referring to the time 'a learner was prepared to spend on learning task'. There is a general agreement that motivation arises from the integration of an array of variables. Hunt (1993: 43) suggests that the discussion of motivation comprises a) individual's need, b) goal's stimulation c), personal anticipation, d) accessibility of proper feedbacks, e) adverse motives, f) unaware factors.

Dörnyei (2011: 4) analyses the discussion pointing out the definition of motivation basically concerns the 'direction and magnitude of human behaviour', namely, 1) the choice of a particular action, 2) the persistent with it and 3) the effort expended on it (ibid, 2011: 4). In terms of L2 learning, it explains why people choose to learn a second language, and how long and how hard they will work on this language. Following this concept, he summarises the definition which is generally adopted by other L2 motivation researchers:

> In a general sense, motivation can be defined as the dynamically changing cumulative arousal in a person that initiates, directs, coordinates, amplifies, terminates, and evaluates the cognitive and motor processes whereby initial wishes and desires are selected, prioritised, operationalized and (successfully or unsuccessfully) acted out. (Dörnyei and Ottó, 1998: 65)

2.3 Perspectives on L2 motivation

As is noted in the definition discussion, researchers of L2 learning investigated variables pertaining to motivation, such as human behaviour. Studies on different variables gradually develop into independent perspectives. Brown (2007: 168) proposes three perspectives which summarise motivation research:

1) Behavioural perspective

Motivation can be purely understood as the expectation for encouragement or reward (Brown, 2007: 168). Once an accomplishment of one or a series of actions results in this, individuals will positively respond to the action and consequently, behave to attain further reinforcement. This was elaborated by Skinner (1953) in his behaviourist theory, in which motivation is regarded as the core of human behaviour. The behavioural perspective is prone to provide a task-motivation situation in which people are driven by external forces. In Brown's explanation, these forces can be people (parents, teachers, leaders) and requirement or regulation (school, career) (Brown, 2007). In terms of L2 learning, language learners may be influenced by such factors such as language teacher, college degree and job specification.

2) Cognitive perspective

Unlike behavioural perspective investigating learners' extrinsic goals, another perspective researching motivation focuses more on people's internal cognition. This cognitive view of motivation research stresses the importance of individual's determination. Keller (1983: 389) elucidates it as 'the choices people make as to what experiences or goals they will approach or avoid, and degree of effort they will exert in the respect'. Cognitive psychologist Ausubel further associates these choices to individual's need. He (1968: 368-379) proposes 'six needs' structuring the concept of motivation:

- The need for exploration, which means people instinctively gravitate to the things that they do not understand the need for manipulating, which describes how people adapt to the environment.
- The need for activity, referring to both physical movement and mental exercise.
- The need for stimulation, indicating that people are easily influenced by their surroundings.
- The need for knowledge, which is also the need to process the integration of previous needs, to seek solutions to problems.
- The need for ego enhancement, defined by Dörnyei (2005: 93) as the 'self-system', which refers to the self to be accepted and supported by others. (Brown, 2007: 169)

In research on L2 learning motivation, the above needs depict motivation as a number of choices that language learners make, either actively or passively, to govern their language learning process. The difference between each need can much determine learners' language learning efficacy. However, as Brown (2007: 169) indicates, in spite of general acceptance of this concept, the needs construct cannot be singularly identified as a view of motivation, because it subsumes interpretations from a behavioural perspective (e.g. reward stimulation) and social context.

3) Constructivist perspective

A third motivational perspective is the constructivist view of motivation. The constructivist view emphasises the correlation between individual's desires and social context (William and Burden, 1997: 120). Motivation varies with individuals, yet this uniqueness needs to be correspondingly acted out within its social and cultural milieu. In other words, one's motivation cannot independently exist without social context. The constructivist view was first insinuated in Maslow's work (1970), in which he suggests motivation as constructs where ultimate goals can only be achieved by going through a hierarchy of needs. Amongst which, three are respectively rooted in the community, belonging and social status. In general, constructivist researchers hold the view that motivation depends more on person's interaction with others than his or her self-determination (Brown, 2007: 169).

Having been questioned in the previous part, the concept of needs can be generalised to all three views of motivation. That is, the accomplishment of the needs which comprises reward stimulation, making choices and interactions in social context. Concerning a second language learning process, L2 learners may perceive the benefit that they can gain in the language learning, they may have various reasons to learn a target language (interested in the language, influenced by others, want to be approved of, etc.), and they practice the learning process in various methods and in the environment that highly evaluates the skill. But then the learner who is less motivated or unmotivated may fail to identify the above-mentioned needs in their language learning. (see Table 4 for comparison of three motivational perspectives.)

Behaviouristic	**Cognitive**	**Constructivist**
Expectation for reward	Six basic individual's needs	Social context
Aim for attaining positive reinforcement	Degree of effort spent	Community, belongings and social status
External, self-determined	Internal, self-determined	Internal, interactive factors determined

Table 4 Three perspectives of motivation (from Brown 2007: 170)

By way of summary, a three orientations mechanism can be perceived in the study of motivation. The fulfilment of a language learning process is the integration of all three orientations. During this process, a learner may own a relatively high motivation in one perspective while performing not so well in others. With the three perspectives on L2 motivation, in the next section, the key developments in this area are examined.

2.4 Three phases of L2 motivation research

Having looked into different views of motivation research in second language learning, in this section, I turn the focus on some key L2 motivation theories and models spanning the last five decades. It is essential to note at the outset that the study of L2 motivation subsumes a number of theoretical frameworks as well as research methods from other disciplines such as psychology, sociology and cultural studies (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011). In this regard, the development of research on L2 motivation can be seen as an incremental integration with major conceptual frameworks, while remaining its linguistic independence on language learning.

Generally, there are three important phases in L2 motivation research, which are:

1. The social psychological period (1959-1990), characterised by Gardner and his socio-educational model on individuals' social context.

2. The cognitive-situated period (the 1990s), characterised by work focusing on individuals' inner process's influence on language learning motivation.

3. The process-oriented period (the turn of the century), characterised by a demand of exploring the dynamic of the motivation. (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011: 39-40)

2.5 The social psychological period (1959-1990)

The social psychological era in the first half of 20th century coincides with a surge of interest in the study of L2 motivation. Many researchers (Gardner, 1985; Gardner and Lambert, 1972; Gardner and MacIntyre, 1993) were pioneers in exploring the connection between language learners and their learning motivations. Among them the two most influential names are Wallace Lambert and Robert Gardner, researching on bilingual learners in Canada. They investigated the language learning process from an ethnolinguistic view and emphasised the function of L2 in interactions with different ethnic groups (in their terminology, 'L2 community'), and accordingly, they saw L2 motivation in the aforementioned context as a role to promote intercultural communication or, on the other hand, to impede the cultural affiliation (Dörnyei, 2009). A basic principle of such a perspective is that learners' fondness of one or more than one particular language as well as their communities can influence their learning behaviour. These attitudinal dimensions discriminate L2 motivation from other motivations owing to the fact that language learners, as Gardner and Lambert (1972) indicate, cannot be merely satisfied with the pursuit of linguistic knowledge. A further aim is 'to identify with members of another ethnolinguistic group and to take on very subtle aspects of their behaviour, including their distinct styles of speech and their language' (Gardener and Lambert, 1972: 135). Therefore, they pioneered the research by essentially marrying language learning context with interactions between different ethnolinguistic groups, which gradually shape the social psychological view of L2 motivation.

In light of this view, Gardener and Lambert also developed the theoretical framework in the domain of second language learning by shifting language researchers' perspective from human cognition to the social and cultural context. Prior to the social psychological period, a prevailing concept in Second Language Learning is that language learning success much depends on individual's language aptitude. Gardener and Lambert (1972) infer that individual' variation in L2 achievement comprised a more complicated integration of factors rather than language ability alone, and conjecture that L2 motivation plays a significant function. To attest to this hypothesis, Gardner and his associates conducted a number of research investigating L2 motivation and their effect on language learning, culminating in a series of formative publications which shaped and influenced L2 motivation research for the next twenty years (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011:41).

2.5.1 Gardner's motivation theory and Integrativeness

One of the most seminal concepts in Gardner's work on L2 motivation is integrativeness. According to Gardner (1985), L2 motivation can be regarded as 'a central mental engine or energy centre' which comprises 'effort, want/will (cognition) and task-enjoyment (effect)' (Dörnyei, 1998:22). Accordingly, there are three components in L2 motivation, namely, a) motivational intensity, b) desire to learn the language and c) attitudes towards the language learning. Gardner (1985) argues that an ideal language learning process requires the possession of all three components from a language learner. To better explain this, he used the term 'orientation' referring to the situation in which learners try to acquire a second language and pointed out the fundamental difference between motivation and orientation in this context is that origination functionally stimulates the motivation and leads it to a number of purposes. Moreover, Gardner and Lambert specified two types of motivational orientation, instrumental orientation and integrative orientation. The former concerns the pragmatic considerations of L2 learners throughout the learning process: 'if the purposes of language study reflect the more utilitarian value of linguistics achievement, such as getting ahead in one's occupation' (Gardner and Lambert, 1972:3), while the latter describes learners' willingness to interact and even be identical with members of other L2 communities: 'if the student wishes to learn more about the other cultural community because he is interested in it in an open-minded way, to the point of eventually being accepted as a member of that group' (ibid.).

Despite the agreement on L2 achievement can be influenced by both orientations, the integrative aspect is more systematically developed and studied in the social psychological period (Dörnyei 2001a; Dörnyei 2003a). In Gardner's view, instrumental orientation such as external requirement or punishment has a negligible effect on motivating language learning. As he claimed:

> Many attributes of the individual, such as compulsiveness, desire to please a teacher or parent, a high need to achieve, might produce effort as would social pressures, such as demanding teaching, impending examination…. however, none of these necessarily signify motivation to learn the language. *(*Gardner, 1985: 10)

On the other hand, integrative orientation is believed to play a more significant role in L2 motivation. In his work on L2 motivation, Gardner used term 'integrative motivation', 'integrativeness' and 'integrative motive' to describe the central concept as 'motivation to learn a second language because of positive feelings towards the community that speak the language' (Gardner, 1985: 82-83). He further proposed an integrativeness construct to illustrate the relationship between language learning motivations, integrative motive and integrative orientation, in which integrative orientation along with other two components constitute integrativeness (see Figure 4 for a schematic view).

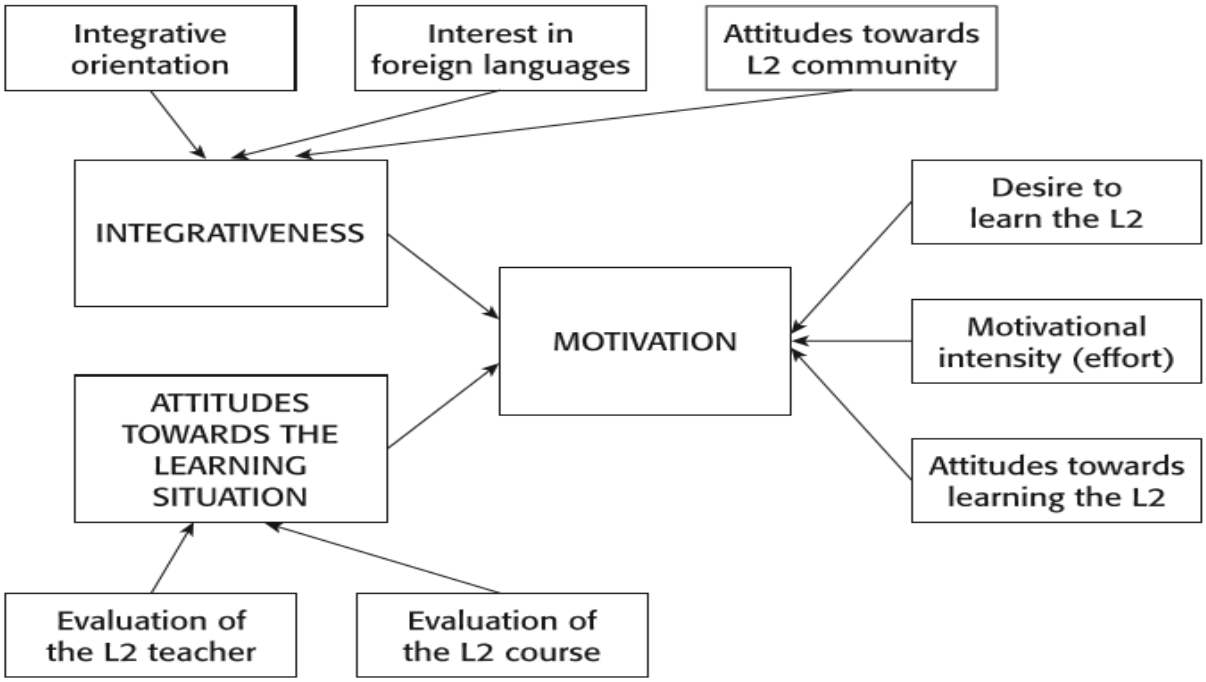


Figure 4 Gardner's conceptualisation of the integrative motive (from Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011:43)

With this integrativeness construct, Gardner and Lambert conducted empirical research, the results of which proved their hypothesis that it is the integrative orientation, integrativeness, that can longer motivate L2 learners. Learners who possess integrative motive tend to perform better in L2 proficiency. Thereafter, successive analytical studies applying all or part of the integrative construct looked into the data collected worldwide, attesting to the fact that learners' disposition towards L2 community positively correlated with their L2 motivation (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011). For instance, Dörnyei and Clément (2001) duplicated Gardner's research on a group of Hungarian students learning English in school. The results determined that among all the components, integrativeness is the most influential factor in a way that it helps learners to determine the choice of the target language as well as the amount of time they would spend on it.

However, Gardner's integrativeness concept received much of criticism insomuch as it caused conceptual ambiguities in L2 context and overlooked the motivational role of external factors (Dörnyei, 1994b; Lukmani, 1972). Thus, later L2 motivation researchers on social psychological view tried to develop this concept and make it more applicable to modern language learning contexts, which is discussed in the subsequent sections.

2.5.2 The Socio-Educational Model

Often noted as 'Gardner's basic model of the role of the attitude and motivation in second language learning', the socio-educational model has been viewed as the cornerstone for second language motivation researchers who were relating themselves to the interest in pertinent theories and approaches (Dörnyei, 1998; Chambers, 2001). The socio-educational model is poisted on seven distinct language models and each model can further fall into either of the following categories: (1) the models identified with linguistic process, which deal with individual differences in L2 performance and (2) the models underpinned by social process, which concern the correlation between second language acquisition and social and psychological factors (Chambers, 2001). Theories and concepts on the linguistic process were summarised in the following models: monitor model (Krashen, 1978, 1981), conscious reinforcement model (Carroll, 1981), and strategy model. Theoretical models addressing social process consist of: the social psychological model of second language acquisition, the acculturation model, the social context model, and the intergroup model (Chambers, 2001). To simplify the over-proliferation of models discussed above, Gardner has distilled this abundance of conceptual frameworks into four classes of variable (ibid.), which are presented as:

- **Social milieu** - It emphasises the impact of the social and cultural environment where the L2 learning occurs. In this view, language learners are expected to be inefficient and ineffective in the learning process when they are in a situation in which the difficulty for language learning is exaggerated. On the contrary, the learners who build self-confidence in language learning normally achieve better learning outcomes (ibid.).
- **Individual differences** – are concerned with the impact of four types of individual differences on language learning, which subsume: intelligence, language aptitude, motivation and situational anxiety (ibid.).
- **Language acquisition context** – is concerned with formal and informal contexts in which learners are exposed to the target language. The former refers to the language classroom or any other institutions or organisations which provide language training or drills, while the latter deals with situations in which language schooling is not the prime goal, such as watching television, travelling in a different country (ibid.).
- **Learning outcomes** – are divided into two groups: the linguistic outcome related to the proficiency in the language or specific language skills, and non-linguistic outcome involving the self-perception in the context of the language which is obtained from the previous learning experiences.

In addition, in order to operationalise this model, Gardner (1985) further created the Attitude Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) to evaluate potential contributing factors in L2 performance.

2.5.3 Attitude Motivation Test Battery (AMTB)

The test is composed of more than 130 items in a self-statement questionnaire format in which each statement is associated to a particular variable and is interpreted in a 6-level Likert Scale (Gardener, 2001). By analysing the scores achieved under different subscales, researchers can be able to understand the effect of particular variables on L2 motivation. Standing on the socio-educational model, the AMTB embodies the foremost ideas in Gardner's L2 motivation theory and focuses mainly on detecting four overarching variables, which are 1) integrativeness 2) attitudes towards L2 situation 3) motivation and 4) language anxiety. Gardner (2004) also suggests that other factors such as parental encouragement and external factors (instrumental orientation) can be added in the test depending on specific learning contexts. Hitherto adaptations of the test have been globally implemented in empirical studies investigating language learning motivation and according to Dörnyei (2001a, 2005), it still demonstrates a high validity and reliability, serving as a standard test in the research of L2 motivation.

Despite the various uses of this test, Gardner's L2 motivation theory is questioned by a number of scholars. Dörnyei (1990) argued that owing to the absence of a salient L2 group, in the case where most Gardner's research was conducted at this time, the identification can be generalised to the cultural value related to the language (ibid.). For instance, a strong integrative motive can be found among English learners in mainland China who may never meet an English native speaker in their live. However, in terms of the language learning in a globalised world, integrative motive is not that meaningful for second language learners. This is confirmed by Brown (2007) who cited Lukmani (1972)'s research investigating English learning of Marathi-speaking Indian students. The result indicates that students possessed instrumental orientations performed better in their English proficiency test. Rahman (2003) explains this as Indian English is a variety of Englishes, which can be learned for instrumental reasons alone.

2.5.4 Clément's Social Context Model of L2 learning

As discussed in the previous session, since Gardner initiated the research of L2 motivation concerning the interaction between ethnolinguistic communities, many other researchers (Clément, 1980; Giles and Byrne, 1982; Shumann, 1986) developed this idea by proposing various L2 motivation models and concepts, which contributed to a wealth of literature at this period.

Clément (1980) proposes a social context model which is based on the premise of linguistic self-confidence. The concept of linguistic self-confidence emphasises individual's perceptions of their

ability to successfully acquire and use the target language. It is theorised in the multi-ethnic context that individual's L2 achievement is heavily influenced by the process of interacting with the L2 community. As Clément (1980) noted, 'the quality and quantity of contact between the learner and L2 members will be a major motivational factor in learning the other community's language, determining the extent of identification with the L2 group' (cited in Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011: 43). He further explained that even in the settings that language learners have few opportunities to communicate with the L2 community, they can still be applicable to self-confidence when they are regularly exposed to the culture by means of social media (Clément, Dörnyei, and Noels, 1994).

With this hypothetical background, Clément (1980: 150) divides the motivational process into two degrees: the primacy motivational process and secondary motivational process. The primacy motivational process describes one's negative dispositional attitudes towards the L2 community, such as fear or dislike, which can be detrimental to the extent to which learners interact with members of the community. The secondary process detailed explained self-confidence and how it appears to work on L2 motivation.

Apart from the aforementioned models, the social psychological period is also characterised by a collection of theories and concepts such as Giles and Byrne's intergroup model (1982), Schumann's acculturation theory (1978, 1986) and Noel's situated identity theory (Clément and Noels, 1992), which all can be seen as a response to the critique that both the term 'motivation' and the social psychological approach are insufficiently defined. In spite of a large variety of theories, motivation models at this time were channelled in the perspective that language behaviours in multi-community settings and ethnolinguistic identity were greatly involved in language learning. In fact, as is critiqued by Skehan (1989), most of the work 'seemed to constitute a commentary on the agenda created by Gardner' (cited in Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011: 46). Meanwhile, L2 researchers in 1990s believed that the social psychological line of reasoning was 'limited with its descriptive scope' (Ushioda, 1996a:8) and gradually switched their perspectives to other variables in language learning process, which leads to a new period in the history of L2 motivation research.

2.6 The cognitive-situated period (the 1990s)

As is stated in the previous section, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the L2 motivation field faced growing calls for alternative research perspectives. It was first responded by Crookes and Schmidt (1991) in a formative article appealing for a practitioner-validated concept of L2 motivation. These voices pushed the L2 motivational research forward into a new phase, which is defined by Dörnyei as the 'cognitive-situated' period. He suggests two interrelated characteristics of this period: 1) The need to bring the newly developed cognitive theories back to L2 motivational research, and 2) the desire to broaden the perspective of researching from ethnolinguistic communities and focus more on a situated

analysis of motivation in specific learning contexts. In substance, the two trends led L2 motivational research to a more classroom-oriented context and to the concerns of language teachers who complained that the previous research was not practitioner-validated. This view was also supported by Crookes and Schmidt, arguing that language teachers' use of term motivation should be 'more congruent with definitions common outside social psychology, specifically in education' (1991: 469).

Yet, the shift to a more cognitive-situated perspective did not negate social psychological views of researching L2 motivation. The process was regarded more as an integration of two different perspectives. L2 motivation researchers in this period sought supplemental variables from cognitive theories, adding to the existing social psychological stance, to enlarge the theoretical construct of L2 motivation. A prototypical example was provided by Tremblay and Gardner (1995), who amplified Gardner's socio-educational model by incorporating other theories such as expectancy-value and goal theories. In their new model, Tremblay and Gardner (ibid.) elaborates the adoption of three variables, namely, Goal salience, Valence, and Self-efficacy over the process from language attitude to motivational behaviour (Figure 5). To be specific, goal salience indicates the particularity of individuals' learning objectives and the regularity of their employment of such goal-settings approach. Valence comprises the learner's aspiration of mastering the L2 and his or her perspectives on the learning. Self-efficacy contains L2 anxiety and performance expectancy, as explained by Dörnyei, is 'the expectation that one will be able to perform various language activities by the end of the course'(Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011: 49).

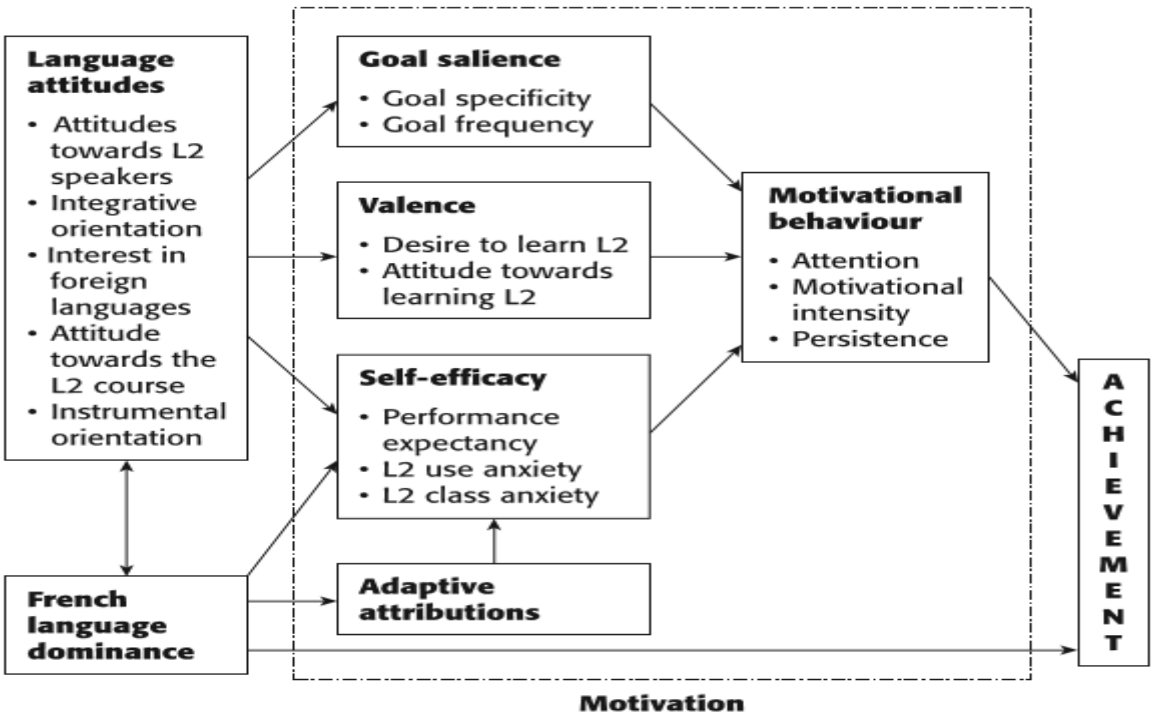


Figure 5 Tremblay and Gardner's model of L2 motivation (from Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011:48)

Despite the refinement of some socially grounded theories, this period has also witnessed a growth of more intricate and expanded conceptual frameworks of L2 motivation. The voice for such development

was initially captured in a sequence of resonant publications prompted by Dörnyei (1994), Oxford (1994), Oxford and Shearin (1994) in *The Modern Language Journal* in 1994, and was subsequently echoed by an up-to-date collection of L2 motivational constructs and perspectives (Dörnyei, 2009; Gao, 2004). For example, Crookes and Schmidt (1991) propose an L2 motivational construct by transforming and integrating four components (interest, relevance, expectancy and satisfaction) in Keller's (1983) educational theory of motivation. Their prototype of categorising language learning motivation into conceptual stages was practised by Dörnyei (1994) in his three-level framework of L2 motivation, in which he provides language practitioners with an inventory of thirty strategies to build the language learning motivation in the language classroom. In keeping with this development, William and Burden (1997) creates the social constructivist model summarising individual's internal and external factors which may exert an effect on L2 motivation. In the meantime, some researchers began to seek possibilities from other areas of enquiry to more effectively interpret language learning motivation in diverse contexts (Gao, 2004). For instance, Oxford and Shearin (1994) examined a vast array of psychological literature on the topic of motivation constructs and presented a new position of the following theories, which could be drawn in developing motivational models in L2 research.

- Need theories,
- Expectancy-value theories,
- Enquiry theories,
- Reinforcement theories,
- Social cognition theories,
- Achievement theories,
- Piaget's cognitive developmental theory,
- Vygotsky's sociocultural theory.

In the remainder of this section, I provide a detailed review on two most influential theoretical models in this period, Dörnyei's (1994) three-level framework of L2 motivation and William and Burden's (1997) social constructivist model, as well as main areas of enquiry in relation to L2 motivation research.

2.6.1 Dörnyei's (1994) three-level framework of L2 motivation

Dörnyei was among the first researchers to take up Crookes and Schmidt's perspective of applying different conceptual levels to the L2 motivational research. He proposes a three-level framework of motivation comprising three distinct L2 motivational levels, which include language level, learner level and learning situation level (1994). The language level refers to factors associated with L2, such as community and culture. The learner level clings to learner's disposition of the target language, which may exert an impact on his or her learning process (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011). The learning situation level explores learner's specific motives related to particular learning contexts. The intention of this

proposal was to provide different lines of studies with a comprehensive construct, in which various motivational component could be summarised into a few major clusters. The first two levels of this conceptualisation heavily relied on Gardener's theory, augmented by the discovery of Dörnyei's (1990) praxis, whereas the last level, noted as the most sophisticated facet, is drawn from the research conducted in the domain of educational psychology and was additionally elucidated in three aspects: course-specific, teacher-specific and group specific (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011: 51-52). In particular, course-specific motivational components are closely associated with the four constituents in the foregoing Crookes and Schmidt's (1991) L2 motivation model, which examine the impact of the content and approaches in language learning environment. Teacher-specific motivational components literally refer to the motivational factors related to the language teacher which involve his or her characteristics and teaching conducts, while Group-specific motivational components concern the language learner's dynamics (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011: 52).

LANGUAGE LEVEL	Integrative motivational subsystem Instrumental motivational subsystem
LEARNER LEVEL	Need for achievement Self-confidence • Language use anxiety • Perceived L2 competency • Causal attributions • Self-efficacy
LEARNING SITUATION LEVEL	
Course-specific motivational	Interest (in the course) components Relevance (of the course to one's needs) Expectancy (of success) Satisfaction (one has in the outcome)
Teacher-specific motivational components	Affiliative motive (to please the teacher) Authority type (controlling vs autonomy- supporting Direct socialisation of motivation • Modelling • Task Presentation • Feedback
Group-specific motivational components	Goal-orientedness Norm and reward system Group cohesiveness Classroom goal structure (cooperative or individualistic)

Table 5 Dörnyei's framework of L2 motivation (from Dörnyei, 1994a: 280)

According to Dörnyei (2011), the rationale for this division was that these three motivational levels can independently generate a significant impact on individual's all-inclusive L2 motivation. For instance, a learner may demonstrate dissimilar motivational levels in different learning contexts, notwithstanding he or she is learning the same language. That is to say, language learners' motivational status can fluctuate with the variation of any of the three levels and the motivational effect from any two levels can be nullified by the remaining one.

2.6.2 William and Burden's social constructivist model

William and Burden (1997) also looked into the connection between various motivational factors and specific language learning settings, by proposing a social constructivist model. The creation of this model was heavily influenced by educational psychology and was rooted in a social constructivist perspective. In their work, William and Burden (1997: 121) indicates that 'a constructivist view of motivation centres around the premise that each individual is motivated differently' and suggests employing approaches that focus on contextual influences. They further elaborated a framework of motivational factors, classified as internal and external factors. The internal factors include intrinsic interest of activity, perceived value of activity, sense of agency, mastery, self-concept, attitudes, other affective states, developmental age and stage, and gender. The external factors contain significant others including parents, teachers and peers, the nature of interaction with significant others, the learning environment and the broader context. All these factors are extracted and evaluated from an examination of conventional in lieu of L2 motivation works and therefore, William and Burden's construct is also regarded as the 'paradigm-seeking spirit of the reform movement' in this period (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011: 53).

2.6.3 Other areas of enquiry

With the evolution of motivational framework exploring potential factors in classroom settings, L2 researchers were not satisfied with the current research enquiry and subsequently turned to other areas. Skehan (1989) firstly suggested that attribution theory could be applied to research on language learning, seeing that an attributional process for various potential results appears to play a vital role in moulding individual's motivation. This suggestion was taken up by many researchers (Dörnyei, 1990; Julkunen, 1989; Trembly and Gardner, 1995). For instance, Dörnyei (1994) adopted causal attributions in the learner level in his three-level framework. William and Burden (1997) also melded it with the learner-internal factors in their social constructivist construct. In spite of the above framework, little research on L2 motivation has been conducted under the attributional process. This is mainly due to the complexity of the causal attribution effect, which cannot be easily identified by the traditional questionnaire-based quantitative methods in L2 motivational research. In order to better amalgamate the theory with L2 motivation research, Ushioda (1996a, 1998) conducted a small-scale qualitative research using the casual attributional processes on L2 learners, which provided an abundance of insight into this field.

Another most influential theory widely applied in L2 motivational research is Deci and Ryan's (1985) Self-Determination Theory. Self-Determination Theory (SDT), originated from educational psychology, revolves around human's motivation and disposition which mainly concerns the individuals' behaviours influenced by their intrinsic and extrinsic motives. Due to a research interest in understanding individual's innate growth propensities and inherent cognitive necessity, many researchers of L2

motivation have devoted much time and enthusiasm to the conceptual interpretation of intrinsic motivation in L2 learning. Amongst them, Brown (1981, 1990) has been a pioneer in recognising the salient role of intrinsic motivation in the L2 classroom by arguing that the extrinsic motivation emerged from traditional class settings leads students' attention to the external advantages such as financial interest, which impedes their appreciation of knowledge and creativity (Brown, 1994). Dörnyei (1994a) and William and Burden (1997) respectively situate intrinsic motivation under the learning situation level and internal factors in their framework of L2 motivation. Nevertheless, it was Kim Noels who set forth to extensively research SDT in language learning (Noels, 2001, 2003, 2009). Noel and her colleagues (Noels, Pelletier, Clément and Vallerand, 2000) draw and examine a specific tool for evaluating language learners' orientations depicted in the SDT. A major finding reported in the empirical studies was that amongst the four types of extrinsic motivation (external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation and integrated regulation), three, introjected regulation, introjected regulation and identified regulation, were more closely connected with intrinsic or self-determined motives. Accordingly, Noels et al. oppose the prevailing belief about intrinsic motivation by conjecturing that intrinsic motivators, for instance, fondness of the language, may be deficient in cultivating constant language learning, and that the personal value or attitude toward the learning may be more important on this subject. The research conducted by Noels and her colleges, along with the aforementioned researchers, has facilitated the L2 motivation framework in categorising language learning orientation as well as underscoring the social situation in the learning process. In this sense, the L2 motivation framework or research surfaced in the cognitive-situated period have shown a sign to explore the dynamic nature of motivation, and therefore to gradually gravitate to a more process-oriented period.

2.7 The process-oriented period (the turn of the century)

Owing to the fact that at the end of the cognitive-situated period, researchers in L2 motivation has developed the specific concern with learner's motivational process over time, as a result, there was a pressing call for enquiries into the dynamic nature of the motivation and its temporal dimension (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011: 60). Such enquiries were backed by language researchers and practitioners who have been fully alert that student's language learning motivation keeps fluctuating over the course of learning, and therefore they advocated analyses focusing on language learner's motivational changes from a temporal perspective. All the voices have led to a new period in the development of L2 motivation, in which an array of proposals for L2 motivational framework culminating in the process-oriented conceptualisation of the motivation (Dörnyei, 2009; Dörnyei, 2000a; Dörnyei, 2001b). In some well-known concepts, the esoteric term 'temporal dimension' was used to refer to motivational change, implying a universal agreement in the L2 motivation study that motivation encompassed both the internal interest in the language and the maintenance of such interest to pursue a particular goal in

language learning. Therefore, it is of vital importance to clearly divide the motivation into two distinct groups: the motivation for learning participation and the motivation during learning participating. To this end, William and Burden (1997) propose a three-stage continuum containing Reason for doing something, Deciding to do something and Sustaining the effort or persisting. According to the authors, Reason for doing something and Deciding to do something are mainly related to 'initiating motivation', whilst Sustaining the effort concerns more with 'maintaining motivation' (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011). The particular emphasis on sustainable L2 motivation was established on William and Burden's (1997) close examination of an L2 class, in which virtually all learners had undergone frequent fluctuations of their passions and dedications on a daily basis. In answer to this problem, Dörneyi and Ottó (1998) attempted to model the dynamic process of L2 motivation through corresponding L2 motivational factors to a range of actional circumstances within the string of initiating and performing motivated behaviours (Dörnyei, 1998). The model contains three actional phases and illustrates a transformation from learner's desires and wishes to the enacting intentions. Ushioda (2001) further explored Dörneyi and Ottó's model by focusing on the influence of L2 motivational changes over time on learner's motivational perception, and classified the temporal dimension into casual and teleological. In addition, Ushioda (1998) proposes a theoretical framework of motivation from a temporal perspective to 1) identify a goal-setting role in the L2 development and 2) explain how L2 learning experience or perspective of different time (the past, current and future) would mould learner's motivation (Ushioda, 2011). The rest of this section gives a detailed outline of Ushioda's temporal perspective and Dörnyei and Ottó's (1998) process model of L2 motivation, which heralded the application of process-oriented approach in L2 motivation research.

2.7.1 Ushioda's temporal perspective

Despite the fact that the dynamic nature of motivation has been fully comprehended, few L2 motivation researchers involved temporal facets in their research or model design. One probable reason was the dynamic process of motivational progression cannot be easily quantified in the psychometric traditions of mainstream approaches such as questionnaire and therefore such temporal dimension of learner's motivation was not immediately attainable. In response to this concern, Ushioda (1996a, 1996b, 2001, 2009) has conducted a sequence of qualitative research to validate the temporal aspects of L2 motivation, which indicates that qualitative approaches are more appropriate for investigating and portraying the dynamic nature of this development (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011). An exemplar of her temporal view of L2 motivation was demonstrated in her longitudinal research with a group of Irish students who were studying French as their second language. From these cases, Ushioda (1998, 2001) attributes students' language learning motivation to two distinctive variables in the temporal reference frames, namely, inter-individual variation and intra-individual variation. According to the research results, a majority of the participants described that a positive learning experience, in lieu of future objectives, had exerted a

substantial impact on their L2 motivation. Furthermore, she (1998: 81-2) argues that the role of goal-setting could be 'more appropriately conceived as a potentially evolving dimension of language learning motivation, rather than its necessary rationale', and the continual momentum for L2 learning, reflected on some successful language learners, is derived from learners' previous language experience. A schematic view of Ushioda's temporal perspective on L2 motivation is provided below.

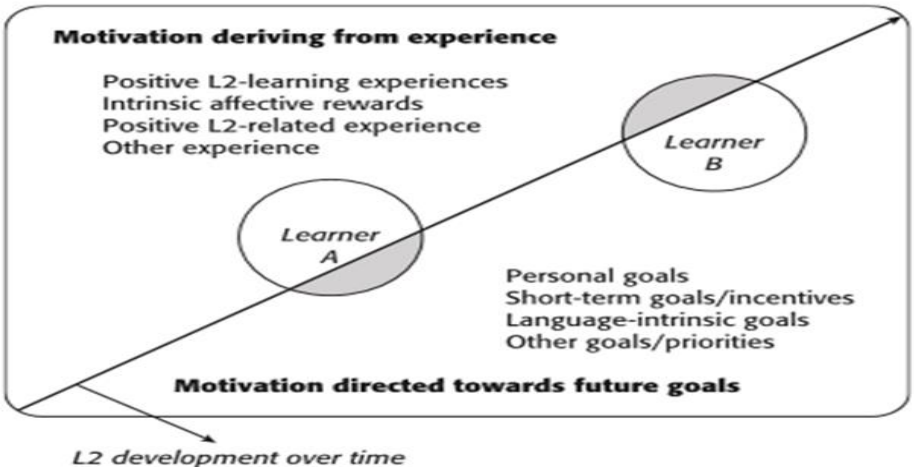


Figure 6 Ushioda's (1998: 82) temporal perspective on L2 motivation

Based on the qualitative studies conducted in this period, Ushioda (1996a: 240) points out that most learners' would undergo motivational fluctuations through their language learning especially in the formal language schooling, whereas the 'potential for developing a dynamic theory of L2 motivation would seem to extend beyond the phenomenon of motivational loss or growth alone'. In this regard, she suggests that more qualitative research encouraging learner's self-reflection should be conducted to observe a motivational flux over a period of time.

2.7.2 Dörnyei and Ottó's (1998) process model of L2 motivation

During this period, Dörnyei (2001b) reviewed the literature of L2 motivation and revealed a lack of perfectly appropriate L2 motivational theory for researchers' purposes, albeit the various frameworks or models discussed above. He (2001b) subsequently gave three reasons to explicate this judgement:

1. The existing theories or frameworks failed to offer a sufficiently inclusive and in-depth summary of all pertinent motivational impacts on learner's learning behaviour.
2. The existing theories or frameworks attempted to understand why and how language learners select specific courses of action, rather than explain the motivational sources of accomplishing goal-directed behaviour.
3. Most of the existing motivational strategies failed to represent the dynamic nature of motivation.

Though some of the arguments might incur massive controversies and required further discussions, the foregoing reasons stimulated Dörnyei and Ottó (1998) to develop a process model of L2 motivation. Unlike the current existing L2 motivation models or frameworks, the process model, as claimed by Dörnyei and Ottó, embodies a dynamic perspective of motivation, which was assumed to identify the motivational changes during a period of time.

The process model consists of two principal dimensions: Action sequence and Motivational influences. The first dimension concerns the process of individual's learning behaviour describing the trajectory from individuals' desires or wishes, through goal-setting, to the real actions, while the second dimension refers to the energy sources and motivational forces guiding and boosting the behaviour process (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011). As mentioned in Section 2.6, the first dimension is further broken down into three actional phases: Prectional phase, Actional phase and Postactional phase. To be specific, Preactional phase involves various types of selection from individuals, which can be categorised into goal setting, intention formation and the intention enactment. Actional phase concerns individual's motivation which activates actions during the actions being carried out. This phase employs three other processes: subtask generation and implementation, appraisal and action control. Post-actional phase corresponds to individual's reflections on the actions after they have been accomplished, which entails assessing the completed actions and envisaging potential deduction for future actions (ibid.).

Apart from the L2 motivational theories and models summarised in this section, the process-oriented period also coincided with the rising concern to situate the motivation study into a complex interrelationship of motivational factors, the concern with integrating L2 motivation with its social context and the need to speculate L2 motivation considering the extended complications of language use and learning in a gradually globalised environment. Therefore, L2 motivation research is facing an evolution into a new period.

2.8 A new direction of L2 motivation

Despite the fact that L2 motivation research has evolved through different phases, researchers argue that many concerns on L2 motivation still exist. These concerns include 1) the situated complexity of L2 motivation process and its development during the interaction with other factors and 2) the application of the L2 motivation theories to language learning in the globalisation. With these concerns, Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011: 74) suggest that L2 motivation study is moving into a transitional phase, in which conceptual approaches rather than traditionally used models and frameworks are more appropriate to this transition. These conceptual approaches, according to Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011), include: 1) A person-in-context view of motivation (Ushioda, 2009) and 2) The L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009). In the following subsections, I briefly review the two approaches.

2.8.1 A person-in-context relational view of motivation

As one of the pioneering researchers in this period, Ushioda (2009) proposes a person-in-context relational view of motivation, which pays attention to 'organical evolving interactions among motivation, self and context'(Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011: 75). Opposing to the traditional motivation approach regarding learners as theoretical abstractions, this conceptual approach focuses on the individuality of a real person. As She states, anyone who involved in language learning will create an identity of 'language learner' which constitute one of their many of identities or sense of self. Other identities may exert an impact on the motivational process at some times. For instance, a language learner could be a Chinese or a mother, a professor, an immigrant and so on. In order to understand individuals' motivation and identity, we need to situate those people into a particular cultural or social context. This relational view challenged the traditional analytical approach to the extent that the unit of analysis has to represent the extension beyond the individuals to describe the complicated interactions between the individual and contexts. Therefore, it is difficult to work out a practical strategy of enquiry. One possible strategy of enquiry suggested by Ushioda (2009) is narrow the interactional data down to a certain level and thereby investigate motivation as it merges and proceeds through the developing discourse.

2.8.2 The L2 Motivational Self System

In recent years, perhaps the most discussed approach on L2 motivation is Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2005). It was first proposed by Dörnyei in 2005, as an extensive collection of previous research on the main perspectives of L2 motivation, which illustrates a development of motivational view by mainly drawing the concept of self from psychology theory, albeit the theory is firmly rooted in L2 research. The construct derived from two major theoretical development in mainstream psychology: 1) Makrus and Nurius' (1986) possible selves and future self-guides; and 2) Higgins'(1987, 1988) ideal and ought selves. The former describes the one's ideas of the self in the future and accordingly, the dynamic concept which explains how one is moved from the present to the future, whereas the latter discusses one's willingness to become the self in the future. Dörnyei (2005) further develops this 'Self System' into three components: Ideal L2 Self, Ought-to L2 Self and L2 Learning Experience. Ideal L2 Self refers to the L2-specific facet of one's ideal self. For example, I want to be the person who can speak L2. Ought-to Self concerns the attributes one believes one ought to possess to meet expectation or avoid a negative effect. L2 Learning Experience refers to the situated motives related to language learning context and experience. To sum up, the L2 Self System indicates that there are three sources to motivate a language learner: the learner's vision of oneself as a proficiently L2 user, the pressure from the environment and the positive learning experience.

This study is motivated by the above-mentioned transition in the motivational research. First, since the traditional approach no longer captures the 'dynamic and mutually constitutive nature of the relationship between motivation and context'(Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011: 77), it is more important to situate the

language learning motivation in a relational context. This research scrutinises the motivation of a particular group of language learners, Confucian heritage learners in Ireland, from a perspective of their own culture, Confucian learning philosophy. Second, the introduction of idea of 'self' in the L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2005) provides an insight into the possible researching area for L2 motivational research, which leads to the discussion about the impact of self-awareness on people's learning behaviour. This inspires me to adopt an Eastern concept of 'self', the principles of self-cultivation, to explore language learning motivation, which is illustrated in the following chapter.

2.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined some of the key theoretical frameworks in the field of L2 motivation. I first identified some principal notions about motivation from the main strands of social psychology and educational psychology. Then, I reviewed the development of mainstream L2 motivation theories by delineating L2 motivation frameworks and models in three distinctive periods: the social psychological period, the cognitive-situated period and the process-oriented period. The chapter finished with indicating a prospective transition in L2 motivation research, which involves the discussion of the interreaction between motivation and identities This new perspective has informed the conduct of this research and encouraged me to explore L2 motivation from approaches in other disciplines. In the next chapter, I sketch out the design of my exploration of the motivation in the Confucian heritage learners.

Chapter 3 Fieldwork design

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research design and methodology employed in the present study. This research adopts a mixed and longitudinal method in which interview tools, participant observations and questionnaires are the sources of the data collection. In the first half of the chapter, I review the design of this mixed-methods and longitudinal approach, and in the second half, I present the data collection instruments and their implementation.

3.2 Selection of research methods

This study uses a mixed-methodology and longitudinal approach to collect data, involving three main instruments, namely, participant observation, focus group interviews and questionnaires. Qualitative data collected are analysed through Saldana's coding method with the aid of CAQDAS programme, which is presented in Chapter 5. Questionnaires collected serving as complementary data, are used to triangulate the qualitative information captured from observations and interviews. The rationales and purposes of selecting these approaches are presented below.

3.2.1 Mixing methodologies

Mixed methods research refers to 'the research involves different combinations of qualitative and quantitative research either at the data collection or at the analysis level' (Dörnyei, 2007:24). According to Reams and Twale (2008:133), mixed methods design is 'necessary to uncover information and perspective, increase corroboration of the data and render less biased and more accurate conclusions'. There are two main reasons for adopting mixed method: 1) to achieve a fully understanding of the given phenomenon and 2) to distinguish one finding from others (Sandelowski, 2003; cited in Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011: 240). The relative merits of using mixing methods have been widely accepted amongst the L2 motivation researchers, as this approach provides researchers with a comprehensive view of a complicated issue from different perspectives. For instance, in Lamb's (2004) investigation of motivational changes of Indonesian middle school students over their first two years of formal English learning, he designed a mixed-method approach involving a questionnaire survey for two hundred and nineteen students, classroom observations for a focus group of twelve students and follow-up interviews for the same group. Ryan (2009) melded questionnaire surveys with follow-up interviews trying to interpret young Japanese people's English learning motivation. In his research, Ryan (2009) distributed the questionnaire to 2,397 Japanese learners of English from nine language institutions, from which he selected twenty-three participants as the core group for a three-stage semi-structured interview.

However, it should be noted that there is no fixed pattern for mix methods design and researchers are advised to discreetly integrate the characteristics of each applied instrument with the research aim or possible outcome over planning the fieldwork. In spite of that, Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) underlined six types mix-method designs used in the research of L2 motivation, which include questionnaires survey with follow-up interview, questionnaire survey with preceding interview, interview study with follow-up questionnaire, interview study with preceding questionnaire, observational studies and practitioner research. The first two are more associated with quantitative-focused research thereby the implementation of interview either before or after the questionnaire is to interpret and validate the information captured by the rating scales. The third and fourth types of design better serve qualitative-leading studies. The preceding questionnaires can help researchers with purposeful sampling, while the follow-up questionnaires enable researchers to generalise the findings obtained from the qualitative approach. Observational studies entail the use of multiple instruments around the observational data to record the consequence of motivation, and practitioner research refers to the process of language teachers collecting introspective types of data from their students for pedagogical purposes. With regard to this research, I mainly adopted an observational study by conducting a participant observation in the English learning class. I also designed two parallel instruments, focus group interview and attitudinal questionnaire, to present and interpret what I observed in the class.

Another view of categorising design types of this method, highlighted by Hennink et al. (2010), is simply bracketing it with the different paradigms. Therefore, four types of design are concluded: mixing qualitative methods, mixing quantitative methods, mixing qualitative with quantitative methods, mixing quantitative with qualitative methods. Concerning this research, I employed a mix qualitative with quantitative method. Qualitative data are collected through participant observations and focus group interviews to analyse learner's motivation factors described in the motivational construct in the *Great Learning*. More specifically, they allow me to carry out the research in a natural setting, directly obtaining a detailed reflection of participant perspectives and behaviours which are valuable in understanding motivation. Quantitative data are collected through two types of questionnaire, demographic questionnaire and attitudinal questionnaire, which helps to report an overall profile of the participants and examine the motivational change of this cohort over the course of the study.

3.2.2 Longitudinal research

This study employs a longitudinal approach to see whether students' motivation for learning English has changed over the period of EAP modules at Trinity. Longitudinal investigation is the research in which 1) data are collected for two or more distinct time; 2) the subjects/informants/participants are the same or comparable (drawn from the same population) from one period to the next and 3) analysis involves some comparison of data between the periods (Dörnyei, 2007: 79; Dörnyei, 2001b: 195; Menard, 2002). The main purposes for adopting longitudinal approaches are to describe paradigm shifts and to explain temporal and accidental relationships, as Dörnyei (2001b:194) claims, 'longitudinal

studies observe the participants for an extended period in order to detect changes and patterns of development over time'. Moreover, Menard (2002: 68) indicates that the longitudinal data should be presumed 'necessary to estimate the parameters, efficiently and without bias, of any dynamic process in the social sciences'.

In SLA research, especially in the research of L2 motivation, longitudinal research is suggested and widely applied due to the harmony that longitudinal approaches commonly provide comparatively more practical insights into motivational influences than cross-section, in particular, in respect of changes (Dörnyei, 2007: 195). For instance, Jia and Aaronson (2003) conducted a three-year study on ten young Chinese immigrants in the United States, looking for changes in their L2 learning motivation, L2 environment as well as L2 proficiency. Sasaki (2011) investigated the motivation for English writing among thirty-seven Japanese students by designing and implementing participant observation over three years and a half. Busse and Walter (2013) explored the motivational perspectives of freshmen in German degree modules at two universities in the UK. In their research, a longitudinal mixed-method approached was used to perceive fluctuations of the target students' language learning motivation over 12 months.

Notwithstanding an abundance of empirical studies in Applied Linguistics displayed in ways such as ethnography and case study, which can be viewed as longitudinal inherently, Ortega and Iberri-Shea (2005) pointed out that most of these were 'longitudinal-like' studies, as they were unable to follow explicitly constructed longitudinal aims. Their attitude was reiterated by Dörnyei (2007: 82), who therefore summarised and proposed four prime categories of longitudinal design in SLA based on up-to-date longitudinal principles. The four categories include: prospective longitudinal studies, repeated cross-sectional studies, retrospective longitudinal studies and simultaneous cross-sectional studies (ibid.). Specifically, prospective longitudinal studies group the participant into a specific panel and maintain this panel for study over a long period, which allow the researcher to gather meanings of changes on subtle scales. Repeated cross-sectional studies interprets the longitudinal data from an aggregate stance whereby the same set of instruments is repeatedly used to different representatives of the same target group. Retrospective longitudinal studies, on the other hand, ask participants to review what had happened and their attitudes in the past experience, whilst simultaneous cross-sectional studies focus on changes over different age groups, and thus are deemed 'partially longitudinal' (ibid.).

Apart from the foregoing four approaches, in this inquiry, I decided to use a 'distinct new approach' called longitudinal qualitative research (Thomson et al, 2003), which involves the researcher's sustained participation in the fieldwork, such as the re-visiting to research sites and re-interview with the participants. Such investigations enable the researcher to situate participants' reflections and meanings in a temporal context and hence to represent an intricate and assorted image of data collected at different times from the participants (Mcleod, 2003). Yet, this methodological strand is beset by the complicated nature of qualitative data analysis and the relationship between researcher and participants (Dörnyei, 2007). Under such circumstance, I also drew on repeated cross-sectional approach by administering a questionnaire at four intervals, and therefore to form a longitudinal mixed design. Following this design,

the data were collected from the participants in this study throughout a 10-month academic year, from September 2015 to May 2016.

3.3 Research site and participants

This research was conducted in the English for Academic Purposes programme at Trinity College Dublin, a medium-sized comprehensive research university in Ireland's capital city. As informed by the research aims and the theoretical construct, this inquiry seeks Chinese postgraduate students who were learning English in the formal language class in Ireland. Therefore, the subset of this specific population can be viewed as a selection in lieu of a sample. The selection of the participating group was driven by the familiarity with the research site and the approach to this group, and accordingly, it was not representative and systematic. I had been involved in the language programme in the research site during my Master programme study at Trinity and had built a good relationship with some English teachers in it, which allowed me to request these teachers to act as 'gatekeepers' to gain access to the target group (Hennink et al., 2010). Virtually all the Chinese students in the class were studied as a 'natural bounded group' (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993: 62). In addition, I also used informal networks strategy to invite the potential participants who possess required criteria to the research (Hennink et al., 2010). Through these processes, a group of eleven students has gradually formed, which later serves as the core participants for data collection instruments.

3.4 Participant observation

One of the major instruments used in my field work is participant observation. According to Marshall and Rossman (1989: 79), observation refers to the 'systematic description of events, behaviours, and artifacts in the social setting chosen for study'. Observation methods allow researchers to check the information that participants provided in other research instruments and observe the issues or situations that participated unable to describe, thereby improving the quality of the data collected (Marshall and Rossman, 1995). Dewalt and Dewalt (2002: 92) propose that 'the goal for design of research using participant observation as a method is to develop a holistic understanding of the phenomena under study that is as objective and accurate as possible given the limitations of the method'. They further elucidated that participant observation could be used to increase the validity of in the research combining with other instruments such as interviewing and questionnaires. It can also help with descriptive research questions, to create models, or to examine hypotheses (ibid.).

The aim of participant observation in this research is to collect detailed information about the target learners as well as their learning behaviours in the language classroom. The gathered data would provide me with a holistic understanding of their English learning motivation in this context. To this end, I was expected to participate in their authentic learning situations and to be fully accepted by the group

members. Normally, two dichotomies are involved in the design of an in-class observation, that is, participant or non-participant and structured or unstructured (Dörnyei, 2007). Whereas the need for engaging in participants' learning activities was stated above, in the operational stage of the observation, I still faced the situation of choosing the extent to which I would be involved in the context, which is decisive for the quantity and quality of the collected data. In this regard, Gold (1958) proposes four observation stances of researchers conducting field observation, namely, complete participant, participant as an observer, observer as participant and complete observer. Of these four stances, Gold (1985) further points out that the role providing the most ethical approach to observation is that of the observer as participant, as the researcher's main task is to collect the data, yet his or her identity as an observer can be positively accepted by the group being investigated. In this stance, although the researcher is not a member of the group, he or she is obliged to fulfil his or her assigned duties in the group for conducting better observation and thus generating a better understanding of the participants' behaviour, owing to the fact that, like in many other data collection, it is the participants that control the level of information given (Merriam, 1998). In order to increase the validity of the data, I adopted the observer as participant in this inquiry by creating a good rapport with the participating students in the class.

The second dichotomy concerns the preparatory stage of this instrument. According to Dörnyei (2007), distinctly structured observation requires the researcher to carefully prepare observation topics and purposefully design concrete scales or checklists before entering the classroom. These scales or checklists, also known as observation schemes, were used as a frame of reference throughout the observation. In terms of unstructured observation, the researcher is inclined to first observe what is happening and then to evaluate its substance for the study. The whole process is basically completed by taking field notes, sometimes supplemented with other materials collected in the class, such as class handouts. Considering the aim of this inquiry, I employed unstructured observation attempting to capture the insights emerged from the students themselves, whereas such insights may not be anticipated and can easily escape when focusing on the observation scheme.

In practice, before the observation, I discussed this issue with the EAP class teacher, Bill, who agreed with my plan of observation in his class. He also suggested me participating in the class activities to a certain degree to mitigate the uneasy feeling and inconvenience among the students. I took his advice and during the process, we developed a rapport and decided that I would stay in the class as a role of 'assistant/ student'. In this role, I would be assigned to different groups, participating in activities such as discussion, presentation and debate. Therefore, I came to class as a regular student with some duties of assistant, who was also collecting data for a work on language learning motivation. In my early visits to the class, Bill informed the students that I was also working towards my doctoral thesis, exploring the topic of Chinese students learning English and their motivation. This, as well as my identity as a Chinese native speaker, allowed me to better interact with the participants and be seen as an 'insider', which helped me access some of the data I was interested in collecting for the purposes of this study. In the

meantime, I was mindful that my researcher identity should keep my reflection and judgment away from the familiarity with the participants. This was mainly achieved by writing reflective memos or diaries after the class, which is discussed in the next section.

3.4.1 Field notes

Field notes are the primary way of capturing data that is collected from participant observation (Kawulich, 2005). Notes taken in the observation record researchers' informal conversation with participants, activities and events during which the research cannot communicate with participants and the materials that are kept on a daily basis. Dewalt, Dewalt and Wayland (1998: 24) regard fields notes as both data and analysis, as they 'provide an accurate description of what is observed and are the product of the observation process' In this research, two notebooks were used for keeping field notes. The first one was used in the class to record what was happening during their learning processes, such as class activities and unanticipated problems (e.g. absence). In order to participate fully in the classes, I only took a few notes in class. Another reason for minimising note-taking in class was to alleviate any uncomfortable feelings caused by being 'observed'. Most information was written down in the field diary after class. I kept diary entries after each class to report my observations and suppositions. The habit of writing such memo enabled me to rethink my discoveries in class, remaining some distance from the participants, as I found this distance is sometimes difficult to achieve due to the frequent interaction with the class. All the notes were arranged in a chronological order and were later indexed by a short identifying description for the purpose of coding and analysis.

3.4.2 Weakness of participant observation

Whereas the preceding sections have described the necessity of applying participant observation as a data collection technique, in this section, I discuss some limitations in its implementation throughout the duration of the fieldwork. It is widely agreed that one of the major constraints with this instrument is the extremely time-consuming process whereby substantial vitality and commitment are demanded (Hennink et al., 2010), and thereby fatigue is inevitable, physically and mentally, as the observation progresses. I sporadically encountered such weariness, especially in the middle of each term, due to the effort involved to highly concentrate on participating students' behaviours. Another factor which exacerbated this tiredness is the cumbersome process of field notes recording (ibid.), and sometimes it appeared totally overwhelming. I restrained this limitation through flexibly arranging focus group interviews and questionnaire surveys during the long session of observation, and therefore the whole research process seemed to be more 'dynamic'.

Simultaneous observing and taking notes can be burdensome for a junior researcher like me, who first dealt with this approach. Under such circumstances, as I noted in Section 3.5.1, I wrote down very few notes in the classroom and spared most of my energy on observing what was valuable for further

interpretation. Meanwhile, my educational background about interpreting facilitated me with sufficient skills in note-taking in a short period. Apart from that, inasmuch as I was expected to stay with the group for ten months, it was reasonable for me to build a good relationship with the target participants. Such connection may result in subjective records in my field notes. With respect to this, the field notes, especially the field diaries, of this inquiry were documented as analytical memos to evaluate participants' inner process in the class and were presumed to be intuitive. All the observational data would be scanned and triangulated by other types of data collected from instruments such as focus group and questionnaire, which are presented in the following sections.

3.5 Focus group interview

The focus group interview, or focus groups, serves as the other major instrumentation in this research. Kitzinger (1995: 299) described focus groups it as 'a form of group interview that capitalises on communication among research participants in order to generate data'. It is traditionally viewed as a method contingent on group interaction to quickly obtain data from several people simultaneously. Unlike other interviews in which the researcher asks each participant to answer a question in turn, focus groups encourage people to talk to others in the group by asking questions, exchanging anecdotes and commenting on other's experiences and points of view (Kitzinger, 1994: 103). This method is particularly pertinent to the observation of people's attitude and experience, which can be used to understand 'not only what people think but how they think and why they think that way' (Kitzinger, 1995: 299).

The advantages of focus group, according to Marczak and Sewell (1991: 5), can be concluded as follows:

- It can provide a high face validity by situating the study of participants' natural interaction.
- It is one of the few tools available for collecting data from participants who are not particularly literate。
- It saves the time and cost comparing to the separately individual interviews.
- It allows the researcher to directly interact with respondents and to obtain information from non-verbal expressions to verbal expressions.
- It can be applied to a wide range of topics, individuals and contexts.
- It can help with analysis of a deeper level of meaning delivered by participants.
- The result is easy to understand.

In terms of the implementation of this method, there are five characteristics related to the participants in typical focus group interviews: 1) a small group of people, who 2) share certain characteristics, 3) provide qualitative data, 4) in a focused discussion 5) to help understand the topic of interest (Krueger and Casey, 2014: 8). The position of interviewer in a focus group is not leading or powerful. The interviewer acts the role as a moderator in the group by asking, listening, keeping the discussion on track

and giving everyone equal speaking opportunities. The goal is to provide participants with a permissive environment in which everyone feels comfortable (ibid.). In this research, focus groups are used to record students' perceptions on English learning in their own words. By examining their English learning before, during and after the EAP modules, I aim to understand the factors influencing their learning motivation. A second main reason is to identify my target group norm and cultural values and accordingly to interpret these factors in the Neo-Confucian motivational construct.

3.5.1 Designing and piloting focus group interview

With the two above-mentioned purposes, a discussion guide was developed before each focus group interview. The guide is an inventory of topics or an array of questions designed by the moderator to conduct the discussion, and it functions as an aide-memoire for the moderator to ensure all the research topics are involved over the course of the discussion (Hennink et al., 2010). However, it should be noted that such logically structured topics or questions can be interrupted by topics or issues surfaced in participants' spontaneous discussion. In order to keep the discussion fluid, the moderator is advised to be flexible to these unconstrained conversations, and in this way, the discussion guide is more often regarded as a checklist rather than established questions used in, for instance, structured interviews.

In terms of designing the specific topics, before the conduct of the fieldwork, I developed an initial guide list with deductive reasoning, mostly drawing on the central topics from the research questions as well as motivational factors illustrated in the Neo-Confucian construct. Over the course of the interviews, I also inductively refined the discussion guide by adding more topic probes from the data collected in the early group discussions. As to the structure of the discussion guide, each focus group interview was built around various types of questions including introduction, opening questions or ice-breaker questions, transition questions and key questions. An overview of the general topics discussed in four interviews can be seen in Table 12 (Section 4.5.2). I piloted two types of interview, one in Chinese and the other in English. I found that the interviewed Chinese students produced much less information in English, albeit they are capable of communicating in fluent English, as the students expressed that they felt nervous and unnatural to speak English in front of me. Accordingly, I decided to conduct all the interviews in Mandarin Chinese.

3.5.2 Description of focus group interviews

Focus group interviews were arranged with five to six participants after the EAP class, in a seminar room on campus. Each interview lasted between fifty-five and seventy minutes and was conducted in Mandarin. As mentioned in the preceding section, I developed a guide list to cover the topics I wanted to explore in the discussion and wrote them down in a piece of A4 paper. The general topics involved the participants' attitude on a variety of issues such as their perception of the factors related to the university, previous English learning experiences, individual particular learning interests, personal

educational values and beliefs, the impact of their family, current learning process, personal goal achievement and professional development plan. I did not deliberately select the members of each discussion group, and all the participations were based on students' voluntariness. The completed interviews were recorded in a digital device which could only be accessed by myself. During the interviews, I used many group probing techniques to encourage group interaction and manage group dynamics. These techniques comprise group probe and probe for diversity. Group probe refers to the situation in which the researcher looks for more information from other group members by discussing the issues or opinions raised by one participant, while probe for diversity describes the researcher's attempts to seek diversity in attitudes by asking different views from other participants (ibid.). Overall, four rounds of focus groups interview were arranged, stretching across a 10-month academic year, from October 2015 to May 2016. The data collected were transcribed and translated based on Jeffersonian Transcription (Jefferson, 1992), and were presented in Appendix A.

3.5.3 Limitations of focus group interviews

In this section, I address some of the limitations that I have encountered in the conduct of focus group interviews. One major concern with the instrument of this type, which requires the moderator's skills, is the group dynamics. As the participants of interviews were from different educational backgrounds and possess various personalities, a hierarchy seemed to develop within the focus group. Participants decided the degree of their involvement in the conversation according to their familiarity with the topic or disposition to express their views. Consequently, some students showed a sign to dominate the speech while some hold back in the conversation. Given this issue, I attempted to use group probing techniques described in the previous section to prompt output from the 'quiet listeners' in the group. Yet, I could not ensure an independent response from each participant over every topic, which is not a prime problem for research like this, with no intention to generalise the findings. At the same time, the presence of very communicative participants would direct the conversation to their preferred topics, and at times it is not easy to lead the topic back to the discussion guide. As the aim of this inquiry is to probe students' inner process and their cultural values, in this case, I would give them the freedom to develop their own agenda in the discussion. A final concern may lie in the analytical process of the interview data. Given the fact that the interviews were conducted in a different language, it is inevitable to face the problem of some loss of information in the analytical process. This problem was mitigated by a proper translation process, which is described in Chapter 5.

3.6 Questionnaire design

Questionnaires are 'any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers' (Brown, 2001: 6). The popularity of questionnaires is due to the fact that they are versatile,

and uniquely capable of gathering a large amount of information quickly in a form that is readily processable (Dörnyei, 2010; Dörnyei, 2003a; Rasinger, 2008). By administering questionnaires, researcher can spend less time to collect the responses of the participants in a structured way (Dörnyei, 2003a). The questionnaire may give three types of data about respondents (1) factual questions which examine specific facts about the respondents, such as demographic features. (2) behavioural questions which enquiry into the respondents' actions in different period and (3) attitudinal questions which are used to find out respondents' inner world (Dörnyei, 2010: 5; Dörnyei, 2003a: 8). Accordingly, two types of questionnaire are used in this research: a demographic questionnaire administered at the beginning of the fieldwork, and a closed-format attitudinal questionnaire administered at four intervals.

3.6.1 Demographic questionnaire

Demographic questionnaires were distributed to each participant shortly before his or her first focus group interview and was collected at the end of the interview. It was employed to collect descriptive data providing researchers with factors may influence a participant' response. In this study, the use of demographic questionnaires as a research instrument is determined by two reasons. First, it assists the compilation of participant profile which gives a holistic view of the data collected. A more important reason is that items (e.g. educational background of parents and siblings) in the questionnaires describe backgrounds of each participant, contributing to the analysis of motivation factors such as educational value, career path and family influence, which are depicted in the Neo-Confucian motivational construct. There are 19 items in the demographic questionnaire regarding participant's career path, educational background, English proficiency, family language learning background. The design of the items mainly consulted Wong's (2014) study. A copy of demographic questionnaire can be found in Appendix D.

One major concern with using this type of questionnaire, from both the researcher's and the participants' stances, is the confidentiality of the gathered information. As these data contain sensitive and private details about each participant, it was of vital importance to design appropriate procedures on how to store and anonymise these data to dispel the participants' misgivings about exposure of their privacy. The specific measures taken are presented in the section of ethical issues (Section 3.8).

3.6.2 Description of the attitudinal questionnaire

The primary type of questionnaire used in this research is attitudinal questionnaires. Attitudinal questions, as noted earlier, are employed to explore people's attitude, opinions, beliefs, interest and values (Dörnyei, 2007: 102). As this research aims to interpret motivational factors of a group of English learners using the Neo-Confucian construct, attitudinal questionnaires allow me to find out whether the participants had the self-cultivated needs to learn the language, whether they had the expectation or anticipation for language improvement, what kind of positive or negative language experience did they have, and whether they feel obliged to learn the language for fulfilling responsibilities in relationships

(See Section 1.5, in Chapter 1). These variables correspond to four components in the Neo-Confucian motivational constructs, Self-Cultivation, Self-Improvement, Self-Transformation and Sense of Responsibility, which therefore formulate the four subscales in the attitudinal questionnaire. A further purpose of this inquiry is to identify the temporal dynamic of this cohort's motivational process. In this regard, the questionnaire was administered repeatedly over the course of the academic year.

Given the fact that the participants were occupied with intensive schedules of their major studies, and because of the iterative process of answering the same questions, a long and complex questionnaire would lead to weariness among the participants, and thus would handicap their willingness to provide authentic responses to the relevant questions. On this account, I drafted a questionnaire with the maximum length of two A4 sheets of paper. In order to ease their burden throughout the process, I selected to write the questionnaire with close-format items, which 'do not require the respondents to produce any free writing' (ibid.). Overall, the attitudinal questionnaire is composed of twenty items presented on a Likert scale from one to five, with a short instruction on the top of items informing the participants about the purpose of this research as well as the confidentiality of the collected data.

3.6.3 Writing questionnaire items

The particular need for statistical or quantitative analysis entails a highly-organised nature of the questionnaire, which is mostly demonstrated in questionnaire item writing. Researchers using questionnaire surveys have amassed a large amount of experience and rules about designing valid questionnaire item. Yet, as Dörnyei (2007: 108) pointed out, 'item design is not a 100 per cent scientific activity because in order to write good items one also needs a certain amount of creativity and lots of common sense', and there are no swift and solid rules to avoid the potential pitfalls throughout the process. He further provided some suggestions for practising item phrasing, which include: 1) aim for short and simple items, 2) use simple and natural language and 3) avoid ambiguous or loaded words and sentences, 4) avoid double-barrelled, 5) avoid items that are likely to be answered the same way by everybody and 6) include both positively and negatively worded items (ibid.).

Concerning the content of the items, I consulted a collection of motivational questionnaires or constructs, involving Gao's (2003) attitudinal questionnaires, Gao's (2004) motivational scales, Noel's (2003) Language Learning Orientation Scales and Wong's Confucian motivational constructs (2014). As this research heavily draws from the Confucian learning philosophy, items are translated and interpreted from the Confucian structure of three principles and eight steps, identifying variables by formulating four scales: 1) Self-Cultivation, 2) Self-Improvement, 3) Self-Transformation and 4) Sense of Responsibility (Wong, 2014). It is also important to note that the introduction of this neo-Confucian philosophical constructs into L2 motivation research is still at an initial stage. In terms of items writing, I extensively adapted questions from Gao's (2003), Gao's (2004) and Noel's (2003) scales. Gao (2003) constructed a questionnaire survey investigating the English learning motivation of Chinese urban

students. The subscales of his questionnaire focus on the following aspect: learning English as a burden, learning English as a responsibility, learning English for interest, learning English for self-actualisation, and learning English for one's country (ibid.). Gao (2004) designed a questionnaire analysing motivation types of Chinese college students learning English, one of which explores the influence of their family, social and cultural background. Noel's (2003) Language Learning Orientation Scales discusses intrinsic motivations in language learning, which is often compared with Self-cultivation principles (Wong, 2014). After careful consideration and with the help of previous research studies and several revisions, the final questionnaire was worked out asking twenty closed questions from the participants. The choice of the items was based on both the interpretation of the neo-Confucian learning philosophy and motivational factors which have been discussed in the past few decades.

3.6.4 Rating scales

Questionnaire rating scales 'require the respondents to make an evaluative judgment of the target by marking one of a series of categories organised into the scale' (Dörnyei, 2003a: 37). I selected the closed-format questionnaire items as they are said to be appropriate for corroborating theories or concepts, and these concept-driven statements are well tailored for statistical analysis (Dörnyei, 2003a). I situated all the closed format questions in a Likert scale with five points for the participants to indicate their agreement. The selection of Likert scales is due to its widely application in the attitudinal research (Oppenheim, 1992: 195). The scale comprises a continuum with the degrees to which the respondents indicate their attitude to the corresponding statements, from strongly disagree to strongly agree (Dörnyei, 2003a). I assigned five points for each response option, retaining a middle category for some respondents who have difficulties in giving a clear response to some of the statements (ibid., 2003a). In this research, I used 'disagree' and 'agree' at the end of each scale, with numerical ratings from one to five. I also involved three negative statements in the questionnaire.

3.6.5 Piloting the attitudinal questionnaire

The process of piloting data collection instruments, according to Dörnyei (2007), is an integral part of the quantitative research, which can, to some extents, ensure the psychometric quality of the research. When it comes to the questionnaires, this piloting process is more prominent, as in questionnaires 'so much depends on the actual wording of the item', which requires 'field testing' (ibid.: 112). As a consequence, Dörnyei proposes a five-step process for piloting the questionnaire in varying phases, which contains 1) drawing up an item pool, 2) initial piloting of the item pool, 3) final piloting, 4) item analysis and 5) post hoc item analysis.

The pilot study of this research was carried out in the pre-sessional EAP class at Trinity College Dublin, which was in August 2015. Before the class, I sent an invitation letter to the Wechat (a Chinese networking mobile app) group of Trinity Chinese Students' Association looking for new entrants in the

pre-sessional EAP class. Seven students volunteered to participate in the pilot study. The study was arranged in the same seminar room which later was used as an interview room. I prepared a draft of the questionnaire with thirty questions. Participants were asked to go through the questions on the draft. They were also requested to reflect verbally on the clarity, understandability and any other problems which might hinder them from answering these questions.

Based on the feedback from the pilot study, I selected twenty questions for the main questionnaire and made a few adjustments to the item scales. For instance, I found students have problems in understanding to *inspire other people*. Thus, I replaced it with *to set a good example for my friends or relatives*. Similarly, I substituted the statement *I can anticipate a sense of fulfilment in language learning* with *I enjoy the feeling of accomplishing difficult exercises in English learning.* Meanwhile, comparing the participants' responses to the same item, I found a certain degree of variation among their answers. In this case, questionnaire items were informative and could be numerical analysed. I did not test the consistency of this measurement technique, as the pilot study has indicated sufficient responses from participants and variation of learning motivation was expected from students' answers over time.

3.6.6 Weaknesses of the attitudinal questionnaire

The weaknesses of employing a close-format questionnaire for motivation research were fully comprehended. First, due to the fact the questionnaire items were composed in a straightforward and simple manner, the approach is insufficient to deeply enquiry into an issue such as motivation (Moser and Kalton, 1971). This essential accessibility might also discourage the participants from spending much time and thoughts on the questionnaire and generate superficial results. In this regard, the attitudinal questionnaire in this research was not designed as a foremost and precise tool to ascertain motivational factors, but rather as a complementary technique to interpret the qualitative data as well as to note the motivational progress of the participating students over ten months.

Second, the unstable presence record also affected the validity and reliability of using such instrument. Only one student completed all four questionnaire surveys. Most students were present for at least two questionnaires, among whom, some were not present in a consecutive way (See Table 13, in Chapter four). The problem of attrition and irregular participations in such longitudinal study led to a handicap where individuals' motivational fluctuations could not be accurately identified. In response to this, I selected the responses from students who consistently participated in not only questionnaire surveys but also other data collection instruments, and presented and interpreted them as individual cases.

3.7 Potential ethical issues

This research investigates students' language learning and life experience in the social context and hence it automatically entails ethical issues. The predominantly employment of qualitative research methods

augments the influence of such issues, as they are inherently attracted to individuals' exclusive attitudes and often target sensitive or confidential matters (Punch, 2005). Hennink et al. (2010) propose five principles for ethical considerations in the conduct of research, which include informed consent, self-determination, minimisation of harm, anonymity, and confidentiality. In this inquiry, the ethical issues were carefully considered throughout the fieldwork.

Informed consent was the fundamental aspect of the conduct of the ethical research. Before the research process, I applied for and received approval from the School ethics committee. I asked and acquired the consent from both the language teacher and the relevant students to allow me to attend the class for observation. Over the course of data collection process, I followed the principle of informed consent to ensure the subject's right to freedom and self-determination. Such process was applied to four rounds of focus group interview, one demographic questionnaire survey and an attitudinal questionnaire administered at four intervals. Considering it is a longitudinal research, the participants were entitled to exercise their right to withdraw at any stage of the research.

During the participants recruitment as well as the initial stage of my in-class observation, I was confronted with the question that how much information I should share with my participants to not cause any unnatural behaviours or preconceptions in responses. Especially in the classroom in which I only focus on some Chinese students, placing excessive emphasis on my identity as a researcher or observer would result in uncomfortable feelings amongst other students, which could influence the authenticity of the language learning environment. Therefore, apart from the necessary observation, I was more engaged in my new identity in the class as a language student or a nexus between teacher and the students. At the same time, my participants were informed that I was conducting a study on L2 motivation, whereas it seemed that they did not understand what the completed project would resemble, which, to greater or lesser extent, ensured the validity of the gathered data.

As the rapport is gradually established between the researcher and the participants, it is inevitable for participants to share information that, at times, can be exceptionally sensitive. Under such circumstances, the researcher should be responsible for keeping the anonymity and minimising the potential harms. For instance, in this research, some participants had expressed their personal views about things like class settings and teaching staffs during their study at Trinity. As a consequence, I took actions to ensure the confidentiality of the data. All the hard copies of questionnaires are stored in a locked drawer at home and all the data input and analysis were completed on my password-protected PC at home. I created pseudonyms for all the participants as well as other names appeared in the transcript and thesis, and replaced some sensitive personal information with codes.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the longitudinal mixed-methods design employed for the purpose of identifying motivational factors and their temporal dynamics of a group of Chinese postgraduates

learning English at Trinity. I first presented the rationale for selecting a mixed longitudinal approach as the research method and respectively discussed general characteristics of the two approaches. Then, the focus of this chapter was shifted on the empirical design of this fieldwork, in which I described how participant observation, focus group interviews and attitudinal questionnaires were used to collect data about the participants' language learning motivation. In the next chapter, I give an account of the fieldwork in practice. I describe the attributes of the research site and the participants involved in this inquiry. I also present the application of the aforementioned data collection instruments and provide an overview of the gathered data.

Chapter 4 Fieldwork Description

4.1 Introduction

Having discussed the research method and data collection tools employed to observe language learning motivation of Chinese postgraduates in Trinity, in this chapter, I present more details on how these approaches are adopted and developed throughout the duration of the fieldwork in this longitudinal enquiry into the motivation of this cohort. Chapter 4 begins with an account of the research site, the Centre for English Language Learning and Teaching (CELLT) at Trinity, under which English for Academic Purposes (EAP) programme is set up. I introduce the programme's objectives, arrangement and the specific classes in which the research was conducted. Then I give an account of how the target participants were grouped in the EAP programme for the research. With the aid of descriptive data collected by demographic questionnaires, a learner profile is built, analysing learner's features such as gender, age, education background, employment experience, family background and English proficiency level. The remainder of this chapter describes the application of different data collection tools in the research and provides an overview of the data collected.

4.2 Centre for English Language Learning and Teaching

The Centre for English Language Learning and Teaching (CELLT), part of the School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences at Trinity College Dublin, is a centre responsible for providing English language support to Trinity international students before and during their degree programme. A further aim of the centre, seen on its website (CELLT, 2016), is to 'research, develop and share innovative international approaches to English Language Learning and Teaching'. It has evolved from Trinity's Master programme in English Language Teaching (ELT) into a world-class research centre. The centre harbours both the research function and English classes for specific purposes. Scholars and researchers in Trinity assemble in the centre exploring the theories and approaches to this field. At the same time, Trinity students who aim to improve their academic English can participate in the intensive academic language modules run by the centre.

I had chosen CELLT as the research site because, as a graduate from the ELT Master programme, I have been involved in the centre for more than twelve months and during the time I also attended their English modules. Therefore I had a good knowledge of its operations, such as its curricula and their implementation, which is beneficial to the conduction of the research. Additionally, having worked with some English teachers in the centre, I had established a good rapport with them, which helped me to access the target participants. The English for Academic Purposes (EAP) programme run by CELLT is the only university-designated English programme for Trinity students who are not English native-speakers. In other words, Chinese students in Trinity who wish to improve their English and their

academic performance are inclined to take this programme. Hence, I was assured of enough participants. In the next section, I will describe the EAP programme where these students were enrolled.

4.2.1 English for Academic Purposes

The English for Academic Purposes (EAP) programme is consists of two sessions: pre-sessional EAP Modules (summer EAP) and in-sessional EAP Modules. The pre-sessional EAP Modules run before the start of the Michaelmas term and are organised on a full-time basis for twenty hours each week. The span differs from four weeks to twelve weeks, according to varying language needs. The courses are prepared for prospective Trinity students and sometimes the general public, to improve performance in spoken and written English. The in-sessional EAP Modules take place during the academic year for registered Trinity students who need English language support during their degree programme at Trinity College Dublin. The modules comprise two parts: the EAP Modules in Michaelmas Term and Hilary Term English courses. In the Michaelmas Term, from late September to December, the EAP classes are available on a weekly basis for two hours each week. There are two sessions of classes held each day, from Monday to Friday. Students can choose preferred class schedule (Table 6).

Time	**Venue**
Monday 5-7 pm	Arts Building
Monday 7-9 pm	Arts Building
Tuesday 6-8 pm	Arts Building
Tuesday 7-9 pm	Arts Building
Wednesday 6-8 pm	South Leinster St.
Wednesday 7-9 pm	Arts Building
Thursday 6-8 pm	Arts Building
Thursday 7-9 pm	Arts Building
Friday 2-4 pm	South Leinster St.
Friday 4-6 pm	7 South Leinster St., 206

Table 6 EAP class schedule in Michaelmas Term

While during the Hilary Term, from January to April, various English courses are tailored for specific disciplines and learners who need to improve particular language skills. An overview of these courses is shown below (Table 7).

Time	Class	Venue
Monday 5-7 pm	Academic Writing	Arts Building
Monday 7-9 pm	English for Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM)	Arts Building
Tuesday 6-8 pm	Academic Writing	Arts Building
Tuesday 7-9 pm	English for Business	Arts Building
Wednesday 6-8 pm	English for Health Sciences	South Leinster St.
Wednesday 7-9 pm	English for Humanities and Social Sciences	Arts Building
Thursday 6-8 pm	Oral Fluency	Arts Building
Thursday 7-9 pm	English for Academic Purposes 101	Arts Building
Friday 2-4 pm	Academic Writing	South Leinster St.
Friday 4-6 pm	Oral Fluency	South Leinster St.

Table 7 Overview of Hilary Term English courses

The EAP programme adopts a task-based language learning approach to create a learner-centred environment in which students are accountable to their own English learning process. Teachers play a role as 'facilitator', framing the plans before the class and responding to students' linguistic and cultural questions in the class. Students are encouraged to raise their language awareness through completing various academic tasks using English. The purpose of this is to motivate students in their English learning and help them reach a deeper sense of understanding. Apart from that, by introducing the notion of self-evaluation, the EAP programme highly values students' reflection on English learning and encourages them to become autonomous language learners.

4.2.2 School premises and site location

The research was conducted at two sites on opposites sides of Nassau Street in Dublin, between the main university campus and the building where CELLT is located on South Leinster Street. In Michaelmas Term, every Thursday I went to the Arts Building in the main campus for EAP class observation, the premises for housing the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences which contains lecture theatres, classrooms, administration and social facilities for Trinity staff and students. It locates on the south of Trinity College along Nassau Street and is also known for its uninviting exteriors and labyrinthine structure inside. There are six floors in the building, connected by four stairwells. Rooms on each floor are organised in clusters, with departmental rooms and large classrooms on the street sides and corridors,

toilets and other utilities placed in the centre. Many rooms in the premises are left windowless, and as a result, little natural light can be spotted in the entire building. As one of the participants stated in the interview:

> Lan: Arts Building…is really like a maze. In the first few week, I was always late for classes simply because I can't find the way! And each room, with the shape of the poured concrete ceilings, resembles padded cells in an asylum. And we had EAP class in the evening hours…It was always like it's raining outside and you could easily get tired sitting inside for twenty minutes! (F2:416)[3]

A number of rooms in the building are used for EAP teaching at different times. The one I always visited is on the third floor, to the right of the stairwell beside Lecky Library. It can accommodate about twenty-five people and is equipped with electronic devices such as computer and wall screen projector. There are a blackboard and a plastic table at the entrance of the room, surrounded by some writing tablet chairs. A small window can be found at the furthest end and there is no air conditioning in the room. Owing to the fact that the space functions as lecture rooms for other disciplines, items such as tables and chairs may be reallocated each day. For the same reason, some English classes are arranged in my second research site.

I spent most Friday afternoons in South Leinster Street over the course of the fieldwork. It is located to the south of the main campus with a two-minute walk from it. The premises houses Department of Clinical Speech and Language Studies, the Centre for Deaf Studies, Student Counselling Service, Career Advisory Service and offices for doctoral research. The facilities are much modernised compared with those in the Arts Building. All the English classes in this building are set up in the seminar room on the third floor, which is to the left of the corridor in front of the lift. Wooden folding tables are placed in the centre of the room, with chairs on the sides. The room is also equipped with whiteboards, an individual computer and a screen projector. There are large windows on one side of the room, providing much better natural light. A second advantage is the central heating and air conditioning, making the room suitable for learnings in all seasons. However, the room can only accommodate up to fifteen people and is fully occupied by furniture. Therefore, there is not sufficient space for class activities, which was also mentioned in one participant's interview:

> Zhuan: The new room is brilliant, very comfortable (.) in all aspects. I really think it is much better than the room we used before. One thing probably is, the room is a little bit small. Sometimes when we had group work, it's not very convenient for us to move around. But it is fine for me. (F4:346)

4.3 Fieldwork at EAP classes

As is noted in the earlier chapter, I adopted participant observation as a major instrument in my fieldwork and had decided to conduct longitudinal research focusing on Chinese students in EAP classes. After

[3] The abbreviations used for transcripts in this research is explained as follows: F1, F2, F3, F4 = Focus group 1-4
F2: 416 = Focus group interview 2, line 416

discussing my research plan with the English teacher in charge of the appropriate classes and after obtaining approval from the Research Ethics Committee (See Section 3.7, in Chapter three), I was given permission to commence research and began to attend the classes in late September 2015. I worked as a role of 'assistant /student' in the class, interacting with the assigned students for different language tasks. In the meantime, my primary goal was to observe Chinese students' English learning behaviours in the class and to collect their reflections on the language learning process in the focus groups that ensued.

The fieldwork spanned nine months organised into two main sessions which roughly corresponded to the Michaelmas and Hilary terms. The first session was carried out between September 2015 and December 2016. During the time, I participated in two EAP classes, one on Thursday evening and the other on Friday afternoon. The second session was from January to May. In this session, I followed the Academic Writing class on Friday afternoon. In the next section, I will explain why these classes were chosen and how the target group emerged.

4.3.1 Selection of participants

Given the research questions, I sought registered Chinese postgraduate students taking English courses at Trinity College. Based on this criterion, the selection of the classes and participants had recourse to 'gatekeepers' and 'informal network' strategies (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2010: 91). Through the then Director of CELLT, I consulted with the EAP teacher, Bill, to make sure I could observe as many Chinese students as possible. Meanwhile, I used my personal connections with new Chinese entrants in Trinity who enrolled in CELLT's courses, inviting them to participate in the research. The recruitment should not be regarded as a sampling process inasmuch as the students chosen are not representatives of the population of any cohort. In effect, the focus group was selected on the basis of students' cooperation as well as their class attendance.

Longitudinal research is inevitably confronted with the problem of attrition (Gustavson, von Soest, Karevold and Røysamb, 2012: 918), which is especially the case in a non-credit bearing module for English learners in this research. Students were absent from classes for many reasons, including tight schedules, illness, family issues, personal activities and even the weather. A more difficult situation to work with this programme is that only limited number EAP classes are provided weekly and there is an unavoidable clash. Students were allocated to different classes based on their preferences and pragmatically they are allowed to switch the class for proper reasons. Accordingly, it became impossible to make an ongoing observation of a fixed group of students. Apart from that, due to the distinctiveness of this study, only Chinese students were sought in the class and there is no class in particular for Chinese learners. All these factors exerted influences on the process of participant selection.

Despite these challenges, a group of eleven students emerged from the population of the EAP classes and helped me with the data collection over a nine-month period. In the end, I participated in three

different classes, conducting four rounds of focus group discussion as well as administering questionnaires at four intervals.

4.3.2 Composition of the target group

The fieldwork happened during the academic year from September 2015 to May 2016. As has been noted, I spent the Michaelmas Term with Thursday and Friday EAP class, and the Hilary Term in Friday afternoon's Academic writing class.

In August 2015, I sent an invitation and information letter to a Wechat (a Chinese networking mobile app) group called English Language Teaching Trinity College Dublin seeking new entrants of the forthcoming EAP class. The same invitation and information letter was later distributed through group members' personal networks. In the weeks thereafter, three students volunteered to participate in the study: Qi, Sa and Yi. I also had a discussion with the EAP teacher, Bill, who suggested me commencing the class observation on Thursday evening as well as Friday afternoon, as those classes could guarantee a larger population of Chinese students. Amongst them, excluding the aforementioned three students, five Chinese students (Li, Shi, Yu, Zhi, and Zhuan) joined this research. During the term, two students (Lan and Xu) from other classes moved to Thursday class and were interested in the project. These ten students formed the target group in the first term and their participation was largely determined by their frequent appearances in my class observation. In the second term, most of the students who worked with me before continued their learning on Friday's writing class, with Lan, Shi and Xu leaving or moving up to different classes. They were no longer observed in their new classes, but they kept participating in focus group interviews and questionnaire surveys. At the same time, a new student (Jun) joined the research project.

There were other students in EAP classes in the first term who completed the questionnaires. They were not regarded as the 'core subjects' due to their sporadic attendance on the day I was in the class or collecting other data. Albeit these students were mentioned in the field note, their recorded data will not be processed in the analysis later. A table of the involved students is provided below, demonstrating class schedules as well as their participation. The '✓' is used to indicate student's presence during the time I was conducting class observation. Overall, seven students enrolled in both sessions in the fieldwork.

Students	Sep-Dec 2015 Thursday 7-9 pm	Sep-Dec 2015 Friday 2-4 pm	Jan-Apr 2016 Friday 2-4 pm
Jun			✓
Lan	✓		
Li		✓	✓
Qi		✓	✓
Sa		✓	✓
Shi		✓	
Xu	✓		
Yu	✓		✓
Yi	✓		✓
Zhi	✓		✓
Zhuan		✓	✓

Table 8 Participants involved in the research

In terms of the length of this fieldwork, seven students (Li, Qi, Sa, Yu, Yi, Zhi, Zhuan) participated in a nine-month class observation and four students (Jun, Lan, Shi and Xu) were present for four months.

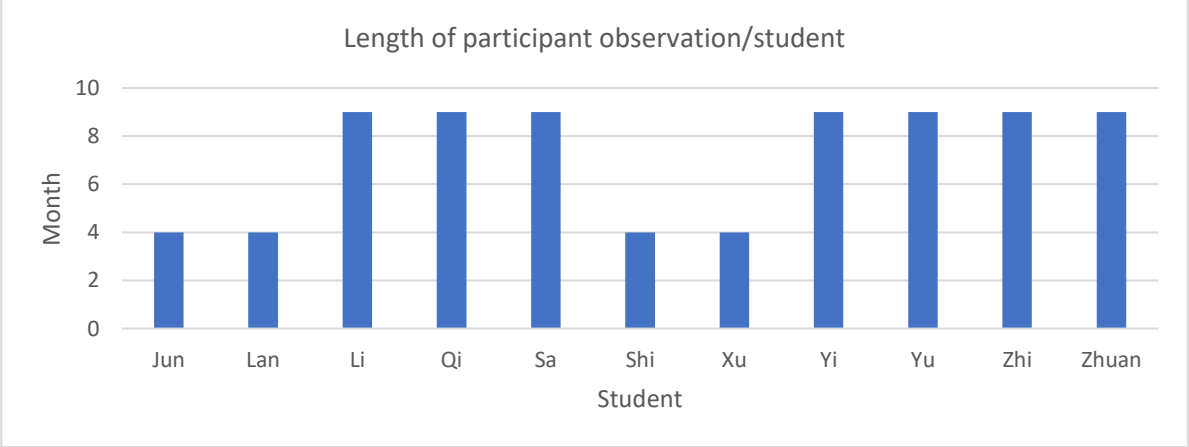


Figure 7 Length of participant observation/student

4.4 Profile of participants

This section outlines some features of the participants in this research. While the participants selected cannot represent the overall population of EAP classes or the Chinese-born English learners, the group indeed show a reflection of some characteristics amongst Chinese postgraduate students taking formal English classes in high education in Ireland.

4.4.1 Gender, age and employment background

Of the eleven participants, female students outnumbered male by ten to one. By all accounts, only two male Chinese students turned up to the EAP classes over the course of a nine-month observation. The difference between the number of male and female student is in accordance with the report released by Ministry of Education of People' Republic of China (MOE of PRC). In 2014, amongst the 460 thousand Chinese students studying abroad, female students were in the majority. In terms of the Chinese students studying in the UK and Ireland, female students predominate in number, with 63% to 37% (MOE of PRC, 2015). The report also indicated that the main part of these students was born after 1990, with 37% born between 1990 and 1994 and 25% born after 1995 (ibid.). In this research, nine participants fall into this range and two students (Li and Zhi) were aged between 25 and 30. Seven participants were recent graduates before enrolling in the Master programme. Jun, Yu and Zhuan had worked for one or two years at the time of data collection. Li had the richest employment experience in the group, with a working experience of five years in the banking system.

4.4.2 Educational background

All the participants had accomplished their undergraduate study in China. In spite of that, heterogeneity can still be perceived on their research background. Before they came to Trinity, four out of eleven participants (Sa, Xu, Yu and Yi) studied English major at their home university. Two students (Qi and Shi) completed a degree in Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (TCFL). The remainder of the group had a background in Chinese, Computer Science, Environmental Engineering, Finance and Law. Most students remained with their previous or similar discipline at Trinity, whereas Zhuan changed her major from Law to ELT. It is also worth noting that amongst students involved in the research, Zhi was the only one whose area is not associated with the humanities and social sciences.

Name	Gender	Age range	Employment experience	Background Major	Major in Trinity
Jun	F	21-25	1-2 years	Finance	Business & management
Lan	F	21-25	N/A	Chinese	Comparative literature
Li	F	26-30	3-5 years	Computer Science	Linguistics
Qi	F	21-25	N/A	TCFL	Applied Linguistics
Sa	F	21-25	N/A	English	ELT
Shi	F	21-25	N/A	TCFL	Applied Linguistics
Xu	F	21-25	N/A	English	Comparative literature
Yu	F	21-25	1-2 years	English	Applied Linguistics
Yi	F	21-25	N/A	English	ELT
Zhi	M	26-30	N/A	Environment Engineering	Environment Engineering
Zhuan	F	21-25	1-2 years	Law	ELT

Table 9 Participants' background information

4.4.3 English learning experience and English proficiency

As can be seen in the table below (Table 10), all participants in the study had a prolonged period of English learning before coming to Ireland, varying from 12 to 17 years. In addition, they all experienced English learning in their home university in China, where they completed various English proficiency tests.

In respect of their English proficiency level, I consulted three different instruments by asking the participants to write down their IELTS result, English proficiency test taken in their Chinese university and the corresponding level, as well as their estimated common European language proficiency levels based on the CEFR[4] by using a self-assessment exercise. The gathered information shows an obvious diversity between the first two instruments. Five of the group achieved an IELTS band 6.5 and four scored 7.0. Xu and Yu performed best in the group, with an IELTS band 7.5. As for college English proficiency test in China, five students participated in the Test for English Major (TEM)[5] and the other six took the College English Test (CET)[6]. All participants except Yi were granted the highest level in their test. Interestingly, despite the difference reflected in IELTS and college English tests, nine students considered their English level as B2. Only Xu and Zhi described their proficiency level differently, with C1 and B1 respectively.

Name	Years of learning English	IELTS result	College English level in China	CEFR English proficiency level
Jun	17	6.5	CET 6	B2
Lan	15	7.0	CET 6	B2
Li	18	7.0	CET 6	B2
Qi	15	7.0	TEM 8	B2
Sa	15	6.5	TEM 8	B2
Shi	15	7.0	CET 6	B2
Xu	14	7.5	TEM 8	C1
Yu	17	7.5	TEM 8	B2
Yi	12	6.5	TEM 4	B2
Zhi	13	6.5	CET 6	B1
Zhuan	16	6.5	CET 6	B2

Table 10 Participants' English learning experience and English proficiency

[4] CEFR refers to *The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* developed by the Council of Europe in 2001, which is regarded as an international standard to indicate and benchmark language ability. It defined language proficiency in six levels: A1 and A2, B1 and B2, C1 and C2 (Council of Europe, 2001).
[5]TEM refers to Test for English Major, which includes TEM 4 and TEM 8. It is set up for students in English Majors only. However, non-English major students in the university of foreign languages are allowed to participate in TEM if their CET 6 score exceed 600.
[6] CET refers to College English Test, which includes CET 4 and CET 6. It is a national English as a foreign language test in the People's Republic of China, which examines the English proficiency of undergraduate and postgraduate students in China.

4.4.4 Family English learning background

Information about participants' family members as well as their English learning was also collected, to have a glimpse of any possible family influence on participants' English learning activities. Most of the participants were the only child in their family, apart from Sa, Shi and Yi who all had a younger brother studying in senior high school. Only Zhi was married in the group when I started the fieldwork. His wife, mentioned in the field note, was also a postgraduate student at Trinity and was occasionally present in the class I observed in Hilary Term. Four of the group believed that none of their parents had English learning experience. Five described that either their mother or father was somehow involved in the learning and only two students stated that both of their parents had learned English. Concerning their access to the English learning, amongst the parents presumed to have learned English, four received a formal English training in the college and others had a basic understanding of language through high school English class or self-study. Given these points, their English level was evaluated as 'very basic' by most participants.

To sum up, notwithstanding the individual differences in educational background, the group of eleven participants had possessed some common characteristics. Most participants were females and were in their early twenties. All had received formal English education for rather long periods of time and reached similar proficiency level. Almost all the participants were unmarried and most of their parents had no or very few English learning experience.

4.5 Overview of data collected in the programme

Having looked into the composition of the group as well as some characteristics of the participants, this section focuses on how different data collection tools were implemented in the fieldwork. A more detailed description of the data collected is provided in this section. It should be noted that not all the eleven participants were involved over the course of the data collection, and students participating in different data collecting activities somewhat varied from time to time.

4.5.1 Participant observation

Two types of note-taking were employed to write the observations, field notes during the observation and field diary after it. The former was used to record multiple elements in the class such as place (setting and activities), people (interaction) and events, while the latter recorded my own perceptions and interpretation of what I had observed, including my hunches, feelings and personal opinions. These interpretations were compared to data gathered from focus group interviews with the students which constantly provided narrations of the same circumstances. All the notes were arranged in a chronological order and were later indexed by a short identifying description for the purpose of coding and analysis (Appendix A). It should be noted that apart from these tangible data, there were also intangible data

resulting from my formal or informal interactions with the participants. The acquaintances established through these interactions provided an insight into their language learning motivation, which could hardly be recorded. In addition to the field notes kept as a major instrument for participant observation, I also collected supplementary data during my presence in the class, which includes lesson handouts, two writing samples from Sa and Yi and class exercise from most of the participants. All these data were adopted for a critical and reflective examination of notes written down in the observation.

4.5.2 Focus group interviews

Four rounds of focus groups interview were arranged with small groups of five to six students, stretching across a 10-month academic year, from October 2015 to May 2016. The information about participants in each interview, date and duration is given in the table below (Table 11). All focus groups were conducted in the same seminar room attached to the Arts Building at Trinity. Each interview approximately lasted for an hour, was audio recorded, and was conducted in Mandarin.

Interview date	**Interview 1 9 Oct 2015**	**Interview 2 15 Dec 2015**	**Interview 3 15 Feb 2016**	**Interview 4 13 May 2016**
Duration of interview	60 minutes	65 minutes	55 minutes	70 minutes
Participants	Qi, Shi, Yi, Yu, Zhuan	Lan, Li, Sa, Xu, Zhi	Jun, Qi, Sa, Yi, Zhi	Lan, Li, Xu, Yu, Qi, Zhuan

Table 11 Students participated in focus group interviews

The purpose of the focus group interview was to probe learners' internal motivational process which could not be directly observed in the class. Students were situated in the centre of the group providing uncovering facets of their English learning experience, as well as sharing their personal views in answer to the research issues. I developed a focus group guide to explore participants' attitude on an array of topics, including their perception of the factors related to the university, previous English learning experiences, individual particular learning interests, personal educational values and beliefs, the impact of their family, current learning process, personal goal achievement and professional development plan.

Each focus group was structured around different types of questions including introduction, opening questions, transition questions and key questions. During the introduction, participants were informed of the purpose of the research as well as ethical issues. As the interview proceeded, I encouraged participants to develop the topic by asking transitional questions and using a range of probing techniques, such as group probe and probe for diversity (Section 3.5.2, in Chapter Three). The use of these techniques was to keep the flow of the talk and to guarantee each participant had an opportunity to respond to the topic. The topics discussed in four focus groups varied depending on the group formation on the day I conducted the interview. A list of general topics discussed in four interviews is given below.

	Interview 1	Interview 2	Interview 3	Interview 4
Topics Discussed	Impressions of Trinity Reasons for studying in Ireland Life in Ireland First contact with English College English learning Learning objectives Family influence Enjoyment of learning English Impressive experiences related to English Cultural difference Reasons for attending EAP class Class setting Satisfaction of EAP class Major study Future plans	Holiday plan Impressions of Ireland Reasons for studying in Trinity Years of English learning Reasons for choosing to learn English Learning experience College English Enjoyment of learning English Learning objectives Family impact Reasons for attending EAP class Evaluation on EAP class Major study Learning progress Future plans	Essay writing Reflection on learning Progress in major learning English improvement Writing class Reason to join writing class Goals and expectation Enjoyment of English learning Challenges in learning Personality Family issues Future plans Life in Ireland Anecdotes in Ireland	Major study Making progress Lifelong learning Life in Ireland Good and bad experience English skills Difficulties Writing class Enjoyment of English learning Family Motivation Personal interest Staying in Ireland Job hunting

Table 12 Topics discussed in interviews

4.5.3 Attitudinal questionnaires

An attitudinal questionnaire was designed using closed-format questions to pinpoint a temporal dynamic of participants' motivational process throughout the duration of their English learning at Trinity. The drafting and piloting of the questionnaire are elaborated in Chapter Three. It should be noted that data collected through this instrument were not viewed as 'discrete bodies' from other data. In other words, the result from questionnaire survey was used to translate and triangulate qualitative data gathered from observations and interviews. A copy of the attitudinal questionnaire is attached in Appendix (Appendix C).

The questionnaire consisted of four sections which were compatible with four components in the Neo-Confucian Construct: Self-Cultivation, Self-Improvement, Self-Transformation and Sense of Responsibility. Self-Cultivation contained questions of language interest and passion of language related knowledge. Self-Improvement focused on language confidence and learners' perception of language improvement. Self-Transformation was further broken down into learners' educational value as well as their positive and negative English experience. The last one, Sense of Responsibility explored family influences and how would they use the language in the future.

Specifically, the ***Self-Cultivation*** subscale was assessed by five items: a) 'I feel learning English is interesting'; b) 'I find learning English is useless to a growing understanding of my major subject' (R); c) 'I think English learning is a lifelong learning process'; d) 'I enjoy the feeling of acquiring knowledge about English culture and society' and e)'I learn English because I want to be able to read the English written context'. (R) was used indicating negative statements in the questionnaire which were reversed in percentage calculating.

The ***Self-Improvement*** subscale was measured by five items: a) 'I can feel my English improved during the learning'; b) 'I want to improve my English-speaking skills'; c) 'I enjoy the feeling of accomplishing difficult exercises in English learning'; d) 'I am sure that I will be able to learn English well' and e) 'I want to improve my English writing ability'.

The ***Self-Transformation*** subscale was measured by: a) 'I feel ashamed if I could not speak good English in front of my classmates and friends in Ireland'; b) I do not think it is necessary to learn English to be a well-educated person' (R); c) 'I learn English because other people will respect me more if I can speak a fluent English'; d) 'Learning English had a great influence on my life'; e) 'I am determined to improve my English because of the bad experiences on previous English learning'.

The ***Sense of Responsibility*** subscale was evaluated by: a) 'I learn English because I have the impression that it is expected of me'; b) 'I learn English in order to find a more prestigious job later on'; c) 'I have to learn English for exams and assignments'; d) 'My parents want me to learn English' and e) 'I learn English because I want to set a good example for my friends and relatives'.

The attitudinal questionnaires were administrated four times at regular intervals during the academic year. All the eleven students in the group participated in at least two rounds of the questionnaire survey. Among them, six students completed three questionnaires: Li, Sa, Xu, Yu, Yi, and Zhi. Only Qi completed all four rounds of questionnaire survey.

Student	Q1 16 Oct, 2015	Q2 11 Dec, 2015	Q3 19 Feb, 2016	Q4 8 April, 2016
Jun			•	•
Lan		•		•
Li	•	•	•	
Qi	•	•	•	•
Sa	•		•	•
Shi	•	•		
Xu		•	•	•
Yu		•	•	•
Yi	•	•	•	
Zhi	•	•	•	
Zhuan	•	•		

Table 13 Students participated in questionnaires

4.5.4 Data collected through attitudinal questionnaires

This section provides a comprehensive description of the data collected through attitudinal questionnaires administered at four intervals throughout the academic year. Due to the small sample size, the current study does not fit for using inferential statistical techniques, as the small data set would not meet the requirement or assumption of normal distribution. Tabular forms are applied to demonstrate the result of each questionnaire in which, scores are calculated in percentage form and figures after the decimal point were rounded. As mentioned in the questionnaire design, there are twenty questions in total and each scale is assigned a number from one to five, leaving a total score of 100. Two negative items have been reversed in adding the numbers. Figure 8 sketches out response items involved in each subscale.

Questionnaire Subscales:

(1) *Self-Cultivation* (five items: 1, 3, 16, 18 and 19)

(2) *Self-Improvement* (five items: 6, 11, 13, 14 and 17)

(3) *Self-Transformation* (five items: 2, 4, 9, 15, and 20)

(4) *Sense of Responsibility* (five items: 5, 7, 8, 10 and 12)

Figure 8 Attitudinal questionnaire subscales

4.5.5 Questionnaire 1

The first questionnaire was distributed on 16th October 2015. The students participated in the survey have been studied in EAP classes for four or five weeks. Seven students completed the questionnaire: Li, Qi, Sa, Shi, Yi, Zhi and Zhuan.

Qu. No	& Subscale	statement	Li	Qi	Sa	Shi	Yi	Zhi	Zhuan
1	1	I feel learning English is interresting	4	4	5	3	2	3	3
2	3	I feel ashamed if I couldn't speak good English in front of my classmates and friends in Ireland	3	4	4	4	5	4	4
3	1	I find learning English is useless to a growing understanding of my major subject	4	4	4	4	5	5	4
4	3	I do not think it is necessary to learn English to be a well-educated person	4	4	4	5	4	3	4
5	4	I learn English because I have the impression that it is expected of me	3	4	3	4	3	3	4
6	2	I can feel my English improved during the learning	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
7	4	I learn English in order to find a more prestigious job later on	4	3	3	4	3	3	4
8	4	I have to learn English for exams and assignments	3	3	4	4	4	3	4
9	3	I learn English because people will respect me more if I can speak a fluent English	4	3	3	3	3	3	4
10	4	My parents want me to learn English	3	3	4	5	5	2	3
11	2	I want to improve my English-speaking skills	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
12	4	I learn English because I want to set a good example for my friends and relatives	4	2	4	4	5	3	2
13	2	I enjoy the feeling of accomplishing difficult exercises in English learning	4	4	4	4	3	4	3
14	2	I am sure that I will be able to learn English well.	4	4	4	3	3	4	3
15	3	Learning English had a great influence on my life	3	4	4	3	2	2	4
16	1	I think English learning is a lifelong learning process	3	4	4	4	4	4	5
17	2	I want to improve my English wiriting ability	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
18	1	I enjoy the feeling of acquiring knowledge about English culture and society	4	4	5	4	4	4	5
19	1	I learn English because I want to be able to read the English written context	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
20	3	I am detemined to improve my English due to the bad experiences on previous learning	3	2	2	3	5	4	2
		Total score	**75**	**74**	**79**	**79**	**78**	**72**	**76**

Table 14 Results from Questionnaire 1

With regard to the total score, Zhi scored 72%; Qi scored 74%; Li scored 75%; Zhuan scored 76%; Yi scored 78%; Sa and Shi both scored 79%. The highest score was from Sa and Shi (79%) and the lowest was from Zhi (72%). The mean total of the seven respondents was 76%. The respondents were giving similar views on most statements in the questionnaire. Among those, four statements prompted a unanimous agreement: Item 6 *I can feel my English improved during the learning* and item 19 *I learn English because I want to be able to read the English written context* obtained score of four from each participant, while item 11 *I want to improve my English-speaking skills* and item 17 *I want to improve my English ability* were given the maximum score of five.

Significant disagreements were found in item 1, item 15 and item 20. Sa expressed a very strong interest in English learning, whereas three students (Shi, Zhi and Zhuan) gave a neutral score of three and Yi described English learning as somewhat boring (item1). Qi, Sa and Zhuan believed that English learning had somehow influenced their lives. This opinion was opposed by Yi and Zhi (item 15). In terms of their previous English learning (item 20), both Yi and Zhi admitted that they had bad experiences of learning English which inspired them to improve their English, while others disagreed with the statement.

When we focus on four subscales, there was a small gap between the ratings from each student in subscales of Self-Cultivation, Self-Improvement and Self-Transformation. All student seemed to have a stronger motivation related to Self-Improvement. A variation was perceived in scores under the subscale of Sense of responsibility, with the highest score 84% (Shi) and lowest 56% (Zhi), which indicated that students discerned different levels of family influence on their English learning and they held dissimilar stance on the future use of the language. Turning to the individual result, Yi scored consistently in all four subscales (76%, 80%, 76%, 80%), whereas Zhi demonstrated a diversity in each motivational scale, scoring 88% in Self-Improvement and 56% in Sense of responsibility.

		Li	Qi	Sa	Shi	Yi	Zhi	Zhuan
1	Self-Cultivation	76%	80%	88%	76%	76%	80%	84%
2	Self-Improvement	88%	88%	88%	84%	80%	88%	80%
3	Self-Transformation	68%	68%	68%	72%	76%	64%	72%
4	Sense of Responsibility	68%	60%	72%	84%	80%	56%	68%

Table 15 Subscale scores from questionnaire 1

4.5.6 Questionnaire 2

The second questionnaire survey took place on 11th December 2015. It was almost at the end of the Michaelmas Term and students had been stayed in EAP classes for at least ten weeks. Nine students completed the questionnaire this time. Their overall scores were shown below: Lan scored 70%; Qi scored 73%; Yu scored 76%; Shi and Zhuan scored 77%; Xu scored 78%; Li and Zhi scored 79%; Yi scored the highest percentage, with 85%.

Qu. No	Subscale	statement	Lan	Li	Qi	Shi	Xu	Yi	Yu	Zhi	Zhuan
1	1	I feel learning English is interresting	4	4	4	3	4	4	5	4	4
2	3	I feel ashamed if I couldn't speak good English in front of my classmates and friends in Ireland	3	4	3	4	3	5	4	2	3
3	1	I find learning English is useless to a growing understanding of my major subject	4	5	4	5	5	5	4	5	4
4	3	I do not think it is necessary to learn English to be a well-educated person	2	3	4	4	4	4	4	3	3
5	4	I learn English because I have the impression that it is expected of me	3	3	3	4	3	4	4	3	4
6	2	I can feel my English improved during the learning	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
7	4	I learn English in order to find a more prestigious job later on	3	3	4	4	4	3	3	3	4
8	4	I have to learn English for exams and assignments	4	4	3	4	4	5	3	4	4
9	3	I learn English because people will respect me more if I can speak a fluent English	2	4	3	3	3	3	4	4	4
10	4	My parents want me to learn English	2	3	3	4	4	5	3	3	3
11	2	I want to improve my English-speaking skills	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5
12	4	I learn English because I want to set a good example for my friends and relatives	2	3	2	4	2	5	3	2	2
13	2	I enjoy the feeling of accomplishing difficult exercises in English learning	4	4	4	4	4	5	4	5	4
14	2	I am sure that I will be able to learn English well.	4	4	4	4	5	4	4	5	4
15	3	Learning English had a great influence on my life	4	4	4	3	4	3	4	4	4
16	1	I think English learning is a lifelong learning process	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
17	2	I want to improve my English wiriting ability	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
18	1	I enjoy the feeling of acquiring knowledge about English culture and society	4	5	4	4	5	4	4	5	5
19	1	I learn English because I want to be able to read the English written context	5	4	4	3	5	4	4	5	4
20	3	I am detemined to improve my English due to the bad experiences on previous learning	2	4	2	2	2	4	1	4	3
		Total score	**70**	**79**	**73**	**77**	**78**	**85**	**76**	**79**	**77**

Table 16 Results from questionnaire 2

Concerning the evaluation of each item, a unanimous agreement was reached on three statements: All participants gave the maximum score to the statement *I want to improve my English writing ability* (item 17), and gave the second highest score to the statement:

- (6) *I can feel my English improved during the learning*
- (16) *I think English learning is a lifelong learning process*

Apart from that, there was no apparent clash of views amongst the participants on some statements including:

- (1) *I feel learning English is very interesting*
- (3) *I find learning English is useless to a growing understanding of my major subject*
- (11) *I want to improve my English-speaking skills*

- (13) *I enjoy the feeling of accomplishing difficult exercises I English learning*
- (14) *I am sure I will be able to learn English well*
- (15) *Learning English had a great influence on my life*
- (18) *I enjoy the feeling of acquiring knowledge about English culture and society*

In terms of the rating across four subscales, students gave yet relatively high scores to the Self-Improvement, with seven students scoring 88%. The second highest score came from Self-Cultivation, with a mean total of 85%. Disagreements were manifested in the rating of items associated with Self-Transformation as well as Sense of Responsibility, with a disparity of 24% and 32% respectively in percentage.

		Lan	Li	Qi	Shi	Xu	Yi	Yu	Zhi	Zhuan
1	Self-Cultivation	84%	88%	80%	76%	92%	84%	84%	92%	84%
2	Self-Improvement	88%	88%	88%	88%	88%	92%	88%	96%	88%
3	Self-Transformation	52%	76%	64%	64%	64%	76%	72%	68%	68%
4	Sense of Responsibility	56%	64%	60%	80%	68%	88%	72%	60%	68%

Table 17 Subscale scores from questionnaire 2

4.5.7 Questionnaire 3

The third questionnaire was administered one month after the beginning of the Hilary Term, on 19th February 2016. There were eight participants in this survey. Among them, Xu had left the class I observed and Jun was the new entrant of the group in this term. The overall scores were presented as follows: Li, 76%; Xu, 77%; Jun, 81%; Qi, 82%; Sa, 82%; Yi, 83%; Yu, 84%; Zhi, 87%.

As is illustrated in Table 18, the overall scores were noticeably higher than those in the first two questionnaires, with a mean total score 82%. Six out of eight participants scored over 80% and the highest score came to 87% (Zhi). There were assorted responses for most items excepting *Learning English had a great influence on my life* (item 15), which all students gave a score of four, and *I want to improve my English writing ability* (item 17), winning the maximums score from all participants. Some scores in the questionnaire indicate explicit individual differences: Li gave a negative response to the statement *I feel learning English is interesting* (item 1), while all other students held an opposite attitude. Only Yi and Zhi agreed that they could influence other people by learning English well (item 12).

Qu. No	& Subscale	statement	Jun	Li	Qi	Sa	Xu	Yi	Yu	Zhi
1	1	I feel learning English is interresting	4	2	5	5	4	4	5	5
2	3	I feel ashamed if I couldn't speak good English in front of my classmates and friends in Ireland	4	3	4	4	4	5	5	3
3	1	I find learning English is useless to a growing understanding of my major subject	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	4
4	3	I do not think it is necessary to learn English to be a well-educated person	4	3	3	4	5	4	4	4
5	4	I learn English because I have the impression that it is expected of me	4	3	4	4	3	4	4	4
6	2	I can feel my English improved during the learning	4	5	5	4	4	4	5	5
7	4	I learn English in order to find a more prestigious job later on	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4
8	4	I have to learn English for exams and assignments	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4
9	3	I learn English because people will respect me more if I can speak a fluent English	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4
10	4	My parents want me to learn English	4	3	3	2	3	4	3	3
11	2	I want to improve my English-speaking skills	5	4	5	5	4	5	5	5
12	4	I learn English because I want to set a good example for my friends and relatives	2	3	2	3	2	4	2	4
13	2	I enjoy the feeling of accomplishing difficult exercises in English learning	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	5
14	2	I am sure that I will be able to learn English well.	4	4	5	4	5	4	5	5
15	3	Learning English had a great influence on my life	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
16	1	I think English learning is a lifelong learning process	4	5	5	4	4	5	5	5
17	2	I want to improve my English wiriting ability	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
18	1	I enjoy the feeling of acquiring knowledge about English culture and society	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5
19	1	I learn English because I want to be able to read the English written context	5	3	3	4	3	4	4	5
20	3	I am detemined to improve my English due to the bad experiences on previous learning	3	4	3	4	2	4	2	4
		Total score	**81**	**76**	**82**	**82**	**77**	**83**	**84**	**87**

Table 18 Results from questionnaire 3

In terms of subscales representing different motivational factors, Yu and Zhi scored the highest in percentage on Self-Cultivation (96%), and Li gave the lowest with 76%. All students scored over 88% on Self-Improvement. Amongst them, Qi and Zhi stood out from others with 100%. The scores on Self-Transformation are rather homogeneous, ranging from 72% to 80%. Compared with other three subscales, Sense of Responsibility accumulated most lower scores, varying from 60% to 76%.

		Jun	Li	Qi	Sa	Xu	Yi	Yu	Zhi
1	Self-Cultivation	88%	76%	88%	92%	84%	88%	96%	96%
2	Self-Improvement	88%	88%	100%	88%	88%	88%	96%	100%
3	Self-Transformation	76%	72%	72%	80%	76%	80%	76%	76%
4	Sense of Responsibility	72%	68%	68%	68%	60%	76%	68%	76%

Table 19 Subscale scores from questionnaire 3

4.5.8 Questionnaire 4

The last questionnaire was administered on 8th April 2016. Six students engaged in this study: Jun, Lan, Qi, Sa, Xu and Yu. Apart from Lan and Xu who had ceased attending the English class in Hilary Term, all the students had completed a three-month study with Bill. The total scores were: Xu, 74%; Lan, 77%; Qi: 81%; Jun, 82%; Sa, 82%; Yu, 82%.

All respondents strongly agreed with the statement *I enjoy the feeling of acquiring knowledge about English culture and society* (item 18). They also reached an agreement on giving a second highest score for the following statements: (2) *I feel ashamed if I could not speak good English in front of my classmates and friends in Ireland*, (4) *I do not think it is necessary to learn English to be a well-educated person* (reversed item) and (19) *I learn English because I want to be able to read the English written context*. In the meantime, all the students were vague about the item (10) *My parents want me to learn English* at this time. Mixed responses were given for other statements. Extreme response includes: Xu

could not perceive an obvious improvement in English learning (item 6). Sa was determined to improve her English due to unpleasant English experiences she had during this time (item 20).

Qu. No	Subscale	statement	Jun	lan	Qi	Sa	Xu	Yu
1	1	I feel learning English is interresting	4	4	4	5	4	5
2	3	I feel ashamed if I couldn't speak good English in front of my classmates and friends in Ireland	4	4	4	4	4	4
3	1	I find learning English is useless to a growing understanding of my major subject	5	4	4	4	4	4
4	3	I do not think it is necessary to learn English to be a well-educated person	4	4	4	4	4	4
5	4	I learn English because I have the impression that it is expected of me	4	3	4	4	4	4
6	2	I can feel my English improved during the learning	5	4	5	4	3	4
7	4	I learn English in order to find a more prestigious job later on	4	4	4	3	3	4
8	4	I have to learn English for exams and assignments	4	4	4	4	3	3
9	3	I learn English because people will respect me more if I can speak a fluent English	4	3	3	4	4	3
10	4	My parents want me to learn English	3	3	3	3	3	3
11	2	I want to improve my English-speaking skills	5	5	5	5	4	5
12	4	I learn English because I want to set a good example for my friends and relatives	3	2	3	3	2	3
13	2	I enjoy the feeling of accomplishing difficult exercises in English learning	4	4	5	4	4	5
14	2	I am sure that I will be able to learn English well.	4	4	4	4	5	5
15	3	Learning English had a great influence on my life	4	4	4	4	4	5
16	1	I think English learning is a lifelong learning process	4	4	4	5	4	5
17	2	I want to improve my English wiriting ability	5	5	5	5	4	5
18	1	I enjoy the feeling of acquiring knowledge about English culture and society	5	5	5	5	5	5
19	1	I learn English because I want to be able to read the English written context	4	4	4	4	4	4
20	3	I am detemined to improve my English due to the bad experiences on previous learning	3	3	3	4	2	2
		Total score	**82**	**77**	**81**	**82**	**74**	**82**

Table 20 Results from questionnaire 4

When we take a look at the scores under individual subscale, the students were liable to give high scores for Self-Cultivation and Self-Improvement, with the mean total of 87% and 90% respectively. The scores in Self-Transformation were in the range of 72% to 80%, resembling the result from the data collected two months ago. In addition, all the participants chose Sense of Responsibility as the most unfavourable motivational factor, with an average rating of 67%.

		Jun	Lan	Qi	Sa	Xu	Yu
1	Self-Cultivation	88%	84%	84%	92%	84%	92%
2	Self-Improvement	92%	88%	96%	88%	80%	96%
3	Self-Transformation	76%	72%	72%	80%	72%	72%
4	Sense of Responsibility	72%	64%	72%	68%	60%	68%

Table 21 Subscale scores from questionnaire 4

4.5.9 Demographic questionnaire

The demographic questionnaire was designed to collect descriptive data, giving a holistic picture of the selected respondents. A further aim is to interpret the data gathered from other instruments. It was composed of two parts: respondent's personal information including age, gender, employment, education background, English learning experience and English proficiency, and family background concerning family composition and English learning of each family member. This questionnaire was distributed to each participant shortly before his or her first focus group interview and was collected at the end of the interview. All the eleven students in the group participated in the questionnaire. The result has been discussed in Section 4.4. A copy of demographic questionnaire can be found in Appendix D.

4.5.10 Summary of the gathered data

In this section, I give a brief summary on when and what sorts of data were gathered from particular participants. As mentioned in Section 4.3.1, I adopted two strategies for the selection of the target participants and the group was eventually formed due to student's disposition as well as their presence in the class. The research was conducted at different site according to the data collection tools. Participant observation was conducted in three EAP classes with the consent of the English teacher. Focus group interviews and attitudinal questionnaires were arranged in a seminar room in Arts Building at four regular intervals during the academic year. Demographic questionnaire was administered before the first interview. The details can be seen in the data accounting log below (Table 22).

	Q1	*Q2*	*Q3*	*Q4*	*I 1*	*I 2*	*I 3*	*I 4*	*Fieldnotes*	*D Q*
Jun			✓	✓			✓		✓	✓
Lan		✓		✓		✓		✓	✓	✓
Li	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓
Qi	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Sa	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓
Shi	✓	✓			✓				✓	✓
Xu		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓
Yi	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓
Yu		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
Zhi	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓
Zhuan	✓	✓			✓			✓	✓	✓

Table 22 A data accounting log of the fieldwork

Data collected through attitudinal questionnaires were calculated and presented in the above sections. Information gathered from the demographic questionnaire was summarised in Section 4.4. I transcribed and translated the data from interview recordings. The transcription was reorganised with field notes and was formatted into proper units or stanzas for subsequent coding.

4.6 Conclusion

The chapter has described the conduction and development of the fieldwork for this longitudinal research. It first outlined the research site by introducing its settings, functions and essence, as well as giving an account of a specific programme, EAP Modules. Then, the composition of eleven participants was summarised and profiles of them were discussed. Personal information such as gender, age, employment, education background, English learning background and family background were

examined in this section. Above all, an overview of data gathered in the fieldwork was provided, which includes field notes and field diary from the participant observation, recordings from four focus group interviews, an attitudinal questionnaire conducted at four intervals during the academic year, a demographic questionnaire administered at the start of the interviews, and other supplementary data such as class handouts and students' writing samples. The quantitative data from attitudinal questionnaires were further calculated and analysed in a percentage format. The qualitative data from observations and interviews were reorganised and scanned for succeeding analysis. In the next chapter, I will explain the analytic tool used for my qualitative data and describe the analysing process.

Chapter 5 Data analysis

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analytical approaches employed for qualitative data coding as an integral part of the analysis in this research. It begins with a description of the methods used for my data transcription and translation. Then, I summarise the rationale for the coding development, illustrating how the coding structure has been erected and refined based on the assorted data form gained in the fieldwork. Following that, I introduce some characteristics of the analytical software, NVivo, used in the analysis and give examples of how I selected units of analysis for the interpretation of my field notes and interview recordings with this tool. Two cycles of coding can be found in this research, which are applied to extract information from the account of English learning experience of Chinese postgraduate students at Trinity and subsequently, to scrutinise the result under the Neo-Confucian motivational constructs. I specifically describe different coding methods adopted in each cycle and eventually present a picture of the interrelationship of the cycle, theoretical frame and key questions in this research.

5.2 Data preparation

Before progressing further with the discussion of data coding, I will first present the process of data preparation for audio interviews. The preparatory work contains three steps: generating a verbatim script of the focus group interviews, translating the transcript and finally anonymising the data.

Transcribing refers to the process of verbatim writing down the record of an interview or a discussion (Hennink et al., 2010). It is an act of representation capturing words and phrases spoken both by the informant and the researcher in qualitative research, and should be viewed as very much part of the analysis in lieu of an insignificant procedure (Elliott, 2005; Oliver et al., 2005). Transcription in this research captured information of participants' reflection on language learning in their own words as well as other implicit meanings involved such as attitude and belief, which is requisite for analysing motivational construct depicted in the previous chapter. However, there is a general agreement that it is almost impossible to keep a very fluid transcription as fragmented sentences are inevitable in the interview (Hennink et al., 2010: 211). This fragmentation is also rather valuable in analysis by virtue of the supplementary information in the speech conveyed through modulation, paraphrasing, pausing, repetition and so forth. Therefore, various transcription conventions have been proposed to somehow preserve these implicit meanings according to the focus of the research. This research project adopts the Jeffersonian Transcription System (Jefferson, 1992) as a scheme for transcribing the focus group interviews of the participants' language learning trajectories, which comprises overlapping speech, pauses, intonation, emphasis, sound prolongation and non-verbal activity. Yet, as is suggested by Jefferson herself, no approach could accurately and completely reconstruct embodied interviews (Jefferson, 1992), and the quality of the transcribed data very much depends on subsequent analyses. An extract from the transcription of one focus group discussion is provided below (translated from

Chinese), illustrating how this scheme was used in the annotation. Keys for Jefferson style symbols are presented in Appendix B.

> Yi: I am (.) My home university is NYL Normal University. It has a long history, very traditional. The academic atmosphere there is quite similar to what you can find in Trinity. Very emphasise learning but life on campus is not as lively as it in Trinity. Entirely speaking, my home university is not as lively as Trinity. Hmm… My home university is very, kind of solemn. (laughs) Yes, very solemn. Er…I was doing English. It's shameful to admit, (chuckles) my major is English. (F1:128)

As it can be seen, the chosen convention allowed me to conserve the fine-grained characteristics of the dialogue which might influence the result of the study, and at the same time, it secured the stance of the interviews against being obfuscated by innumerable fragments caused by non-verbal indicators (Oliver et al., 2005: 1279). In addition to the transcript convention, I was also alert to one major constraint in the transcription which may beset the authenticity of the representation of original interviews: the fact that the data were collected in Mandarin and subsequently translated by me into English.

Given this fact, due care and strict attention to translation process was essential. I did not include specific translation approaches due to a lack of mature theories in discourse translation from Chinese to English. The translations were completed by myself based on my own language competence and my teaching experiences in the two languages. The interview recordings were made in Mandarin Chinese, transcribed in Chinese, and then translated into English for the use in the research. In this way, a transcript in the original language was kept as a reference throughout data analysis. However, virtually all translations are bound some loss of information in the translated script. The challenge in the translation in this study is caused by the disparity between natures of the two languages: Chinese is generally viewed as paratactic language while English gravitates to hypotaxis (Lian, 1993). Therefore, in order to reflect the maximum information conveyed by the Chinese participants, priority was given to the meaning and form of the original utterances. In terms of the style of the language, the translated script retained a colloquial style of the sentences spoken in the interviews, in which cultural terms and English words misused by participants were preserved for further coding. During the focus group, I was aware that various Chinese discourse makers repeatedly appeared in participants' conversations (such as '然后' and '就是'). These words are meaningless in the Chinese language functioning as false starts and speech fillers, and thus were literally translated into corresponding English connectors ('and' for '然后', 'just' for '就是'). I was also mindful that the meaning of Chinese exclamation words could be influenced by different tones in Chinese phonetic system. For example, the exclamation '啊' may indicate questioning in the second tone and show admiration in the fourth tone. Accordingly, I inserted a short index for each expression in the original transcript and later adapted them into the transcription system. Finally, the translated scripts were checked with the participants to ensure their meanings had been appropriately captured.

A final step before data coding was to remove the identifiers from the transcript to protect the participants' identities (Hennink et al., 2010). This involved using pseudonyms for all the participants

as well as other names mentioned in the transcript, and replacing some sensitive personal information such as the name of the school with codes. Some core, general, information related to Trinity College (such as school premises, course name, course timetable, etc.) was kept in the transcriptions.

5.3 Coding cycles

According to Saldaña (2013: 3), codes in qualitative enquiry refer to 'a word or short phrase that assign symbolic meanings to the descriptive or inferential information compiled in the study'. In other words, the process of coding can be regarded as a method of analysis which enables the researcher to deeply reflect and interpret the meanings from the collected data (Miles, Huberman and Saldana, 2013:72). Through the retrieval and classification of homogeneous data chunks, segments can be clustered associated to a specific research question or thematic framework. These clustered segments are further used for theorising or drawing conclusions.

The coding process in this research consists of two cycles of coding. Each step in this cyclical process was built on the rearrangement and reclassification of the preceding analytical progress, and was also associated with others (Saldaña, 2013: 11). A schematic diagram of this process is provided in Figure 9.

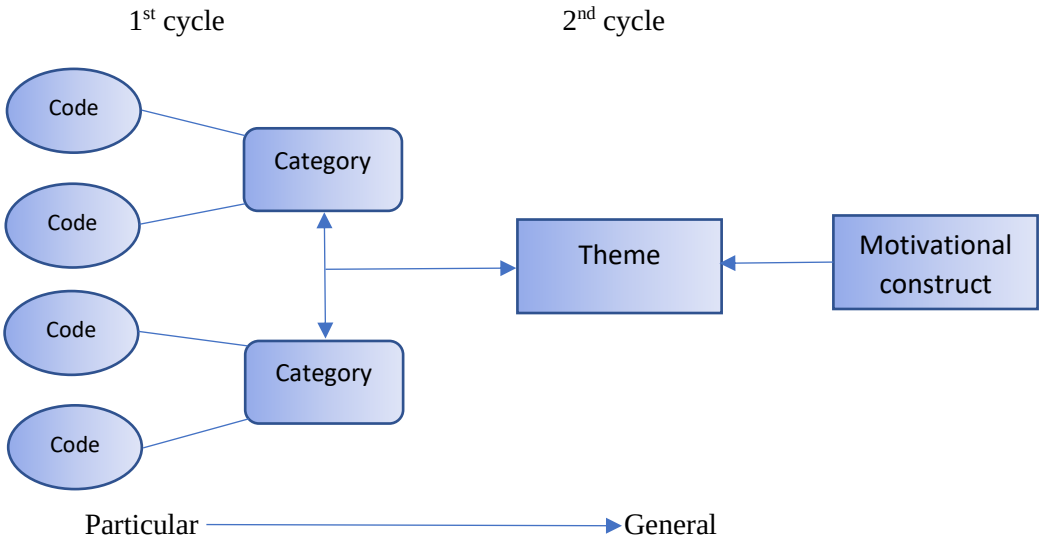


Figure 9 Summary of coding cycles

The first cycle involved the process in which codes were initially given to the corresponding data chunks and was conducted to primarily mirror the communications between the researcher and participants as well as participants' EAP learning experience observed in the class. I employed an eclectic mix of methods (Section 5.4.3) which resulted in a large number of data-driven categories and a wide assignment of codes across the categories. The second coding cycle entailed a series of tasks managing and underscoring the salient characteristics of the initially processed data for developing concepts and grasp meanings (Saldaña, 2013: 8). I first recategorised the most frequent and significant codes or categories emerged in the first cycle. The thematic groups generated from this process were further examined to corroborate or refine the motivational construct depicted in *The Great Learning*. Meanwhile,

I applied the Qualitative Longitudinal Analysis to the codes assigned in the initial coding methods for a close observation of the possible changes of participants' English learning motivation over the course of their study at Trinity. The details regarding two coding cycles involving specific coding methods and process are presented in the remainder of this chapter.

5.4 First cycle of coding

The following section provides an account of the first cycle of data coding which was used to seek patterns amongst various qualitative data and to establish preliminary connections between emerging themes. It begins with a description of the units of analysis coded. Next, it describes how the computer software, NVivo was used during the analytical process. Finally, it elaborates how different coding methods were employed to understand the language learning motivation of the participated Chinese students, and to further corroborate this interpretation with researchers' observation.

This study was conducted on the research questions including both ontological and epistemological enquiries, and had collected qualitative data containing interview transcripts and field notes, which all entail a repertoire of different methods concomitantly in the analysis. Four coding methods were adopted in the first cycle of coding in this analysis, namely, Descriptive Coding, Holistic Coding, Values Coding and Themeing the data. Specifically, Descriptive Coding uses topic-driven words or short phrases to summarise qualitative data recorded in different forms. It was used in my analysis to examine all qualitative data collected, particularly field notes written in the fieldwork, as it can 'document from rich field notes the tangible products that participants create, handle, work with and experience on a daily basis' (Saldaña, 2013: 90). Holistic Coding summarises the key themes in large analytical units in lieu of analysing them sentence after sentence (Saldaña, 2013), and was used as a preparatory approach to deal with the large dataset by the interview transcripts. According to Bazeley (2007: 67), Holistic Coding provides researchers with broader topics to 'chunk the text', which allows the researcher to code large amount of data in a relatively short period. Value Coding, as described by Saldaña (2013:111), is applicable to studies which aim to draw 'cultural values, identity, intrapersonal and interpersonal participant experience'. The method is said to be not only advantageous to review interview transcripts, but also useful to analyse field notes where participants' real-life behaviours are captured. Value Coding contains three primary codes: Attitudes, Beliefs and Values. Attitudes refer to people's perception of themselves, other people or matters. Values indicate the significance people ascribe to themselves, other people or matters. Beliefs are the synthesis of people's attitudes, values and experiences as well as other ways of explaining society (Stern and Porr, 2011). Themeing the Data refers to the codification based on topics or questions constructed before or during the data collection, which provides the researcher with an insight into participants' inner activities, constructs and identity variation (Saldaña, 2013). The application of individual method is described in Section 5.4.3.

5.4.1 Units of analysis

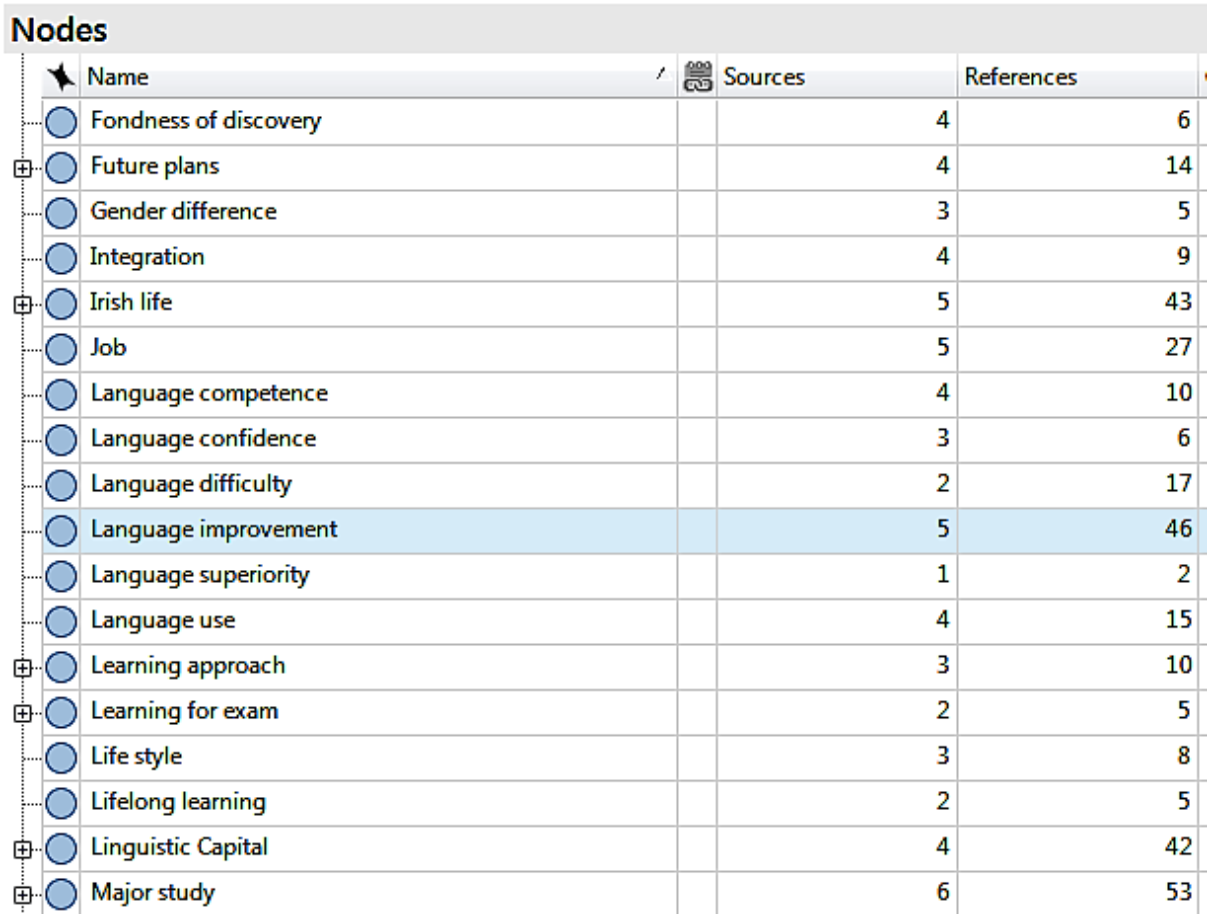
Before the actual coding took place, one of the fundamental questions is 'code what?'. According to Chenail (2012: 266), qualitative researchers should focus on 'the single undivided entity upon which researchers direct their analysis and express the qualities they perceive in that element'. These entities were also known as units in qualitative analysis. Lofland (2006) first sketches out nine major units including 1) cultural practice, 2) episodes, 3) encounters, 4) roles, 5) social and personal relationship, 6) groups and cliques, 7) organisation, 8) settlements and habitats and 9) subcultures and lifestyles. He also proposes three aspects: cognitive, emotional and hierarchical. The integration of the units and aspects above forms topics for coding and thus results in various coding methods (Saldaña, 2013). Concerning this research, in the first cycle of coding, the identification of units of analysis was distinctly influenced by the above-mentioned coding methods. For instance, in Values Coding, I only coded phrases or sentences which reflect participants' attitudes, beliefs and values on English learning. I also selected the units based on the research questions, interview topics and themes emerged from my previous researching and teaching experience. This can be demonstrated in the method of Themeing the Data, I used the topic questions as well as students' direct response in the interviews to create single units for analysis. Apart from that, I consulted the relevant literature (Saldaña, 2013; Turner, 1994; Wolcott, 1994) and decided to code virtually everything related to participants such as actions, perceptions and the tangible artefacts from them, as well as my reflective comments surfaced in the process. It should be noted that the varying approach of identifying units can lead to layers of mutually exclusive codes under the main categories (Haden and Hoffman, 2013), which requires discriminative analyses in the second cycle of coding. Specific approaches of pinpointing units of analysis are illustrated with the examples in the following sections.

5.4.2 Coding with NVivo

The research has opted for Computer Assisted Qualitative Data AnlysiS programme (known as CAQDAS), especially NVivo for labelling and categorising field notes and transcript data. The programme is said to efficiently keep, dispose and reconfigure various types of qualitative data, whereas it is not responsible for coding the data itself (Saldaña, 2013). Despite the statement that traditional manual coding using paper and pencil gives junior qualitative researchers more focus on and possession of the dataset (Bazeley, 2007: 92), I chose this tool mainly for its ability to 'organise evolving and potentially complex coding systems into such formats as hierarchies and networks for at a glance user reference' (Saldaña, 2013: 31).

In the first coding cycle, I coded the major entities in the transcribed data with specific nodes (See nodes samples in Figure 10). The nodes, functioning as an integral part of the software, are described as 'the place where the software stores a category' (Richards, 2005). They allow the researcher to seek emerging frames and themes by assembling comparable substances in one place together. In the below

figure, the ‘Sources’ division is designed to track the original documents used in the codification, and the ‘References’ division refers to the sum of major entities mentioned as this node.

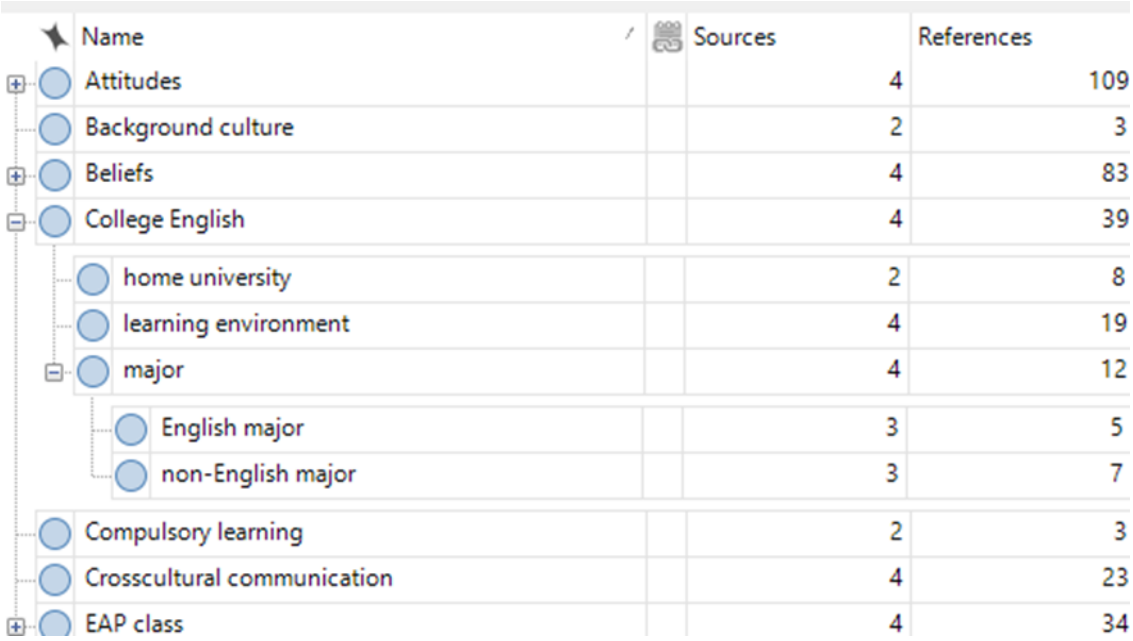


Nodes

Name	Sources	References
Fondness of discovery	4	6
Future plans	4	14
Gender difference	3	5
Integration	4	9
Irish life	5	43
Job	5	27
Language competence	4	10
Language confidence	3	6
Language difficulty	2	17
Language improvement	5	46
Language superiority	1	2
Language use	4	15
Learning approach	3	10
Learning for exam	2	5
Life style	3	8
Lifelong learning	2	5
Linguistic Capital	4	42
Major study	6	53

Figure 10 Node samples from NVivo 11

The nodes from the above screenshot indicates some degrees of the distrubution of themes emerge through the first cycle of coding. During the preliminary coding, many units of analysis resembled each other and repeatedly occurred as different nodes. In addition, particular themes developed as a result of a chronological account of the students’ reflection of English learning over the course of the fieldwork. Accordingly, I organised the affiliated themes by building a node hierarchy, specifically, creating child nodes for nodes of the similar concept at the top level. In analysing some participants’ dialogue in the interviews, ‘grandchild nodes’ were generated in accord with the nature of this narrative tool. The following example (Figure 11) shows the node hierarchy built around the node ‘College English’. The nodes related to ‘College English’ were broken down into nodes ‘home university’, ‘learning environment’ and ‘major’, and sequentially the node ‘major’ further produced the ‘English major’ and ‘non-English major’ nodes. A detailed description on how nodes were generated under different coding approaches is provided in the next section.



Name	Sources	References
Attitudes	4	109
Background culture	2	3
Beliefs	4	83
College English	4	39
home university	2	8
learning environment	4	19
major	4	12
English major	3	5
non-English major	3	7
Compulsory learning	2	3
Crosscultural communication	4	23
EAP class	4	34

Figure 11 Node hierarchy

5.4.3 Four coding methods in the first coding cycle

Throughout the first cycle of my data analysis, multiple coding methods were employed. I applied Descriptive Coding as an initial approach to examine the entire qualitative dataset, particularly field notes gathered in the participant observation. The following excerpt was taken from my field notes (29 January 2016)[7], which gives an example of how descriptive coding method was used in the analysis. I assigned the node 'activity', 'engagement', 'approach' and 'satisfaction' respectively to each sentence in the excerpt. All the sentences or passages coded with 'activity' were extracted from the field notes and reorganised as a subtheme of the node 'writing course' in the analytical memo for subsequent analysis. Therefore, a major function of this coding method is to primarily create a categorised archive or index of the original data.

In the second half of the class, students were given a writing task. [1]They needed to point out and correct the language problems in the writing samples provided. [2]Students were fully engaged in this activity. [3]In the end, a continuous self-assessment questionnaire was administered and students were using different emoji to give their satisfaction toward the class. [4]The result showed all the students were very happy with the class.	[1]Activity [2]Engagement [3]Approach [4]Satisfaction

[7] Excerpt from Field notes is labelled and represented with the date of the corresponding observation.

I also employed Holistic Coding as a preliminary approach to code the large dataset. Two factors had influenced the decision of using Holistic Coding in this research. First, the induction of icebreaker questions into the focus groups had produced a large number of analytical units at the beginning of the transcribed data. These data were not directly related to the driven topics, yet they could more or less affect the interpretation of those. A typical example is shown below. The whole interview excerpt was coded as 'vacation plan', as the discussion is mainly about participants' plans for the coming vacation.

Renfeng:	You are on holidays now?
Sa:	Yeah
Xu:	I guess so…Christmas break
Renfeng:	Do you have any plan for the vacation?
Sa:	Writing essays and travelling
Lan:	I am going to American East, Boston. I have friends there.
Xu:	I got the Schengen Visa. I am ready for a trip to Central Europe. The initial plan is, I think I will go to the Czech Republic and Hungary. Perhaps there will be more countries on my list.
Renfeng:	Alone?
Xu:	Yeah. I plan to do something like a cycling tour there, like the bike trips, that sort of thing.
Sa:	It sounds really cool!
Renfeng:	How about other guys?
Li:	I will go to Italy with Sa.
Sa:	Yeah
Li:	Rome, Florence, Venice, Milan… for eight days.
Renfeng:	None of you will go back to China?
Zhi:	I will. Well, I mean people like me who already married must go back to our parents' house during the festival. The Chinese New Year will clash with the Hilary Term here, so we don't have the time to go back at that time. We decide to take this break to go back to see our parents. And it's also cheaper to go home during this time.
Renfeng:	How long will you stay in China?
Zhi:	I will try to stay about three weeks. (F2:4)

The method was also used in the context which was in line with the description of particular themes in the theoretical construct. The context was often related to vignettes or stories about participants' social life with fixed parameters such as time, place and actions. In the following interview excerpt, I assigned the node 'English experience' to the whole paragraph. The initial review of the data collection generated from Holistic Coding provides the researcher with an inventory of categories, which calls for a detailed further analysis with other methods.

[1]Because (.) when I was very small, once I was travelling to somewhere. And the flight was delayed, so we were trapped in the airport. There was one girl I remember in our group who was happily talking to a Canadian couple. I was so jealous of her. And from that moment on, I started to learn English. (F1:97)	[1]English experience

In some cases, I used Values Coding in order to reveal participants' periodic reflection of English learning throughout their time at Trinity. In the following excerpt from my focus group interview, Yi

expressed her preference for the learning environment in the EAP class and recalled her distressing learning experience in China. Through the coding process, data were first labelled with nodes 'Attitudes', 'Belief' or 'Values' and analytical units under each tag were then subcoded specifically, with the aid of other approaches such as Descriptive Coding.

Yi: If you ask me, [1]I would say I prefer this comfortable and easy learning pattern in EAP class. [2]Because When I was learning English in China, it's very painful. [3]I feel like the purpose for everything is to remember vocabularies. And when you remember those words, you just take the exam. It has nothing to do, to do with mastering the language…[4]and no long-term goals or plans. (F3:164)	[1]A: Learning environment is enjoyable [2]B: Learning English in China is painful [3]B: The purpose is vocabularies [4]V: Long-term goals

In this way, analytical units were categorised into three main constructs based on their collective meaning and interaction. Therefore, units in the above excerpt were analysed as such:

Attitudes:	'Learning environment is enjoyable'
Beliefs:	'Learning English in China is painful'
	'The purpose is vocabularies
Values:	'Long-term goals'

These methods altogether generated 40 nodes at the top level and more than 160 child nodes (and grandchild nodes) at this stage of coding, contributing to the development of my thematic codes structure, or coding frame. I also used the 'codebook' function in the software to export the report on codes I assigned in a form of codebook as a reference for later coding cycle. Through the application of codebook and a broad distribution of coding frequencies across the child nodes for a parent node, the consistency and validity of the coding frame were respectively ensured (Schreier, 2012: 179).

Apart from data-driven code frames mentioned above, a more top-down coding method, Themeing the Data, was also applied by topically analysing interview questions generated from my research questions, theoretical framework and relevant literature underlying this research (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). Through the process, I used the topic questions carefully selected from focus group interviews, which could resonate with participants' own meanings of their language learning motivation. I employed an independent NVivo tool to store the themes generated from these questions.

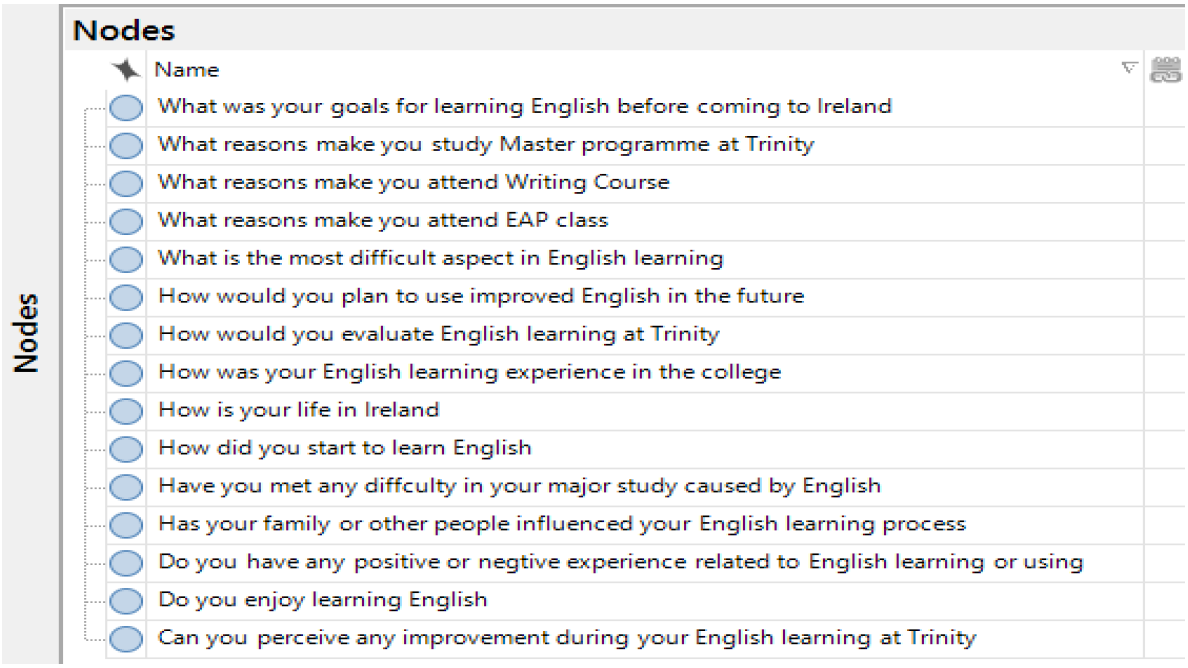


Figure 12 Question nodes

In the process, fifteen questions nodes were generated. Some themes from the questions were refined or deleted with the development of data collection and analysis. An example is provided on how the data were coded and initially analysed through this process. In the interview extract below, I investigated the participants' fondness for English learning. Such a theme was generated by the topic question 'Do you enjoy learning English?'.

Renfeng:	Do you still enjoying learning English?
Yu:	I am… Yes, I didn't change my attitude. I think learning English is enjoyable. If I didn't learn it, I wouldn't have the current experience.
Xu:	Me too. Learning language, the thing itself is interesting. And you can know other things from it.
Lan:	I like the language…and I like to know other things like culture, sports, literature…So I like the process of using English to explore other fields.
Li:	I like to know news things. Although English is not something new for me, it's indispensable for me to explore things here. And also I speak three languages, so l like speaking and learning different languages. (F4:361)

The themes occurred in this excerpt were categorised as follows according to different constructs in the theory underpinning the study. These themes and the original data would be used as indicative cases to support the interpretation of the constructs.

Theoretical Construct	Supporting Themes
Language enjoyment	*I like the language*
Language related investigation	*I like the process of using English to explore other fields*
Inquisitiveness	*I like to know new things*

As I have used the above mentioned methods in the first cycle of data coding, at the end of this process, I was confronted with manifold codes and themes in a 'post-coding transition' (Saldaña, 2013). During this transitional period, I reviewed the codes assigned in my first investigation and regularly talked to the students I observed or interviewed about my interpretative reflection for possible perspectives in the subsequent analysis. In keeping with the aims of developing an array of precise conceptual categories, I also transformed some elusive codes and themes from short topic-driven words or phrases to complete sentences, which then enabled me to reorganise and reconstruct the coding frame. All these actions were taken in pursuance of high-level concepts or themes, which could lead toward a deeper comprehension of the gathered data in the second cycle of data coding (Haden and Hoffman, 2013). In the next section, I provide an overview of the second coding cycle methods and procedures included in this research.

5.5 Second cycle of coding

In this chapter section, I give a description of the second coding cycle which I employed to develop a logical meta-summary of data processed in the first coding cycle. I first illustrate the analytical memos created to reflect how thematic categories from initial analysis interrelated with the theoretical framework in the study. In the second part, I explain the approaches, namely, Focus Coding and Elaborative Coding, along with the evolution of summative conceptual groups in this cycle of data coding. Finally, I described how I compared these conceptual groups from a longitudinal perspective.

5.5.1 Analytical memo

Analytical memos are considered as exclusive log or blog for researchers to accommodate their reflection of things like participants, events or research progress by an iterative process of 'thinking and writing' (Saldaña, 2013). Clarke (2005: 202) defines memos as 'sites of conversation with ourselves about our data'. In terms of data coding, researchers are suggested to regularly keep analytical memos over the course of the analysis to record and reflect on their coding process including the selection of analytical units, coding methods, generated themes and categories, and theories in the data. Ultimate goals behind this activity, as argued by Saldaña (2013), is to raise questions, make connections, build strategies, solve problems and generate answers. Concerning this research, two benefits were manifested in the utilisation of memos in this phase of data analysis. Before the second cycle of data coding, I assembled the coded themes of each participant, trying to reconstruct their individual English learning

experience at different period by dint of analytical memos. Through this procedure, I wished to interpret the data from a more 'vertical' perspective, in which participants' language learning motivation was longitudinally observed. This interpretation provided me with future directions of selecting coding method based on the longitudinal characteristics of the study. In addition, during the second coding cycle, memos writing was instrumental in generating codes and categories, from which theoretical segments were articulated to the motivational construct. Through reviewing the memos taken down in this phase, I was casting about prospective guidance and synthesising concepts.

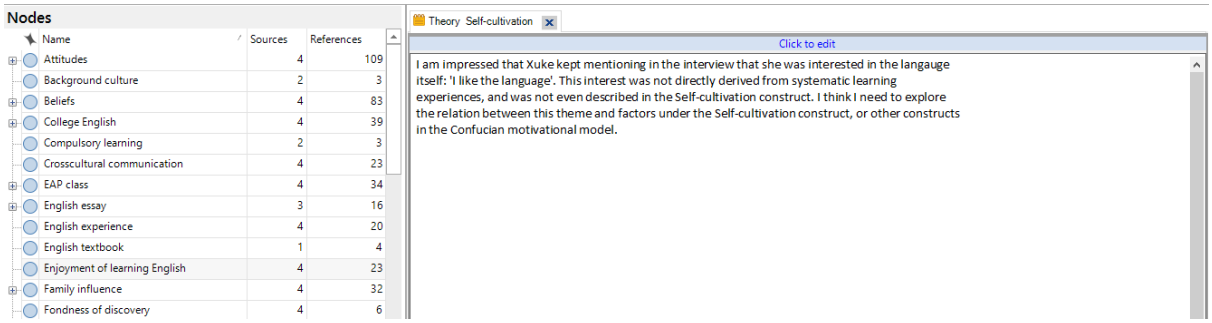


Figure 13 Analytical memos in NVivo

In the practice of coding with NVivo, I inserted analytical memos whenever I came across problems or insights in the coding cycle. This function also allows me to instantly link my documented reflection with nodes generated in the coding process. In my example of analytical memos shown above, I was aware that a possible theme was created which was not involved in the motivational constructs used in this research when I was coding one of my participants' dialogue. I decided to further explore the connection between this theme and the relevant theory, by writing a memo and linking it with the node 'Enjoyment of English learning'. In this way, I could identify a proper category for this theme and its position in the theoretical construct at the final stage of the analysis.

5.5.2 Focus Coding

Focus Coding was initially employed in the second coding cycle due to the fact that it helped me to seek the most recurrent and notable codes to build 'the most salient categories', and to determine 'which initial codes make the most analytical sense' (Charmaz, 2014: 138). It is said to be the most pivotal process in the grounded theory coding, for creating brackets without inattentive observation on their dimensions (Saldaña, 2013). I adopted Focus Coding as an approach to transform the codes from the first coding cycle to the second by comparing and combining thematic groups, and thus to support and refine the pre-existing theoretical construct (Neo-Confucian motivational construct). When it came to the practice of selecting the codes or categories for the eventual theoretical analysis of this study, I was informed by the list proposed by Charmaz (2006:141-142) for ascertaining the final category.

- What do you find when you compare your initial codes to with data?
- In which ways might your initial codes reveal patterns?

- Which of these codes best account for the data?
- Have you raised these codes to focused codes?
- What do your comparisons between codes indicate?
- Do you focused codes reveal gaps in the data?

With these questions, in the following example, I demonstrate how identical codes were clustered and interpreted by virtue of Focus Coding. The codes below were selected from the initial codes generated in the first coding cycle, which all comprise the topic 'influence'.

- 'Influences on language learning'
- 'Family compulsion'
- 'Influencing my brother'
- 'Family edifying'
- 'Girl's environment'
- 'Joining the crowd'
- 'Classmate's encouragement'

By purposefully reviewing the interview transcripts of factors influencing participants English learning, I listed some codes pertaining to the topic 'influence' and transformed them into the following tree diagram. Almost all names of categories were directly drawn from the above codes, whereas some were summarised and thematised from them.

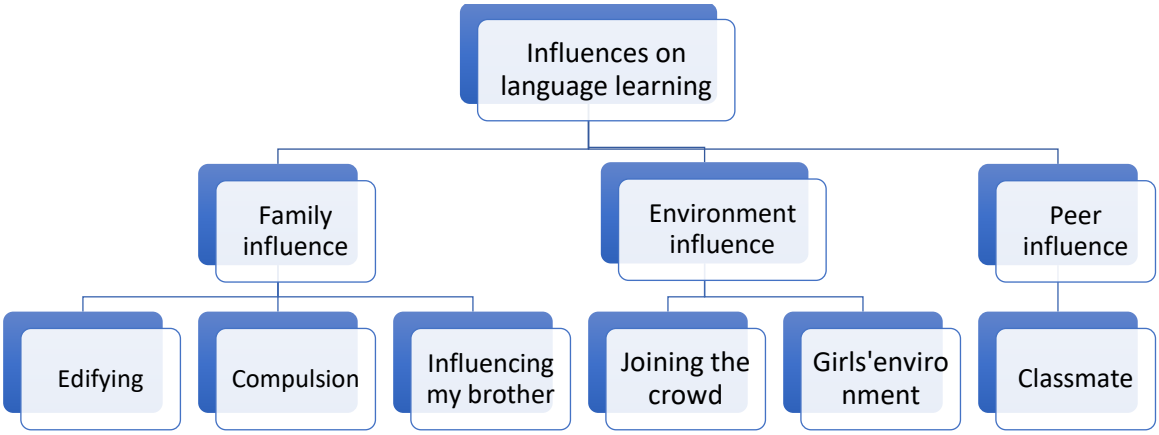


Figure 14 A tree diagram from categories

However, this organisational drawing of categories varied according to the interpreting perspective. The above representation can also be outlined as such:

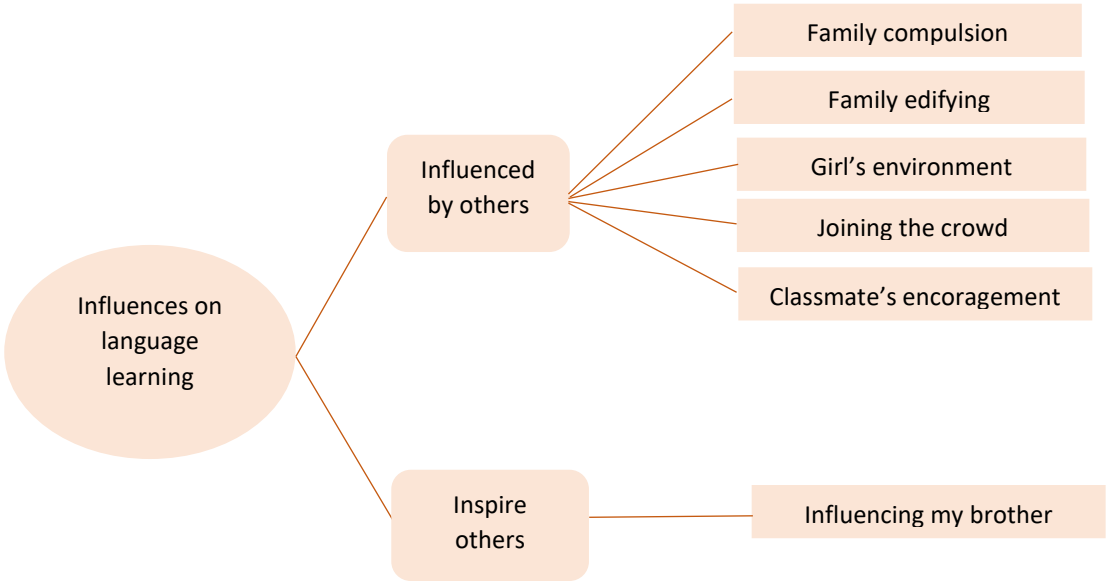


Figure 15 Recategorisation in Focus Coding

As it can be seen, the intentional weaving of categories integrated the codes in a semantic approach, which enabled me to search for the 'core patterns'. The focused codes were subsequently processed by elaborative coding method for transforming the categories into concepts, which is described in the next section.

5.5.3 Elaborative Coding

Elaborative coding refers to 'the process of analysing textual data in order to develop theory further' (Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003: 104). It is applicable to qualitative research that builds upon established theoretical constructs or aims to corroborate the theoretical findings of preceding studies (Saldaña, 2013). The method was used in this research to validate the Neo-Confucian motivational constructs in language learning by comparing the motivational factors depicted in the constructs with thematic categories generated from the narrative stories of my participants' English learning experience. Having been stated in the section of Neo-Confucian motivational constructs, this framework was recently introduced in this research area which requires further corroboration or disconfirmation. Therefore, the elaborative method functioning as the top-down approach was designed and implemented atop the bottom-up approaches such as Focus Coding and coding methods used in the first cycle of coding. The essential step to further develop the theory, according to Auerbach and Silverstein (2003: 105), is 'elaborate old theoretical constructs by grouping themes into units consistent with them'. Herein I present this step with an example from the qualitative data provided by the participants. The topic question asking about participant's introjections of language learning enjoyment is drawn again. Having described in Section 5.4.3, I employed the method of Theming the Data to build three theoretical categories 'language enjoyment', 'language related investigation' and 'inquisitiveness' according to corresponding interview transcripts. These categories were henceforth examined under the Self-

Cultivation constructs (See Section 1.5.1, in Chapter One), The process can be illustrated in the figure below.

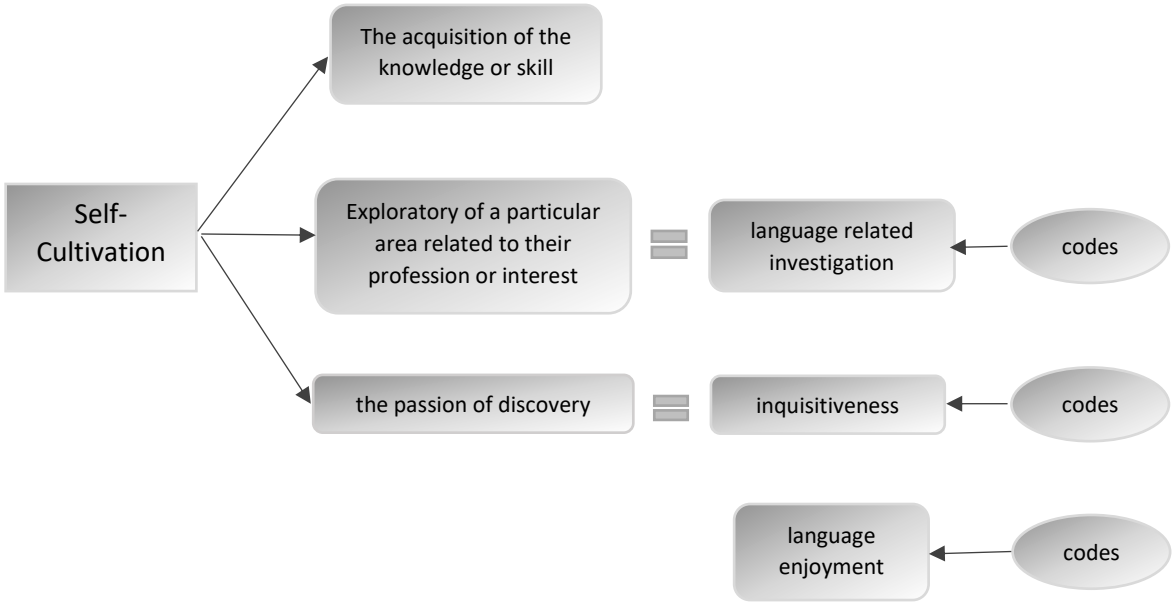


Figure 16 Category trees from Elaborative Coding

As indicated in the category trees above, two categories generated from my initial coding matched the descriptions in the Self-Cultivation constructs. However, one thematic category extracted from the selected participants' utterance was not fit with the remnant of the old constructs, whilst instead proposed a new one, which as noted by Auerbach and Silverstein (2003: 105), was valuable for the understanding of my research concern as well as a reinterpretation of the old constructs. With this finding, 'a theoretical narrative retelling participant's stories regarding both old and new constructs' is elucidated in the data interpretation chapter (Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003: 105).

5.5.4 Qualitative Longitudinal Analysis

Apart from coding from category to concept, another salient research concern in the second coding cycle was how to reflect individual's motivational change of language learning. After reviewing relevant literature, I decided to adopt Qualitative Longitudinal Analysis (QL) in this study for understanding change or continuity within a period of time. Unlike Longitudinal Coding which focuses on life course study requiring rather long periods, QL analysis is regarded as temporal analysis which comprises 'periodic restudies at regular or irregular intervals' (Epstein, 2002: 64). In terms of the specific approaches, as argued by Lewis (2007: 551, 555), the QL analysis calls for 'repeated readings, interrogating the data and asking different questions of change, and its absence', which are achieved through repeated cross sectional investigations and exploration of intersection of waves and cases across the sample (Thomson and Holland, 2003). The researcher can slice the time into sessions based on the topic such as 'biography', 'transitions', 'adaptions' and 'trajectories' (Thomson and Holland, 2011;

Millar, 2007). By vertically analysing the cases happened in the period and horizontally examining data generated in the cases, the theoretical framework can be captured.

Given the fact that this study explores Chinese student's language learning motivation in different learning contexts, and because of the argument that the motivational construct used is bound with this particular language learners, I would like to observe any noticeable changes which could prove the Confucian heritage image of the investigated group had diluted or escalated throughout the fieldwork. Therefore, I chose to temporally analyse students' motivation at a different time, by means of the reflections of my participants which were initially processed during the first coding cycle. I divided the generated codes and categories into four periods: English learning in China; English learning in EAP class; English learning in Writing Course and Futures. In this regard, I was able to portray and envision the motivational development of each participant, and thus to better present the uniqueness of individuals.

In terms of the analysing practice, I was suggested by a colleague to categorise the nodes generated from initial coding methods into clusters based on their temporal features with the 'collection' function in NVivo (Peter, 2015). For example, the cluster of 'English learning in EAP class' subsumed codes or categories recording my participant's life and study in the Michaelmas Term at Trinity (Figure 17). In this way, I could label most activities and participant' reflections with the corresponding time, which could improve the validity of the analysis. I also consulted and adapted Saldaña's longitudinal qualitative data summary matrix (Saldaña, 2003) for analysing participants' motivational variables in a certain period of time. The matrix, which is illustrated in the Appendix E, provides the researcher with an analytical tool to interpret and compare the data from 'differences', 'affecting changes', 'interrelationships', 'social processes', 'participant rhythms', 'preliminary assertions' and 'through line' (ibid.). In addition, I also reviewed the quantitative data collected through questionnaires for a deeper understanding of the possible variation or fluctuation; notwithstanding, the result cannot be generalised due to the nature and design of quantitative method in this study. In the end, the result was interpreted and discussed in a form of distinctive cases.

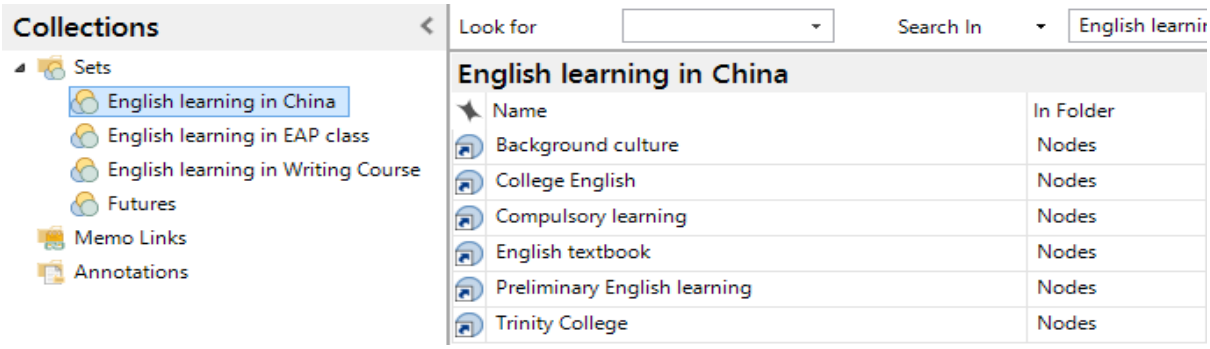


Figure 17 Temporal coding

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has described the use of coding as a chief analytical tool in this research for interpreting qualitative data collected from interviews with participants as well as my in-class observation. It first presented the preparatory stage of the analysis, summarising the data transcribing and translating process as well as the use of an analytical software, NVivo. Then it provided an overview of the coding process employed in the analytical phase which contained two cycles of data coding. I exhaustively described the coding methods and their rationales involved in the two cycles and explain how they interrelated for the purpose of a theoretical interpretation of my dataset. Throughout this process, I categorised the themes of factors which influenced participants' English learning motivation at different intervals and examined these categories under the Neo-Confucian motivational constructs. I have also demonstrated the use of a longitudinal method to identify a temporal dynamic of the language learning motivation of each participant over the course of the fieldwork. In the next chapter, I interpret the processed data and present a report on the thematical categories according to the research questions.

Chapter 6 Result and discussion

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I interpret the theoretical categories emerged from the previous analytical process and discuss the results according to the research questions of the study. The chapter is divided into three sections. In the first section, I review the aims, theoretical framework and research questions of this project. Then, I represent the findings of factors which motivated the English learning of my participants in this research, by evaluating and comparing salient themes generated from the qualitative analysis. These factors are further grouped and presented in keeping with four sub-questions designed in Chapter 3 (Section 3.6.3). In the last section, I focus on the longitudinal perspective of the study, comparing individual's language learning motivation across four learning periods, namely, English learning in China, English learning in the Michaelmas Term, English learning in the Hilary Term, and Futures. All the longitudinal comparative cases drawn in this section arise from students' reflection of their individual language learning experiences, and thus cannot be generalised to learners of a similar group.

6.2 Theoretical approach, research purpose and questions

Having discussed in the chapters of literature review, I integrated the evolving Western L2 motivational theories with Confucian learning philosophy, specifically Neo-Confucianism, to try to capture aspects of the English learning motivation of a group of Chinese postgraduate students studying at Trinity College Dublin. The Neo-Confucian philosophical construct, also described as the Neo-Confucian motivational construct, derived from Wong's (2014) model in the study of the motivation of working practitioners seeking a doctoral programme, which consists of four components: Self-Cultivation, Self-Improvement, Self-Transformation and Sense of Responsibility. Adhering to Wong's exposition in the model, and converting to the milieu of Second-language acquisition, the application of Neo-Confucian motivational constructs in this study aims to describe, from both the standpoint of the researcher and Confucian heritage learners in Ireland, their personal interest in language and language-related knowledge learning, their expectation and perception of language improvement, and their situated reflections on language experience prompting changes in values or beliefs. This research also availed itself to the praxis to investigate the target participants on their expectation to fulfil obligations in relationships to family members, organisations and communities. The final purpose of the study is to identify the potential motivational change of the learners throughout their English learning in Ireland, and to further understand in what way those Confucian heritage learners preserved or lost this cultural identity, which is of great significance in deciphering the influence of culture or community identity on language learning motivation (Altugan, 2015; Peirce, 1995).

To resume the project's research questions:

RQ1: What factors motivate Chinese postgraduate students to select and to keep attending optional English for Academic Purposes classes at Trinity College?

RQ1a: What kinds of personal interest have encouraged them to learn English as a second language? (Self-Cultivation)

RQ1b: Has the expectation or perception of language improvement influenced their decision to learn English in this optional class? (Self-Improvement)

RQ1c: Has students' language experience influenced their values or beliefs in English language learning? (Self-Transformation)

RQ1d: How do students plan to fulfil role obligations in relationships with their improved English language skills? (Sense of Responsibility)

RQ2: Is there any observable motivational change in students during their English learning period in Trinity?

To answer these questions, I drew on a mixed methods and longitudinal approach to try to envisage the interaction of the individual's motivation, identity and context. This view, opposing to the traditional linear approach which only focuses on a few crucial variables and idealised motivational models, represents 'the unique individuality, agency, intentionality and reflexive capacities of human beings as they engage in the process of language learning' (Dörnyei and Ushioda. 2013: 76). A discussion of the major findings of this study pertaining to such view is presented in the upcoming sections.

6.3 Research Question 1

The central topic of motivation factors in language learning, which is described in the first half of the discussion, is preoccupied with enquiries in learning trajectories, language and personal interest, language improvement, educational values and beliefs and learning outcomes which emerged from the analysis of the participants' reflection. For the past four decades, researchers engaged in L2 motivation studies unanimously acknowledged that the domain is very much framed by two psychology traditions: North American social psychology and cognitive motivational psychology, which culminates a wide deployment of psychometric approaches to ascertain people's distinctive characteristics (Ushioda, 2009). Despite the term 'motivation' is intrinsically related to psychology, I decided to probe it from a different, a more philosophical viewpoint, through which all the participants in this study were required to examine their English learning from the aspect of Self-Cultivation, Self-Improvement, Self-Transformation and Sense of Responsibility. Though there is a controversy about the appropriate conceptual translation for these terms, the introduction of this oriental motivational constructs enables me to situate the language learning motivation of a particular group of learners such as the cohort in this research in their cultural context and to comprehend how this cultural identity interrelated with individual's learning motive. As

the recent research (Cheng, Shu, Zhou and Lam, 2016; S. Heying and Kennedy, 2016) has indicated that the phycological constructs entail varying meanings for Chinese learners, the Confucian heritage culture may exert a unique impact on physiological process of this cohort, and therefore of substantial significance in interpreting their language learning behaviours. I break down the first research question into four sub-questions and in the following sections, I expound the major findings under each of them.

6.4 Research Question 1a

This section revolves around the question *what kinds of personal interest have encouraged them to learn English as a second language*? The topic question is drawn to reflect students' self-cultivated motivational factors and summarises the independent but somehow overlapping thematic categories of fondness for the language or language learning, cross-cultural communication, language's related professions, the passion of discovery and informal or formal language schooling, emerged from the used analytical approach. The themes involved in the following discussion provide an insight into the thinking of both motivating and amotivating aspects of the cohort.

6.4.1 Fondness for the language and language learning

This subsection evaluates and interprets participants' attitude toward English and English learning，which provides an overview of this thematic trait manifested in some of the students in this group, as well as its sequel for these students of dissimilar facets to choose to participate in the EAP class. Notwithstanding that the enjoyment of language and its learning is considered as an influential factor, as suggested in many mainstream theories and research in L2 motivation (Dörnyei, 2003; Dörnyei, 2005; Noels, Pelletier, Clément and Vallerand, 2000), the impact of such personal interest has not been discussed in the traditional text of *the Great Learning*, which can be attributed to its historical function integrating individual moral standard and civil conduct in the social and political order (Keenan, 2011). Concerning this research, in spite of the variation in language proficiency and individual learning scenario, virtually all the students in the study have demonstrated somewhat their orientation of the given issue in their engagement in English learning at a different stage. For example, Yu maintained a very positive way of looking at English learning and regularly described it as 'very enjoyable' over the interviews. Moreover, given the fact that a mean length of learning English of the group was fifteen years, with some, like Li having been learning for eighteen years, their cognition of the language has been most likely shaped throughout the early learning process. In this case, many participants, such as Sa, hypothesised the interest in language as the most effective point to the English learning.

Specifically, eight participants (Jun, Li, Qi, Sa, Xu, Yu, Yi and Zhi) at least once claimed that they possessed or used to possess an interest in English learning, and such interpretation was attested through their responses to the attitudinal questionnaire, with an average score of 80% for the entire group

regarding the question about their enjoyment in English learning. Some students in the target group, such as Lan, Li, Xu and Yu, suggested that this enjoyment was derived from an authentic absorption in the language, whereas others such as Yi and Zhi related it to the specific learning approach and context. For Qi and Sa, their overall satisfaction in language went along with the dislike of concrete linguistic elements, which resulted in contradictory, yet understandable statements in the inquiry. For instance, in the second interview, Sa first expressed her contentment in language learning:

> Sa: I feel very happy in English learning…I don't have any specific aims at the very beginning. I just learned it happily. (F2:256)

As the discussion developed to the particular English skill of essay writing, she demonstrated a different attitude:

> Sa: [Writing essays. I <u>really</u> hate writing essays. That's the reason I failed the UNG writing requirement. (F2:399)

This disparity in attitude was also reported by Li, who has undergone a fluctuation in her language learning motivation in the preliminary learning and ascribed this fluctuation to the process of gradually knowing the language.

> Li: It's always like this when you first get in contact with English. Very novel. While when you start to learn it systematically, especially after you touch the grammatical part, your previous image will be gradually diluted. There are also times you feel it very boring. (F2:166)

Apart from that, the only negative case was from Yi's story, in which she had suffered from a protracted period of what she called 'painful learning' in the college. This length of learning, as she further suggested, was exacerbated by aimless and monotonous language learning actions in her previous learning environment. However, this negative emotion has been thoroughly transformed to the fondness for English due to her participation in EAP class at Trinity, which is discussed in the longitudinal analysis in this chapter.

> Yi: I want to say the EAP class really saved my interest in English learning. Seriously. I think I have mentioned again and again that I was very painful when I was learning English in China. When I came here I realised that I could learn English in this way. You know, I really enjoy the time in the class. And also other modules in our school. It is… no longer a burden for me. I am quite happy. (F3:323)

By way of conclusion, the theme surfaced in Yi's account, as well as in other students' stories, could much validate the fondness of language and language learning as a cultivable motivation factor on this cohort, which appears to disapprove the contention that Chinese students tend to be passive learners (Kember, 2000).

6.4.2 Cross-cultural communication

This section examines and presents the need or expectation for cross-cultural communication of the participating students. It has been noted that cultural specific motives, motions and values can exert an

enormous impact on individual's ways of behaving, and therefore are of great importance in understanding personal meanings and emotional well-being (Heine, 2015). The intercultural communicative motive in this research was manifested in using English as a medium between the cultures, which includes the factual communication between individuals and integration into the host community. In terms of the cultural interaction between individuals, virtually all the participants in this study expressed the desire to communicate with people from other cultures, which ranged from Zhuan's concern of language barrier to Sa and Xu's interest of meeting new people. Some of their narratives on this topic are presented in the following interview excerpts:

> Zhuan: Not only the culture…English learning, actually, is of extreme importance. Because everyone is using the language everywhere, you won't get stuck in language barriers. (F1:205)
>
> Qi: I think we all have goals…But for me, probably because of my home university, I have a special interest in communicating with foreigners. And there are lots of exchanging students from other countries in our school. And some cannot speak good Chinese but they really want to talk to you. In this case, most of the time, we have to talk to each other in English. (F1:229)
>
> Sa: Not really, in college… It started from my second year in college. From the second year… because so many foreign teachers and overseas students in our school…and we hanged out…went to pubs…chatted with them… and travelled together, and many things like that. (F2:260)

I also noted in my field notes that in the EAP class, the participants seemed to be more engaged in group work with students of different nationalities than other forms of class activities. This impression was confirmed by Sa and Xu, who claimed that they were motivated to attend the EAP class for 'making friends'.

As for linguistic adaptation of destination culture, Zhuan related the language learning as an approach to prevent both linguistic and social isolation. Jun, on the other hand, told of her 'feeling the culture' experience, which triggered a discussion about the relation between language and culture:

> Jun: I am still at the stage of 'feeling the culture' here. I really enjoy learning English here because, it seems that I am learning the culture, the people and custom here…
>
> Renfeng: Using English as a tool?
>
> Jun: Yes, but you can't separate them. English is part of them or a representation of them.
>
> Qi: And it's hard to say that we learn the language for those reasons. I feel that language is part of the culture… not really because it's a tool. The language itself gives you the feeling like what you can find from other cultural elements.
>
> Jun: Cultural interaction
>
> Qi: That's the word I want to say. (F3:328)

In addition, Qi also reported a case, in which her Chinese use was back-influenced by English expressions. From this example, we can see some students, to greater or lesser extent, have succeeded in linguistically interacting in the host community.

> And you will unconsciously pick up the English sentence structures. For example, I will back translate some uses of English into Chinese. For example, now I often say an adverb before the sentence in Chinese, but that doesn't make a good sense in Chinese. Yes, you can say that. Because our grammar is quite flexible. (laughs) I often say '基本上…', because I always say 'Basically…' in English. (F4:132)

However, some interviewed students, such as Shi, wished to strengthen the linguistic integration while maintaining the heritage customs or living style in the host country. In this regard, language cannot be merely viewed as a cultural medium, but instead should be used for more specific purposes, which is presented in the next section.

6.4.3 Language-related professions

A third major finding, affiliated to the motivation factor illustrated in the Self-Cultivation construct, from this group concerns the language-related professions. The profession in this study refers to both their present-day identity as a postgraduate student and their envisioned career identity or interest field. Inasmuch as the target participants were recruited from the population of Chinese postgraduate students at Trinity, who came from a completely different language context, it is inevitable for them to face the problem of using English in their major study. During the learning, all students of this group had perceived the language-driven obstacles in understanding lectures or completing assignments and exams, and in consequence, they wished to purposefully improve language performance in their individual areas by attending EAP class. These demands involved the development in various linguistic skills, and some have a bearing on factors related to Self-Improvement construct, which is expounded in the succeeding sections. An example of this can be found in the questionnaire survey, a mean total of 83% was scored on the statement *I learn English because I want to be able to read the English written context*. In the interviews, some students, Lan, Qi and Yu, for instance, recounted their frustration in the class due to the accent of particular lecturers, while others, such as Xu and Yi, related this English learning motive to the course content and settings.

Apart from the concerns for major studies, some students positively envisaged their future career linked with the language. Unlike the conventional views of 'external factors' or 'ought to learn' (Dörnyei, 2005), this profession-related learning motive emphasises the enjoyment of actively combining the language with the preferred occupation or realms. Given the fact that seven participants were studying English-related programmes (Applied Linguistics, ELT and Linguistics), with two (Qi and Yu) having worked as a language teacher, it is reasonable for some of them to retain such motivation factor. The following extract from Qi's interview transcript shown how she integrated ideal profession with language learning.

> I just want to teach kids Chinese…I am teaching Chinese to some students this term, so I have a better understanding of the language learning and teaching. I really like teaching languages. I feel it's a pleasure to teach a language through another language. So I think I like it. (F1:11)

Moreover, Zhi reported his experience of developing a motive in English learning by dint of an interest in basketball.

> Zhi: (laugh) But I really like playing basketball. I watch NBA. So the language…works as a bridge (.) You will inevitably develop an interest in it. (F2:300)

From the foregoing examples, it would appear that the exploratory of language-related profession or interest facilitated our participating students in gaining momentum over the course of language learning, and for some students like Qi, the language would, in turn, enable them to develop and forge their professional identity.

6.4.4 The passion of discovery

The section presents and evaluates the theme of the passion of discovery, which was also labelled as 'inquisitiveness' through the coding cycles. The evaluative focus in this subsection is on participants' reflection on the possible impact of their characters in constructing language identities. Seeing that the enthusiasm for specific facets of English learning such as language and language-related profession have been thoroughly reported by the participants, this thematic quality was not commonly displayed amongst the students of this group in their narratives, and accordingly I pinpoint the interpretation of this theme on the cases of two students: Shi and Li.

Shi recalled her preliminary English learning experience in speciality class when I interviewed the students about their first contact with English. She believed that, at the time when she started to learn English, most children had a very vague conception of the language and therefore, she selected the English speciality class out of curiosity.

> Shi: Yeah. At that time, other kids might choose to do something very specific, like calligraphy, musical instrument and swimming. You know, it's like you will immediately understand what they are doing. For kids, learning English is quite strange, or interesting, coz lots of your friends and classmates don't understand what kind of letters you are reading and what kind of sounds you are making. And some kids may find this very boring… (F1:103)

From this excerpt, we can see Shi seemed to be more attracted to unfamiliarity and strangeness of the language, and her participation in the speciality class much account for what she sensed the language as well as her peers' attitudes at that instant. The other member of the group who was perceived to possess this characteristic, Li, has demonstrated a protracted and stronger passion of discovery, as she could discern the value of various 'new things' and was able to build a connection in between.

> Li: I like to know new things. Although English is not something new for me, it's indispensable for me to explore things here. (F4:372)

This enthusiasm was firmly embedded in her personality and endured through her learning at Trinity, which prompted her to attend the writing course in the Hilary Term. I wrote in my field notes as follows:

> Before the class, I met Li in the lift, who has not registered the course in this term. She said she came here to try the new class, though she had been told that the content was similar to the class she was in last year, because she was afraid of missing 'something new'. She thought she would definitely participate in the class, as she said, anyway, she could always make use of the 'new things' in the class. I think she is the kind of person who loves to explore. (29 January 2016)

Whereas not all the participants have equally reported a similar characteristic through the conduction of the fieldwork, the factor emerged from the case of Shi and Li seems to prove that individuals' attitude toward unknowns can place an influence on their language learning decisions.

6.4.5 Informal and formal language schooling

The last subsection cross-evaluates participants' attitude or value of their informal and formal language learning experience. Contrasting with mainstream theories in the L2 motivation research, the Neo-Confucian motivational construct contemplates the acquisition of the knowledge or skill from a formal or informal education as a process through which learners are constantly self-motivated. This concept was first portrayed in *The Great Learning*, and later translated and interpreted in Keenan's work as 'investigating things and extending one's knowledge' (Keenan, 2011). It subsumes individuals' self-growth procedure in the aforementioned process concerning learners' motivation and amotivation determinants in learning, examining and understanding new knowledge. Inasmuch as language learning background of the participants in this study, informal language schooling refers to preliminary English learning in extracurricular programmes such as English speciality class, which is more responsible for arousing students' interest in the language rather than train them for particular skills. A glimpse of the class of such type based on Sa's reflection is provided below:

> Sa: It's the time when we first learned English. It's all about…actually it didn't concentrate on grammar or what. And in the class the teacher is saying a sentence and clapping to the beat, all you need to do is to repeat after her, singing along and clapping. It's really like singing. We just repeat each sentence she said. After class, we would listen to the tape and recite the words and the passage. It's interesting. (F2:189)

Seven students in the group (Jun, Li, Qi, Sa, Shi, Xu and Yu) reported that they had participated in similar speciality class for various reasons, and had developed an interest in English or, to a lesser degree, English class. However, not all the participants enjoyed this alternation in the participation of language class. Some of them, Yi and Zhi, were exposed to the language in formal English modules implemented in the elementary school. The relatively late contact with English may lead to diversity in the perception of language learning. For instance, Zhi reflected on his English schooling in China and described it as 'a state of lacking any motivation'. Such evaluation was supported by other students. Zhuan recounted her stance on formal language schooling as 'it has nothing to do with your choice' and therefore 'no special feeling'(F1:94).

When I asked Zhi in the focus group interview why he deemed himself poorly motivated, he portrayed an insider's view of his English learning in the primary school.

> Zhi: I don't have experiences like these. I didn't show a special interest in English when I was very small or maybe I don't know much about English at that time. And yes, we gradually had English classes when we were at different stages of schooling. Anyway, English is not a major subject at that time. (F2:212)

In this extract, Zhi imputed his 'amotivation' to the insufficient exposure to the language in the school. It appears that there is an overtone of indifference with his repeated use of negation and the expression 'anyway'. This indifference in his attitude was demonstrated again when the discussion topic proceeded forward.

> Zhi: Before I went to the college, I don't really think I paid much attention to this. For me, there is no difference between learning English and learning Chinese or Maths. It is one of the major subjects and you need to pass the related exam, so I just regarded it as one module. Although I couldn't be called as an excellent student in learning English, just in that kind of environment, I could achieve a good result in the exam without showing a great enthusiasm for it. (F2:293)

In Zhi's case, though he was convinced that English was merely considered as a compulsory subject at the primary stage of his language learning, he was yet self-motivated and self-cultivated. By virtue of other factors, such as 'pass the exam' or 'achieve a good result', accommodated in this learning environment, Zhi was encouraged or forced to remain in the learning context and could, to greater or lesser extent, achieve progresses. In light of all these, the informal and formal language schooling provides a dwelling for mixed motivational factors, which, sometimes, cannot be perceived by the learner.

Apart from the above-mentioned five themes, *The Great Learning* script also emphasises a self-cultivating process in individual's life course, which is universally interpreted as lifelong learning. However, the importance of this notion of self-sustainability was not widely recognised among the participants in this research. Despite a mean total of 87% given to the statement *I think English learning is a lifelong learning process* in the questionnaire, only Yi and Yu showed a sign that they would carry out the practice of such concept in their future English identities.

6.5 Research Question 1b

Having discussed the participants' self-cultivated motivation in English learning, in the following sections, I focus the evaluation and interpretation of the research question *Has the expectation or perception of language improvement influenced their decision to learn English in this optional class*? This topic question is employed to portray students' inspirations depicted in the Self-Improvement construct, which contains students' expectation for improving particular language skills or performance and their sense of accomplishment after perceiving the improvement. The improvement-identifying motive of this inquiry is built on the conception that, through establishing an inner process of self-evaluation, language learners can observe their language improvement and hence, effectively ameliorate their self-confidence in language learning (Spaulding, 1992; Weiner, 1992). However, the identification of language improvement can be much intricate, which entails a long process and validated measurement

tools, and this improvement cannot be invariably promised. A learner may shrink away from the practice of learning due to the bewilderment of their improvement for a long period. In this regard, it is of vital importance for the language learner to anticipate having a sense of self-fulfilment before, during and after the learning process. In the next subsection, I first discuss the findings from participants' expected language improvement.

6.5.1 Language improvement

This subsection focuses on the participants' objectives of English learning over the course of their study at Trinity. It first examines how and what this cohort wished to improve in the EAP class in the Michaelmas Term, and then the emphasis is placed on the writing course in the Hilary Term. Given the fact the English class, as the locus of research activities, is designed and implemented for academic purposes, all the participants in this research conceded that a primary goal for them to attend the class was to improve their English use in academic performance. Lack of sufficient academic experience and worry about language adaptation in English learning context was frequently indicated in the documents of members' interview as well as my own notes. Most students in the group outlined the language difficulties that they had encountered prior to their English study in the EAP programme. For instance, Qi recalled her experience of talking to a taxi driver, illustrating the problem with pronunciation. Yi related how she was troubled with grammatical errors in spoken English, and expressed her wish for the 'idiosyncratic use of the language', while Jun and Zhi told of their problem of 'better understand English spoken by Chinese'. With these language worries, ten of the eleven participants attended the EAP class provided in the first term, according to Qi, to 'improve their performance in oral presentation and academic writing'. Some of their statements can be seen below.

> Qi: I heard the class can improve our performance in oral presentation and academic writing. (F1:325)
>
> Yu: I hope by the end of my essay writing, I can see improvements in my academic writing. (F1: 364)
>
> Zhi: Poor English. It's really…I can't stand it. This is true. You were also in the class and you saw my performance there. I just want to improve my English. I don't have any class in my own discipline but I need to write English essays and communicate with people in English about issues like fieldwork arrangement and data collection. It was very tough at the beginning and my English was barely enough for communication in daily life. English ability on academic performance is…badly needed. (F2:379)

As most students were confronted with essay writing at the end of the Michaelmas Term, even having academic English support accessed from EAP teachers and other resources in CELLT, many of them were not satisfied with their writing ability. Li, Sa and Yi, for instance, described their essay writing process as 'a headache' or 'very painful', whilst Zhuan told of using humdrum sentence patterns in her work. Some students, Li, Sa and Yi reported that they had to ask for an extension to make the submission. In addition, Yi sent me one of her writing samples for proofread and suggestions. In the fragment of her written work, Yi demonstrated her talent in generating luminous ideas, yet much could be ameliorated

in respect of grammatical control and specific skills in academic writing such as paraphrasing. This interpretation was later corroborated in the final focus group interview, in which she related:

> Yi: I also sent you one of my writings. (chuckles) And so many grammatical errors in the first paragraph…And also the structure, I mean on how you would organise your ideas. I was always full of ideas, but I didn't know how to write them. I feel I really need something like a sample for me to refer to (.) I don't know. It's really hard for me. Now I am very happy that I made the submission. (F3:279)
>
> Yi: Actually paraphrasing is harder for me. It has a higher standard for the language I think. I remembered I paraphrased a lot for the literature review, and then I started to write in a free style. (laughs) (F3:79)

As a consequence, eight students decided to keep attending the writing course in the Hilary term. Notwithstanding that some participants, such as Lan and Xu, had withdrawn from the formal English learning in this programme, they still prioritised writing improvement as their goal in this phase of language learning. This unanimous agreement was also reflected in the attitudinal questionnaire, in which an average total of 99% was given by the participants, responding the item *I want to improve my English writing ability*. To sum up, the cases listed in this section demonstrated how the impulse for improving particular language skills could have an effect on the language learning decisions of this cohort. In the next section, I will discuss their perception of the language improvement as well as the sense of accomplishment ensued.

6.5.2 Sense of fulfilment

As mentioned in Section 6.5, the competence to identify and value language improvements acts a significant role in building self-confidence throughout individual's learning process. This section begins with a discussion of complications in how the participants perceived their language improvement. Next, it brings the sense of accomplishment into focus, exploring how it benefited this cohort in terms of language learning motivation. It has not escaped my notice that, despite the consistent scores given on the statement *I can feel my English improved during the learning* (a mean total of 83%) in the attitudinal questionnaire, some of the students stated that they failed to notice their improvement at different stages of learning. Zhi, for instance, argued that he couldn't see the progress in the Michaelmas Term due to his study was 'quite similar to what he had done in China'. Xu, however, found it was more difficult to achieve the improvement in an advanced phase of learning, as she said:

> I guess it's because of the gap…I mean from zero to one, the difference is quite clear, you can see it. But from one to two, it's not something can be easily spotted. For example, I didn't know how to write a proper academic paper before I studied in Trinity. After so many practices, I knew it at the end of the first term. But this year I already knew how to write, so the next step, perhaps is to write a good essay? But it's not easy to achieve and you can't judge whether it's good on your own. (F4:85)

Their arguments were echoed by Qi, who claimed that the key figure in evaluating learning outcome was 'one's psychological effect', and she further suggested 'the positive presumption of the learning' would lead to 'the spot of even the smallest improvement'(F3:292). From these accounts, we can see

that lack of noticeable self-assessment approach impeded these students' successful perception of language improvement. To this end, participants of the inquiry sought various slants to pinpoint their improvement. Qi, for instance, related her perceived improvement to the gradual understanding of the class of one professor. Yu sensed the changes in her cognitive process as follows:

> The way of thinking, I mean, when I was writing. In the past, if I was going to write something, I needed to think about how to say in Chinese and then translated in my head. Now I think in English when I am writing. (F4:115)

Meanwhile, some students perceived the language improvement in more socially situated scenarios. Zhi, found his English listening improved as he could understand the chatter of native speakers, while Lan recounted and compared two of her experiences at the theatre:

> Lan: I found my improvement is huge.
>
> Renfeng: How did you find that?
>
> Lan: It's I can understand most of the dialogue in the drama… I remember the first time I went to a theatre was last October, in Abbey Theatre. It's a drama composed by an Irish playwright, McGuinness...I was sitting in the second row, but I was just guessing the story there. I didn't understand half of their lines. But it's something about literature and I was really interested in it. So I worked very hard on listening to stage performance…and last week I went to Gates Theatre for *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Oscar Wilde…
>
> Renfeng: That's a really nice piece of work.
>
> Lan: And surprisingly, I understood almost everything! In the past, I was there laughing with the crowds, because I didn't know why they were laughing. To pretend I understood, I just laughed together. But this time, I was clear about everything apart from a few words. (F4:92)

Though other members of the group could not report events which represent the above narratives, they still believed, to some extent, their English, especially the academic use of English has been improved. With the above discussion, a more salient question is 'how would the participants view these improvements?' According to the questionnaire survey, most participants enjoyed the feeling of such accomplishment, with a mean total of 83% on the relevant scale. The similar finding was also reflected in the interview. When I asked about their attitude toward the perceived improvements, all of them expressed that they were 'very happy'. This sense of fulfilment, sometimes, goes along with other factors in motivating individual's language learning. A typical case was described in Yu's early English learning experience. She summarised her learning motivation related to self-fulfillment as such:

> I feel if you decide to learn something, you will care about the result. If you can see the result, you will think your hard work pay off…and you will have the motivation to do something further. Sense of fulfilment is really important. (F4:156)

Moreover, she developed this sense of fulfilment and integrated it with the fondness of the language.

> For me, I think, simply because I like it. Since I started to learn English, I can always learn very well during my learning process. Especially when I look at my results of other disciplines, I feel 'Okay, this is something I can do it well'. (F1:152)

Through the process shown above, a learner, like Yu, can effectively establish her self-confidence in language learning. This mental process is concluded in the Neo-Confucian motivational construct, as 'to anticipate having a sense of self-accomplishment by completing certain tasks or difficulties'. Howbeit, apart from Yu, this theme was not demonstrated in the participating students in this research.

6.6 Research Question 1c

Whereas the preceding sections concerned the self-Improvement aspects in motivating language learning of this cohort, the interpretative focus in this section is shifted to the question *Has students' language experience influenced their values or beliefs in English language learning?* The topic question is designed to illustrate students' motivation factors represented in the Self-Transformation construct, which is categorised into three subsections, namely, positive English experience or introjective identification, negative English experience and changes in lifestyle. As described in the section of Self-Transformation, the significant transition or an accumulation of less substantial transformations or predicaments in the life course of this cohort could change their comprehension of themselves, their belief system and even lifestyle (Mezirow, 1995; Mezirow,1997). By appreciatively recollecting and accepting the metaphorical meanings of the subconscious, individuals can penetrate their experiences, and therefore establish autonomous thinking (Taylor and Cranton, 2012). In this research, these underlying transformations in participants' English experiences, combined with their own interpretations, have encouraged and unearthed the successfulness of some participants in creating an effective language learning motivation. In order to better explain the process of how these students were motivated by their attitudinal changes which occurred in the previous language experience, this study also adopted the transformative learning lens (see Section 1.5.3, in Chapter one) to investigate and interpret the emerged themes illustrated in the Self-Transformation construct.

6.6.1 Positive English experience

This subsection presents and examines the positive English experience of some group members in the inquiry, aiming to understand how they were motivated by such experiences in their later language learning. The positive English experience can be automatically, yet not necessarily viewed as introjective identification, which is a psychological term used to describe the process of a subject reproducing in behaviours to imitate or emotionally approach other target subjects. In terms of this study, only a few students reported an involvement in such experiences. Amongst them, Yu and Xu provided an evident account of their transforms, which is presented in the following.

Yu suggested that she had many 'good memories' of 'being jealous about people who can speak good English', which initiated her journey of English learning.

> Yu: Because (.) when I was very small, once I was travelling to somewhere. And the flight was delayed, so we were trapped in the airport. There was one girl I remember in our group who was happily talking to a Canadian couple. I was so jealous of her. And from that moment on, I started to learn English. (F1:97)

From her story, we can see Yu was attracted to the image in which 'a girl' was communicating with 'a Canadian couple' in an alien language. This attraction was further developed into an identification with the admired subject who was able to speak the language. In this regard, in order to introject this ability to her own ego, or to become more like the subject, she made the decision to learn English.

On the other hand, Xu first related her initial contact with the language. The recognition and appreciation of a new language in the situated context unquestionably shaped her primary self-perception.

> Well, it could be. And we have the custom to watch the opening ceremony together. And in the ceremony, when athletes from different countries walk into the stadium, you know, someone will introduce the team in English. And I felt the language is (.) magical. Amazing, I want to say, in the splendid atmosphere. I felt that if I could speak the language, it must be, how to say (.) something to be proud of. (F2:151)

Here, Xu's cognitive interests were not built directly on the introjective identification, instead, on her presupposition about the proficient use of the language. But, as her narratives proceeded forward, a stronger motivation related to identification gradually came into sight.

> …but I feel that it's another issue make me strongly motivated in English learning. It's Beijing Olympic (laughs), yeah, Olympic again. And the opening ceremony, because it was in China, they invited Chinese to host the event in Mandarin, English and French. It was Ji Xiaojun who emceed the English part in the opening ceremony of Beijing Olympic. And his English just sounds so comfortable…I just felt his English is so good. I really hope I can speak English like him, so I started to imitate his tone. (F2:173)

Regardless of what approach was used in constructing this cognitive interest, the two participating students offered insider's perspectives of an attainable change in the fundamental premises of feelings and thought that altered their language learning behaviours (O'sullivan, Morrell and O'connor, 2002). From these perspectives, it appears to be concluded that, the stronger attachment one indicated to the positive language experience, as in the cases of Yu and Xu, the better language identity could be forged.

6.6.2 Negative English experience

Having noted learners' potential introjective identification, in this subsection I discuss and examine some participants' negative English experience and how it stimulated this cohort in ameliorating their attitudes toward language learning. The exploratory concern is on the participants' reflection of language-related predicaments that they had encountered before and during their English learning at Trinity. A further aim is to interpret how the learners reacted to these predicaments by seeking likely changes in their perspectives on themselves or the language learning. I first provide a holistic evaluation of the cases demonstrated under this thematic category. Then, I give a fine-grained interpretation of these cases with examples of participants' account. Not all participants were reported with undergoing

such unpleasant situations. According to the attitudinal questionnaire, a mean total of 59% was scored on the statement *I am determined to improve my English because of the bad experiences on previous English learning*. Amongst the students who underwent a quandary, Yi told of her embarrassing situation in the college where her English presenting skill was deprecated in an activity. Zhi recalled his anecdote of applying for broadband in Dublin, and talked of his awkwardness when he could not understand the shop assistant. Sa related her teaching practice in a language school, and described her inexperience when she was required to speak English in front of students. Jun and Yi recounted the troubles caused by their unfamiliarity with the vocabulary of some housewares. Interestingly, most of these reported predicaments occurred during their learning in Ireland, which implied the constraints were concentrated in the situated practices of linguistic integration. The following excerpts are provided for a detailed examination of transformations in these participants' views of their language proficiency or learning.

Yi saw her transformation due to the 'embarrassing' presentation in her English learning at college. The criticism from one teacher hurt her self-esteem, which stimulated her realisation of the self as 'an English major' who could not speak English well. This epiphany subsequently pressurised her into the persistence of practising 'oral English'.

> Yes. I have one which impressed me the most. I think there was a presentation or some activities I can't really remember. It was a collaborating project between different schools… It's about English presenting. I remembered one teacher said to me 'Ah, how can an English major speaks English like this?' I was really embarrassed at the time. After that, I insisted practising oral English every day. That's it. (F1:303)

With reference to how socially situated use of language had remoulded one's language learning motivation, Zhi recalled one of his communicative failures in a retail store.

> Zhi: I mean, it's true…When I just arrived in Ireland, I need to deal with the Wi-Fi issue for the apartment I rented. I thought it's a very simple task and I just did it alone. I went to Vodafone and the staff who talked to me…I really don't understand his English. I felt very embarrassed because I asked him to repeat so many times. When I went home and looked at the brochure he gave me, I finally understand the word he kept saying is 'broadband'. (laughs) I just couldn't understand it no matter how many times he said in the store. And whatever he said, I just replied 'yes' to pretend I understood everything. I suddenly felt my English is really awful. And I am also scared of talking in English on the phone. (F2:386)

It seemed that due to his unsuccessful experience in a store, Zhi reflected on his misconception 'it's a very simple task' and transform his point of view to 'my English is really awful'. Consequently, he could perceive the value of understanding the language well in his life in Ireland, which, according to the interview, motivated him to cast about various methods to improve English. Another example on the same subject was provided by Jun, who claimed that her language confidence was weakened as a result of the incompetence to correctly identify the English name of 'toilet seat'. This unpleasant episode led her to the self-image that her 'English level is not enough for daily use'. And accordingly, she is now working on the lexicon 'used in daily life'.

Jun: Before I came to Ireland, I believe my English is okay, at least for daily use. I thought I might have difficulties in understanding the class or writing an essay. But when I came here, I realised my English level is not enough for 'daily use'. There were so many basic things I didn't know how to say in English. For example, once the toilet seat was broken in my apartment, so I asked my landlord to fix it. I don't know how to describe the seat cover. I think I used toilet, rings and so many different words. In the end, I could only show him the problem. I felt so bad at that time, because it was something very common, but you can say it. Since then, I began to pay special attention to the English words of stuff used in daily life. (F3:207)

What has emerged from these exemplars seems to be that through undergoing English-related predicaments, participants were constructing a cognitive process, in which discrepancies between their ideal English level and actual level were first perceived. The perception then prompted a notion that learning could change their perspective on identities, and finally encouraged their language learning behaviours. Such behaviours are commonly associated with regulation by conditional self-esteem, and in which individuals are emotionally urged to show the capacity to retain self-worth (Deci and Ryan, 2000). However, it should be noted that not all the negative experience can unmistakably lead to a positive transformation in language learning attitude. The limited subject selection determined that participants of this inquiry encountered the foregoing language motivation factor.

6.6.3 Changes in lifestyle

The third theme in relation to the sub-question investigated the imminent or recognisable changes about the lifestyle of the participants in the study. It emerged from some learners' reflective account in which they viewed language learning as attainable access to a different lifestyle, and was not intentionally scheduled in the topic questions. Unlike the previous two themes under the Self-Transformation section, it emphasises the changes in one's attitude about life, based, not necessarily on concrete life experience, but on his or her value or knowledge about the integration of the language and future identities. Four students, Li, Yi, Zhi, Zhuan, have indicated the similar ideas over the course of the fieldwork. Yi, for instance, related her distressing English learning in China, wishing to 'get rid of the current environment. She further drew the conclusion that 'learning English is the only possible way' to achieve this goal. Zhi interpreted his life in Ireland is rather 'boring'. By learning in the EAP class, he made many friends and was 'freed from previous boring life'(F2:312). Zhuan, who was rather independent and always showed definite ideas about her life, identified English could 'broaden her vision', and hence she 'can access more and know more possible choices'(F1:290). When I asked her about English learning outcomes, she replied:

Zhuan: …But for me, a more important reason, maybe, that I enjoy the lifestyle like travelling somewhere alone. I mean, travelling to different countries, different cities, all by myself.

Yi: To experience the culture

Zhuan: Not only the culture. I mean a ( ) of freedom. And if you want to pursue this freedom, English learning, actually, is of extreme importance. (F1:201)

From the excerpt, Zhuan connected English learning to the life of 'freedom'. The metaphor was imaged probably due to the communicative function of the language. As the fieldwork was approaching to the end, she gave a similar response to the question about her language learning motivation.

> Zhuan: I don't have a specific reason. I think because at a different time, I just want to improve my English. One reason could be I want to have a very free life, so learning English can help to achieve that. (F1:216)

In addition to this 'language-to-lifestyle' view, Li provided a counter-argument that her language learning decision was influenced by 'a very free' lifestyle. Despite the dissimilarity between these two types of belief, it seems that there is an interrelation between the language learning and learners' desired life, which was manifested in the aforementioned cases, and accordingly, individuals' learning behaviour will be inspired by such lifestyle-related factors.

Apart from the three themes mentioned in this section, another form of perspective transformation, normally linked with a life crisis or major life transitions, was indicated in Wong's discussion of Confucian motivational model (Mezirow, 1995; Wong, 2014). In her research, Wong discovered that the loss of a family member had motivated one of her participants in pursuing the doctoral degree after having worked in another field for a long period (Wong, 2014). Notwithstanding that such perspective transformation could be hardly perceived on a group of young learners like the one in this study, a narrative of the life course transition was provided by one participant. Li gave a detailed description of her experience on New Year's Eve, when she found a homeless man was reading a book under the dim torchlight in contrast to the crowd celebrating the coming new year (See F4:255). She was strikingly impressed at the instant, and believed to be stimulated to 'work hard' on her study as well as English learning.

> Li: And I think I was stimulated by it. I decided to work hard on my study this year. Because I was a very… I wouldn't push myself to do something. And also the English, I thought the EAP class was not that helpful and I didn't need it this year. But after this…made me to choose to attend this class. I found I was really motivated by him, in spirit. So I hope in my position, I won't waste the time, and to achieve the goals. (F4:281)

6.7 Research Question 1d

Having noted the participants' attitudinal shift about language learning in the previous sections, in this section, I attempt to answer the question *How do students plan to fulfil role obligations in relationships with their improved English language skills?* The themes summarised in this section concern learner's Sense of Responsibilities represented in the Neo-Confucian motivational construct, which comprises family impact, environmental impact and obligation to future identities. The first two themes reviewed the existing language learning motives affected by relationships such as family and learning environment amongst the participating students, while the last theme explores their commitment to the future identities such as career planning. The rationale behind this research question was derived from the strong attachment to filial and society in the traditional Chinese culture (Pratt, 1992), which views

the process of learning as an integral part of the benefaction to the civil society (Li, 2013). In this regard, Sense of Responsibility places the requirement of being a social role as an ultimate goal in the learning activities. Despite the fact that the idea was proposed in ancient China for a social and political purpose, it still has a realistic effect on the contemporary Confucian heritage culture.

6.7.1 Family impact

This subsection presents and evaluates participants' language learning motives regarding family influences, which contains three subcategories. Firstly, it investigates the reflections of some participants on how they were advised or compelled to learn English by their parents. Then it analyses how some of the students were unconsciously edified by what they had seen in their families. Lastly, it discusses the role of inspiring other family members in participants' language learning motivation. Despite that very few theories on L2 motivation involve the discussion on family roles (Noels, 2001; Csizér and Kormos, 2009; Jiang, 2011), it is an indisputable fact that Chinese family, especially parents, may exert a particularly important impact on their offspring's English learning since, culturally, they are apt to accept the view that full participation in the decision-making of their children's learning will substantially benefit their lifetime's development (Cortazzi, Jin and Wang, 2009). The rationale behind this cultural phenomenon is that Confucians recognised the ontology of the universe simply as a fact that 'individuals' lives are the continuation of their parents' physical lives' (Hwang. 1999: 170). Premised upon this recognition, Confucian idea of filial piety was advocated, which conceptualized the family by analogy to the human body. Specifically, each individual in the family can be seen as a distinct component of the body, and together they constitute an inseparable entity. Meanwhile, the Confucian configuration of ethical arrangements within a family also corresponds to the body structure. For example, the up-and-down relationship between head and feet refers to the superior and inferior positions of father and son. The relationship between children and their parents in the family is described as the four limbs stemming from the body. When children establish their own family, their children will likewise be oriented towards them. In this way, relationships between senior and junior in the family retain the hierarchy. With this hierarchy in the family, the Confucian ethical system is established not only on 'the principle of respecting the superior, but also on favouring the intimate'(ibid.:170). Since family members are conceived of as a whole body, each member living under the same roof has an obligation to do their best to satisfy the needs of other family members.

As to this research, many students for instance, Qi, Shi, Yi and Yu, suggested their parents assisted them in making decisions on their domestic learning such as applying for speciality class and selecting the expected major in college. Such parents-driven role is interpreted as undertaking family obligations from the parents' perspective (Sung and Padilla, 1998), which yet resonates with their children's psychological meanings to complete these obligations. In some cases, students such as Shi and Yi replied to the question 'What reasons make you learn English?' by immediately alluding to their parents' expectations. Shi related her preliminary English learning in the speciality class as a result of her father's

suggestion as he 'might find it useful to know English'(F1:110). In the other exemplar, this parents-driven factor generated a negative feeling in Yi's endeavour to meet her parents' expectations.

> Yi: Oh, my God! It's like the whole family is forcing you to learn. After I have learned English in college for three months, I told my mom 'Mom, I can't make it. I can't continue learning. This is too hard. I've got no talent on this.' Guess what my mom replied? 'No way. If you don't learn it, come back and do business.' (F1:244)

These parents-driven factors, sometimes, may result in an attitudinal resistance to the language, as was in Yi's example. Nevertheless, in one form or another, they pushed the participants toward the language learning practice.

More often than not, this factor was manifested as a more moderate form of guidance in the family, which unintentionally influenced participants in the English learning. According to Zhou and Jin (2012), parents' English learning background has a positive relationship with their children's learning of English. With regard to this study, seven participants stated either or both of their parents had a varying degree of English learning experience. Amongst them, three believed that they were influenced by their parent's language learning background. Zhuan recalled her inceptive period of English learning promoted by her mother's 'English books on the shelves'.

> Zhuan: Not really. The thing is… My mom knows English. When I was very small, I can find English books placed on the shelves at home. So in this way, I guess I was influenced more or less. And during my English learning, she provided me with some suggestions. Yeah. You can understand that she still wants you to learn English well. (F1:267)

Xu told of her autonomous learning experience with the support of her father's old English textbook and cassettes.

> And just right at that time, my father had a set of textbooks called *Follow Me* at home. He used them for self-studying English. Then I got the books and started to read. I think it was more like a television programme and my father recorded it with cassettes. (F2:156)

She also reported how her parents encouraged her to participate in English class when they observed her interest in the language. Like Xu, Lan accompanied her period of early English learning with the language atmosphere in the family, whereas she thought her mother 'did not want her to learn this, deliberately'. In spite of the confirmation of parents-related impact from these students, many participants in this inquiry could not bridge their language learning with their parents' expectations in the relevant questionnaire (a mean total of 65%) and interview investigation, due to learner's independent personality or parents' lack of English knowledge. In addition, one special case was reported by Zhi, in which he found his language learning was motivated not by his parents, but instead, by his wife, as he was the only participant who got married in the group.

> Zhi: I don't think my parents really care about it. Generally I make the decision on my own for this kind of issues. They just said if you are going to learn something, work hard and find a good job. They wouldn't go to the details. They stopped being nosy about my life I think, after they provided me with some ideas on applying to college and major. Everything, I rely on my own. But, my wife came here with me. Her English is much

better than mine, so I also have pressure, or motivation to make a progress. As a man, I should carry some responsibilities. (F2:369)

This type of motives can also be perceived as a wish or need to inspire other family members, which is frequently described as 'to set a good example for other people'. Apart from Zhi, two other students, Shi and Yi, had reported similar cases. In the questionnaire survey of the statement *I learn English because I want to set a good example for my friends and relatives,* Shi and Yi, gave an average score of 80% and 93% respectively, comparing with a mean total of 58%, which, as they explained in the interviews, is for the reason that they felt obliged to create a role of 'good English learner' for their younger brother to follow.

Yi: I have a younger brother in China. How to say, as an elder sister, you are expected to set a very good role for him, even in English learning. My parents will talk to my brother 'Look at your elder sister. You should learn from her.' If I did something wrong, they will criticise me for not establishing a good example for my brother. (F1:257)

Shi: I also have a younger brother. Well, it is not that exaggerating as you said, but it sounds like my story. Because I have to take care of him since he was a child, and also take care of his study. The funny thing is if I can't learn English well, there is no reason for me to push him to work hard on English. (F1:261)

Overall, it would seem from all foregoing reflections of participants over various data collection tools that any form of the situation of one's English learning in his or her family environment could be helpful with building language learning motivation.

6.7.2 Environmental influence

The focus of my interpretation in this subsection is placed on the impact of some factors arising from participants' surroundings on their participation in certain English programmes and classes. The factors emerged in students' account are evaluated following a chronological order, from preliminary English learning to their participation in the EAP programme. The environmental motivator refers to learner's expectation to fulfil other people's views of English learning, ranging from communal beliefs about language to peer's recommendation of a particular course. The rationale behind this motivator is established on the interpersonal relationship, suggested by the Confucian ethical system, in Confucian heritage culture (Zhou, 2014). In order to attain this relationship, some members of the participating group, like Qi and Sa, began to learn English as a result of what they called as 'follow the crowd'.

Qi: Hmm…Nothing very special. Everyone started to learn English, so I just followed the crowd. (F1:91)

Sa: The speciality class in elementary school. I knew nothing about English at that time. It's like many pupils will learn English after class. And if you attend the class, you will know many friends there, and you can play together. It's the same on weekends. If you join those classes, you may enjoy a rich experience in extracurricular activities. (F2:141)

In their narratives, Qi and Sa attributed their initial language learning motive to the influence of their peers learning behaviours. Despite the peer's influence reported at this stage of learning, Li revealed

another social preconception in her account of how she developed language superiority by using English in her hometown.

> Li: I was more influenced by the environment in my hometown…It's like if you can speak English, people there will think you are terrific, I mean from upper class maybe? Anyway, you will earn more respect and better service in the public. (F4:409)

Apart from this regional preconception, a universal view about English study prevailed among participants' relations. Virtually all the female participants in this study indicated that their language learning was accompanied by the statement 'English is suitable for girls'. Some, Sa and Yi, for instance, stated that one reason for them to choose English as the college major was because their family members held such a view. It is worth noting that, one participant, Xu, was reported to possess a distinctive motive evolved from this view on gender difference in language learning.

> Xu: It's funny. It's when I was studying English in college in China, I found that people took it for granted that girls should learn English better, because very few boys study English in China. So I need to work harder to let others believe I could stand out in the class. You know, teachers paid more attention to boys and boys are praised even if they just complete a very small task. It's not easy for girls to survive in language school. (F4:419)

However, this social or peers' pressure was not eliminated from their language learning inasmuch as the participants have moved to a different learning context. Some participants, such as Li, Shi and Zhuan, still used their classmates' actions as a reference to decide their participation in the EAP class.

> Shi: Zhuan and I didn't know this EAP class at the beginning. We knew about the class in our Linguistics class from our classmates. They all participate in it. And we think it is very necessary. It's better to get prepared in advance. And yes. We are now in the class. (F1:332)
>
> Li: I heard this class from Sa. I don't know it at first… Another reason is I found that most English major students were also in this class, so I am sure I need it. (F2:406)

From these examples, we can see that the social and individual's attitude and belief may facilitate the learner in participating in language learning, and therefore in building the language identity. For the aforementioned participants, especially for Li, these motivators also allowed her to envision the language use in her future identity, which is discussed in the next subsection.

6.7.3 Obligation to future identity

In the last subsection, I examine participants' future language use for obligations in other relationships such as schooling and employment. The purpose of this examination is to understand how these participants would visualise the English language in their future prospect and how these envisioned future identities had motivated them in language learning. Despite that, some involved factors such as career identity were also discussed in the section of the language-related profession, the future identities in this subsection focus on learner's passive learning actions in order to meet certain requirements or the social value of a non-specific territory. For instance, the wish for becoming an English teacher can

be viewed as a self-cultivated language learning motivator, while the need to find a job or high-income profession is more regarded as a sense of responsibility. The submissive learning reported in this study can be divided into two temporal stages: English learning in China and English learning at Trinity, which involves the topics such as completing a task or exam, job hunting and applying for doctoral programme.

In terms of the English study in China, some participants, Lan, Shi, Yi and Zhi, for instance, saw their English learning as a process to complete various tests and exams. Zhi, in particular, told of his high school's English learning as follows:

> Although I couldn't be called as an excellent student in learning English, just in that kind of environment, I could achieve a good result in the exam without showing a great enthusiasm for it. (F2:296)

He further summarised that 'the most important reason for learning English is for things like exams and jobs'. Other members, such as Sa and Xu, questioned the operation of combining test and employment as the learning objective.

> Sa: You have to prepare the major test, because learning English well is a very big…how to say, very vague concept. What's the proof of 'learning well'? The answer is TEM 4 and TEM 8. (F2:324)
>
> Xu: …the certificate for TEM 8 is extremely valuable. When those companies ask your English level in the interview, TEM 8 will perfectly solve everything. (F2: 328)

Their opinion can be seen as a mainstream attitude from the participants during this period of learning. Yu, for example, described her impression as these test 'may be more important than the degree itself', while Yi demonstrated her dissatisfaction about this 'learning for exam', as she could not see 'long-term goals or plans'. Notwithstanding the above arguments, there is no evident proof from their responses in the attitudinal questionnaire that the participants had suffered from such negative learning purposes when they learned English in China, In fact, compared with the scores given to the same items after they had studied in Ireland over six months, the mean total scores at this stage are 7% and 1% lower respectively on the statement *I learn English in order to find a more prestigious job later on* and *I have to learn English for exams and assignments*, which was contradicted to the participants' utterances in the later interviews that they denied the existence of similar factors after coming to Ireland. One reasonable explanation can be those participants have transferred the orientation to other similar identities such as pursuing a doctoral degree. Six students (Lan, Qi, Sa, Xu, Yi and Yu) in this research has demonstrated the intention of applying for a doctoral programme. Among them, four (Lan, Sa, Yi and Yu) admitted that they considered it as a way to stay in Ireland or escape employment in lieu of extending the passion for proper knowledge. As a result, Sa and Yu gave up the idea before the completion of this research[8].

[8] At the time of writing this section Qi and Xu had successfully enrolled in the doctoral programme at Trinity College Dublin.

In summary, in the preceding sections, I have presented and discussed the results from participants' reflection on English learning before, during and after their participation in the EAP programme at Trinity. I interpreted the emerged motivational factors according to the four components, Self-Cultivation, Self-Improvement, Self-Transformation and Sense of Responsibility depicted in neo-Confucian motivational constructs, and revealed their possible effects on the language learning of learners of this inquiry. In the remainder of the chapter, I shift the focus on the second research question, probing the notable motivational dynamics of some language learners.

6.8 Research Question 2

As is mentioned earlier, this section addresses the temporal nature of participants' English learning motivation over the course of their English learning at Trinity. The process-oriented praxis of this research has been informed by an integration of social-dynamic views of L2 motivation and the interpretation of Neo-Confucian educational philosophy. In keeping with this praxis, a qualitative longitudinal analytical method was employed to perceive and interpret participants' motivational flux from their interview narratives as well as researcher's field notes assembled over a ten-month period. The primary goal is to explore participants' motivational variations in different learning contexts. A further aim is to understand the impact of Confucian heritage culture on these learners by analysing the motivational loss or growth of particular factors. Not all members of the inquiry are chosen as the core participants in this section. The selection is much determined by the length of their overall participation in fieldwork conduction, which includes in-class observation, focus group interviews and additional questionnaires. As a result, a group of five students (Li, Qi, Yi, Yu and Zhi) has emerged, and according to my temporal coding, each learning motives are compared among four periods: English learning in China; English learning in EAP class; English learning in Academic Writing course and Futures. The result can only be used to portray a motivational development of each participant, which cannot be generalised to learners of the same group.

6.8.1 Case 1: Li

This section examines the fluctuation in the English learning motivation of Li, who was in her late twenties, studying Linguistics as her Master programme at Trinity. She has a bachelor degree in Computer Science and had worked in the banking system for five years before coming to Ireland. As noted in Section 6.4.4, Li could speak three languages and was keen on the discovery of all languages. This passion for discovery encouraged her to attend various language classes provided in Trinity notwithstanding that sometimes she was much beyond the exit level of the language proficiency for them. For example, apart from the EAP class and writing course which I observed, she also enrolled in a Japanese class provided by Trinity Centre for Asian Studies and kept a good attendance record for it.

Over the course of my fieldwork conduction, Li has participated in both terms of class observation, two rounds of focus group interview and three questionnaire surveys.

In relation to Li's English learning motivation in China, most knowledge has been learned from her reflections in the first interview, in which she ascribed her preliminary English learning to the participation of English speciality class and English superiority in the local environment. As the fieldwork developed, her innate inquisitiveness for exploration has gradually surfaced in my field log as well as her later self-account. These factors, along with her solid interest in the language, shows that she was considerably influenced by self-cultivated motivation through this period of English learning. Nonetheless, a motivational change could be observed in this period within the same type of motive, as Li indicated that her first contact with English was 'very novel' and with her learning progressed, this picture was slowly 'diluted', which, to a certain degree, attests the changeability of motives under the Self-Cultivation construct.

Despite that English was solely regarded as a personal interest or a dispensable skill in her domestic learning, Li decided to choose Linguistics as her postgraduate researching area, which is completely different from her previous major and employing experience in China. The authentic reason for this shift is yet unknown, in spite of her vague attitude about seeking a dissimilar lifestyle. In terms of the participation in the EAP class, Li's responses in the research has demonstrated a variety of motivational factors. In the focus group discussion, she explained the decision was prompted by the wish to improve English on academic performances and Sa' suggestion, while according to the result calculated from the two questionnaires administered in the Michaelmas Term, Self-Improvement and Self-Cultivation motives stuck out with an average score of 88% and 82% respectively.

During the transitional period between the two terms, Li encountered what she saw as a life course transition on the New Year's Eve (noted in Section 6.6.3) and recounted how she was stimulated to 'work hard' to us in the final focus group. This assertion is somehow echoed by her attitudinal questionnaire in the Hilary Term, in which the scores for Self-Transformation scales dramatically grew. Following this transformation in attitude, she continued English learning in the writing course provided in the second term. The decision was also motivated by her passion for discovery and the need to improve academic writing ability documented in my field notes. Regardless of these various motivators, her attendance in this term fell from 83% to 58% (Appendix A) due to unspecified reasons such as 'forget to go to the class', which implies her language learning motivation had undergone a very unstable span.

Like most participants, Li did not present a very clear attitude toward the language learning in the future prospect. She related this to the uncertainty of her settlement and stated that the further language learning much depended on the prospective requirement. She also cast doubt on the notion of lifelong learning and for her, English learning is 'need to' rather than 'want to' at this stage. To recap, Li' language learning motivation has demonstrated a remarkable distinction delineated by different learning phases:

Self-cultivated motives in the domestic learning period, Self-Improvement related factors in the Trinity learning period and unknown or Sense of responsibility in the future.

6.8.2 Case 2: Qi

In this section, I present and evaluate Qi's English learning motivation across each learning period based on the summarised themes. As noted in Section 4.4, Qi was studying Applied Linguistics at Trinity and has an educational background in Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language. This major entails the proficient use of both target language (Chinese) and communicative language (English), which therefore facilitated Qi with a satisfactory English competence, TEM 8 in national college English test and band 7.0 in IELTS. Her English learning motivation was, in general, rather high conforming to my impression stated in the field notes:

> She (Qi) does not speak much in the public and will think a lot before answering, but I find that she is that kind of person who decides everything on her own, and once decided, she will stick to it till the end. This characteristic is also reflected on her language learning in the EAP programme. (6 November 2015)

Overall, Qi was enrolled during two sessions of participant observation, participated in three rounds of focus group interviews and completed all questionnaire.

Qi's English learning experience in China can be divided into two phases: the preliminary language learning before her enrollment in college and the college language learning. In the first phase, like Li, her English learning behaviours appeared to originate as the participation in English speciality class, which was prompted by what she referred as 'follow the crowd' as well as her parents' suggestion. These forms of Sense of responsibility did not hamper her enthusiasm for language learning, and alternatively, she chose a language-related major (TCFL) as her study focus in the college. Thereafter Qi has outwardly displayed an attentiveness to the function of English in cross-culture communication, and she actively integrated this interest with the knowledge in her own discipline, as she stated in the interview, 'I feel it's a pleasure to teach a language through another language.' As a consequence, throughout this stage, Qi maintained such self-cultivated motivations, against the fact that the enjoyment of language learning was sporadically disturbed with exhaustion in 'reciting words'.

Following her learning motives and original career identity in China, Qi proceeded with the major of language teaching at Trinity and participated in the EAP class in the Michaelmas Term. A direct motive for attending this course, as she said, was 'to improve her performance in oral presentation and academic writing'. Due to the absence from the second focus group interview, her attitude to the language learning in this phase could be mainly perceived from my reflections in the field notes, on which I recorded her attendance as 92% (missed one class), and summarised that she was constantly inspired by her determination of self-improvement as well as the wish for being a Chinese teacher. This review was echoed by her responses in the first two questionnaire surveys, in which motivational factors related to Self-Cultivation and Self-Improvement were consistently scored higher.

	Self-cultivation	Self-improvement	Self-transformation	Sense of responsibility
Questionnaire 1	80%	88%	68%	60%
Questionnaire 2	80%	88%	64%	60%

Table 23 Qi's rating on motivational factors in the Michaelmas Term

The predominance of the aforementioned motives in Qi's English learning maintained strongly in the Hilary Term. In this term, Qi attended the Academic Writing course with an impressive attendance of 100%. She attributed the high attendance to the perception of language improvement and the positive experience in Bill's class. In terms of language improvement, Qi told of how she perceived a progress of language learning in the class of her own discipline.

> Qi: It's…I can understand the class of particular teachers. I remember When I first came here, the first time I was in Henry's class. I couldn't understand anything at all. I didn't know where he was talking about. But in the later classes, on the last but one class, I found I could understand his joke and I felt very happy.
>
> Renfeng: Only in this class?
>
> Qi: Yes. I just found it's really difficult to follow him in the class at the beginning. When I found I could understand his joke, I was very happy. (F3:149)

From the segment, we can see that Qi not only succeeded in identifying her improvement, but also generated a sense of fulfilment about this result. On top of that, Qi related this improvement to the language learning approach used in the class.

> Qi: But since I came here, the thing is, members in the group will encourage you to express your idea. And you also want to participate in the discussion, and get involved, and present your point of view on the discussed topic, so I feel it's quite good. (F3: 183)

This interpretation was again supported by the findings in the questionnaire investigation, which is provided below:

	Self-cultivation	Self-improvement	Self-transformation	Sense of responsibility
Questionnaire 3	88%	100%	72%	68%
Questionnaire 4	84%	96%	72%	72%

Table 24 Qi's rating on motivational factors in the Hilary Term

Comparing the two tables, we can easily note that there was an upward growth in the column 'Sense of Responsibility'. This motivational change conforms to Qi's perspective of English learning in the future. During my in-class observation in the Hilary Term, she kept asking me about issues related to doctoral study, which was written in my notes as such:

> After the class, I had a conversation with Qi, who asked me about the conditions for applying for the PhD programme in Trinity. As it was not the first time that she mentioned this topic, I was curious about her true momentum and asked why did she want to pursue a doctoral degree. She replied that she wants to teach Chinese in the university and the doctoral degree is a must for entering the college, though she just wants to teach a language. (26 February 2016)

What has emerged from the extract, alongside her dialogue in the subsequent interview, seems to demonstrate a complex integration of motivations on Qi's perception of the language use in her future

identity. On one hand, she viewed English learning or improving as an approach to satisfy relevant requirements in the doctoral study. On the other hand, the ultimate purpose in the pursuance of a doctoral degree is informed by her language-related interest.

6.8.3 Case 3: Yi

In this section, I provide a longitudinal evaluation of Yi's English learning motives in the context of neo-Confucian motivational constructs. Throughout the fieldwork, Yi has participated in my class observation in both terms and has completed two rounds of the interview as well as three attitudinal questionnaire surveys. On her domestic language learning trajectory, Yi showed a sign in the first interview that she has undergone an exceedingly uncomfortable length of time, first, owing to the unavailability of enough language contact at an early age. The unpleasantness was exacerbated by the decision and consistent pressures from her parents asking her to study English as the major in college. Much of her parents' attitude came from the social preconception that language learning is 'suitable for girls', which was noted in Section 6.7.2. In addition to that, Yi also undertook the responsibility to set a good role model for her younger brother in the language learning. All these pressures led to her idea of going abroad to escape from the current environment. The major motivational factors demonstrated in this period were described under Sense of Responsibility and Self-Transformation, which resulted in a passive and negative learning experience.

> Renfeng: Do you like learning English?
>
> Yu: Yeah, very enjoyable
>
> Yi: Totally not. How can it be possible?
>
> Shi: I just take it as a module No special feeling.
>
> Yi: Extremely painful
>
> Renfeng: Extremely painful?
>
> Yi: Extremely painful (F1:237)

As a consequence, Yi failed to achieve a satisfactory result from her college English learning, compared with other English majors of this inquiry, with only a TEM 4 accomplished.

In the Michaelmas Term, Yi chose to attend the EAP class 'without hesitation' due to a fear of 'behind the progress' in her major study. During the participation in the class, it seemed that she has developed some self-cultivated motivations documented in my notes as 'Yi has become more and more interested in English learning, at least, the language class.' This motivation gained through formal language learning, along with other motivational factors could be reflected in her responses to the attitudinal questionnaires at this time.

	Self-cultivation	Self-improvement	Self-transformation	Sense of responsibility
Questionnaire 1	76%	80%	76%	80%
Questionnaire 2	84%	92%	76%	88%

Table 25 Yi's rating on motivational factors in the Michaelmas Term

From the table, we can see that there was a significant increase in the column 'Self-Cultivation' and 'Self-Improvement', despite that 'Sense of Responsibility' yet played a crucial part of Yi's language learning motivation. This increase in ratings was caused by higher scores given to the scales of the enjoyment of English, a sense of accomplishment and language confidence.

The enjoyment of the learning approaches in the EAP programme has inspired Yi to participated in the writing course in the Hilary Term, which was reported in her dialogue in the third interview.

> If you ask me, I would say I prefer this comfortable and easy learning pattern in EAP class. Because When I was learning English in China, it's very painful… So it's really good here, you won't feel very difficult after the learning in the class. You just play games and time passed. If you want me to make a comparison, I prefer this kind of freestyle. (F3:164)

Apart from that, Yi's English learning decision in this phase was also influenced by her frustration in the essay writing. As discussed in Section 6.5.1, she still had problems in issues such as grammatical control and paraphrasing, and could not complete the essays within the assigned time. In this regard, she has demonstrated a strong wish for improving her English writing ability by actively involving in the writing exercises in the class and distributing her writing samples to Bill as well as other teaching staffs in the Centre. An overview of the components of motivational factors is provided in the following table.

	Self-cultivation	Self-improvement	Self-transformation	Sense of responsibility
Questionnaire 3	88%	88%	80%	76%

Table 26 Yi's rating on motivational factors in the Michaelmas Term

Comparing the two tables, we may perceive that: first, Yi's motivation related to Sense of Responsibility slightly dropped, probably due to the long distance apart from her family and other pressures in China. Second, a growing realisation of the English learning motives related to Self-Cultivation and Self-Transformation has happened to Yi, which was echoed in her account of an awkward experience caused by the unfamiliarity of the words 'circuit breaker' and 'trip'.

> Yi: I am living with my landlord. And one day I was alone at home and the fridge in the kitchen didn't work, so I texted my landlord. She replied 'it appears that a circuit breaker has tripped'. Just this short message, I didn't understand 'circuit breaker' and 'tripped'.
>
> Renfeng: How did you finally solve the problem?
>
> Yi: Based on my similar experience in China. (chuckles) So I would say don't dream that I can really learn this language in a year or two. There is always more to learn. It's about lifelong learning. (F3:220)

The incident enabled Yi to reshape her perception of the language learning, adding the notion 'lifelong learning' to her previous recognition, which may lay the foundation for her English identity in the future.

Apart from that, she was also striving for the application to a doctoral programme in Trinity, though a motivation behind this, as she admitted, was the resistance to the previous environment in China.

6.8.4 Case 4: Yu

The fourth character discussed in the longitudinal investigation is Yu, who was studying Applied Linguistics at Trinity and had an educational background in English study. The extensive English learning period facilitated Yu with the highest language proficiency in the group, with TEM 8 in national college English test and band 7.5 in IELTS. She also had a two-year working experience as an English teacher in China and a direct reason for her to withdraw from the previous employment was the decision to recharge herself, which can be viewed as the need for self-cultivating.

> You know I have worked for two years in China before I come here. Taught for two years. I came here because I feel that the programme provides something lacking in my previous working experience. So I come here, trying to learn that part and go back, continuing my previous work. I am not saying I will do exactly the same thing. But it may still be English teaching. (F1:372)

Overall, Yu has participated in two sessions of the observation, two rounds of the focus group and three questionnaire surveys from December 2015 to April 2016.

From the interview, Yu seemed to possess an interest in the English language at a very young age, due to one of her early experiences in which she was impressed by a Chinese girl who could talk in fluent English with a Canadian couple. Henceforth, she began to learn English and maintained an exceptionally positive way of looking at English learning, as she explained that she 'simply likes the language' and 'can always learn it very well'. In Yu's case, the prior access to the language was advantageous to her in a way that her English competence stood out in the crowd during the domestic learning period. The perception of this language achievement, in turn, enabled her to construct a self-confidence in language learning, and therefore she would anticipate having such sense of self-accomplishment by keeping on with the learning.

Following this genuine enthusiasm for English and language learning, Yu decided to study language-related programme at Trinity and her preceding mixed-type of language learning motivation gradually gravitated to the language need in the major study as well as the desire to improve her English in academic performances, which was frequently reflected in her conversations with me before and after EAP classes reported in my field notes.

> Before class started, Yu asked me about my PhD progress and how long do I need for it. She found the English for academic use was different from what she had imagined and used Henry's class as an example to explain this. She mentioned the difficulties in his class, such as the accent and a lack of time for preview, and admitted that 'much could be improved' in her academic English.(15 October 2015)

On account of her absence from the second and third focus group interview and her consistent participation in the last three questionnaire surveys, Yu's motivational movement between the two terms

was summaries based on her responses to the questionnaire items and was presented in the following chart.

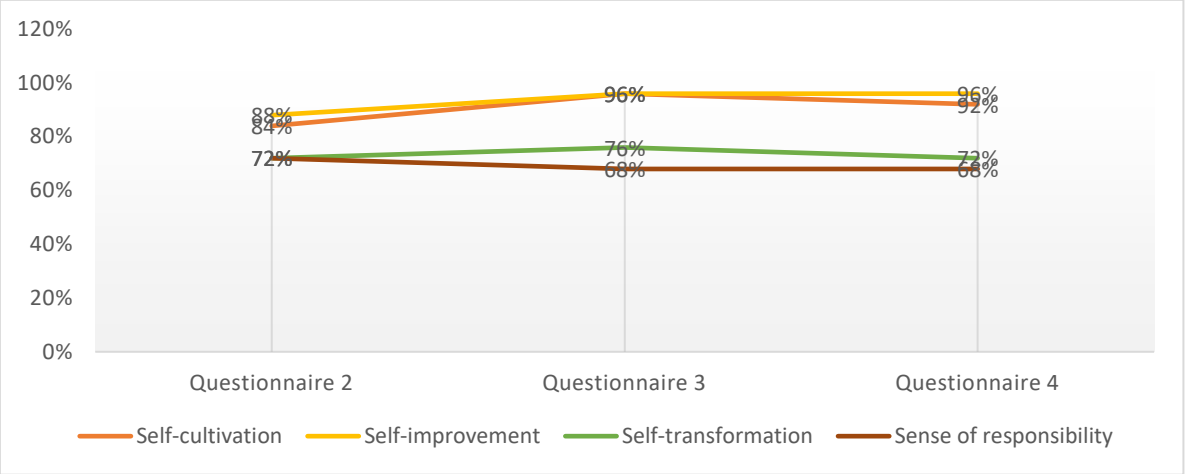


Figure 18 Yu's language learning motivation in the two terms

From the above figure, we can see that Yu's four clustered motivational factors were relatively stable during this period, despite a minor fluctuation in Self-Transformation. The factors related to Self-Cultivation and Self-Improvement sustained their crucial impact, while the factors pertaining to Self-Transformation and Sense of Responsibility came after them. In her latest account, Yu told of her improvement in writing as she no longer needed 'a translation first' and believed she was 'one step closer to a native speaker'.

In terms of English learning in the future, Yu was against the idea of learning for specific purposes and advocated 'lifelong learning'. When I asked her about the goals related to English in the future, she replied:

> Yu: I think now English is not the major concern in making the objectives, because first, we have been here for quite long, and we won't actively see where our English is still not enough. We are used to the English context. It doesn't mean we don't need to improve English. Just like, for me, I won't say I give a very concrete goal on this. (F4:295)

Apart from that, she also found a translation job in Ireland, which involves a great deal of language-related tasks and processes. In her words, she began to anticipate her language identity work in this country.

6.8.5 Case 5: Zhi

This section and this chapter, will come to an end by discussing the motivational flux of Zhi, who was studying Environmental Engineering at Trinity and has a domestic educational background in the same area. Zhi can be seen as the most distinctive participant of this inquiry in many aspects: 1) He is the only male participant of the group, 2) He is the only student who was not studying social sciences and 3) He is the only participant who was married when I conducted the research. All these unique identities made

him a fascinating research subject. Over the course of my fieldwork conduction, Zhi was involved in both terms of class observation, two rounds of focus group interview and three questionnaire surveys.

Virtually all the Zhi's English learning experience in China was associated with the formal English class provided at different stages. As a consequence, he perceived the English language solely as a subject and believed that 'there was no difference between learning English and learning Chinese'. Notwithstanding this perception, he still complied with his role as a good student by achieving satisfactory results in various English tests, without 'showing an enthusiasm for it'. However, this attitude or belief has been completely transformed throughout Zhi's English learning at Trinity. The following figure was summarised from Zhi's responses to the attitudinal questionnaires, which can basically describe his motivational development during this period.

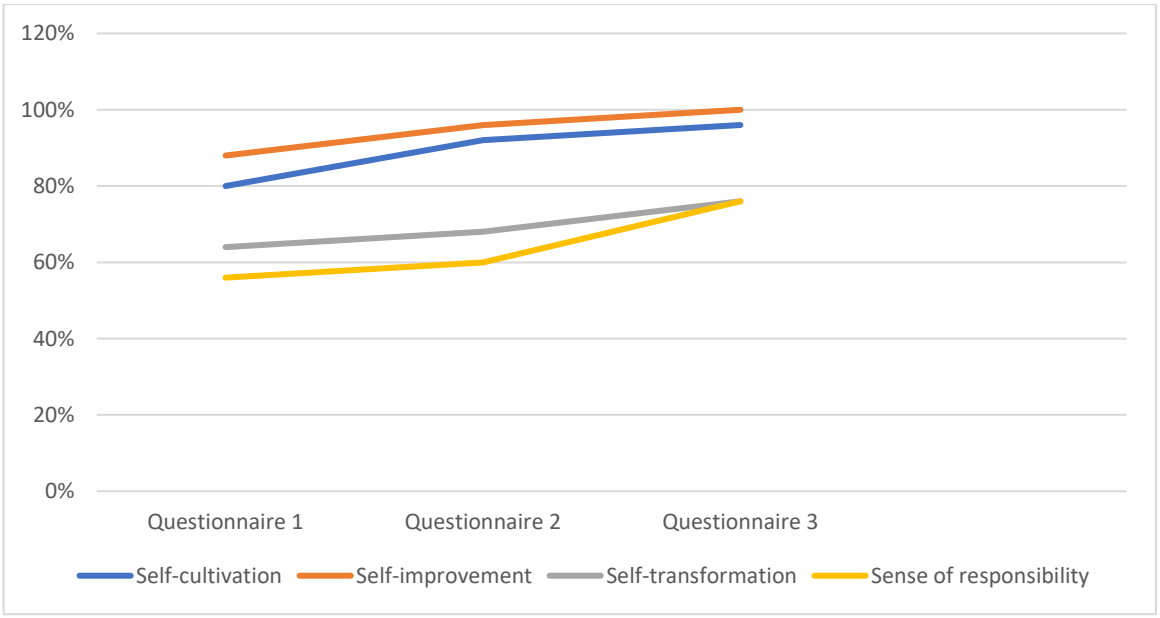


Figure 19 Zhi's motivational development

What has emerged from the figure seemed to be that Zhi has continually developed his language learning motivation on all four aspects. Amongst them, factors related to Self-Cultivation and Self-Improvement were in a more dominant position. A major reason behind this remarkable change, according to Zhi's reflection in the interviews, was his participation in the EAP programme. Unlike some participants, such as Sa and Xu, who underrated the effect of the EAP class, Zhi highly evaluated the class' function of inspiring his performance in language skills such as oral presentation. As a result, he completed the two sessions of learning with an attendance of 100%. Through his experience in the class, Zhi's language identity was strongly attached to the need for cross-cultural communication. By making friends in the class, he 'was freed from' the humdrum daily routine in Ireland. Apart from that, the class also provided him with an opportunity to witness his language improvement by an array of autonomous learning activities.

Despite the foremost influence from the formal language schooling, as noted in Figure 19, there was also a significant increase in Self-Transformation and Sense of Responsibility. The former was echoed

by Zhi's reflection on an awkward experience in a store in which he failed to communicate with an Irish shop assistant (see Section 6.6.2), while the latter could be explained as the motivation of his wife's presence in the class (see Section 6.7).

By way of conclusion, this section has examined the motivational development of five English learners in a different learning context. The primary findings from these cases are reported as follows: 1) Most participants have demonstrated a mix-type language learning motivation, and factors related to Self-Cultivation and Self-Improvement were in a more dominant position in this phase of learning; 2) Self-Cultivated motives are more dynamic compared with other motivational factors, and are inclined to appear at the early stage of language learning; 3) Self-Cultivation and Self-Transformation are not temporal or bounded in time, which can exert a long-term effect on language learners 4) Self-Improvement and Sense of Responsibility possess the characteristic of temporal effectiveness, which can vanish and reappear at a particular time.

6.9 Conclusion

This chapter has responded to the research questions of this inquiry by presenting and interpreting the themes generated from the analytical process mentioned in Chapter 5. First, I situated the discussion in the wider context of the employed theoretical structure and reiterated the pivotal questions of this research, to provide an instruction for the following discussion. Then, I discussed the findings of emerged motivational factors by grouping and evaluating them in accord with four sub-questions. Specifically, Section 6.4 discussed the self-cultivated motivators manifested in the language learning process of these target learners. Section 6.5 focused on this cohort's expectation for language improvement as well as a sense of fulfilment. In section 6.6, I investigated learner's reflection on preceding experiences related to English and evaluated their impact on this cohort's attitudes and values. In section 6.6, I interpreted the connection between learner's learning objectives and their obligations in various relationships. The remainder of this chapter pictured the motivational dynamic of five learners, by individually comparing their language learning motivation across four learning spans. In the following chapter, I draw together my findings discussed in this chapter and conclude the practicability of introducing the Neo-Confucian motivational construct into L2 motivation research of this group.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

This final chapter brings together the discussion of the main strands of this research, which is divided into three sections. The first section revolves around the summary of the structures and key arguments in the theoretical framework, fieldwork design, and data presenting and analysis. The second section focuses on the major contributions based on the research findings discussed in the previous chapter. The last section highlights some limitations of this project and provides implications for the relevant future research.

7.2 Summary of previous chapters

In the first chapter, I employ Neo-Confucian learning philosophy as the potential research scope for informing the conduct of this inquiry. Due to a renaissance of Confucian philosophy in the domain of education studies, a large number of Confucian concepts and works have been recently reinterpreted and transformed to the modern educational research context (Angle, 2009, 2011; Cheng, 2006; Nguyen, Cees, and Pilot, 2006; Tweed and Lehman, 2002; Yang, 2011). Given this situation, I first examined the pertinent research and interpretations on the Confucian educational lens, through which, I specified the research context by explaining two salient facets of this inquiry: Confucian heritage learning culture and Neo-Confucian perspectives. I further narrowed this theoretical scope by placing the interpretative focus on Neo-Confucian learning concepts depicted in one of the Neo-Confucian canon, *The Great Learning*, which describes the approaches of Three Objectives and Eight Steps for individual to practise learning behaviours and pursue utmost moralities (Keenan, 2011). To introduce these approaches in the current research, I reviewed the previous studies discussing motivational aspects of the Neo-Confucian learning philosophy, and accordingly summarised and proposed a Neo-Confucian motivational construct for this study (Bashral et al., 2011; Cheng and Low, 2010; Hwang et al., 2012; Kim, 2000; Wang, 2006; Wang and King, 2006; Wong, 2014). From the summary, and with the comprehension of Neo-Confucian 'self' concept (Hsu, 1985; Kwak et al., 2016; Liu, 2004; Tu, 1985; Yao, 1996; Yao, 1999), the remodelled construct consists of four components: Self-Cultivation, Self-Improvement, Self-Transformation and Sense of Responsibility. The presented motivational construct demonstrates a dynamic learning process underpinned with various motivational components. At the same time, it emphasises the interrelationships between the learner and his or her social identities. In the end of this chapter, I compared this construct with some well-established Western motivation theories and argued the validity of using the construct in L2 motivation research.

Following this argument, in Chapter Two, I reviewed the L2 motivation theories and models respectively from social psychological, cognitive-situates and process-oriented perspectives (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011). The latest development of the mainstream research angle in the L2 motivation research has

indicated a paradigm shift in order to grasp the temporal and dynamic nature of language learning motivation in an increasingly interrelated learning context (Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011; Larsen-Freeman and Cameron, 2008; Ushioda, 2009). Through a critical review of the relevant literature, I argued that Dörnyei and Ushioda's (2011) call for a temporal and relational view of studying L2 motivation are ideal for the modernised research context. In their view, language learning motivation fluctuates and varies with one's relational self or social identities over the course of learning, which therefore requires 'a more retrospective type of research approach' (Ushioda, 1996: 240). In this regard, I re-emphasised that a broader research perspective from a different discipline could be used in L2 motivation research.

In Chapter Three, I shifted the focus on the methodological design of the fieldwork. As this research aims to understand the motivational factors of a particular language learning group, as well as their potential temporal changes, the most appropriate research method can be a longitudinal mixed design. To respond to the call for a more relational and retrospective approach (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011), qualitative data collection instruments including participant observation and focus group interviews were employed to perceive the interaction between the learners' learning context and their motivation, and to understand the learning process from learners' reflection. In addition, in order to collect the background information of the participants and to triangulate the qualitative data, a demographic questionnaire and an attitudinal questionnaire were respectively designed.

Chapter Four described the research site and participants. It first gave an account of the function and purposes of the Centre for English Language Learning and Teaching and the English for Academic Purposes programme. Then, it illustrated how a group of eleven students was chosen as the core participants in this research and described some characteristics of the participants such as gender, age, education background, employment experience and family background. Lastly, it provided an overview of the data collected over the ten-month fieldwork, which includes field notes from ten months in class observation, transcripts of four focus group interviews and attitudinal questionnaires administered at four times. The quantitative data were presented and analysed in descriptive statistics.

In Chapter Five, I described the use of coding as the analytical approach for qualitative data in this research. I presented a summary of the schematic of the coding process and reviewed the relevant literature for the most appropriate coding methods (Saldaña, 2013). Overall, the analytical process contains two cycles of data coding and involves both bottom-up and top-down coding methods. I outlined the methods used for data transcription and translation before the actual coding process, and delineated the specific coding approaches throughout the process. The themes emerged from this process were categorised and examined under the theoretical construct of this research.

The thematic categories emerged from the analytical process was interpreted and discussed in Chapter Six, which is divided into three sections. The first section reviewed the research aim, theoretical framework and pivotal questions of the inquiry. The second section attempted to answer the first main

research question by evaluating and comparing salient themes generated from the qualitative analyses. These themes were further grouped and interpreted in keeping with four sub-questions related to four components of the Neo-Confucian motivational construct. The last section concerns the longitudinal facet of this research, which compared the participants' data across four learning periods. Due to the nature of qualitative approaches and the fact that various analytical methods were employed in this research, the descrption and discussion presented in Chapter Six are inevitably partial, and the data can be arranged and examined in many other ways. For instance, themes such as 'linguistic aptitude' sporadically surfaced in the interviews, are not well matched in the original theoretical framework. Motivational factor 'language-related profession' (Section 6.4.3) and 'obligation to future identity' (Section 6.7.3) are interchangeably indicated in other motivational constructs. Yet, the prime concern of this study is to examine how the Neo-Confucian motivational construct, seemed to contribute to the comprehension of Chinese learner motivation in the EAP programme at Trinity.

I now summarise how the evidence from the data indicates that the Neo-Confucian motivational system, consisting of Self-Cultivation, Self-Improvement, Self-Transformation and Sense of Responsibility, supports Chinese learner motivation and creates an favourable language learning situation which responds to learners' cultural needs.

7.3 Self-Cultivation

The data gathered through participants' reflection on their English learning process of this inquiry have shown that all the participants have mixed motivational factors for engaging in the EAP programme at Trinity, amongst which, one of the most notable motives is developing their knowledge about the language for particular uses or interests by carrying out learning practices in formal English classes. This wish for extending and deepening one's knowledge has been well identified and depicted in various interpretations of *The Great Learning* (Keenan, 2011; Li, 2013; Wong, 2014). According to the interpretations, the core conceptual system of Neo-Confucian learning philosophy is established on grounds of 'acquiring knowledge and skills' (Li, 2013: 113). Through conducting fundamental learning behaviours, one is considered to commence his or her learning process. This learning process is also addressed in Neo-Confucian learning philosophy as the process of Self-Cultivation due to the sequential steps within the original text of *The Great Learning*: '物格而后知至；知至而后意诚；意诚而后心正；心正而后身修' (when things are investigated, knowledge is extended; when knowledge is extended, the intention becomes; when the intention becomes sincere, the mind is rectified; when the mind is rectified, one's person is cultivated). Therefore, for Neo-Confucian practitioners and researchers, Self-Cultivation embodies the meaning of a self-developing process, which is primarily manifested as gaining and refining a comprehensive understanding of the knowledge and its surroundings (Keenan, 2011; Wang and King, 2006).

As to the research context of learning motivation, according to the Neo-Confucian motivational construct (Section 2.5.1, in Chapter Two), Self-Cultivation includes: 1) the acquisition of the knowledge or skill from a formal or informal education, 2) the exploratory of a particular area related to one's profession or interest, and 3) the passion of discovery. All these factors were reported, to a greater or lesser extent, in the participants' English learning experiences in this study. Specifically, the first motivational factor is represented and interpreted as informal and formal language schooling from the data analysis. Unquestionably, all the participants in this research have undergone such a factor in the past and current English learning. The reason for their participation in different kinds of language education varies from personal selection to school's compulsion and through this motivational factor, learners are not presumed to carry interests or specific purposes to the learning context. As a result, two participants, Yi and Zhi, reported the problem of lacking motivation in the domestic English learning experience (Section 6.4.5, in Chapter Six). Yet, the informal and formal learning is still contemplated as a major motivational factor in the Neo-Confucian motivational construct, as it emphasises the function of learning context as a dwelling for other motivational factors or immediate environmental influence (e.g. class settings and learning approaches) to exert impacts on learners' learning behaviour. In the above Yi and Zhi's examples, they both eventually managed to achieve language progress by dint of other factors such as 'going abroad' and 'passing the exam' (Section 6.4.5). Moreover, different learning contexts can lead to dissimilar learning motivations on the same learner. In the same cases, in contrast to their attitudes about English learning in China, both Yi and Zhi indicated a drastic change in attitudes by reporting their enjoyment of English learning in the EAP class. This kind of change normally occurs as a result of disparities between immediate environmental factors such as class content, class settings and learning approaches (Dörnyei, 2005).

The second motivational factor in the Self-Cultivation related construct describes learning for particular interests, which contains the following themes emerged from the interpreted data:

1. Fondness for the language or language learning
2. Cross-cultural communication
3. Language's related professions

In the given context, the first theme refers to participants' enjoyment of English or English learning, while the last two themes concern participants' desire for using English as a medium for understanding other areas. There is much evidence from participants' reflection on their English learning experience that these factors can substantially encourage individuals learning behaviour. Eight out of eleven participants (Jun, Li, Qi, Sa, Xu, Yu, Yi and Zhi) claimed an interest in English learning, notwithstanding that some participants, for instance, Xu and Yu, has developed this interest from a very early age, while some other participants' (Yi and Zhi) interests were coeval with their learning in the EAP programme (Section 6.4.1, in Chapter Six). In their retrospective account of the preceding English learning process, many participants (Li, Qi, Sa, Yi, Yu and Zhi) demonstrated that their overall enjoyment of language learning endured through time and would not be much affected by a distaste for

specific linguistic elements (Section 6.4.1). In terms of using English as a medium for additional purposes, all the participants in this study indicated the need and wish for both tangible and intangible communication with other cultures sustain their practices of English language learning. Through the cross-cultural communication, some participants, such as Jun and Qi, have developed the awareness that language is an integral part of the culture and learning the language is deemed an access to knowing the culture (Section 6.4.2, in Chapter Six). Apart from that, a stronger motive for the participants to attend the EAP class seemed to be the need for using English in their own discipline's studies. In many cases, language-driven obstacles were perceived in participants' development of the identity in their own research area. By acquiring the language, the participants were able to seek a better understanding of the content in their major learnings. In additional to that, some participants (Qi and Yu) integrated the language learning with their favoured profession and envisioned the language use in their future identities (Section 6.4.3). All these facts corroborate the motivational steps depicted in *The Great Learning*, as first 'investigate the knowledge' and then 'extend one's knowledge to a broader sense' (Keenan, 2011: 40).

The last self-cultivated factor describes the passion of discovery as a particular motive in some participants' English learning process. This passion of discovery can be derived from one's unfamiliarity with the language or the inquisitive nature in one's character. In this research, two participants (Li and Shi) have indicated such a sign in their decision-making of learning English. Li claimed to enjoy the feeling of exploring values from 'new things', which prompted her to attend the writing course in the Hilary Term. On the other hand, Shi attributed her participation in English speciality class to the unfamiliarity and strangeness of the language (Section 6.4.4, in Chapter Six). Although this factor is not widely perceived on all the participants, Li and Shi's cases seem to prove that individuals' disposition to unknowns can influence their learning decision.

Overall, the early part of this section has summarised and examined the Self-Cultivation related motivational factors on the participating language learners. Primary conclusions can be drawn as such: 1) Self-Cultivation demonstrates a diversity of motivational factors in terms of language learning, and 2) Self-Cultivation can exert a noticeable impact on individual's language learning behaviour. In order to unearth the nature of this motivational synthesis, longitudinal discussion about participants' motivational changes was examined. Through this process, two additional findings were summarised: 3) Self-Cultivation motivation can be acquired or developed during the learning process and 4) Self-Cultivation motivation can exert a long-term effect on language learners and cannot be easily eliminated or changed. The former conclusion is drawn from Yi's case, in which she undergone a transformative in attitude toward English learning from 'extremely painful' to 'enjoyment of language learning' (see Section 6.8.3, in Chapter Six), while the latter is summarised on the participants' consistent positive response to the relevant items in attitudinal questionnaires.

7.4 Self-Improvement

Self-Improvement has been portrayed in *The Great Learning* as two objectives, namely, '在明明德' (to glorify righteous behaviour) and '在止于至善' (to attain utmost goodness' to achieve the way of learning). For Neo-Confucian scholars, Self-Improvement is viewed as the progressive learning which contains the essential meaning of Neo-Confucian learning concept, that is, 'to learn for one's self' (Kim, 2000: 123). In the light of this concept, Self-Improvement embodies one's dedication to his or her self which entails perseverance to continually aim at re-establishing one's self (Kim, 2000: 124). Given the current research context of L2 motivation, as summarised in the Neo-Confucian motivational construct, Self-Improvement consists of 1) to improve oneself or one's performance in particular area, 2) to have a sense of self-fulfilment and 3) to anticipate having a sense of self-accomplishment by completing certain tasks or difficulties.

As with many language difficulties and unsuccessful communication experiences provided by the participants in Section 6.5.1, the first Self-Improvement related motivational factor emerged from the interpretative process concerns participants' wish for improving specific linguistic skills. The particular skills which they wanted to improve varied evidently with their learning stages. In Michaelmas Term, the participating students had demonstrated a diversity in the language problems, including pronunciation, grammatical control in spoken English, listening difficulty and idiosyncratic use of the language (Section 6.5.1, in Chapter Six). In Hilary Term, all the participants prioritised academic writing as their major problem in this phase of language learning. As a consequence, these various language problems or difficulties had stimulated the participants to attend English classes for different purposes. Ten participants selected EAP class in Michaelmas Term, while Eight participants attended Academic Writing class in Hilary Term.

Having discussed the participants' motivation before achieving any kind of language improvement, the second motivational factor in this section concerns their cognitive process after accomplishing relevant goals in language learning. This motivational factor, also known as a sense of fulfilment in the Neo-Confucian motivational construct, describes the situation in which one is inspired by his or her satisfaction of the improvement achieved. In this case, a fundamental stride towards this motivation is the awareness of one's progress. I can report that virtually all the participants in this research could perceive their language improvement, and accordingly, most of them enjoyed the feeling of such accomplishments (Section 6.5.2, in Chapter Six). Through a sense of fulfilment, a learner is likely to duplicate or even augment his or her learning behaviour to retain the pleasant feeling. A consistent iteration of this mental process can result in a different motivational factor under the Self-Improvement motivational scale: to anticipate having a sense of self-accomplishment by completing certain tasks or difficulties. With regard to this research, only Yu had reported a similar motivational factor. In her narrative of previous English learning experience, she explained her English learning motivation as a circle of 'learning', 'see the result', 'happy about the result' and 'keep learning' (Section 6.5.2).

Apart from probing how Self-Improvement has motivated the English learning of this cohort from a cross-sectional perspective, I also consulted the longitudinal data, aiming to explore Self-Improvement from a temporal and relational view. By comparing the participant's scores in the four attitudinal questionnaires, I found that Self-Improvement played a predominant role in participants' language learning motivation during their English learning at Trinity. However, the qualitative longitudinal analysis of five participants' motivational flux has revealed that such a motivational factor did not appear in their domestic language learning experiences and future learning plan. In other words, Self-Improvement was coeval with participants' learning span at Trinity, and its influence disappeared when the current learning process ended. Taking all these into consideration, the main characteristics of Self-Improvement can be concluded as follows:

- Self-Improvement is a type of context-bounded motivation, which exerts temporal effects on individual's learning.
- When Self-Improvement occurs, it will play an overriding role in individual's learning motivation.

7.5 Self-Transformation

The Great Learning represents Self-Transformation as the learning objective and steps '在亲民' (to transform the person), '正心' (making one's intention sincere) and '修身' (rectifying one's mind). Those objectives and steps in the original text involve the process that one achieves conforming to the highest righteousness, or renews one's self (Hwang, 2007: 82). Therefore, Self-Transformation can be viewed as the advanced learning stages, in which learning happens by dint of information transference from Self-Cultivation. In terms of the motivational aspect of Neo-Confucian learning philosophy, Self-Transformation regards learning as 'a change in understanding of self' (Pratt, 1992: 311). Accordingly, it is summarised in the Neo-Confucian motivational construct as such: 1) the changes one has experienced in which learning can help to change one's perspectives on self and 2) the wish of being identical to the role model in a positive way.

The above-mentioned features of Self-Transformation have long been, to a greater or lesser extent, reflected in the concept of shame in Confucianism, which conceptualises shame as 'an emotion as well as a human capacity that directs the person inward for self-examination' and motivates the person toward 'socially and morally desirable change' (Li and Wang, 2012: 772). From the perspective of Confucianism, admitting one's misconduct and wishing for changing oneself when he or she has behaved inappropriately is regarded as an act of expiation requiring personal bravery, which is highly valued and encouraged in Chinese culture. It should be noted that the concept of shame in Confucianism refers to an 'autonomous shame', seen as a 'predisposition to feel ashamed' when one does something wrong because it seems wrong to oneself, and not because others regard it as wrong or shameful' (Tiward, 2017: 45). Therefore, Confucian sense of shame entails a specific setting in which the level of

this shame varies with individuals. Similarly, functioning as a motivator, it cannot be generally observed from all learners. Nonetheless, the interview data in this research confirms that such motivation appeared in some of the participants' English learning process. From the participants' reflection, one of the most notable factors is associated with their negative English experiences. These experiences refer to the language-related predicaments which can cause an unpleasant feeling or an incentive to one's language confidence or even self-esteem. Four out of eleven participants reported such predicaments in their language experience. For instance, Yi recounted the embarrassing moment when her English skills were deprecated in the public. Zhi told of an anecdote in which he could not understand the English of a shop assistant. Sa described her failure of teaching English to a group of migrant students. Jun and Yi related the troubles caused by their unfamiliarity with some vocabularies (Section 6.6.2, in Chapter Six). The subsequent data showed that these predicaments have led to changes in the participants' attitude about their English abilities and the value of English in their social context. In other words, the participants began to realise that language learning could change their relevant negative perspectives on self. In order to demonstrate the capacity to retain self-worth, the participants were encouraged to carry out language learning behaviours.

On the other hand, positive language experience is also found to exert an influence on some participants' language learning motivation. Yu told of her early experience in which she was impressed by a Chinese girl who talked in fluent English with a Canadian couple. Xu related her initial language contact in the Olympic opening ceremony when she was attracted by the English accent of one host (Section 6.6.1, in Chapter Six). In the two examples, both participants indicated the wish for being identical to their role models, and in this case, English served as the key factor to achieve this wish. By learning English, the participants were able to imitate or emotionally approach their role models' behaviour.

Apart from the two motivational factors described above, a third theme emerged from the participants' reflective account in relation to Self-Transformation is the imminent or recognisable changes in lifestyle. This Self-Transformation factor considers one's attitude changes about the life, both one's previous life experience and one's value or knowledge about future identities. Four of the eleven participants had indicated such changes over the course of this fieldwork. Yi regarded learning English as the only possible way to leave her previous depressing environment. Zhi stated that learning in the EAP class freed him from a boring life in Ireland. Zhuan believed that English could broaden her vision in her future life. Li told of how her English learning was urged by a free lifestyle. (Section 6.6.3, in Chapter Six). It appears from these examples that individual's learning actions can be influenced by lifestyle-related factors.

In addition to the preceding findings of how Self-Transformation has influenced the language learning motivation of the participating group, the longitudinal examination reveals that the effect of this motivation is profound. As mentioned earlier in this section, the concept of Self-Transformation as an approach to change one's perception of self is much associated with Confucian 'autonomous shame', in which Confucius suggests a sense of unease based on personal belief, requiring the judgement that one

has failed or will fail to live up to his or her own standard. According to Confucian teachings (e.g. *Analects* and *Mencius*), this sense of feeling is innate, which can be evoked in particular circumstances. In the meantime, it is autonomous, and not social, as individuals' wish for making the change or being transformed is autonomous if and only if it is elicited by one's own view about what needs to be changed on oneself (Tiward, 2017). Once the perception has been created, it can hardly be influenced by social or environmental changes. In this study, all participants who reported such motivation factor have shown a sign that their English learning were consistently motivated by the previous language experiences or specific perceptions about language learning. By way of conclusion, Self-Transformation is endowed with the following characteristics:

- Self-Transformation can exert a long-term impact on individual's learning.
- The effectiveness of Self-Transformation motivation depends on individual's emotional response to the relevant experience.
- Self-Transformation cannot be purposefully developed.

7.6 Sense of Responsibility

From the interpretation of the text of *The Great Learning*, Sense of Responsibility is extracted from the final three steps in the way of learning: '齐家' (regulating one's family), '治国' (ordering the country) and '平天下' (bringing peace to all). The notion is said to be fostered under the Confucian and Confucian heritage culture in which ethical relationships are highly evaluated (e.g. family and filial piety). Within this context, Sense of Responsibility can be perceived as individual's expectation for 'fulfilling role obligations in relationships, particular to family members and the community at a large' (Hwang, 2011: 1012; Wong, 2014: 324). Abiding by this comprehension, Sense of Responsibility in the motivational construct focuses on individual's response to the relationships, which consists of two major factors: 1) relationships influence and 2) submissive response to obligations in one's future identities.

With regard to relationships influence on language learning motivation, impacts from family members arose in many of the reflections given by the participants. According to these reflections, family impact subsumes parents' interference, family edifying and inspiring other family members. Specifically, parents' interference refers to the situation in which participants were advised or compelled to learn English by their parents. Four students (Qi, Shi, Yi and Yu) reported that their English learning choices were, to a greater or lesser extent degree, made by their parents. Under such circumstances, the participants had no other choice but to learn the language, which resulted in attitudinal resistance to the language on one participant (Yi) (Section 6.7.1, in Chapter Six). Family edifying refers to the situation in which participants were unconsciously influenced by the language atmosphere in the family. Four participants (Lan, Xu, Zhi and Zhuan) reported that they gained a language influence from their family members, and such an influence had positively encouraged their language learning (Section 6.7.1). The

last factor refers to the situation in which participants were required to set a role model for other family members. Two participants, Shi and Yi, reported that they were obliged to paint an image of good English learner for their younger brother (Section 6.7.1). I was alert to the fact that, during the interview process, some participants (Lan, Li, Zhuan, Xu) responded definitive 'no' to the question whether their learning motivation was influenced by their family. Through an attentive examination of the data, it is not hard to notice that such response from these participants was inconsistent with their descriptions in the remainder of the scripts as well as the attitudinal questionnaires. As mentioned above, Lan, Xu and Zhuan have evidently demonstrated a motivational factor of family edifying (Section 6.7.1), while Li also reported that her English learning behaviours such as attending the English specialty class was substantially supported by her parents. One reasonable explanation for this contradiction could be the ambiguity caused by the interview question, under which family influence was instinctively understood as family interference by the participants. This interpretation was somehow corroborated in the follow-up interview, through which I interrogated the issue by changing the question into 'will you think about your family factors in making a decision?' and the result showed that none of the participants gave negative response to this question. Another possible interpretation is related to the motivational fluctuation that some participants have experienced, which is discussed at the end of this section.

The second major factor concerning relationship influence is the environmental influence. Unlike the language learning environment mentioned in Self-Cultivation, the environmental influence herein describes participant's expectation for fulfilling other people's view of English learning, for instance, communal belief about the language and peer's recommendation for a particular class. In the narratives of participant's English learning in China, Qi and Sa related their reason for attending English speciality class as a result of following their peers' decision. Li attributed her domestic language learning to the English superiority in her hometown. Sa, Xu and Yi assigned partial reasons for selecting English as their college major to the preconception that language study is suitable for females (Section 6.7.2, in Chapter Six). Even after coming to the new learning environment in Ireland, some participants, such as Li, Shi and Zhuan, still reported that their participation in the EAP class was a direct influence from other Chinese students (Section 6.7.2).

The last motivational factors found in this group is related to participants' response to obligations in their future identities, schooling and employment in particular. The future identities in Sense of Responsibility focus on participants' passive learning actions to meet the requirements or general social values. The factor reported in this research can be divided into two temporal phases: English learning in China and English learning at Trinity. In the first learning phase, seven students (Lan, Sa, Shi, Xu, Yi, Yu and Zhi) linked their major English learning objective with specific tests such as TEM, CET and IELTS. Amongst them, Sa and Xu furthered the need for passing those tests as the requirement for future employment (Section 6.7.3, in Chapter Six). As a result, most participants showed their dislike of learning for such reasons. In the second phase, according to the interview data, none of the participants seemed to retain the influence of this motivational factor, despite four participants (Lan, Sa, Yi and Yu)

indicated the tendency to pursue a doctoral degree as a way to stay abroad or escape employment (Section 6.7.3).

Through a longitudinal interpretation of participants' qualitative data, an interesting topic surfaced in relation to whether some of the learner cohort diminished Sense of Responsibility, particularly the factors of relationships influence, in their language learning since they came to Ireland. As mentioned in the discussion of relationship influence section, some participants claimed in the final interview that family influences on their language learning has been discontinued after a period of time in Ireland, and they further attributed such a view to the disconnection from the heritage environment. A typical example can be seen in Yu's interview script, in which she described studying in Ireland as an escape from domestic pressures (F4: 460). Yet, after a careful re-examination of both qualitative and quantitative data, no sufficient evidence can be found in this research to support the above claim. The result of attitudinal questionnaires illustrated that overall there is no clear fall in the percentage of Sense of Responsibility reported by the participants over the course of the study. The qualitative data concerning participants' language learning in Ireland indicated that notwithstanding the absence of a direct influence from parents, relatives or other social expectations in the home country, this cohort could be motivated by preconceptions and pressures occurred in the host country instead. For instance, Yu and Zhi admitted their English learning was, by some means, encouraged by their new family members (boyfriend and wife) in Ireland (Section 6.7.1). Li, Shi and Zhuan ascribed their participation in the EAP class to the direct influence of their Chinese classmates (Section 6.7.2). In addition, four students, Lan, Sa, Yi and Yu considered English learning essential to fulfil obligations in their future identities (staying abroad). The above descriptions of data demonstrate that, in this research, Sense of Responsibility as a motivator is not contingent on proximity to the heritage environment, albeit particular motivational factors under this scale, such as family interference may be transformed into other manifestations. To sum up, Sense of Responsibility in this research holds the following features:

- Sense of Responsibility is strongly attached to Confucian heritage cultures.
- Sense of Responsibility normally represents individual's most extrinsic motivations.

7.7 Summary of contributions

With an upsurge in the number of Chinese students studying for master's degree in Ireland, English learning becomes increasingly significant for this cohort to interact with the learning and social context in the host community. From this viewpoint, equipping this learner cohort with better language skills will be advantageous to both Chinese students and the host community. This process requires the host community, particular the language practitioners, to foster a favourable language learning environment, first through comprehending the learning motivations of this group. Meanwhile, as these learners have undergone an extensive and systematic English learning process in China, ascertaining the difference between their language learning motivation in different learning contexts can be exceptionally

enthralling. However, the distinctive cultural identity of this learner group has impeded the factual interpretation of their L2 motivation using the mainstream Western L2 motivation theories.

Given this situation, the first original and the most important contribution of this study is introducing Neo-Confucian learning philosophy into the field of L2 motivation research. The philosophical perspective situates the participating students into the Confucian heritage context and consequently examines their inner motives of language learning from four constructs depicted in *The Great Learning*: Self-Cultivation, Self-Improvement, Self-Transformation and Sense of Responsibility. This move can be viewed as the first attempt to systematically use an Eastern theory in the relevant research, which greatly enriches the current L2 motivation theories. Moreover, the application of this theory was established on a summary of pertinent Western frameworks as well as an empirical investigation using Western conventional research methods. Therefore, this study can also be seen as an endeavour to bridge Eastern learning values with Western motivational approaches. The data gathered are of substantial value for proposing an inspirational approach in researching language motivation of similar groups.

The original contribution is also reflected in the design of this empirical investigation. The study employs a retrospective and longitudinal approach in response to the call from Ushioda (1996a, 2001) for qualitative approaches from a temporal view researching L2 motivation. The retrospective approach involved focus group interviews asking the participants to reflect on their learning process in their own words, which ensures an in-depth understanding of their unobservable motivation. The longitudinal design provides the possibility to look into the temporal facet of L2 motivation by identifying motivational changes of the study group.

The results of this inquiry indicate a successful application of Neo-Confucian motivational construct in the domain of L2 motivation, which proves that even at the present time, the ancient Eastern philosophical tradition has been yet functional in motivation studies. From the findings, all four motivational components subsumed in the construct were displayed in the participants' learning process. Amongst them, Self-Cultivation and Self-Improvement exerted a major impact on this cohort's language learning in the non-Confucian heritage context. Therefore, corresponding measures can be purposefully taken by language institutions or classes to improve learner's motivation on these aspects. The results also hint at a dynamic nature of some motivational components, which requires a further examination. This, along with other implications is presented in the next section.

7.8 Limitations of this project and future implications

This doctoral project is vulnerable to an array of limitations. As noted in the previous section, the introduction of this Confucian philosophical construct into L2 motivation research is still at an inceptive stage. Due to a lack of sufficient conceptual framework and empirical studies, the construct is summarised based on various interpretations of *The Great Learning*, which may lead to an incomplete understanding of some motivational aspects. Because of the same reason, the description of this

motivational construct is heavily influenced by the Self system proposed by Confucian scholars. However, I noticed that the term 'self' derives from Western literature and contains a wide range of meanings. In psychology and sociology, the term 'self' is often interchangeably used with 'identity'. Therefore, I have misgivings about whether the term 'self' can truly represent the concepts in the Eastern philosophy. In terms of the fieldwork design and implementation, the qualitative-focused methods selection determined that the findings cannot be generalised to a larger population. As participant observation is adopted as the main data collection instrument in this research, the sample size therefore much depends on the number of Chinese students attending the classes I observed. In spite of the fact that more than one class was observed during the same term, in the end, only eleven students participated in my research project. At the same time, Chinese students were not the only ethnic group in the class, which meant I need to place my focus on particular learners during the observation. For other data collection instruments, attrition and inconsistent attendance were the major problems that beset my longitudinal analyses. Some students only completed half of the questionnaire surveys, while others participated in the surveys inconsistently. This, along with the small sample size decided that the current research did not fit for using inferential statistical techniques, which brought difficulties to my longitudinal interpretation of the data. Regarding the data analysis, as all the interviews were conducted in Mandarin, a translation process was completed. Despite various translation methods had been applied to maximumly reflect the information conveyed by the Chinese participants, it was inevitable to have some loss of information in the translated script.

As this research pioneers the use of Neo-Confucian learning philosophy in L2 motivation research and with the limitations mentioned above, much could be improved and remained undeveloped. It is my hope that this research would encourage future studies to refine the use of the Neo-Confucian motivational model in the L2 motivation research. It is also my hope that this research would motivate future studies to explore language learning from Eastern conceptual perspectives, and to integrate these perspectives with Western theoretical frameworks, furthering the current perception of language learning.

Some specific approaches for advancing the findings of this inquiry are presented as follows. As this study focuses on a group of Chinese postgraduate students learning English in Ireland, the further research could be expanded to other learner groups, such as Chinese undergraduates. Another possible research direction is conducting a comparative study of the Chinese students in the Confucian heritage context with those in the non-Confucian heritage context. With regard to theoretical aspects, an in-depth interpretation of the Neo-Confucian motivational concept, as well as Confucian Self system, is highly recommended, which can be possibly achieved by comparing motivational values depicted in *The Great Learning* with other Confucian canons, or other Eastern philosophical perspectives such as Buddhism and Taoism. Apart from that, as noted in the previous section, a dynamic nature of the current motivational constructs (Self-Cultivation, Self-Improvement, Self-Transformation and Sense of Responsibility) requires further examination. According to the Western mainstream interpretation of

The Great learning and the remodelled Neo-Confucian motivational construct in this research, four motivational components are interrelated during one's learning process (Figure 3, in Chapter One). Hence, it is valuable to understand the relationships between these factors (e.g. whether Self-Cultivation can gradually evolve into Self-Transformation). A longitudinal investigation of four types of motivation on an individual learner would help with this issue. In terms of the fieldwork design, I would suggest the future research to conduct participant observations (if necessary) in a class which only has Chinese learners. A larger group of participants is also suggested to incorporate inferential statistical techniques for generalising the research findings. Regarding the longitudinal aspect of this research, a narrative inquiry may be useful for later studies aiming to collect a richer qualitative data from participants' learning experiences over a long period.

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Appendix A: Field notes for participant observation

Fieldnotes

Thursday, 24th September 2015 Arts Building

I went to Bill's EAP class for my first time of class observation. The class is set up in a rather big lecture room in Arts Building, which equipped with a computer, a screen projector, a blackboard, a plastic table and a dozen chairs. I am very familiar with this room, because it is also used as the classroom for my Mandarin class. I would not say the environment is 'pleasant' for studying in the late hours, whereas it can provide both the language teacher and the students some flexibilities in terms of language activities and group works.

There are eight students in the class and only two of them are Chinese, Yu and Zhi. I knew Yu before this class through an informal meeting within the School of Linguistics. She is studying applied linguistics modules in our school. Before she came here, she worked as an English teacher in a private English teaching institute in China. As for Zhi, it is my first time to meet him in this class. I didn't have a chance to talk much with him and just exchanged our WeChat account for later contact. The rest of the students in the class are from different countries like Brazil, France and Spain. I started to worry about the participant number in my research and told my concern to Bill. He explained the class had just set in and more students were expected to join the class in the coming weeks. He also suggested me to come to class on week 2 or week 3 and therefore he could have a basic idea of the participants of each class.

The class served more as an introduction to the module. Each student was given a course handbook. In the first half of the class, Bill guided the students to review the content in the book, the theme of each lesson and the working methods which will later be used in the course. There was a 10 to 15 minutes' break, during which I had a brief conversation with Yu. She told me where she lived in Dublin and her feeling about the current living environment.

In the second half, students were asked to write down and present their individual objectives of this class. It was the first time that students were encouraged to speak in the class. I could tell Zhi was a little bit nervous (late I confirmed with Zhi), as his voice was shaking during the presenting. He said he wanted to improve his spoken English to freely communicate with English native speakers by the end of this term and he was very confident about this goal. Yu, on the other hand, felt the class might be helpful to improve her academic English. However, after the class, she told me that a more important reason was she wanted to adjust to the English learning context. She said that she was not sure whether she could understand

the class or complete an English essay and she thought the EAP class was one approach to know everything quickly.

The class ended around 9 o'clock in the evening. Since the Chinese students needed to catch the bus to go home and they were not very familiar with their neighbourhood, they hurriedly packed their things and left, but they proposed we could have a coffee or dinner after they settle down.

Friday, 2nd October 2015 South Leicester Street

In order to observe more Chinese students in the class, and because of the advice given by Bill. I moved to Friday afternoon's EAP class in the second week. The class is arranged in a seminar room in the building on South Leicester Street, with a walking distance to the main campus. The room is much modernised compared with that in Arts Building, which is equipped with whiteboards, an individual computer and a screen projector. There are wooden folding tables in the centre of the room and chairs on the sides. The biggest advantage of this room is that it contains large windows on one side of the room, providing much better natural light in the daytime. A shortcoming is it can only accommodate few people, for furniture has taken most of the space.

Seven students turned up in the class. Amongst them, three are Chinese: Li, Qi and Sa. They are all studying Master programme under the School of Linguistics. Li works on Linguistics; Qi studies Applied Linguistics and Sa is taught in English Language Teaching programme. I have known Qi and Sa before their orientation week at Trinity through WeChat group and had shown them around the campus. Sa has a very cheerful personality which makes her popular among the students. Qi seems to be shy in front of the public and she did not speak much in the class. I did not know much about Li before this class. Sa told me she is studying in the same school and is living on the campus.

In the first half of the class, students reviewed the expressions and conventions used in writing correspondence. I spent time discussing the language used in email writing with a Brazilian student. Only by this time, I began to realise the difficulty in observation in this class. In order to use as much English as possible in a different task, students are encouraged to work with their peers with different nationalities. Most of the time, I was assigned to work with Non-Chinese learners, which caused a problem in observing other Chinese students while working in the group. After the group work, Bill introduced the ELP self-assessment worksheet and asked students to assess their own English proficiency level. All three Chinese students classified their level as B2 and wished for further improvement.

During the break, I talked with Li, Qi and Sa. They were interested in my research topic and agreed to participate in the research. Sa showed me the places she had visited in Dublin. She said she lived with her cousin but was looking for accommodation on campus, because she thought she could not enjoy much freedom living with relatives. Qi also expressed the idea to move closer to the city centre, and Li confirmed that she is living on campus, which is 'a great convenience'.

In the second half, students were given a list of descriptions and were asked to find someone in the class who fits the description by asking different descriptive questions. I had a chance to exchange the information with Li. She said she was not very self-disciplined and could speak three languages, Mandarin, Cantonese and English. I found that She could speak a very fluent English with hardly any accent.

Apart from the Chinese students, most students in the EAP class took me as 'one of them'. In the presenting session, Bill also asked my opinions about the relevant issues. All these made me feel that I have been accepted in the class and therefore I was more confident in the subsequent observations.

Thursday, 8th October 2015 Arts Building

I did not participate the Thursday's class in the second week, hoping the class could completely settle down and more Chinese students would attend the class. Apparently, things did not progress as I expected. Only one more Chinese student, Yi, came to the class. I have known Yi in her orientation week. She is studying ELT in School of Linguistics and has a bachelor degree in English Studies in China. Yu and Zhi also appeared in the class. Apart from the Chinese students, I found the formation of the learner group in this class has been greatly changed and I do not know half of the students. This, as later I talked with Bill, is one of the characteristics of the non-credit bearing module. Students do not feel obliged to participate in every class and they are flexible to move between the classes.

The first half of the class mainly revolve around the activity of 'My old bag'. Some students were invited to present their characters using three objects. Zhi was the only Chinese student being invited to present in front of the class. He talked about the basketball, one particular book and the marriage ring. From the presentation, he is very much influenced by his personal interest and family member, wife in particular. Although there were still some grammatical and pronunciation errors in his speech, I could see he was very confident about his language using on the given topics.

In the second half of the class, students were divided into groups of three to describe words by using synonyms and antonyms. Before the activity, Bill prepared a number of slips of paper with an academic word on each of them, and randomly distributed them to the students. Each student had a few pieces and students took turns to describe the words in the group. When one was explaining, the other two group members were responsible for guessing the word. During the activity, I was working with Yi and another Italian student. I was still adjusting myself to the observation while participating in the group work. The class atmosphere was splendid at this time. Everyone was fully engaged in the activity, trying to explain and guess more words. As Yi told me later, she seemed to be too concentrated on the 'game' to forget that it was an exercise about academic vocabulary.

Aa the class coming to the end, Bill gave a brief introduction about using linking words to structure academic speech and he said most of the content would be discussed in the following week. I think some students, like Yu, wanted to spend more time on this topic.

Friday, 9th October 2015 South Leicester Street

I was delighted to see two more Chinese students coming to the Friday's class, Shi and Zhuan. They were also from School of Linguistics, studying Applied Linguistics and ELT respectively. They told me they learned the information about this class from other Chinese classmates and thought the class would be helpful for their language adjustment to the new learning context. With the two new Chinese students, I have five participants (Li, Qi, Sa, Shi, Zhuan) on Friday's class.

The class content was much similar to Thursday's class. At the beginning of the class, some students presented three objects in relation to their characters. Qi and Sa were among the presenters and gave a speech of three personal belongings. Both presentations were excellently completed, despite that Bill corrected a small grammatical error in Sa's presentation. I was particularly interested in Chinese students' subtle emotional responses to people's correction or suggestion. As I understood, sometimes such an action can cause a negative influence on some students' language confidence or learning motivation. It seemed that Sa happily accepted the suggestion and participated in the following activities without any influences. I guess this is because Bill is so skilled in the teaching techniques in a way that he always cares about students' learning motivation and can give them suggestions without provoking unpleasant feelings. After the presentation, I spent time working with Sa and a Spanish student on words-guessing activity. The activity was very popular among the students. In our group work, Sa had an in-depth discussion with the Spanish student about

	the synonym of a particular word. At the same time, I could see, in the other group, Li and Qi kept asking Bill about the use of some words. In the second half, Bill listed some linking words and explained how to use them in spoken discourse. An exercise sheet was distributed to the students for practicing the relevant knowledge. After the class, I conducted the first focus group interview with Qi, Shi and Zhuan from this class, and Yi and Yu from Thursday's class. The focus group was arranged in the seminar room of Trinity Centre for Asian studies. Students sat around the tables and I used a digital recorder for the interview recording. The interview lasted an hour and the students seemed to enjoy participating in a group interview like this. They were given the freedom to develop their own topics and sometimes, I found it difficult to guide the topic back to my plan. Thursday, 15th October 2015 Arts Building Before class started, Yu asked me about my PhD progress and how long do I need for it. She found the English for academic use was different from what she had imagined and used Henry's class as an example to explain this. She mentioned the difficulties in his class, such as the accent and a lack of time for preview, and admitted that 'much could be improved' in her academic English. At the same time, another Chinese student joined this class. According to her conversation with Bill before the class, she demonstrated an impressive oral English skill and appeared to be very familiar with the EAP class. In the first half, Bill carried on the topic of linking words. I spent time working with students from other countries in the practices. Unlike Friday's class in which Chinese students were the majority and I could always work with Chinese students, Thursday's class is more integrated in terms of students' nationality. Although I understood the danger of forming a task group with members for the same language background, failing to work with Chinese students means some loss of information about the target group during the language activities. During the break, I talked to the new Chinese student, Xu. I learned that she is studying Comparative Literature and moved from Tuesday's EAP class. As I explained my research project to her, she was happy to participate in the research group and agreed to come to the Thursday's class in the rest of the term. The second half of the class focused on noting-taking skills. Students were asked to take notes on two short video clips. Based on their notes, they tried to answer some comprehension questions and discussed the topic in groups. After the class, I told the participants about my plan for questionnaire survey and invited them to take part in it.

Friday, 16th October 2015 South Leicester Street

The Friday's class has really settled down. I found sometimes, Bill did not arrange the class exactly following the course syllabus and sometimes there was a difference between Thursday's and Friday's class in content. I think such a difference is good for both the language teacher and students in terms of motivation. Students in Friday's class spent longer time on exercises about linking words. From their facial expressions, I could read that this decision is very popular. Li told me that it's very easy to feel sleepy on Friday afternoon and more group works were necessary. Qi added that it's better to balance the length for various learning practices in the class because she would immediately feel exhausted after a long-time discussion.

In the rest of the class, students were told in the following weeks, they would have English debates about some topics. They were given a list of topics and instructions for the coming debate exercise. Everyone seemed to be excited about the activity apart from Shi, who worried about her public speaking skills. She was always quite in the class and did not actively speak in front of the class. The reason for this kind of behaviour, I don't know whether is related to her character or caused by her unfamiliarity with the class.

After the class, I administered the first attitudinal questionnaire survey with some participants (Li, Qi, Sa, Shi, Yi, Zhi, Zhuan). The survey took place in the same seminar room for the focus group interview last week. I explained the purpose of this survey and mentioned some ethical issues, as participants needed to put their name in the questionnaire. All the participants expressed that they were happy to give the relevant information and they had no problem in understanding each item. In this case, the process went very smoothly and took less than ten minutes. Some students, such as Li and Sa, were interested in the design of some items in the questionnaire, as they have never been involved in the attitudinal questions of English learning like those. I explained that I am researching language learning motivation from an Eastern philosophical perspective, which is rather new in this area. The explained research plan seemed to draw curiosities from all the participants, though I know they don't really understand the study.

Thursday, 22nd October 2015 Arts Building

I am surprised to see another Chinese student in the Thursday's class. I talked with her before the class and therefore knew her name, Lan, and major at Trinity. She originally attended Wednesday's EAP class and came here today as she missed her class this week. She

accepted my invitation for participating in the research project and tried to rearrange her class schedule to Thursday. So far, I have five participants (Lan, Xu, Yi, Yu and Zhi) from Thursday's class.

The academic content of the class began to develop from sentences to paragraphs. In the first forty minutes, the class was working on paragraph structure. Students were each given a handout from Oxford paragraphs and were asked to analyse and discuss the textual cohesion with their neighbouring students. A typical feature for Chinese students in this kind of group work is that they are great team players in the group, but they won't make themselves stand out in the whole class. This brought difficulties to my field notes for recording anything 'unexpected' or 'conspicuous'. Till the moment, it seemed that most Chinese students carefully participated in various language activities and tried not to be 'over-behaved' in the class. Students from other countries such as Brazil were much more lively and vigorous in the class. They were more willing to express their opinion and doubts in public and sometimes they even encouraged the Chinese students to do so. This was precisely reflected in the second group work associated with the review of preposition 'at'. In this session, students were each given a gap-filling sheet to judge the proper use of 'at'. As I was sitting at the very back of the classroom, I could see that most Chinese students were playing the supporting role in the group discussion.

The second half of the class focused more on oral presentation practices. On the request of Bill, students worked in pairs explaining one key concept from their academic areas to each other. Students who completed explaining and listening were regrouped and were asked to continually explain to other students. I first worked with a Brazilian engineering, and then moved to a French literature group. During the process, I also observed Yi's presentation in two different groups. I could see there was an improvement between her two presentations in terms of fluency and language structure. After the group, Bill asked three students to repeat the explanation in front of the class. Yu was one of the representatives and she explained a term in Second Language Acquisition. Her presentation was clear and easy to understand and she admitted she could see her progress after each time of repetition.

After the class, I had a quick chat with Yi and Yu, who both indicated a satisfaction of the last class activity, as they could clearly perceive their improvement. Yi expressed the wish for more similar activities, while Yu said she was eager to know more about the preposition-related knowledge.

Friday, 23rd October 2015 South Leicester Street

	Shi didn't come to the class today. I heard from that Zhuan that She caught a cold. This led to complaints about the Irish weather amongst Chinese students before the class. I could tell that some other students such as Zhuan also had a cold from symptoms like the running nose. I think the increasingly worsened weather condition will be a potential problem for students' motivation to come to the class. The class started with the grammar focus on the preposition 'at'. The exercise and activity are very much similar to that in Thursday's class. However, I found the class atmosphere in Thursday's class is always better than Friday's. probably due to the different time slot arrangement or because of the dominance in numbers of Chinese students in Friday's class. Even in terms of the class break, students in Thursday's class always chatted with their classmates, while in Friday's class, students tended to take a rest or looking at their phones. Despite this difference, students in Friday's class were much concentrated on language focus as well as language exercises. I guess this is one of the reasons why Bill arranged the class content in dissimilar orders between the two classes. For example, as for the second topic in the class, Bill asked the students to practise academic speaking by explaining one key concept in 3 minutes. The activity lasted for 15 minutes, much shorter than it in Thursday's class. In the remainder of the class, students prepared the debate project for the week after. They were divided into two groups and voted for a favoured topic to debate. The class atmosphere became immediately better in this session. I, therefore, realised the different atmospheres and students' attitudes toward various activities were attributed to classroom settings. In Thursday's class, students have a larger and more open space to move around and form groups, while in Friday's class, students are restricted to the limited space and can only communicate with the people sitting next to them. Given this circumstance, it is necessary to choose different forms of the task. Thursday, 29th October 2015 Arts Building The atmosphere was very lively even before the class, as the following week is reading week, in which most Trinity students do not have any classes. However, for some Chinese students in School of Linguistics, the reading week is arranged in Week 12, and thus they were expecting another event: Halloween. All the Chinese students expressed that they had no relevant experience in China. Yi and Yu said they would go to the school party and were preparing the costume for it. Xu said she would spend the day in a countryside. Bill also

prepared some chocolates for the students, as he said sometimes it was very helpful to maintain their motivation.

The class started a new topic, group debate. Students were divided into four groups, choosing and preparing the topic for debate. I worked with Yu and other two Brazilian students. We chose the topic about vegetarian. We spent time thinking and discussing arguments from different perspectives. The group chemistry was brilliant. We generated ideas, encouraged other members to express and cooperated in presenting them in a written context. Yu was very active in the group work. She understood the topic in her own way and contributed many constructive suggestions. And in the end, other group members chose her to present our group's plan in front of the class.

During the break, I talked with Yu. She said she's now used to most of the major classes, but she still had problems with one particular class, in which she commented both the class content and the lecturers' teaching style were hard to understand. She also admitted that she spent the most time with Chinese after class and there were not many opportunities for her to speak English in daily life.

In the second half of the class, the topic was changed into using the present perfect in academic writing and speech. Students were each given a handout discussing the past and present perfect in academic writing. The class ended with an exercise on the relevant topic. Before leaving the class, Bill asked students to send him writing samples for 'a writing clinic'.

Friday, 30th October 2015 South Leicester Street

The Halloween atmosphere kept growing. All the conversations were related to the festival before the class. The class began with the grammar focus on preposition 'in' and the use of present perfect in academic writing. Students were divided into groups of three, discussing the gap filling exercises on the pertinent topics. Most Chinese students were fully engaged in the exercises, as some of them, Qi and Zhuan told me that they were not confident with their English grammar and such practices were a good opportunity to improve this aspect. Li and Sa were in the same group. Once they finished the task, they tried to communicate in Mandarin Chinese, which was quickly noticed by Bill. He gave them a soft warning. I understood in that situation, their Chinese came out as a result of the 'subconscious'. I often met the situation in which Chinese students were arranged in a group, especially they are the only members of the group, they felt very awkward to talk to each other in a different language. I think it is necessary to change some of these attitudes for the purpose of language

learning. The rest of the class mainly involved the preparation for group debate. Students were split into groups of three, discussing the topic of corporal punishment. They shared their previous experience of physical punishment received. Sa told of a funny story when she was in the elementary school. Shi described a horrible teacher in her junior high school. Those stories created a relaxing atmosphere in the class and students gradually formed two groups, attempting to debate the issue in the class. I think the activity (debate) was applied to great effect.

Thursday, 5th November 2015 Arts Building

Absent

Friday, 6th November 2015 South Leicester Street

Li, Shi and Zhu were absent today. I didn't know the reasons. Everyone seemed to be a little bit absent-minded. Qi mentioned to me that she found the whole campus suddenly became quite in the reading week. She also said she was mentally tired after the intensive class schedule in the first half of the term. Sa thought she now adapted to her life in Ireland, the school, the weather, the food, everything. Probably due to the reading week, including the two Chinese students, only 5 students turned up in the class. We were first divided into two groups for academic work exercise. Each student in the group described words using synonyms and antonyms, while group members guess the words. I was in the same group with Sa. The atmosphere was quite strange today. No loud discussion, no laughter. Bill had to encourage students to speak in the group. The second half of the class focused on note-taking and writing training. Students listened to some talks, answering some questions and discussing the topic in groups. Bill planned to discuss the project presentation issues, such as settling down the group, selecting the topic and so on. Because not many students came today, we just had 15 minutes to discuss the possible topics instead.

As the class is progressing into the second half of the term, I decided to write some impressions about the Chinese students in this class so far.

Li: Li came to the class, as she said, because of the recommendation from Sa. She said her major background in China was not English and when she saw all the English major students chose to attend this class, she felt 'guilty' if she did not do the same. According to my observation, she is vigorous (talkative perhaps) and curious about everything. She has an interest in different languages. From her class performances, it seems that she attends the

	EAP class mainly to explore what is happening here, and further to make some friends. Although she told me that she thought the topics and language activities in the class are 'helpful', I can tell she is more interested in the format of activities rather than the content. Qi: Qi is the typical 'good student' from a traditional Chinese perspective. She is interested in learning and will spend time on it. From the start of the term, I can see her often stay in the postgraduate reading room. She does not speak much in the public and will think a lot before answering, but I find that she is that kind of person who decides everything on her own, and once decided, she will stick to it till the end. This characteristic was also reflected on her language learning in the EAP programme. She came to the class with a rather clear purpose to improve her academic speaking and writing. She also develops her extracurricular life by engaging in various cross-cultural communications such as teaching Chinese as a foreign language. She gets well with her classmates in the class, but I can tell she is more intimate with Yu in Thursday's class. Sa: Sa has a joyful personality. She is cute and always has a pleasant smile on her face. She is also the youngest students amongst the Chinese students in the two classes and it's not difficult to find the innocent aspect of her character. She loves English and has a wide interest in cross-cultural communication. I think she likes practically using English more than learning the linguistic skills in a passive way. Therefore, she seems to perfectly fit in the learning approach in the EAP class. During the first seven weeks' participation in the EAP class, she is the most active learner amongst Chinese students. She is good at making friends with everyone in the class. Shi: Shi has missed two classes in the first seven weeks. Perhaps it's still too early to say she is less motivated in the class compared with her peers. She is very quiet in the class and doesn't talk much to me, like other Chinese students. She always comes to the class with Zhuan, whereas she seems to possess an independent lifestyle. She likes travelling, and I can see from her Wechat journal that she almost goes to the UK or other countries every weekend, alone. I hope to know more about her motivational aspects of English learning. Zhuan: Zhuan is another 'mysterious' student in the group. She has a degree in Law and has worked for a company in China for two years. She took the study at Trinity as 'a gap year', which I understand is a very popular culture in Korea in lieu of China. Apart from that, she is a K-pop lover and is keen on 'free life'. I think she perceives English more as an approach to her ideal living condition. From my observations, she doesn't speak much in the class. She prefers sitting there and being asked to express her opinions by Bill. However, after a few

contacts with her after class, I find she is very lively in front of the friends or acquaintances. Like Shi, Zhuan also knew the EAP class from her Chinese classmates.

Thursday, 12th November 2015 Arts Building

Came back to Thursday's class. I was surprised to see Zhi was happily talking with a Spanish student about basketball when I came to the class. Later, he told Bill that they went out playing basketball during the reading week. I am happy to see that he could find a non-native speaker of Chinese as his friend, which is of great help in terms of improving his English speaking and listening skills. Lan didn't come today. I heard she was in Tuesday's class in this week.

The class started with some students' presentation. None of the Chinese students presented in this class. All the presentations were followed by peer review. Yi and Zhi were asked to critical evaluated their peer's performance. It seemed that Yi was still not used to this kind of work. She tried to use the least harsh words and mentioning many merits in her review. Zhi was more straightforward. He had a clear picture of what needed to be improved, notwithstanding he was restricted with his vocabulary choices and sometimes could not precisely convey his meaning. After that, students worked in pairs reviewing preposition 'on' in speaking and writing through its form, meaning and use. Bill illustrated humorous examples about the use of 'on', which created a very lively atmosphere in the class.

During the break, Zhi asked me if I could find him a language exchange partner. He knew I am teaching Mandarin at Trinity and wanted to know if any of my students were looking for Chinese practising opportunities. I promised to keep an eye on the issue and asked him the reason for this. He explained that he needed to improve his oral and listening skills. He also mentioned that he was happy to hang out with people from other countries, but his language him from a deeper communication. I guess the statement was drawn from his basketball playing experience with the Spanish student.

In the second half, the topic was shifted to academic writing. Students spent time framing topics for essay writing, establishing focus and structure. Some students were suggested to send their introduction to essay or paper to Bill for a writing diagnosis.

After the class, I had a short conversation with Xu. She said although she was happy with the class overall, she doesn't believe it can really improve her academic performances in a short

period. She considered the class and its approaches more as a relaxation in the intensive academic term. I guess this represents the idea of some Chinese participants

Friday, 13th November 2015 South Leicester Street

Zhuan was still absent. I heard that some Chinese including Sa and Zhuan selected one module which required them to experience participant observation in other EAP classes. I don't know whether it is because they had already participated in other EAP classes earlier this week. The class content was much similar compared with yesterday's class. Students worked on the introduction writing in the beginning. Li forgot to bring her handout and shared the one with Sa. Most of time, students were busy thinking and writing. In the second half, students worked in groups on the preposition 'on' and prepared their debate in the following week. Some students had already sent their writing sample to Bill and feedbacks were given to them. As most Chinese students had a presentation to prepare for their major course, I didn't have time to talk to them individually.

Thursday, 19th November 2015 Arts Building

I found a language exchange student for Zhi during the week. He seemed to be very happy about it. He said they had met up once and would arrange the meet up every week. He also told me that they helped each other to talk in English and Chinese each about 30 minutes, with the topics involving culture, politics and economy.

Xu was not in the class today. Starting from Week 6, I found students began to 'take turns' to miss the class. The identified reasons include illness, weather and changing the time slot. To capture the authentic information for the participant's motivation, I didn't want to 'force' them to come to the class by asking 'why you didn't come to the class last week?'. Yet the decreasing number of observing participants beset my data collection. The class focused on academic writing in this week. Students presented essay topics to each other, eliciting feedback and suggestions, and worked on referencing and reporting verbs. A sheet of relevant exercise was completed by students at the end of the class.

Write down some impressions of the students in Thursday's class:

Lan: To be honest, I am not very familiar with Lan. She only appears in this class twice. I know she is studying comparative literature and from a very famous university in China. She is not active neither in the class nor in the private conversation, but she is happy to answer any questions given to her. I think she is just a little bit slow in reacting to any forms of

social interactions. She said she always makes some 'silly' mistakes in her life, such as couldn't find the classroom and booked the wrong flight ticket. It appears that she prefers to keep her away from 'socialising'.

Xu: Xu has a very strong personality. She is very straightforward and is easy to complain. I heard her complain about the weather, the campus environment, the school setting and public services. At the same time, she is a very independent and 'literary' person. She likes travelling alone with books and prefers countryside better than cities. Xu also has the best (or one of the best) English proficiency in the group. In terms of EAP class, she said she likes the approaches in the class because they are relaxing. She doesn't think the content in the class is useful.

Yi: As an English major, Yi's language competence cannot be called satisfactory. She still makes many mistakes in English speaking and writing. I think she has a clear understanding of her language ability and attempts to make improvements by all means. She is always attentive in the class and will take every opportunity to practise her oral English. She indicates more than once that she enjoys learning in Bill's class, for the learning approaches and atmosphere. She is quite confident that she can make a great progress by the end of the term.

Yu: Another good student. Doesn't speak much but has the desire to express herself. She is pretty confident about her language ability and knows how to use it. More attracted to the language-focus topic in the class, but still give a high evaluation on various activities in the class as 'they can encourage people to speak'.

Zhi: The only male learner in the group. Study environmental engineering. A little bit masculinist. Has a strong confidence in his ability and is willing to carry responsibilities. Due to his study background, he has the lowest language proficiency in the group. But he is good at noticing his weakened and makes plans for improvements. He always plays the leading role in the group discussion and asks the most questions in the class. After class, he actively looks for language exchange opportunities. Very motivated in language learning.

Friday, 20th November 2015 South Leicester Street

Sa was absent today, she told me that she would go to Tuesday's class for the assignment of class observation. Try the group debate in the class. Qi and I were in the same group, while Li, Shi and Zhuan were in the other group. The topic was 'whether drinking alcohol should be banned'. We were given the time to prepare arguments and counter-arguments within the

	group. Qi seems to have very few knowledge about alcohol, so she was searching evidence online and listening to other group members for most of the time. In the other group, I could see Li was very active organising the other team members. After the break, we began our group debate. Each student played her own role in the group. All the Chinese students successfully completed their task. They seemed to very much enjoy this activity and kept coming up with new ideas even after the debate. In the rest of the time, students worked on exercised about frequently used reporting verbs in groups. At the same time, Bill was talking with some students on their writing samples. Thursday, 26th November 2015 Arts Building No absence today. Had a chat with Yu before the class. She said she began to worry about her essay writing as the end of the term was approaching. She mentioned various difficulties she encountered in her major studies and concluded that nobody would give you an academic support in those classes in terms of how to completed the assignment. Apart from that, she was still optimistic about the result of this term's learning and claimed that she had never been so diligent. The class started with a similar group debate on the topic of 'alcohol'. This time I was in the same group with Yi and Yu. The rest of the Chinese students were in the other group. The preparation was very similar to that in the last week, despite both Yi and Yu were very dynamic contributing ideas and assigning roles. In the other group, Zhi was appointed as the team leader arranging roles and summarising arguments. When the debate started, it immediately became white-hot, as Zhi first proposed his arguments with a large number of statistical support from his own area. Other Chinese followed him joining the fierce debate. Only Lan seemed to be in a different tempol. After completing her role in the group, she changed her identity to a 'spectator'. During the break, some Chinese students were still talking the debate. Most of them were happy to see more similar language tasks in the class. Xu said the debate is the activity she liked the most. Yu and Zhi agreed with her. Yi left the class for 'family issues'. The second half started with listening practice on stress and intonation. Students watched a speech and understand the different meanings conveyed in different intonations and stresses. After that, they were divided into groups for the academic words practice. Meanwhile, Bill was giving feedback on some students' writing samples. Yu told me she really likes the way of practising vocabularies in the EAP class. It's more interesting and she could remember

many of them. However, she still hoped to know more, 'something deeper' about those vocabularies, which was not provided in the current class.

Friday, 27th November 2015 South Leicester Street

Students were numbered for their sequence to present the final project. Qi, Shi and Zhuan would present in Week 11. Li and Sa would present in Week 12. It seemed that students were very excited about the coming presentation, or the end of the term. Qi and Sa said that they would rehearse the presentation for their linguistic classes, while Shi indicated that she didn't want to spend much time and effort on this due to a very busy schedule. Following their discussion and preparation on the final project, the class started the vocabulary activity. Students were assigned a new word list and were told to describe words on it using synonyms and antonyms, while group members guessed the words. This time, many words were very strange to the students and they kept asking Bill for explanations. A vocabulary test was assigned to the students after the discussion.

In the second half, students worked on listening practice. They first listened to video clips and according to which, students tried to answer some comprehension questions and further discussed the topics in pairs.

Thursday 3rd December 2015 Arts Building

The first week for some students to present their final project. Lan and Xu didn't come to the class today. Some students didn't know whether they should present today or next week. It took a few minutes to settle everything down. Bill set up the video camera, as he would further analyse details about individual's oral presentation. Yi and Zhi presented in the class. Yi explained her research on the subject of English variation. I think she made a huge improvement compared with her presentation at the beginning of the term. She's more confident and fluent now, yet she still had some minor problems with her pronunciation. It didn't impede the delivery of meanings. Zhi, as confidence as always, presented the problem of water pollution in River Liffey. He performed very well on grammatical control this time and his project had successfully aroused the interest of most students in the class. Both presentations a lot of encouragement from their peer review.

I congratulated Yi and Zhi on their performances during the break. Both attributed the performance and improvement to the EAP class and the language teacher Bill. They reached an agreement that the class indeed motivated them in English learning. Zhi expressed the wish for coming back to the EAP class in the Hilary Term. He said he didn't care about the

repetition in terms of the content. The most important thing for him is to have the chance to speak and listen. Yi commented that now she's looking for feedback for her writing sample from Bill and hoped to focus on academic writing in the next term.

In the second half of the class, students discussed and practised the hedging devices in academic writing and some students received feedback from Bill on their writing sample. Before the class finished, Bill reminded everyone that there would be one more class in Week 12.

Friday, 4th December 2015 Arts Building

Shi and Zhuan were absent today. Only three students would present in this class including Qi. The class began with academic writing session in the first half. At the same time, Qi and Sa, received their feedback on their writings. Sa seemed to be a little bit disappointed with the result. I knew they didn't start essay writing for their major assignment and they were quite worried about that.

The whole class was very excited. Bill had to repeatedly calm everybody down. I think this is because some of them, such as Li, Qi and Sa had completed their modules in this term. They were very much looking forward to the Christmas break. Li said she wanted to move her presentation to this class, and thus she didn't need to come to the class next week.

The major task in the second half was students' final presentation. As the only Chinese presenter, Qi gave a report on language teaching curriculum design. I think this is the topic she was very familiar with and her interest was teaching Chinese. The presentation was clean and clear. She also answered some questions from 'the audience'. I cannot call her a dark horse in the class, because I know she seldom demonstrated her language ability. After the class, Qi said she was very satisfied with the learning experience in the EAP class. She further asked me whether I could find him a language exchange partner, as she wanted to teach Chinese in the next term.

Thursday, 10th December 2015 Arts Building

Came to the class today and found no Chinese students turn up. I understood students might find it's unnecessary to come to a non-compulsory class after completing their major modules. I still felt pity that I couldn't see the final presentation for some students.

Friday, 11th December 2015 South Leicester Street

The last class of the week. Very good atmosphere in the class. Only Sa and Zhi came to the class today. Zhi told me he didn't realise that there would be one more class in the last week and was hence absent from yesterday's class. In the first half, some students presented a topic on their major subjects. Sa presented her research in language curriculum design, describing the situation of Chinese students learning English. I didn't think she had any problem with the language, yet something could be improved in terms of the academic aspect. After the presentation, students completed the course evaluation forms. I helped Bill take a family photo of the class. The class finished in a very happy mood and students bad farewell to each other.

Friday, 29th January 2016 South Leicester Street

In the second term, writing course is provided for students in Trinity who want to improve English writing ability. I choose the Chinese students in Bill's class as my observation target group in this term. The class is arranged in the same seminar room which was used for the Friday's EAP class in Michaelmas Term. Before the class, some students who were interviewed last term, Sa and Qi, told me they would attend the writing course this term to solve the problem they met in the essay writing

The class size is very big. There are 18 students in the class and half of them are Chinese. Li, Qi, Sa, Yu, Yi, Zhi and Zhuan did the EAP class in the previous term. Jun and Yang are the new students I met in this term. They are doing management and literature respectively.

In the first class, Bill introduced the working method and the objective of this class. Students will take a large amount of writing exercise in the class and they can email their written samples to the teacher for detailed feedback. After talking to some Chinese students during the break, I found this idea was very popular among the students and was considered very helpful for the writing improvement. A words list was provided to students and they were asked to work on part of it in each class.

In the first session of the class, students were asked to take turns giving a brief self-introduction. At the same time, a questionnaire about needs analysis was distributed and collected amongst the students. After the introduction, Bill asked some students about their objectives of this course. Qi expressed the idea to improve her academic writing ability. Jun said she was rather confident with her Chinese writings and she hoped to improve her overall English in this class. After that, each student was given a piece of paper with questions about personal background information. They were encouraged to talk to their classmates in the

class in English, to collect as much information as possible. In the activity, I had a chance to talk with Jun and Sa. Jun showed a wide interest in different language and she was one of few students in the class who knew some Irish greeting words. While Sa, as lively as always, demonstrated her hometown dialect, successfully arousing the interest of the whole class.

During the break, I had a conversation with Qi and Yi. Qi briefly described her essay submitted and worried about the final dissertation. Yi admitted that she asked for an extension to complete one of her essays.

In the second half of the class, students were given a writing task. They needed to point out and correct the language problems in the writing samples provided. Students were fully engaged in this activity. In the end, a continuous self-assessment questionnaire was administered and students were using different emoji to give their satisfaction toward the class. The result showed all the students were very happy with the class.

Friday, 5th February 2016 South Leicester Street

Second visit to the writing course. There were some changes within the formation of this class. Some students left the class and some came in. Yang had moved to the later EAP class and Hong became the new Chinese student in this class. Later I knew that she is Zhi's wife. Li and Zhuan didn't come to the class today. I don't know whether they had registered in the writing course in this term. The class size was still very big and there was virtually no enough space for one more student.

Bill started the class with some small chit chat but quickly moved into the topic in the syllabus. The class reviewed the use of linking words in the academic writing. I found some contents were very similar to what I had observed in the Michaelmas Term. Students were then divided into groups discussing the exercise on this grammar focus. In the second half, students first reviewed the expressions and conventions in email writing and then were given writing exercises to complete in the class. The completed exercises were collected by Bill and the feedback would be given to the students in the following class.

As Bill explained at the very beginning, the writing class was not designed as an advanced level of the previous EAP class. It only focuses and extends the academic writing part of the EAP class. Many topics and activities would be similar to those in the EAP class. I presumed all the old students were clear about this, and I was very curious about how those students would look at the things they had already experienced.

To my surprise, it seemed that most students were still concentrated on each activity and language focus. Yi and Zhi carefully wrote notes for different linguistic points. Qi was also busy taking down something in her notebook. None of them showed a sign of boredom or distraction. With the curiosity, I asked Qi and Yi why they came back to the class this term. Both expressed that the essay writing experience during the winter break pushed them to select the module. Qi said that, in this class, at least, she could send a writing sample to Bill and received very detailed feedback, which as she perceived, was extremely valuable. Yi added that apart from the writing problem, she still missed the learning approach in the EAP class and regarded it as a way to motivate her interest in English learning. With these findings, I decided to ask other Chinese students the same question in the next class.

Friday, 12th February 2016 South Leicester Street

Talked to Zhi before the class. He was very happy with the language partner I introduced. He said the student has now become his best Irish friend. I asked him the reason for coming back to the writing course. Zhi told me he liked the environment in the class in which he had many opportunities to use English. He also admitted his wife was another important reason for him to consistently participate in the class. I think he placed the family in a very important position in his values.

The class started with a vocabulary exercise. The activity was identical with those happened in the Michaelmas Term. Students tried to explain the academic words through their synonyms or antonyms. After the activity, they were given a test on the practised words. Such an activity was very popular among the students. By finding the proper synonyms or antonyms, they would be more comfortable with words selection in terms of the essay writing. Following the words practice, students worked on transition in academic writing. They were divided into groups, discussing the handout and completing the exercise.

The picture of the course in this year gradually becomes clear. Normally students would work on a language focus in a form of group discussion in the first half. The second half, they would work individually on writing exercise. Students were encouraged to send writing excerpts from their submitted essays for a detailed diagnosis.

The class took place during the period of Chinese New Year. The Chinese students introduced this festival and its cultural meaning to students from other countries in the class. They also invited them for Chinese food and watching Chinese New Year's Gala in the global room in Trinity. Everyone was influenced by the atmosphere of the festival.

Friday, 19th February 2016 South Leicester Street

Prepared for the third questionnaire survey before the class. Li, Yu and Zhuan did not come to the class today. The class spent some time reviewing prepositions in the academic writing. Some students seemed to forget what they had learned in the previous term, while the others thought it was not necessary. For Jun, everything is new and fresh. She was very in group activities and often asked questions. For others, such as Sa, the repetition in content seemed to be a problem for her enthusiasm in participating the relevant tasks. Students looked very tired in the afternoon and some of them kept yawning. This weariness quickly spread over the whole classroom and was noticed by Bill. He asked the students to stand up to do some physical exercises, such as imitating the chicken. The exercises were effective and the class was back to liveliness. In the second half, students worked in group critical analysing the writing sample given by Bill. Some students were asked to express their opinions on the strength and weakness of the sample. I worked with Sa in this session and found she was at a lost. She thought the sample was very good and couldn't identify the problems. She was 'striving' for some sentences that she thought was unnatural. At the same time, Bill was walking around and checking the progress of each student. After the class, Sa told me that she felt a great pressure every time Bill coming to her. She didn't want others to know that she has a problem and she didn't understand something. She pretended to understand the issue to keep her self-esteem. The class ended with a writing exercise and students would receive feedback on it in the next week.

I conducted the third questionnaire survey with eight students: Jun, Li, Qi, Sa, Xu, Yu, Yi, Zhi. Amongst them, Xu didn't participate in the class in this term, as she found the class was not very helpful for a significant improvement. Interestingly, Li and Yu didn't come to the class, but they participated in the survey. Yu said she has an appointment with others during the time and Li didn't have a specific reason for her absence. The survey took about 15 minutes.

Friday, 26th February 2016 South Leicester Street

Came earlier to class. Sa was describing her teaching practice in a language school outside Trinity. She said she was very frustrated because the students appeared to be dissatisfied with her teaching experience. She lamented the selection of this class, and expressed her fear for going to the language school again.
Li and Zhuan were still absent today. I doubt whether they had dropped the class. The class revolved around structure and sequence in the academic writing and particular focused on the

introduction part. Students worked in pairs and took turn to discuss their own writing samples. I spent time reading Sa's first few pages in her assignment for language curriculum design and found that she was still unclear about some basic requirements for academic writing. She asked me to proofread her work thoroughly and was very embarrassed with some problem I pointed out. She admitted she didn't know how to write and she needed a sample to follow.

After the class, I had a conversation with Qi, who asked me about the conditions for applying for the PhD programme in Trinity. As it was not the first time that she mentioned this topic, I was curious about her true momentum and asked why did she want to pursue a doctoral degree. She replied that she wants to teach Chinese in the university and the doctoral degree is a must for entering the college, though she just wants to teach a language.

Friday, 4th March 2016 South Leicester Street

Li and Zhuan returned to the class. I asked Zhuan why she didn't turn up in the previous classes. She admitted she didn't pay enough attention to this class and her absence was easily influenced by the factors like bad weather and heavy workload from her major study. Then she started to question the effect the course. As she had participated in pre-sessional EAP class in summer, during which she needed to work four hours a day, five days in a week, she commented those classes were extremely helpful. Compared with those classes, the two hours writing class on a weekly basis could give her 'very few'. However, she said she would still come to class if she was free or 'had nothing to do'. For her, the learning approaches in the class were viewed as a pastime in her monotonous life in Ireland.

The class focused on training student's skills for active reading. Students were required to underline the key ideas and arguments in the paragraphs given and present a summary to describe the overview picture of the original text. The exercises involved a lot of group discussions which created a lively atmosphere in the class. In the later exercise, I was assigned to the group working with Jun. She was skeptical about her writing ability and kept asking me questions like how to summarise a paragraph and how to paraphrase the sentences. She said there were few assignments related to writing in her discipline and instead. she spent most time preparing exams. Students gradually received feedback from Bill on their submitted writings. Yi told me she would send Bill her conceptions of the assignment for one major module, and present it as the final project in this class.

Friday, 11th March 2016 South Leicester Street

Reading week in Hilary Term. Very quiet class. Only six students appeared in the class, three of them were Chinese, Qi, Yi and Zhi. Bill decided to employed more oral work for such a small class. We did the warm-up activity, describing the previous week's experience and continued with the vocabulary exercise in groups of three. I played the word guessing game with Zhi. Zhi presumed that I knew everything in relation to the English language and asked me many vocabularies that he didn't recognise. Every time I correctly described or explained the word, he would show a facial expression of admiration. If I said I didn't know the word, he would use the phrases such as 'really?' to show his doubt. In his opinion, a linguist or linguistic researcher should be able to speak many languages and knows everything such as words, pronunciations and so on. It took me some time to explain differences between his imagination and the reality.

After the class, Qi told me she decided to apply for a doctoral programme in Trinity and she had been talked to some professors in her school. She asked me about the funding issues and said she would let me know if she could obtain the offer.

Friday, 18th March 2016 South Leicester Street

After a very quiet reading week, all the students came back to the class. Yu told me she would miss many classes in the rest of the term, as she was 'crazily busy' with her major studies. She said she stayed in the postgraduate reading room every day till very late hours for the in-term essays and presentations. She further added that in some modules, the professors didn't give them the time to preview or review the class content, and as a result, she blindly read everything with questions which took her a lot of time. Such a view was also held by Qi, who said that in a particular class, there was not a close connection between the class content and the assigned tasks. The lectures didn't help with the understanding of the assigned project topics.

The topic of academic writing in this week was constructing arguments. Students were first asked to practise making connections between other texts and putting forward their own understanding. Most of the students appeared to really get into it. Jun was eager to know how to build arguments in her own report. Some students, Li and Yu were not very interested in the exercise, and hoped to quickly move to the advanced topic. With various motivations, they were provided with some instructions on some academic phrases and sentence structures. It seemed that all the Chinese students enjoyed this idea better.

Friday, 25th March South Leicester Street

Good Friday

Friday, 1st April South Leicester Street

The course was really coming to an end. For Chinese students who were studying linguistics related subjects, this week was the last teaching week in their one-year postgraduate's learning. Some students had already completed all their lectures before coming to today's class. Some students, such as Sa and Zhuan told me they wouldn't attend the last two classes due to a huge pressure from their presentations and essays. In spite of that, five Chinese students (Jun, Li, Qi, Yu, Zhi) were present in class.

The class was divided into two sections. In the first section, students continued to work on the topic of arguments in academic writing. They were asked to substantiating assertions or claims through careful argument. At the same time, a list of the phrases used in argumentation was provided for starting an argument, a counter argument and putting forward students' own opinion in the passives voices. With these phrases, students were told how to approach a topic from various perspectives.

The second half of the class focused on some students' project presentations. Students were very familiar with their presenting topics and they didn't seem to be any nerves. Qi was the only Chinese student presenting today. She presented a topic of language test design and implementation. The content, as she said, was already presented at the end of her major module. The presentation aroused a wide interest amongst the students. They kept asking Qi about the language policy and the language learning situation in China. The class atmosphere during the presentation was very good. Li said she regarded the presentation as a relax and a conclusion as a year's hard working on her academic schedule.

Friday, 9th April South Leicester Street

The last class in the Hilary Term, and the entire academic year. Jun, Qi, Sa, Yi and Zhi attended the class today. All the students were very happy, with a big smile on their faces. Some students, like Jun and Sa, were planning their trips in other countries. Some others, such as Yi and Zhu, were discussing their future plan about applying for a doctoral programme.

Not much really happened in the class. Some students presented their final project. Jun related a concept in business management. Yi described her findings of the use of Chinese discourse markers. Students were too excited to focus on the analysis of the content as well

	as the linguistic aspects of the presentation. Bill gave a brief comment on each presentation and highly evaluated the improvement student achieved in this term. In the remainder of the class, students filled an evaluation form for the course and discussed their future goals. Most Chinese students indicated they needed a further support for their final dissertation writing. End of field notes

Appendix B: Transcripts of audio interviews

Keys for Jefferson style symbols used in the study

(.)	short pause
( )	inaudible or unclear speech
(gestures)	additional descriptions for movements, laughter etc.
(information)	guess at unclear speech
_____	stressed syllable
[	overlapping talk
> <	the talk between the arrows is noticeably speeded up
< >	the talk between the arrows is noticeably slowed down
…	prolongation of the sound
=	no break within turns
↑	the sentence shifts into higher pitch
↓	the sentence shifts into lower pitch

Transcript of audio interview 1

Present: Qi, Yi, Shi, Yu, Zhuan

Location: Seminar room, Arts Building

Date: October 1st 2015

Interviewer: Renfeng

Duration: 60 minutes

Renfeng: So. As we said before, we will speak Chinese during the interview.

Yu: Um

Renfeng: Since you guys are the new entrants in Trinity, let's start with an easy question: how long have you been staying in Ireland?

Qi: Perhaps three months? I came here in August. When I was in China, I heard there is a free English module for our Master programme, so I just came here earlier.

Yu: I came here in September at the start of the term.

Shi: Me too

Yi: Same

Zhuan: Let me think. I was here in the middle of August, not for the English programme. I just want to know more about the things like the environment here I guess, before the term starts.

Renfeng: What's your impression of Ireland?

Yu: Pretty good. I mean the summer here is not too hot and the air is pretty fresh as well. Before this, I was in Beijing. You know, the summer there is extremely hot and the air quality is not that good.

Renfeng: I know!

Yi: But before I am here, I heard things like it's always raining and very windy in Ireland. Actually it is fine, it is not as horrible as other people told you.

Shi: Yeah. Everyone on the internet says the weather is very cold here. You can't even hold an [umbrella

Zhuan: [Wind jacket. They will suggest you bring a wind jacket, the water proof one, you know.

Yu: That's true.

Renfeng: Well. I would say the weather is pretty good now. Not the typical days in Ireland.

Qi: Really.

Renfeng: Yeah. About Trinity, what is your first impression about this college?

Shi: Very beautiful. And it is quite classic.

Yi: Comparing with most universities in China, the campus is quite small, but with great architectures, like the school building, lab and (.) I showed my family the photos here. They all believe I am studying in an ancient castle. (laughs)

Shi: Yeah. I mean there are chapels everywhere in the school. Oh, and the Old Library.

Zhuan: And there is one building, very special, the one has a skeleton of a dinosaur in it.

Renfeng: Museum Building?

Zhuan: Yeah. It feels like an exhibition hall.

Yu: And the academic atmosphere is very strong. You can't help studying the moment you walk into it.

Renfeng: So why would you choose to study in Trinity? How do you know this college?

Qi: I went to an educational exhibition at that time. In the beginning I was looking for universities in the UK. But I found there were so many people in front of Trinity College Dublin. So I just went there and asked some information about this university.

Zhuan: [Um…

Yu: [At that time…

Zhuan: You go ahead.

Yu: I have a friend and she came here soon after she got her bachelor degree in China. And she has studied here for a year and she thought both the arrangement and the length of the modules here are quite suitable. That is the reason why I am here.

Yi: The reason why I choose to come here is a little bit complicated. I was aiming at universities in Netherland at that time.

Shi: Me too!

Yi: I applied for programmes in four universities in Netherland and later I found that I did it all wrong. I was targeted Master in psychology and was rejected by all the universities. I really don't know what to do at that time, because the time is so limited. Fortunately, the education agency which helped me with the study abroad issue is specialised in Irish universities. And my profile was transferred from department of Netherland to department of Ireland. And they helped me to apply for the Master programme in Trinity. Then I started to check the information about the school and thought 'wow, this is not a bad choice'.

Shi: Are we using the same agency?

Yi: Why?

Shi: We were both refused by schools in Netherland. And then were advised to look into schools in Ireland instead of Scandinavia countries. I feel that we have a very similar experience on this.

Yi: Yeah. And I started to apply for the programme in Trinity College and I felt this university is very good. Then I did research about this country and the result says Irish people are very friendly and it is very safe here. I mean. There is no life-threatening danger. (laughs) This is true. You need to consider that. The safety issue is very important, very important.

Renfeng: So, you all compare Trinity with other schools?

Zhuan: Basically, everyone would take a look at schools in the UK.

Renfeng: And still choose to come to Ireland?

Qi: First, the time slot is very short. And then, the language environment is very good, coz I can improve my English.

Zhuan: If you see the situation in the UK, you will find there are not so many Chinese students here.

Yu: Another issue is talking about the fees, I think it is relatively reasonable here. I mean you need to think about living expenses…

Zhuan: Yeah. I found it cheaper than the UK.

Yu: This is euro zone. It should be cheaper.

Renfeng: Now we focus on English learning. Tell me when did you start to contact English learning.

Qi: Long, long time ago

Yu: Probably when I was seven or eight. First year in elementary school.

Yi: Oh, you guys are so early. We only have English class in the third year

Yu: No, no. It is like speciality classes when you are very small, after class. Normally you have to choose one speciality class. I chose English at that time.

Shi: Yeah. I did the similar thing. I think it happened in the first year of elementary school.

Renfeng: What makes you learn English at the time?

Qi: Hmm…Nothing very special. Everyone started to learn English, so I just joined the crowd.

Yi: Truth

Zhuan: We had compulsory English class in Grade One, so it has nothing to do with your choice. It is only one subject.

Renfeng: How about you guys choosing English speciality class?

Yu: Because (.) when I was very small, once I was travelling to somewhere. And the flight was delayed, so we were trapped in the airport. There was one girl I remember in our group who was happily talking to a Canadian couple. I was so jealous of her. And from that moment on, I started to learn English.

Shi: I just felt, comparing to other speciality classes, English is very mysterious.

Renfeng: Mysterious?

Shi: Yeah. At that time, other kids might choose to do something very specific, like calligraphy, musical instrument and swimming. You know, it's like you will immediately understand what they are doing. For kids, learning English is quite strange, or interesting, coz lots of your friends and classmates don't understand what kind of letters you are reading and what kind of sounds you are making. And some kids may find this very boring. Another very important reason, I guess, is my father asked me to learn English at the time.

Renfeng: Your father?

Shi: Hmm. He might find it's useful to know English.

Yu: Actually, most parents will choose speciality classes for their kids.

Yi: Yeah. Kids don't enjoy much freedom at that time. Your parents will arrange everything for you, and many things actually they don't know that well.

Qi: Like Expected Major in College Entrance Exam

Yi: Oh!

Renfeng: Talking about College Entrance Exam, before the exam, if I am correct, English is always regarded as a major subject?

Qi: [Yes

Shi: [You are right.

Zhuan: Are they going to cancel it in the College Entrance Exam?

Yi: I don't know. I haven't heard about that.

Yu: Perhaps they just want to cut the proportion of English in the Exam.

Renfeng: Alright. How about things after the Exam? How was your English learning in the college in China?

Yi: Well…This is hard to say.

Renfeng: Okay. Let's do in this way. You can first briefly introduce your home university and your major, and then we can focus on English learning in your school.

Yi: I am (.) My home university is NYL Normal University. It has a long history, very traditional. The academic atmosphere there is quite similar to what you can find in Trinity. Very emphasise learning but life on campus is not as lively as it in Trinity. Entirely speaking, my home university is not as lively as Trinity. Hmm… My home university is very, kind of solemn. (laughs) Yes, very solemn. Er…I was doing English. It's shameful to admit, (chuckles) my major is English.

Yu: I am also from English majors. Our university is, just, a comprehensive university. Different disciplines can be found in our school. We also have art-focused (.) Arts and sports. And probably because it locates in Chengdu, everyone is quite laid-back. So I don't think we have a very good academic atmosphere in my undergraduate (.) Everyone learns in a very passive way. The fact is the teacher teaches in the class, and after the class you can choose to do your homework. It won't be a problem if you don't.

Renfeng: How about the others?

Shi: My major is Teaching of Chinese as a foreign language. And I graduate from JN Normal University.

Qi: I was also doing Teaching of Chinese as a foreign language in the college. I from BLJ University. And I am very proud it, coz this major in our university ranks No.1 in China. (chuckles) And we have a large number of oversea students in our school. And it is very convenient to do things like, teaching foreign students Chinese, Contemporary Chinese for Chinese undergraduates and postgraduate research on relevant areas.

Zhuan: Our school, you know, is in Shanghai. Also a comprehensive university like this. We also have many oversea students. While learning atmosphere is not that strong, like, very laid back during the four years. And I was doing law subjects.

Renfeng: So now, we have people doing English major and non-English major. First, I would like to ask English majors, why did you choose English as your major?

Yu: For me, I think, simply because I like it. Since I started to learn English, I can always learn very well during my learning process. Especially when I look at my results of other disciplines, I feel 'Okay, this is something I can do it well'. Another reason (.) Although I have learned English for twelve years at that time, I found most of the time I was doing something for exams.

Yi: Basically, everything related to grammar

Yu: Yeah. So, basically I am not very confident to use the language. I mean, spontaneously. However, I did find it more helpful to do some curriculum activities, like chatting with foreigners. So at this stage, I was determined to master this language in a more systematic way.

Renfeng: By doing English major in the college?

Yu: Yes

Yi: I may get influenced by my parents. Just as I mentioned earlier, the typical parents who always make decisions for their kids.

Shi: Really?

Yi: You see, I was doing art and humanities in senior high. In this case I don't need to consider majors related to science and engineering. And my parents thought it would be good for a girl to learn a foreign language in the college. How to say, like girls' major. You know, the environment in which you are surrounded by girls. And you can also go abroad after you graduate. I feel something like I can help my family business on this.

Shi: It's true. It's the same in Teaching of Chinese as a foreign language. I feel that it is a major very close to English major. Because perhaps you are going to teach beginner students, zero knowledge about Chinese, you must use English as the teaching language. Therefore, in the first two years basically we were learning a different kind of English.

Qi: Same

Renfeng: Different kind of English?

Shi: I mean, listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Renfeng: So what makes you choose this major?

Shi: Just like Yi. I mean, parents will consider teachers school is ideal for girls. And I also want to give it a go.

Qi: I just want to teach kids Chinese.

Renfeng: Good. Now let's talk about your English class in the college.

Yu: We have many different programmes about English. And there are about thirty students in each class. We have our English class altogether. As for selective modules, which are irrelevant to English, we have bigger class size. Students from several classes come to the same classroom, the lecture hall, that kind of room. Talking about the class, let me see, basically we were trained on different aspects of English skills in the first two years. And in the last two year, more specific content was involved, such as Linguistics, Literature and Translation.

Yi: Almost the same. I guess curriculum design is the same everywhere.

Yu: And for English majors, the most important thing is TEM 4 and TEM 8. They may be more important than the degree itself. I don't know.

Zhuan: We have CET 4 and CET 6. To be honest, we don't have so many opportunities learning English in the class. Just in the first year or two? You know, we all have to take one module called College English. After that, all you can do is to prepare for the CET tests. We merely exercise our English on campus.

Renfeng: Alright. What's your learning outcome at this stage?

Zhuan: The primary goal, is to pass the CET 4 and 6. If you can't make it through, you will get some negative effects.

Renfeng: Like what?

Zhuan: It may affect your graduation and chances to get a job. But for me, a more important reason, may be, that I enjoy the lifestyle like travelling somewhere alone. I mean, travelling to different countries, different cities, all by myself.

Yi: To experience the culture

Zhuan: Not only the culture. I mean a ( ) of freedom. And if you want to pursue this freedom, English learning, actually, is of extreme importance. Because everyone is using the language everywhere, you won't get stuck in language barriers.

Shi: But you are still here for English Language Teaching?

Zhuan: It must be something wrong with my head. (chuckles) No, no. Because I am here after my two years' employment in China. And for me, this is more like a gap year.

Renfeng: You previous working experience has something to do with English?

Zhuan: Just in a foreign-capital enterprise.

Renfeng: Foreign-capital enterprise?

Zhuan: Yes. But it has nothing to do with teaching or what.

Renfeng: I see. How about others?

Yu: I don't have a specific target, coz it's your major. But I do have some very general goals, such as to pass the TEM test. I think since you decide to learn it, definitely you hope to find a job in this area in the future. [So

Yi: [But you should understand that there are so many undergraduates taking this major. And many non-English majors who also know English very well, so you can't really (.) Those jobs are open to anyone. You know what I mean.

Yu: You are right. And basically what we can do is very limited: foreign companies, English schools and education agencies.

Yi: In this case you have to perform better than other people in English learning. But I have no advantage in this compared with my peers. So my thought at that time was 'Oh my god, I must go abroad. I must achieve the required IELTS level'. It's like you know you really want to get rid of the current environment and learning English is the only one possible way.

Qi: I think we all have goals like to pass an exam or to study abroad. But for me, probably because of my home university, I have a special interest in communicating with foreigners. And there are lots of exchanging students from other countries in our school. And some cannot speak good Chinese but they really want to talk to you. In this case, most of the time, we have to talk to each other in English. I have many experiences working as a language partner or a language teacher. I found that the better you English is, the better you can help your foreign friend with their Chinese learning.

Shi: Another thing is you will keep using English in your later career.

Renfeng: Do you like learning English?

Yu: Yeah, very enjoyable

Yi: Totally not. How can it be possible?

Shi: I just take it as a module No special feeling.

Yi: <u>Extremely</u> painful

Renfeng: <u>Extremely</u> painful?

Yi: Extremely painful

Renfeng: But you major is English?

Yi: Oh, my God! It's like the whole family is forcing you to learn. After I have learned English in college for three months, I told my mom 'Mom, I can't make it. I can't continue learning. This is too hard. I've got no talent on this.' Guess what my mom replied? 'No way. If you don't learn it, come back and do business.'

Shi: I think it's not a bad idea to start your business.

Yi: I am afraid I will waste all the money in my family. I know myself very well. I have no idea on numbers.

Renfeng: So your family had a huge influence on your English learning process?

Yi: Indeed. But I will not call it something bad. It's like they were giving you a direction. And it feels like the degree of freedom you can enjoy much depends on how hard you are going to work on this direction. You know they (my parents) always told me, 'If you can study, just keep going. If you can't, come back and get married.'

Renfeng: Really?

Yi: I have a younger brother in China. How to say, as an elder sister, you are expected to set a very good role for him, even in English learning. My parents will talk to my

brother 'Look at your elder sister. You should learn from her.' If I did something wrong, they will criticise me for not establishing a good example for my brother.

Shi: I also have a younger brother. Well, it is not that exaggerating as you said, but it sounds like my story. Because I have to take care of him since he's child, and also take care of his study. The funny thing is if I can't learn English well, there is no reason for me to push him to work hard on English.

Zhuan: I also find the family impact is substantial.

Renfeng: So you parents push you to learn English?

Zhuan: Not really. The thing is… My mom knows English. When I was very small, I can find English books placed on the shelves at home. So in this way, I guess I was influenced more or less. And during my English learning, she provided me with some suggestions. Yeah. You can understand that she still wants you to learn English well.

Renfeng: How about Yu and Qi?

Yu: I don't think I have a problem on this. I am the only child in my family…And I made the decision myself to learn English. My parents know nothing about this language. Of course, parents definitely hope no matter what you study, do it well. Anyway, they often ask me, very practical issues, like career, future plan…

Qi: I think…yes. My family, they are quite clear what I am doing. And my major is closely connected with English, so they always emphasise English learning. But I feel okay after going to college…They didn't ask me to listen to them. Basically, I am on my own.

Renfeng: I see. Back to the previous topic. Yu, you said you enjoy English learning?

Yu: Umm. Just as I said before, I admired people who can speak very good English when I was small. And English learning…I think I really like English and I find I am quite good at it. So I began to learn English at a very young age. After the College Entrance Exam, I first chose the expected major, and then decided the school. I heard Qi is the same.

Qi: Yeah. A kind of… I don't like memorising vocabulary and I don't like reciting those passages.

Yi: Neither do I

Qi: But you can't do anything about it. If you don't remember those words, you have nothing to say when you speak.

Zhuan: I am not an English major. I began to love learning English since I came to college, coz I realised that English can broaden my vision. I can access more and know more possible choices

Renfeng: Like what?

Zhuan: Like…It's not easy to describe. Like the entertainment programme in other countries, sports event, or maybe travel…I mean you will know what others are doing, thinking. You won't be isolated.

Renfeng: Awesome. So far we talked a lot about English learning. Do you have any English-related experiences which left you a very deep impression?

Shi: Er…

Yu: For me, probably just the story I mentioned. I may have other similar stories in which I was always very jealous of people who can speak good English.

Shi: The first time I went abroad. It is this time actually.

Yi: Oh, It should be those English tests, the passed one, the failed one. Yes. I have one which impressed me the most. I think there was a presentation or some activities I can't really remember. It was a collaborating project between different schools… It's about English presenting. I remembered one teacher said to me 'Ah, how can an English major speaks English like this?' I was really embarrassed at the time. After that, I insisted practising oral English every day. That's it.

Qi: I don't know about this one. It was when I landed in Dublin airport, there was a stuff asking my age. I was thinking 'Hey, you can't really ask that in English. I learned this in my textbook'. It turned out they were curious whether I am an adult.

Renfeng: Oh! Since we talked about this, did you meet any cultural difference, especially in language?

Shi: Their 'th' sound is really strange!

Yu: Pronounce 'three' into 'tree'

Zhuan: Yes

Qi: Some English words are not pronounced like how we learned in China.

Renfeng: You mean accent?

Yu: Not really. They do have Irish accent which is hard to understand. Just some strange sounds.

Renfeng: Talking about intonation, you can gradually learn everything in your EAP class. Why do you attend this class?

Yu: We had that summer EAP class for our Master programme. Unfortunately, I couldn't make it. And they say there will be an in-sessional EAP class. So I applied for this. This is my first time to study in English context after all, and it's a Master programme.

Qi: I heard the class can improve our performance in oral presentation and academic writing.

Yi: Well. I am always worried that I can't understand those lectures and will be behind the progress. You know, we didn't have such kind of training in China and we are not sure about the requirement here.

Yu: Ture, sometimes I find myself still process everything in Chinese when I need to speak and writing in English.

Shi: Zhuan and I didn't know this EAP class at the beginning. We knew about the class in our Linguistics class from our classmates. They all participate in it. And we think it is very necessary. It's better to get prepared in advance. And yes. We are now in the class.

Renfeng: How would you evaluate this EAP class so far?

Yu: The class only started weeks ago. So far so good. The class is organised in a more lively way comparing to English classes in China. I really enjoy the content, and the teacher is super nice.

Yi: Yeah. You just feel time slips by in the class. It's quite relaxing for learning English.

Shi: More challenging, I think. You don't know when you will be called to do a presentation. It's very different from teaching methods in China which you just need to be quiet and listen. More interesting here.

Qi: Yeah. I just hope I can improve my academic English after a term's learning.

Renfeng: Have you met any difficulties caused by English in the study of your own discipline?

Qi: Henry's class. In the first class, I was completely at loss. I didn't understand anything! I didn't know where on the slides he was talking.

Yu: Yeah. It is very difficult to follow him in the class. Some lecturers…I guess it's because of the accent…

Zhuan: Mike has a very strong accent. It is not easy to get used to it in the first couples of weeks.

Yu: Another problem is I am a slow reader. Well, it's getting better and better. And I think the way of lecturing…For example, my previous experience is, teachers in China will keep telling you which page I am talking about, and they will clearly assign you tasks or exercises after class. While, teachers here, they are…they won't follow the content in the textbook. They have their own way of thinking. Perhaps because they make their own teaching materials.

Renfeng: Last question. I want to know your objectives of English learning this term and possible future plan.

Qi: Complete essays

Yu: Survive exams

Shi: Yeah, essays

Yu: I hope by the end of my essay writing, I can see improvements in my academic writing.

Renfeng: I am sure you will. How about your future plan? What kind of profession would you like to take after this?

Shi: Definitely I will go back to China for work.

Renfeng: English education?

Shi: Not English, perhaps teaching Chinese.

Zhuan: You can stay here.

Shi: No, I will go back.

Yu: You know I have worked for two years in China before I come here. Taught for two years. I came here because I feel that the programme provides something lacking in my previous working experience. So I come here, trying to learn that part and go

back, continuing my previous work. I am not saying I will do exactly the same thing. But it may still be English teaching.

Qi: It depends. I think if I have a chance to do a doctoral degree and I can get the funding, I will do. If I have a chance to be a Chinese teacher here, I will stay here. But if I get nothing, and spend all my money, I will go home.

Yi: I'm thinking if I can do a doctoral programme near China, I will go. If I can't, I will first work for a few years, accumulating working experience (.) or waiting till I have some ideas, and then apply for the degree. Yeah, something like this. If I get a chance to do PhD, I will. If not, I will work.

Zhuan: Definitely I won't think of PhD. Anyway, I will go back to China and see whether I can move up to English teacher. If I can't, I will go back to the foreign-capital enterprise.

Renfeng: Okay. That's everything for today's interview. Thanks again for coming.

Transcript of audio interview 2

Present: Lan, Li, Sa, Xu, Zhi

Location: Seminar room, Arts Building

Date: December 15th 2015

Interviewer: Renfeng

Duration: 65 minute

Renfeng: Okay. Let's get started. Some information in the interview, such as school name and teacher's name will be replaced by pseudonyms, so don't worry on that.

Sa: Okay

Renfeng: You are on holidays now?

Sa: Yeah

Xu: I guess so…Christmas break

Renfeng: Do you have any plan for the vacation?

Sa: Writing essays and travelling

Lan: I am going to American East, Boston. I have friends there.

Xu: I got the Schengen Visa. I am ready for a trip to Central Europe. The initial plan is, I think I will go to the Czech Republic and Hungary. Perhaps there will be more countries on my list.

Renfeng: Alone?

Xu: Yeah. I plan to do something like a cycling tour there, like the bike trips, that sort of thing.

Sa: It sounds really cool!

Renfeng: How about other guys?

Li: I will go to Italy with Sa.

Sa: Yeah

Li: Rome, Florence, Venice, Milan… for eight days.

Renfeng: None of you will go back to China?

Zhi: I will. Well, I mean people like me who already married must go back to our parents' house during the festival. The Chinese New Year will clash with the Hilary Term here, so we don't have the time to go back at that time. We decide to take this break to go back to see our parents. And it's also cheaper to go home during this time.

Renfeng: How long will you stay in China?

Zhi: I will try to stay about three weeks.

Renfeng: Since you have been here for quite long, what's your impression of the country?

Xu: I have a very good impression of the whole country, but I don't like Dublin.

Renfeng: Why?

Xu: It's very crowded in the city centre and a little bit messy. I feel things are in disorder.

Sa: I think everything is good. Just the weather is too horrible!

Xu: You can't really call this as horrible. Those summer days when I was doing cycling tour in Ireland were <u>super</u>, <u>super</u> horrible! When the storm was coming, you got completely wet and it was also hailing…

Sa: I should come here for meteorology study.

Xu: It's really horrible coz you needed to put on your raincoat in the rain. When you just finished that, it turned sunny! And the raincoat, very stuffy. So you need to take it off, and then it started to rain like crazy.

Li: Yeah, I can't stand the weather like that. It's very warm in my hometown, Guangdong. I really don't understand the weather here when I just arrived. And you can see people wearing few clothes on the street, but it's freezing cold for me when I go out.

Zhi: Like it's rainy and windy… really. We have the EAP classes. You know, they are all in the evening and it's always the weather like this.

Li: You don't want to go to class in the weather like this.

Sa: That's true.

Renfeng: You are all complaining about the weather. I think you will be used to it one day. Now what I am curious about is why you choose to come to Trinity.

Sa: It was my cousin who told me about Trinity College.

Renfeng: So your cousin is?

Sa: She used to study in UNG. And she told me the information about different universities in Ireland. Then I applied to all of them.

Renfeng: Why didn't she ask you to go to UNG?

Sa: UNG had a higher demand for IELTS. I didn't reach the level (chuckles).

Xu: Does UNG have a stricter enrolling requirement than Trinity?

Lan: I thought Trinity is the most difficult university to enter.

Xu: But we did have a guest lecturer from UNG giving a talk in our school. It's brilliant.

Lan: I thought he's from DNT.

Sa: Anyway, I also applied to the universities in Hong Kong and the UK. I got the offers. But my family think because I have a relative here, If I can come here, they would take care of me…

Lan: That's really nice.

Xu: I remember I've been to Trinity once in 2012. I was sitting on the chairs opposite Arts Block and I didn't go to the Old Library. I didn't have a good impression of Trinity at that time, coz I feel everything in a mess. The campus was full of tourists. At that time, I complained to my aunt about the school and said I don't want to study in this school.

Sa: But you are here.

Xu: So you don't really know what will happen in the future.

Renfeng: I heard you are from FX University. Why do you choose to come here?

Xu: I also want to know.

Lan: The thing is, I didn't take GRE because I feel it's very annoying to memorise those words.

Sa: I didn't take GRE either.

Lan: So universities in the US were excluded. And basically I was thinking about going to the UK, Britain and Ireland. And actually I applied to the programme in UCL first, and they gave me a conditional offer, which required me to achieve GPA above 3.5. And I only got 3.43 at that time, and I had one semester left which included two modules. So even if I got A level in the two modules, I couldn't get 3.5, so…

Sa: Can you retake the course?

Lan: We were about to graduate.

Sa: Oh.

Lan: And then, probably the second-best university is Trinity.

Xu: What is UCL?

Lan: University College London

Renfeng: Then you came here?

Sa: Is it your education agency help you to choose the school?

Lan: No, I choose the university myself. I just asked the agency to correct something for me. Things like choosing the university, I made the decision myself. I think I might apply to King's College…Perhaps because I got a low band on IELTS writing test…

Xu: The King's College in Cambridge?

Lan: No, the other one.

Renfeng: Zhi and Li?

Li: I had worked in China for a few years before I came here. It's in a bank. And I just want to quit the job and go abroad. And by the way, change my occupation. And I found that my situation got me more difficult to apply to some universities, because I was not a fresh graduate. Anyway, I just wanted to learn something related to education, because English teacher is a good job in my hometown. Then I searched the related programme online and I found programmes of language teaching all required teaching experiences, which I didn't have. So I didn't dare to give it a try. Anyway, I was accepted by the Linguistics programme here.

Zhi: My home university has a collaboration programme with Trinity.

Renfeng: You are from?

Zhi: QH University

Li: Wow!

Sa: Good student

Zhi: I am not. And my supervisor in Trinity is a Chinese. He has many connections with my home university. Luckily, my wife and I were also working on his area, so we both applied for the funding in CSC.

Renfeng: Your wife is also in Trinity?

Zhi: Yeah, she is also here. We have the same supervisor.

Xu: How lucky you are!

Sa: I am always jealous of people who have a bachelor degree from prestigious universities, like FX and QH.

Lan: I don't think there is any difference. But I have few classmates who know Trinity. [They thought

Sa: [It's in the UK.

Lan: I will go to the UK. I told them Ireland is not the UK. Well, I was always staying in the environment like this.

Sa: That's right. People in China ask me 'Are you alright in the UK?'

Lan: There are few students who know the school. For example, I know a classmate. He said 'oh, you are in Trinity. I know it. They have a library used as the background for filming Harry Potter.'

Xu: Is it?

Lan: To be honest, I have no idea.

Sa: I think it's the Star War.

Lan: Actually, I know nothing about this.

Xu: But people studying literature, like us, definitely know Wilde and Beckett.

Sa: Yes, Yes, Yes. I didn't know Wilde studied at Trinity until I Baidu him on the internet.

Renfeng: Since you are now studying in an English context, now let's talk about your English learning. How long have you learned English?

Sa: I started to learn English when I was seven.

Lan: Almost the same

Xu: I think I may get to know English a little bit earlier.

Li: I am…just first learned English in school.

Zhi: I might learn it quite late.

Renfeng: What reason makes you learn English at that time?

Sa: The speciality class in elementary school. I knew nothing about English at that time. It's like many pupils will learn English after class. And if you attend the class, you will know many friends there, and you can play together. It's the same on weekends. If you join those classes, you may enjoy a rich experience in extracurricular activities. I also took part in many other classes at that time.

Lan: It's included in the basic curriculum in elementary school. Nothing special.

Li: Yeah. So did we.

Xu: I am…I remember there was an Olympic Game when I was very small, perhaps in Sydney.

Sa: In 2000

Xu: Well, it could be. And we have the custom to watch the opening ceremony together. And in the ceremony, when athletes from different countries walk into the stadium, you know, someone will introduce the team in English. And I felt the language is (.) magical. Amazing, I want to say, in the splendid atmosphere. I felt that if I could speak the language, it must be, how to say (.) something to be proud of. And just right at that time, my father had a set of textbooks called *Follow Me* at home. He used them for self-studying English. Then I got the books and started to read. I think it was more like a television programme and my father recorded it with cassettes. So I also listened to the programme in this way. Now I may think there is no big difference intrinsically between the English learning materials today and those books. However, I did feel the textbook were so great at that time. And you were surprised at the content on each page of the books. You just have an irresistible impulse to figure it out.

Lan: That's true. I had a set of similar books when I was small. I forget whether they were the same books as you mentioned, but I did have a fresh feeling the first time I saw them. And I don't know why I just want to understand the language in it.

Li: It's always like this when you first get in contact with English. Very novel. While when you start to learn it systematically, especially after you touch the grammatical part, your previous image will be gradually diluted. There are also times you feel it very boring.

Xu: I am okay with it. Where did I stop (.) Yes, I think I can be accounted as an autonomous learner. And my parents found I was so into this, so they asked me to participate in English classes as soon as they are provided. And I kept learning like this, but I feel that it's another issue make me strongly motivated in English learning. It's Beijing Olympic (laughs), yeah, Olympic again. And the opening ceremony, because it was in China, they invited Chinese to host the event in Mandarin, English and French. It was Ji Xiaojun who emceed the English part in the opening ceremony of Beijing Olympic. And his English just sounds so comfortable.

Sa: Ah, Ji Xiaojun

Zhi: Who is he?

Xu: A broadcaster on CCTV International. I just felt his English is so good. I really hope I can speak English like him, so I started to imitate his tone.

Sa: But he is a man.

Xu: Just the pronunciation and intonation

Renfeng: You just mentioned the textbook *Follow Me*. I kept one set myself.

Sa: My first English textbook is *Huang Bo English.*

Li: Yeah, yes, that's it!

Sa: It's like singing while clapping hands.

Renfeng: Singing?

Sa: It's the time when we first learned English. It's all about…actually it didn't concentrate on grammar or what. And in the class the teacher is saying a sentence and clapping to the beat, all you need to do is to repeat after her, singing along and clapping. It's really like singing. We just repeat each sentence she said. After class, we would listen to the tape and recite the words and the passage. It's interesting.

Li: Yeah, and it's completely different from the method we used later. Let's say, first, you need to learn phonetic alphabet, and then you go on with vocabulary spelling. It avoids all the boring elements of language learning.

Renfeng: Like immersion learning?

Sa: A little bit

Lan: If you learn a language like this, I think things like pronunciation probably should be fine, but the grammar…

Li: You are right. Later we used an advanced textbook called *New Concept English*, which gradually involves grammatical issues, but I was still used to the previous learning method, listen to the tape and recite the passage. And my pronunciation was pretty good. However, every time the teacher asked me to make a sentence, I was completely at loss.

Renfeng: What did you do then?

Li: Till I went to junior high school, the school began to set up formal English class and we were required to learn grammar systematically. Then I learned little by little from the very beginning.

Sa: Extracurricular English classes at that time were all like this. They just want you to 'feel the language' and to develop your interest in it.

Renfeng: Zhi, you seem to be very silent on this topic?

Zhi: I don't have experiences like these. I didn't show a special interest in English when I was very small or maybe I don't know much about English at that time. And yes, we gradually had English classes when we were at different stages of schooling. Anyway, English is not a major subject at that time.

Renfeng: Next question, I want to know your major of bachelor degree and English learning experience in college.

Sa: There were 33 students in my class.

Renfeng: English major?

Sa: Yes, HN Agricultural University. I studied English there. Should I study farming in that school? (laughs)

Lan: I think so.

Sa: It sounds like something to do with farming.

Renfeng: And you?

Li: I did computer study for my bachelor degree.

Sa: No way!

Li: I did. Just not relevant to what I am doing now.

Zhi: I was doing Environment engineering in China, mainly on water pollution.

Xu: I didn't study English in the college at first but later moved to English major.

Lan: It means you really like English.

Xu: No, not really. Just because I was discouraged from my learning experience in the first major.

Renfeng: How did you learn English in college? for example, the class size and…

Xu: It's rather good. Because we were divided into smaller classes. One class was separated into two classes and twenty students each class.

Lan: I didn't study English major in China. I studied Chinese. We also had the class like College English in the first year when we were in college. And also about twenty people in a class, perhaps fewer than twenty, more than ten people. And we learned English together in the class, but I would say basically it's like the teacher was reading the textbook. Sometimes there were sessions like you need to discuss with your partner and then present in front of the class. The module was not tailored for the College English Test. Because we also have an FX English proficiency test and it's basically for that, you know. But we also need to take CET 4 and CET 6.

Zhi: Sounds very familiar

Li: Our English class was broken into different disciplines. Apart from the school of foreign languages, there was a certain kind of requirement on English levels in different school. As a result, we would invite English teachers from the school of foreign languages or we went to their school to attend the class. But the most fundamental thing is the College English they just mentioned, and the class was like (.) you know the typical classroom environment in China. Teachers taught based on the textbook and gave students tasks or questions. They would ask you to finish some homework. During the preparation for CET 4 or 6, you just worked on some test paper. Basically you can complete everything in the class.

Renfeng: Talking about college English learning experience, do you like learning English during this time?

Sa: I feel very happy in English learning. I feel that I learned English mainly for making foreign friends. And we just kept communicating in English, and because of this, my English was improved. Honestly, I didn't learn anything in the class!

Renfeng: So you enjoy learning English all the time?

Sa: Not really, in college… It started from my second year in college. From the second year… because so many foreign teachers and overseas students in our school…and we hanged out…went to pubs…chatted with them… and travelled together, and many things like that.

Renfeng: How about you?

Xu: Because I feel learning a language itself is also very interesting, not merely learning English. Other languages are also attractive.

Sa: I agree. My second foreign language is Japanese. I think all of us here learned a second foreign language.

Lan: I learned a little bit French, just a little bit. But to be honest, during my four years in college, basically I didn't use any English.

Xu: This is very common

Lan: Yeah. Apart from that I attended English class in the first semester in my first year, just that English class I told you, I didn't learn any English after that. And I wouldn't have any communication with the foreign students in the university either. (So…

Xu: (I thought Chinese department has more communication with foreign students.

Renfeng: You mean Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language

Lan: Sometimes we had events like that in the department. For example, students from which school came here for different purposes. You could go to the activity and…

Sa: Communicating

Lan: Yes. But anyway, I am not good at socialising and I wouldn't go.

Renfeng: How about Zhi and Li?

Li: I am…I am from Guangdong province. So we speak Cantonese, and we are not far away from Hong Kong. In this case, staying there means you will have many opportunities influenced by foreign cultures. So things like English culture, I began to know at an early age. And the atmosphere there is…how to say, kind of respect foreign culture more…It's like if you can speak English, people there will think you are terrific, I mean from upper class maybe? Anyway, you will earn more respect and better service in the public.

Sa: Really!

Li: Therefore, I had the awareness that I have to learn the language when I was very small. And indeed, you will enjoy the benefit when you can speak the language, on every aspect. So I feel it's more about 'need to' rather than 'like to'.

Zhi: Before I went to the college, I don't really think I paid much attention to this. For me, there is no difference between learning English and learning Chinese or Maths. It is one of the major subjects and you need to pass the related exam, so I just regarded it as one module. Although I couldn't be called as an excellent student in learning English, just in that kind of environment, I could achieve a good result in the exam without showing a great enthusiasm for it.

Sa: This is what we define as 'study machine'

Zhi: (laugh) But I really like playing basketball. I watch NBA. So the language…works as a bridge (.) You will inevitably develop an interest in it. I should say, in the past, the most important reason for learning English is for things like exams and jobs. Even now, because I need to make a presentation or write a report, I am always worried that my English is not good enough. But things start to change now, I find a language partner here, the guy you introduced to me.

Renfeng: Yes

Zhi: I originally intended to improve my English. Now we often go out for food or discussion. I think it's really interesting. We will also exchange our views on politics and economy. So I find myself gradually fall in love with English learning. And another reason is the EAP class. It's very fascinating for me and there are more people I can talk to in the class. I also played basketball with a Spanish guy I knew in the class. It's very helpful to free me from previous boring life.

Renfeng: You don't have other people to talk to in your own discipline?

Zhi: My boss is a Chinese and my wife is also here, so we just talk in Chinese every day.

Renfeng: We can talk about EAP class later. Now what I want to know is your objective for English learning during this time, before coming to Ireland.

Zhi: IELTS, CET 4 and 6.

Lan: For non-English major students who want to study abroad, like me, definitely IELTS. Well… yes… and other various English tests.

Renfeng: What about English major？

Sa: I don't have any specific aims at the very beginning. I just learned it happily. (chuckles) But as my learning progressing, there is always something which can quantify my learning process. You have to prepare the major test, because learning English well is a very big…how to say, very vague concept. What's the proof of 'learning well'? The answer is TEM 4 and TEM 8.

Xu: And they increase the difficulty of these tests which leads to a result that a small number of students can pass the exam. In this case, the certificate for TEM 8 is extremely valuable. When those companies ask your English level in the interview, TEM 8 will perfectly solve everything.

Renfeng: So you got the same feeling?

Xu: I don't really consider test as a goal. It's more like an approach. First, you must pass TEM 4 and 8. But when you have achieved that level, it doesn't mean you are perfect in this language. It's very hard to set a goal in advance in the way of English learning. What you can do is to read more, see more and contact more. I mean you can't really say I want to fully understand an English programme in a few days and as long as I work hard, I can definitely make it. You should really have a more open attitude.

Renfeng: Good. Still on English learning, let's talk about family influence. You already did the questionnaire. I want to know your family's attitude to your English learning.

Sa: Fully support

Li: Parents will support for sure. I mean any kind of learning. They will definitely support.

Renfeng: Okay. Now we change the question. What kind of influence your family has on you English learning?

Xu: I see. Both my parents learned a little bit English. Though their English level is very basic, they know the importance of it, and they understand it may be helpful for my future development. So they would guide me to it on purpose, for example, when I was very young, they would apply to an English course for me or take me to some

activities which could arouse my interest. In their opinion, no matter whether this is my major in the future, it's a skill I should master.

Lan: My mom also knows some English, but I don't feel that she wanted me to learn this, deliberately. I did Chinese as my major in college and she thought it's fine. My family is...We do enjoy the democracy in our family. (chuckles) Normally they will listen to my opinion. But of course, they support me in learning English. They might not say it, but they would remind me of my language issues when I was planning to go abroad. In my view, it's like they are always passive on these issues…

Sa: I feel the same. But since I began to study English in college, my mom might feel that English is a proper major for girls. That's all. It's really because I like travelling and meeting new people.

Li: And you aunt is in Ireland.

Sa: Well, yes. But they take care of me mostly in my daily life. I don't find it very necessary…I feel trapped.

Li: Anyway, it's very good someone can take care of you in a foreign country. I am always alone and quite independent. So learning English I think is also my own choice. They did ask me to learn English when I was small, but I believe they didn't expect me to achieve a certain level. They took it more like a personal interest. They may think English is more suitable than computer science for girls to study. (laugh) I don't know.

Renfeng: And Zhi?

Zhi: I don't think my parents really care about it. Generally I make the decision on my own for this kind of issues. They just said if you are going to learn something, work hard and find a good job. They wouldn't go to the details. They stopped being nosy about my life I think, after they provided me with some ideas on applying to college and major. Everything, I rely on my own. But, my wife came here with me. Her English is much better than mine, so I also have pressure, or motivation to make a progress. As a man, I should carry some responsibilities.

Renfeng: So you come to study in EAP class?

Zhi: Yes

Renfeng: Let's have a look at EAP class. Why did you choose this class?

Zhi: Poor English. It's really…I can't stand it. This is true. You were also in the class and you saw my performance there. I just want to improve my English. I don't have any class in my own discipline but I need to write English essays and communicate with people in English about issues like fieldwork arrangement and data collection. It was very tough at the beginning and my English was barely enough for communication in daily life. English ability on academic performance is…badly needed.

Sa: You are too modest.

Zhi: I mean, it's true…When I just arrived in Ireland, I need to deal with the Wi-Fi issue for the apartment I rented. I thought it's a very simple task and I just did it alone. I went to Vodafone and the staff who talked to me…I really don't understand his English. I felt very embarrassed because I asked him to repeat so many times. When I went

home and looked at the brochure he gave me, I finally understand the word he kept saying is 'broadband'. (laughs) I just couldn't understand it no matter how many times he said in the store. And whatever he said, I just replied 'yes' to pretend I understood everything. I suddenly felt my English is really awful. And I am also scared of talking in English on the phone.

Lan: I was a little bit scared at the beginning.

Renfeng: Do you have any specific reasons to learn English in this class?

Lan: I can't see I have any reasons very special. I didn't study English for my bachelor degree, so I might feel my English level is not enough for exams and (essays here.

Sa: (Writing essays. I <u>really</u> hate writing essays. That's the reason I failed the UNG writing requirement.

Lan: What's their requirement?

Sa: 6.5 on writing

Lan: Then I can't go there either.

Renfeng: Which area?

Sa: The same. English teaching.

Li: I heard this class from Sa. I don't know it at first.

Sa: Yes

Li: I have been to my major class for one week and I also felt my English is not good enough. I need to adapt to the new class environment. Another reason is I found that most English major students were also in this class, so I am sure I need it.

Xu: It's not necessary to follow others. English major doesn't guarantee good English level. But I checked the introduction of the course which described the course very useful, so I came to the class with a great interest. Well, in fact, the course…

Renfeng: Yes?

Xu: First, the time and environment. It's in the evening and inside [Arts Building

Lan: [Arts Building…is really like a maze. In the first few week, I was always late for classes simply because I can't find the way! And each room, with the shape of the poured concrete ceilings, resembles padded cells in an asylum. And we had EAP class in the evening hours…It was always like it's raining outside and it's really easy to get tired.

Sa: Really. But the Friday's class is better. The class is in the afternoon and outside the campus.

Lan: Where is that?

Sa: St. South Leinster. It is on the opposite side when you walked out of the Art's Block entrance. It's quite modern.

Xu: I see. It sounds better.

Li: I wouldn't say so. If you don't have other compulsory courses, you may not have a mind to work on Friday afternoon. I mean you will probably prepare for your weekend, go somewhere for travelling or just lie in bed at home. Very lazy…

Renfeng: How about the learning effect? Is it helpful?

Sa: A little bit. Help me to relax.

Xu: I think it's true. Actually the class is not that helpful I am afraid. Apart from that you could know some friends and got relaxed, it seems that the class didn't work for me.

Renfeng: So you were often absent?

Xu: I still went to the class every week, but I might always change the classroom.

Lan: So did I…

Xu: The teacher is very nice, but the course itself…It targets…because students from different countries are very different…and from so many disciplines in the same class. It's impossible to implant many things in your mind. I understand, it's really hard.

Sa: So we were there making friends.

Xu: This is also my personal opinion.

Renfeng: Zhi, you seem to have a different view?

Zhi: Perhaps my English basis is not as good as yours. I felt it's very helpful for me. In terms of listening and speaking, it's… inspired me a lot. It's like I dare more to express and I am glad to express. I think it definitely has a positive effect on my English improvement.

Renfeng: I found you never missed a single class.

Zhi: I really like the class and I don't want to waste this chance.

Li: I also think it is very difficult to make a great progress in such a short time.

Renfeng: In your own discipline, did you meet any problem caused by the language?

Sa: When I was talking to non-English native speakers, sometimes I have no idea what they were saying.

Renfeng: Non-native speaker? You mean the accent?

Sa: Yes. There is a boy in our class. He speaks English very slowly, but I still can't understand. I think once he probably repeated five times. I felt really sorry to ask him to repeat again. They have very strong accents.

Li: One of the professors in our class…I totally couldn't understand what he talked about, what's more, that module is so complicated. I really wanted to kill myself in the class.

Xu: We also have teachers from other countries. Our school is basically occupied by teachers from other countries.

Lan: Tommy has a strong accent.

Xu: I prefer to call that German.

Renfeng: You still feel difficult or you become used to it?

Xu: I made an adjustment. Now I am fine with it.

Sa: I still have the problem. I can understand those classes the first day I understood. I am still confused with the class which I didn't understand in the beginning. Just like, I like Elve and John's class and I don't like Moran's class. Because she always read PPT in the class, kept reading PPT, and she has a very strong accent. I just couldn't understand. And she just asked 'Do you understand' and then immediately jumped to the next topic.

Renfeng: Do you have a sense of achievement when you get yourself adjusted?

Lan: Well, probably.

Xu: Actually, our school…

Renfeng: Yes?

Xu: We are…Actually I think our school is a kind of disorganised. Because it consists of many departments. Everyone is like…It feels like there is no something like a core in it.

Lan: There are various departments under our SLLCS. But it feels…

Xu: Do you have the feeling our school is loosely connected. That feeling…It seems that people from different department come here only for lecturing, making a brief introduction. They are not even willing to tell others their office hour. And people spent long time and great effort preparing the thesis topic. And only got the feedback 'focus on something else'. (laughs)

Li: I suddenly realise our school is much nicer.

Sa: Yeah. That's terrible.

Zhi: We don't have class. I just do experiment with my boss… and fieldwork survey. The progress is like this so far.

Renfeng: Last question, do you have any future plan related to English?

Xu: I want to do PhD study.

Sa: I also want to do PhD. This is my plan at the moment.

Xu: I think doing PhD means great determination. Because first, doctoral degree doesn't mean that you can certainly find a job. And it's really like Doctor is something very glorious in the past, but now It's only a difficult task. You really need to write a lot and you need to find the funding yourself. You must be determined that this is something you really want to do.

Zhi: You can apply for a scholarship in CSC.

Renfeng: You got it?

Zhi: Yes. At the moment, definitely I want to complete my project first. As for English, I hope I can be more confident after so many exercises and I hope I can meet the required level of academic English.

Li: (.) I will wait and see. First, succeed in essay writing…then successfully graduate…and after that, see whether there is any chance to stay in Ireland.

Sa: I want to go back to China to work a few years and then apply to PhD programme.

Xu: Actually I think our classes are quite interesting. After all, I learned many from them… content on every aspect…I can feel the goal… on academic aspect. And I think this, things like literature, is…you need to be knowledgeable. It's like you need to dip into everything and you need to know a little bit about many areas.

Transcript of audio interview 3

Present: Jun, Qi, Sa, Yi, Zhi

Location: Seminar room, Arts Building

Date: February 15th 2016

Interviewer: Renfeng

Duration: 55 minutes

Renfeng: Today we will have a new friend in our group. Her name is Jun.

Sa: Welcome!

Renfeng: Jun, could you give a brief introduction about yourself?

Jun: Alright, well. I'm Jun. And I am doing business and management in Trinity…I was also doing things related to finance for my bachelor degree. Hmm…that's it.

Renfeng: Very good. It's good to have you here. And this is more like an informal discussion, o you don't need to feel nervous.

Jun: Okay

Renfeng: Now it's your second term in Trinity?

Sarah: Yeah

Renfeng: Did you have any test or paper to write at the end of the last term?

Sa: Yes, we got three, I feel like I am dying on this.

Yi: Yes, very painful at the beginning.

Renfeng: So how did you make it?

Qi: I don't have a particular strategy. I just wrote them. Alright, I don't like writing either. I suppose I just set different deadlines for three essays and then just push myself for it.

Renfeng: It works?

Qi: It works for me. Because I am kind of person…like to pull things till the last moment. The presence of deadline means a lot for me. If I don't push me to do it, I will probably not write a single word until I can see the deadline is really approaching. So I just set a deadline a few days ahead of the school deadline for me. So…

Yi: Trust me, it doesn't work. I did the same. I even set the amount of words I need to complete every day, but I <u>always</u> failed the target…

Qi: I know. I can't fully achieve the goal <u>every time</u> (.) or it's better to say I can achieve the goal sometimes. But because you are always ambitious when you set the target, and for example we can make the deadline a week earlier. Although you can't achieve your daily target, I mean if you are not doing anything at all, you can still make it before the official deadline. Those few days are like…deposit. (chuckles)

Renfeng: Jun, what do you think about it?

Jun: I am… quite self-disciplined. So I don't have the problem like this…

Renfeng: Do you have an essay to write?

Jun: Yes, we did. In a different way.

Sa: They have exams. We don't have.

Jun: Yes. But we did have essays. Perhaps we don't need to write so many words as you did and it didn't come together at the end of the term… Yes, actually we were free after we finished the exam. We are just required to submit reports at several

intervals during the terms. Because we had a very strange course setting, really… but the good thing is we can manage our time better. I mean, there wasn't a time we need to write three essays. And yes, we are not supposed to write long essays…

Yi: Wait. I feel like we are discussing the different issue. It's not because the deadline or things like the use of the time. I worked quite hard during the time I was writing my essay, but I couldn't complete them on time, Because I read very slowly and I had so many books to read. And also the structure, I mean on how you would organise your ideas. I was always full of ideas, but I didn't know how to write them. I feel I really need something like a sample for me to refer to (.) I don't know. It's really hard for me. Now I am very happy that I made the submission.

Sa: Yes…

Yi: But I asked for an extension about two weeks.

Sa: I also asked for an extension.

Renfeng: Zhi, you don't need to write an essay?

Zhi: Not at the moment. Just some short reports.

Renfeng: I see. Do you have any problem in English in terms of essay writing?

Jun: Yes. And that's the reason for me to come to this class.

Qi: More or less for sure.

Renfeng: Did you get the feedback?

Sa: Not yet.

Yi: I think English is the major problem, at least for me. It's not about…At the beginning everything. Words, sentence patterns and the structure of the essay. Because I didn't any experience like this before…

Renfeng: Didn't you write essays in the college in China.

Yi: I did. But God knows how I wrote those. It's different…but in a way, they are similar. Of course, I know big sections in the essay. But for the details…

Jun: So you teacher won't tell you how to write?

Qi: I don't think they did.

Yi: Basically not in the class. But we communicated through emails or made an appointment for discussion. Like I sent my essay structure to Henry and he emailed me back with some suggestions. I also made an appointment with Nicky, we talked about an hour and he gave me very detailed suggestions and a very long reading list. It's helpful for you to prepare the essay. But you may come across many difficulties during the writing and…All I can do it just complete it.

Qi: It also depends on whether your module lecturer is busy. Anyway, it's quite time-consuming.

Renfeng: Did you ask for an extension?

Qi: No. I just completed everything one day earlier. I mean it's nothing to be proud of, coz I don't know whether they are good. Sometimes you will have a feeling…but I am not sure about my writing.

Sa: I think I just learned how to paraphrase, I don't know.

Yi: Actually paraphrasing is harder for me. It has a higher standard for the language I think. I remembered I paraphrased a lot for the literature review, and then I started to write in a free style. (laughs)

Renfeng: Since you didn't receive any feedback at the moment, let's broaden the topic. What do you think about your major learning last year?

Qi: En…

Sa: Not too bad…

Zhi: I can say first. I didn't have any class. (laugh)

Jun: Why?

Sa: He is a research postgraduate.

Jun: Aha

Zhi: Yes. I don't have the class. But learning is not necessary to be done in the classroom. For me, I either worked in the office doing experiments and analysing specimen, or went to the different field for sampling. Science for me is something very specific. That is I have the knowledge of the particular area, the theory, the method, the formula… it's something very systematic and mechanical in my brain. So the past term for me is very valuable. I gradually adjusted myself to the environment, I mean the research environment here. And I learned a lot from my supervisor and have been to many interesting sites. They are all interesting. But, I know, I am not good at producing these, the process of my research and my findings in words, especially in English. I have much more to learn. Anyway, it's only the first term.

Renfeng: Impressive. How about your guys who had classes?

Jun: Our course arrangement is strange, very intensive. It's like we had eleven weeks in a term and we had six modules. But it's not like you would have the same module during the whole term. It's like in each week or two, you would only have one module, but still from Monday to Friday. After this period of time, this module ended and left you a presentation or report as assessment. And you would immediately come to the next module, and experience something similar. You didn't have the time to get used to it! You know what I mean, students in other schools may have five modules but each module was from September to December. It doesn't matter if you didn't understand in the first few weeks. But for us, if you didn't understand, you wouldn't have the chance next week. Because it's gone!

Sa: That's horrible!

Jun: It's really easy to get mentally exhausted every week. And another issue is, you will have all the exams at the end of the term.

Yi: And you forgot the things you learned at the very beginning.

Jun: It will happen for sure.

Qi: It seems that our programme is much more humanised.

Yi: Yeah

Sa: I have a friend who is studying finance. And she always stayed in the postgraduate reading room till one o'clock in the morning. And every time she saw me, she said she was jealous of me.

Qi: I wouldn't say that. I think it depends. Probably we are busier during the break.

Sa: No. I think overall their courses are more demanding. I guess that's the reason why they can find a job here but we can't.

Renfeng: But did you perceive any kind of progress made in your discipline?

Jun: Well, definitely, Otherwise I can't pass the exams. (laughs) I think I learned a lot so far, but I don't know whether this knowledge is useful or where I can practice it. Because management is quite different from accounting. They can easily find a job but we can't.

Zhi: I don't really think I can say I made a huge progress, because I am doing things I am quite familiar with in China. But on the other hand, I can say yes. Because here (.) everything is new and fresh for me. I prefer to say I made progress in English learning or adapting to the new environment.

Renfeng: How about you guys doing English-related subject here?

Sa: As for me…it's hard to say. I think I made some improvements but not very obvious. Hmm…Okay, I did make [improvements

Yi: [I think for people learning language, it's hard to identify improvements in rather a short period of time. But for major class, I would certainly agree. Because we don't have the chance to know these theories and approaches in China. At least, it's kind of modules for master students.

Renfeng: What's your major?

Yi: English Language Teaching

Sa: Me too

Yi: The tricky thing is it's hard to describe the difference between major learning and language learning for students like us. Because the language itself takes very much of the module content, like study the language or how to teach the language.

Jun: That's so interesting.

Sa: I think modules related to English teaching is easier to understand.

Qi: I think I improved a lot.

Renfeng: How did you find that?

Qi: It's…I can understand the class of particular teachers. I remember When I first came here, the first time I was in Henry's class. I couldn't understand anything at all. I didn't know where he was talking about. But in the later classes, on the last but one class, I found I could understand his joke and I felt very happy.

Renfeng: Only in this class?

Qi: Yes. I just found it's really difficult to follow him in the class at the beginning. When I found I could understand his joke, I was very happy.

Sa: Other teachers spoke clearer and slower. It's easier to understand.

Renfeng: So you think this improvement was caused by your EAP learning experience, language learning in your major study or something else?

Qi: All of them, I guess. You can't really single any one out. But, I suppose the drills and daily use of English are more important.

Renfeng: So how about EAP class? I mean the one you were in the last term?

Qi: It was very good. But I don't think your English will improve a lot by attending a two-hour class each week. It has a different function…But I really like it.

Yi: If you ask me, I would say I prefer this comfortable and easy learning pattern in EAP class. Because When I was learning English in China, it's very painful. I feel like the purpose for everything is to remember vocabularies. And when you remember those words, you just take the exam. It has nothing to do, to do with mastering the language…and no long-term goals or plans. You can't see how you're going to use the language in a long period of time. So it's really good here, you won't feel very difficult after the learning in the class. You just play games and time passed. If you want me to make a comparison, I prefer this kind of free style.

Renfeng: Then let's talk about this. How would you evaluate this 'free style' as you mentioned?

Qi: I think it is quite good, compared with the English class in China.

Yi: Yes

Zhi: I agree

Jun: Yes

Sa: Yeah

Qi: Perhaps we have very few opportunities…in China we had very few opportunities to express our [own opinion.

Jun: [Our own opinion

Yi: Yes, yeah

Qi: But since I came here, the thing is, members of the group will encourage you to express your idea. And you also want to participate in the discussion, and get involved, and present your point of view on the discussed topic, so I feel it's quite good.

Zhi: Yes

Qi: The method is not only used in EAP class, also in our major classes. Like in Tony's class, students were divided into groups and we discussed and tried to figure out the topic ourselves. What do they call this?

Renfeng: Learner autonomy

Qi: Yes

Jun: This kind of method was also employed in our school. I just want to add something to the previous question. We can't do it in the class, because we have a much bigger class size. And the teacher was crazily teaching, (laughs) kept talking in the class. But we had homework, like report or presentation. We need to complete it in a group. Although it sounds like what we used to do in China, the discussion, the group work is different…I mean the attitude. But sometimes I don't like it, because you can always find group members bickering over who did most in the group. The competition is horrible in our school.

Sa: We don't have the problem like this. Most of our classmates are very nice. I guess it's because most of them are teachers.

Qi: But some teachers…they didn't arrange the class in proper sequences. One teacher gave us too many things in the beginning, but very few in the end.

Renfeng: Okay. Let's go back to the English improvement. Did you all find yourself improved in English?

Jun: Yes

Renfeng: On which aspect?

Jun: Before I came to Ireland, I believe my English is okay, at least for daily use. I thought I might have difficulties in understanding the class or writing an essay. But when I came here, I realised my English level is not enough for 'daily use'. There were so many basic things I didn't know how to say in English. For example, once the toilet seat was broken in my apartment, so I asked my landlord to fix it. I don't know how to describe the seat cover. I think I used toilet, rings and so many different words. In the end, I could only show him the problem. I felt so bad at that time, because it was something very common, but you can say it. Since then, I began to pay special attention to the English words of stuff used in daily life.

Renfeng: This is normal. You need a process of accumulating new words.

Jun: Yes, and now I feel much better. Even I meet the situation in which I can't exactly give the English name of something, I can describe in a way that people can understand.

Yi: I have a similar story. I am living with my landlord. And one day I was alone at home and the fridge in the kitchen didn't work, so I texted my landlord. She replied 'it appears that a circuit breaker has tripped'. Just this short message, I didn't understand 'circuit breaker' and 'tripped'.

Renfeng: How did you finally solve the problem?

Yi: Based on my similar experience in China. (chuckles) So I would say don't dream that I can really learn this language in a year or two. There is always more to learn. It's about lifelong learning.

Sa: Yeah

Zhi: I found my listening ability became better.

Renfeng: How did you find that?

Zhi: I can understand my colleagues chitter-chattering in the office. (laughs) I mean, seriously, Normally I couldn't get most of the conversation when an Irish talks to another Irish, unless, they talked to me or I paid much attention to their dialogue. It seems that they use different English in the conversation with Chinese and their own fellows. A very strange thing is I understand English better spoken by Chinese. I mean even they can speak very fluent and natural English.

Jun: Yes, I have the same problem.

Zhi: But I am still happy I can understand more now. It gave me the confidence.

Renfeng: That's good. Sa, you said you couldn't sense an improvement in you English learning?

Sa: Not really. I feel I am still not sure about my academic English, but I think I improved in English writing. Because on English speaking and listening, I don't think I have a problem. But for writing, I did poorly on the IELTS writing test before I came here. But after so many essays, I think I have some ideas.

Renfeng: Since you mentioned writing, you are all in the writing course this term?

Yi: Yes

Renfeng: What's the difference between this course and the EAP class you attended the last term?

Zhi: The classroom, this year we have a much, much better room. I am not saying I don't like the classroom in Arts Building, but the current room is much nicer in every aspect. And it's in the afternoon. The light is much better. I feel happier learning in this place. And you know, you need a good environment. You will be more effective.

Sa: Yes. I have been to both classrooms. I definitely like this one.

Yi: And also the content, I feel this course focuses more on the writing and the EAP class is more on speaking, the presentation. They have different purposes.

Qi: Yes, last year basically we had group work like discussion, presentation and debate. And this year we still have some of these activities, but we have something more, like writing exercise…

Sa: Write CV and cover letter

Jun: Games about vocabularies used in the academic paper

Zhi: But we did something similar, like linking words…

Yi: And we can send our writing sample to Bill. This is very useful, I feel.

Renfeng: You said there are some overlaps between the two classes, so why do choose to attend this class?

Jun: I didn't attend the class last term.

Renfeng: Ah, yes

Jun: If I did this programme last term, probably I won't come to the class in this term. One reason is that I knew the information about this class too late. And a second reason is

that I prefer to attend the class this term. Because I need to write my dissertation at the end of this term. If I did it last year, when I am going to write the dissertation later, I may forget everything. So it's more about my own arrangement.

Sa: Sounds like you are always good at arranging those things.

Jun: (chuckles) Perhaps

Renfeng: And you guys participated in the EAP class?

Sa: To improve my English writing. And also we need to write the final dissertation this summer. I hope I can get ready for that through writing so many essays and this writing course. I really don't like writing, to be honest. And Renfeng helped me with the proofreading of one essay, he knows how terrible I am.

Yi: I also sent you one of my writings. (chuckles) And so many grammatical errors in the first paragraph.

Sa: But the most important reason is I like the way of learning in the class, and I like the teacher. And I like to meet interesting people in the class. I feel I need to improve writing, but I don't know whether the class is helpful.

Yi: I think you can more or less learn something in the class. The class is more like…motivate you to learn. But you must work very hard after the class, if you want to see improvements.

Qi: I feel the class is useful. But if you want me to objectively evaluate the effect of the class, I would say it's not very helpful. I say it's useful (.) because of your psychological effect. If you believe the class will improve your English ability and you will probably see the result. And Sa is right. The class gives you a very positive feeling about the language, and you may find the learning process more enjoyable. When you have all these very positive feelings, I think you can easily spot the smallest improvement you made.

Yi: It makes sense. But I still think I came here just because I want to upgrade my writing.

Renfeng: How about Zhi?

Zhi: I didn't think much about it. For me, I didn't regard this class as a new module. I just take it as the second half of the EAP programme.

Sa: No one told you the EAP class only last for a term?

Zhi: Of course I knew. I paid the fees (laughs). I mean, unlike you guys, I don't have a dissertation or something to do recently. But I understand I need to improve my English, everything. I made myself a long-term plan. And the two course are included in my plan. I hope I can achieve something by the end of the class.

Renfeng: So what do you want to achieve?

Zhi: I don't know how to say. I don't have a very concrete goal. I hope I will be able to know how to write papers properly in English. I also want to speak a fluent English, so I can hang out with my foreign friends. But I don't think that's hard for me. This is what I am doing at the moment.

Renfeng: You still meet Bayer regularly?

Zhi: Yes. We often eat and talk together at weekend.

Renfeng: That's nice. How about other people? What's your goal in the class?

Jun: I hope I can have some ideas about my dissertation.

Yi: We still have three essays to write before the dissertation. I really want to write better…on structure, words and other things. The good thing about this class is I can send my draft to Bill and he will proofread my writing. And also, very detailed feedbacks.

Sa: Me too

Qi: I hope he can help us to conclude some ways to write an academic paper, or some skills. Things like some fixed patterns we used for IELTS writing test.

Sa: Yeah, I hope so.

Renfeng: Sa, you just said the enjoyment in this class made you come to class again?

Sa: Yes, that's very important.

Renfeng: So I want to know your attitude on English learning during this period of time. Do you like it? And why?

Yi: I want to say the EAP class really saved my interest in English learning. Seriously. I think I have mentioned again and again that I was very painful when I was learning English in China. When I came here I realised that I could learn English in this way. You know, I really enjoy the time in the class. And also other modules in our school. It is… no longer a burden for me. I am quite happy.

Jun: I am still at the stage of 'feeling the culture' here. I really enjoy learning English here because, it seems that I am learning the culture, the people and custom here. There are so many activities you can join in and so many people you can talk to…

Renfeng: Using English as a tool?

Jun: Yes, but you can't separate them. English is part of them or a representation of them.

Zhi: I have the same feeling. Through learning English I can talk to different people and participate in the different activity. It really inspires me in learning English. You will long for it.

Sa: Yeah. I am the person likes knowing more friends and having fun with them. The language brings you together.

Yi: Sa has another strong motivation in this term.

Sa: What?

Yi: A handsome guy in the [writing course (laughs)

Sa: [The Spanish student

Yi: Sa comes to class every week for him (laughs)

Renfeng: That's a very good reason.

Sa: I just want to know more friend…

Qi: And it's hard to say that we learn the language for those reasons. I feel that language is part of the culture… not really because it's a tool. The language itself gives you the feeling like what you can find from other cultural elements

Jun: Cultural interaction

Qi: That's the word I want to say.

Renfeng: Alright, let's move to the next topic. Apart from the writing, do you still have problems in English learning?

Zhi: You mean learning English or using English?

Renfeng: Both, if you want to say.

Zhi: Well…

Yi: The only problem is my English level. (laughs) Alright, I can't think of anything in English learning, especially in EAP class. I have a lot of problems in using the language.

Renfeng: Like what?

Yi: I may have grammatical mistakes in my spoken English. And sometimes I don't know the idiosyncratic use of the language. It's…not as bad as Chinglish, for example, I would ask something in ten sentences and my Irish just use one word to summarise what I said.

Qi: And also, some pronunciations. One day I took a taxi and I told the driver I wanted to go to Baggot Street. He said, 'it's not Baggot. It's Ba…Follow me, Baggot'. I think it's really funny.

Zhi: Ah, I had many problems like this. But I really want to say something related to English learning. You know, I tried different methods for improving my English. People said that listening to English new and watching English programme helps a lot. But I still don't understand what they are talking about without English subtitles. And I really think if they speak to you, their English is easy to understand. If they talked among themselves, I will feel lucky if I can understand half of it. Like, once I was in the swimming pool. The TV there showed Sky News. I tried my best to listen to it and I could only pick a few words. I don't think it was because it's noisy or what. I found Irish people had no problem in the same environment. I don't know if Irish people learn Chinese, they will have the same problem.

Renfeng: That's a really tough question.

Yi: I think you are too ambitious. You need to learn it following a proper sequence.

Renfeng: If you asked me, I would say if your language proficiency level is not that perfect, you will definitely have problems in understanding very advanced content when you can't concentrate on it.

Zhi: Alright, it makes sense.

Yi: I may have this or that kind of problems, in listening, speaking and reading. Some of them are not caused by the language.

Sa: Now I found I have problems with Chinese. (laughs)

Renfeng: How?

Sa: Sometimes I don't know how to express a certain thing in Chinese. My mom found it.

Qi: I have the similar symptom.

Renfeng: [Well

Jun: [I feel…

Renfeng: Yes?

Jun: I feel unconfident when someone can't immediately understand my English. I am scared of hearing 'sorry?' or 'Can you say that again?'. It's really discouraging. Sometimes I don't think I have a problem with the pronunciation or what, but as long as they ask me, I will feel I made a mistake.

Renfeng: It's more related to personality?

Jun: I guess so. It's so easy for me to feel unsecured when I speak English.

Renfeng: Other people won't have the same problem?

Sa: No, I am fine.

Qi: Awkward feeling is inevitable when you speak something wrong. But this is very normal and you just face it. You learn lessons from the mistake.

Sa: I think extrovert personality is better in learning a language. You need to communicate with others. And you need to get ready being corrected from time to time. I think it's better to be outgoing, even crazy. (laughs)

Zhi: I made many mistakes but I don't think it really matters. I mean, it matters because you need to correct later. But for the feeling, trust me, it's not that important. If you can't put is down, it means you still very young. Just experience more, and you will feel better.

Renfeng: Well, Let's talk about something else. How's your family? Do you often contact with you family members in China?

Sa: They are all good. They will come to Ireland to see me soon.

Yi: I don't think my parents will come here.

Qi: Neither do I. It's too far. We just do video chat through Wechat.

Jun: Same

Renfeng: Do they still care about your English learning?

Qi: Major study, yes. But I am doing English here, so it's hard to tell. (chuckles) I don't think they would think about that. I have been here for half a year. They think I shouldn't have any problem with English.

Jun: My mom worried about it a little bit last year when I just arrived. They asked me whether I can understand everything in class and they told me to take some language classes in necessary.

Yi: My family, oh my god, they are still the same. They told me if I couldn't stay here or find a boyfriend, they would arrange the dating for me in China.

Sa: Still?

Yi: They start to worry about my marriage. The only escape is to do a PhD programme…

Sa: You can get married here.

Yi: That's a different story.

Renfeng: Zhi, we saw your wife in the class.

Zhi: Yeah. This term we study together.

Renfeng: You said you felt pressure learning English in front of your wife?

Zhi: It's Okay. I mean I don't really care about that. But I got the power when my wife was there in the class. I am more motivated.

Renfeng: Why?

Zhi: It's hard to say. Probably you feel comfortable when you are accompanied by your family members. And you can see what you are working for. Another reason is about the 'face'. Yes. It's not a competition but I don't want to be the bad learner.

Renfeng: Does your wife know this?

Zhi: I never told her. I don't know whether she can tell.

Renfeng: So, now, do you have any plans for your family or yourself?

Zhi: It's only the first year of research for me and my wife. I don't have very big plans. Just work on the topic, step by step. And I have a report to submit at the end of the term. No further plan at the moment. No.

Renfeng: I understand. But for the one-year master programme, it's not too early to think about your future.

Qi: I am thinking to apply to PhD programme in Trinity. And I am also looking for chances to teach Chinese in Ireland. If I can't, I may go back to China to teach Chinese. But it's hard because I can't enter universities. They need you to have a doctoral degree. And you also need to rely on connections.

Yi: I am also thinking about that. Apparently, if I can't stay here, I must take my mom's arrangement.

Sa: Dating

Yi: Yes

Renfeng: So you all want to do PhD?

Sa: At the beginning, I want to do PhD. Now I give up the idea. It's too difficult. I even don't know how to write Master thesis. I don't want to do PhD.

Renfeng: What do you want to do?

Sa: I don't know. I'm not ready for work. I will wait and see.

Jun: I want to find a job related to my major.

Renfeng: In Ireland?

Jun: It doesn't have to be in Ireland. I do miss China, but I won't say no to it.

Renfeng: But at least, English is still an important part in your future?

Jun: Yes. This is the trend. You need English everywhere.

Yi: I am very happy this language I learned is still useful. I mean I am here in English-speaking countries and doing English related things.

Qi: We all need to use English for sure. Whether you will stay abroad, doing PhD or teaching Chinese. That is part of the reasons why we learned English. I feel very lucky to stick to this original learning objective.

Sa: Indeed

Renfeng: Now you have stayed here over six months. Do you enjoy your time here?

Jun: Very much

Yi: Yes

Jun: The life here is quiet, unlike Beijing. I can find a strong artistic atmosphere here, museums, galleries and theatres. The night life is kind of monotonous, just the pubs. But I like it.

Qi: I think it's not as lively as cities in China, where you have many things to do at any time. But it is green, the countryside feeling. You may find interesting things to do in good weather, not many. So my life is quite simple here.

Zhi: I agree that the life is simple here. If the weather permitted, I will enjoy this kind of beauty of nature.

Yi: I went to see dramas sometimes, but not always. Apart from my classes, I would go shopping. Yes. Sometimes travel to the neighbour cities. I lived quite far from the city centre and my life is quite boring.

Renfeng: I see. Last question, do you have any stories to share related to English, during this period of time?

Zhi: Ah, yes. I think it's two weeks ago. I received a call from Garda. And the staff who was talking on the phone knew I was a Chinese. And he asked 'do you need a translator? We can invite one for you.' And I confidently replied 'No, thank you'. And he said 'So, you don't need the translator?' I replied 'yes'…I think the staff must be mad. (laughs) I was still thinking about Chinese. You give 'yes' or 'no' based on specific question…

Renfeng: That's interesting. I made the same mistakes in the first year when I was here.

Qi: I worked as an interpreter.

Renfeng: Freelance?

Qi: No, it was…One day I was in Bank of Ireland. And a middle-aged Chinese male had problems transferring the money to a China bank account. So he saw me and asked if

I can speak English. I said yes and acted as an interpreter there explaining things to the staff in the bank.

Renfeng: Did you help him to solve the problem?

Qi: I don't think so. (laughs)

Sa: I am discouraged from English learning a little bit.

Renfeng: What happened?

Sa: I don't think it's really about English. It's about one of my selective module. I chose one module and we got the chance to practice teaching English in a language school. I was so nervous when I was teaching and after the class I was criticised for my unprofessional teaching manner. So I am so nervous in that class. I really don't want to be criticised again.

Renfeng: I didn't know you are teaching English.

Sa: It's terrible. I hope I can have a better performance next class.

Renfeng: How would you like to prepare?

Sa: Spending longer time on the preparation. Like what to say, how to say in the class. And my class was commented as boring last time. I don't really know how to make it interesting.

Yi: Luckily, I didn't choose that class!

Sa: If I had known this practice, I wouldn't choose either!

Transcript of audio interview 4

Present: Lan, Li, Xu, Yu, Qi, Zhuan

Location: Seminar room, Arts Building

Date: May 13th 2016

Interviewer: Renfeng

Duration: 70 minutes

Renfeng: Okay. Everyone is here. This is our last interview for this research. Today we are going to review your experience in the past academic year. Shall we start?

Li: Yeah

Renfeng: So you have completed all the modules?

Yu: Yes

Lan: Yes

Zhuan: Yes

Renfeng: How would you evaluate your study in Trinity? Was it a good experience?

Yu: Pretty good.

Qi: I can say I never work hard like this before. Not during the four years when I was doing the undergraduate study.

Xu: For English majors in China, we just played for four years in college.

Li: It's quite difficult for me. I have worked really hard to understand some classes. And also essay writing is a big headache for me.

Yu: I feel the most valuable thing is the experience of studying here. Because before I decided to go abroad, I talked with some friends. It's like I knew this kind of one year master perhaps can't provide you much. I know many students just want the degree. But I still come because I thought the most important is to experience this different learning context. I really think the experience is very important. So I really enjoy my time here.

Qi: Yes

Yu: And also the language. My English is much better.

Lan: My feeling is… I don't have any special feeling. But normally it takes me a very long time to react to something. I really feel time flies. And I learn many things in the class. Because we still have essays and a dissertation to write, I don't feel I am going to leave here.

Xu: I am not happy with something… especially the organisation of some administrations. But I feel the classes are very useful, and also those lectures. I found them very useful. I learned a lot of knowledge from them. In general, I think this experience is good, because it's not only about the major class. The activities here are much better and my life here is interesting. But yes, the study is tough. These days I almost live in 1937, but it's meaningful.

Qi: Yes, we spent most our time in the postgraduate reading room. Yu and I just came from there.

Yu: Yes

Li: The study here is so different from that in China. We have many tasks needed to be done as a group. I often meet my group members on weekend for a discussion of assignments or presentations. Yes, I think I am hard working here.

Yu: And the school is a perfect place for study. Every time I went to the swimming pool, I can hear students talk about essay, project and PhD, and also in Arts Building. You just feel people in this college talk about the study from time to time…

Li: I lived on campus. One day I went home around 12 at night. I heard two boys were talking about exam or project on their way home. That's really impressive.

Renfeng: Wow

Qi: And you can see the reading room is always full of people. It's very difficult for me to find an empty seat if I came late.

Yu: Yes

Renfeng: How about your major class? Do you like it?

Yu: I like it

Zhuan: I like some classes.

Qi: Our classes are…pretty good.

Yu: And I think I have more critical thinking. Because when I was in China, it's like you are given a task and you need to complete on your own. But the class here, most of the time you need to discuss with your group members. Everybody is engaged…Actually I think this form of group discussion in Roy's class is very good. It's like each class she gave a topic, and we worked on our own…And another class is DG. It's like that class was so difficult and he left a lot of homework at the very beginning. And in each class he…the materials we may need two weeks to read next time, he just summarised it in 20 minutes in the class.

Qi: We need to start from easy things and end with harder ones.

Yu: And also, for example, because it's very difficult. Actually if for example, before the class you could ask us to, to read before the class. First we read and then you teach. But he always taught first and then asked us to read. As a result, we could understand neither his lecture in the class nor the reading materials after class.

Zhi: We can do the preview.

Yu: Later I found we didn't have the thing like preview here.

Xu: Perhaps it's the difference between schools. We were given the reading task before the class.

Lan: Occasionally

Xu: Yes, sometimes. I think intrinsically these classes are excellent in content. But teachers in our school are really weird.

Lan: You are going to complain again? (chuckles)

Xu: No, I won't this time.

Renfeng: Now let's focus on the language. Could you observe your language improvement after a year's learning experience at Trinity?

Yu: Yes

Qi: I think so

Xu: I think definitely I can see the improvement, but it's hard to say whether it had a direct connection with learning at Trinity. I feel as long as you are in an English-speaking environment and you don't only stay with people from your own community, you will certainly make progress. But you can attribute the improvement to the learning in Trinity, because it's part of the experience in Ireland. Especially, learning in the college, you will expect you can make an improvement on some very concrete aspect, like writing an essay. And basically you make progress each time you finish an essay, so I wouldn't deny I made an improvement using English on something academic. But first, I don't think it's because of the EAP class. Second, I can see a more obvious improvement last term than this term.

Renfeng: Why do you think you didn't make an obvious progress this term.

Xu: I guess it's because of the gap…I mean from zero to one, the difference is quite clear, you can see it. But from one to two, it's not something can be easily spotted. For example, I didn't know how to write a proper academic paper before I studied in Trinity. After so many practices, I knew it at the end of the first term. But this year I already knew how to write, so the next step, perhaps is to write a good essay? But it's not easy to achieve and you can't judge whether it's good on your own.

Renfeng: I understand.

Lan: I found my improvement is huge.

Renfeng: How did you find that?

Lan: It's I can understand most of the dialogue in the drama. I am doing literature, so sometimes I went to the theatre to see famous dramas. Because this kind of environment is very good here. You know, people here know how to appreciate a different kind of arts. I remember the first time I went to a theatre was last October, in Abbey Theatre. It's a drama composed by an Irish playwright, McGuinness. It's about an Irish family change throughout the years. I was sitting in the second row, but I was just guessing the story there. I didn't understand half of their lines. But it's something about literature and I was really interested in it. So I worked very hard on listening to stage performance. Just kept listening and last week I went to Gates Theatre for *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Oscar Wilde…

Renfeng: That's a really nice piece of work. I was also there last week.

Lan: And surprisingly, I understood almost everything! In the past, I was there laughing with the crowds, because I didn't know why they were laughing. To pretend I understood, I just laughed together. But this time, I was clear about everything apart from a few words.

Renfeng: You didn't read the Chinese translation before?

Lan: Yes, but that's when I was in China. I had forgotten everything except the author.

Xu: That play is classic.

Lan: Indeed.

Renfeng: And you feel happy about that?

Lan: Very much. I feel surprised and happy. That's the only improvement I am sure about.

Renfeng: Other people?

Yu: The way of thinking, I mean, when I was writing. In the past, if I was going to write something, I needed to think about how to say in Chinese and then translated in my head. Now I think in English when I am writing.

Qi: Yes, yes. I can feel the same.

Renfeng: This is interesting.

Yu: I mean speaking is better. But I did have the translating process in English writing in the past.

Renfeng: Is it because you are so familiar with the language, and the time for this process is much shortened or you just omit the process?

Yu: I don't know. I am still not sure how good I am in English writing, because I found the teachers wrote me many feedbacks on my written work even I felt I tried my best. But at least, I don't have the problem I need to do a translation first. I am one step closer to the native speaker. (laughs)

Li: That's true. I may still need translation for particular words or [phrases

Yu: [I also need that. But that's…you are not sure about the use of…or you want to change the way of expression. It's more like to look up a word in the dictionary. It's not like the translation I mentioned.

Qi: And you will unconsciously pick up the English sentence structures. For example, I will back translate some uses of English into Chinese. For example, now I often say an adverb before the sentence in Chinese, but that doesn't make a good sense in Chinese. Yes, you can say that. Because our grammar is quite flexible. (laughs) I often say '基本上…', because I always say 'Basically…' in English.

Zhuan: True!

Lan: Yes, I didn't think about that.

Xu: It's very common. Your second language can be influenced by your mother tongue or vice versa, like we often say 'you know' in colloquial Chinese. I guess it's from English.

Zhuan: This influence leads to a result. My Chinese ability decreased. Once I talked to my mom and she said 'what are you talking about? Do you forget how to speak Chinese?'

Lan: Really.

Qi: Yes. My friends in China think I am great because I can write English essays, but to be honest I don't know how to write Chinese report.

Li: I wrote a birthday card for one of my Chinese friends here, but I didn't know how to write in Chinese and I searched on the internet…

Renfeng: I know. When you don't have much time to use the language, perhaps your language fluency will change.

Xu: Yes

Renfeng: So how do you see those improvements? Happy?

Li: Of course

Yu: I feel very happy.

Qi: Yes

Zhuan: Yes

Yu: I feel if you decide to learn something, you will care about the result. If you can see the result, you will think your hard work pay off…and you will have the motivation to do something further. The sense of fulfilment is really important.

Qi: Yes

Renfeng: So you will expect the accomplishment before the study?

Yu: Yes

Xu: It's Okay. I will do something not because it is difficult, because it is interesting.

Li: Or you need to do

Renfeng: Okay we will later talk about this topic on motivation, Yu just mentioned the good result may motivate you to do something further. On English learning, I know Lan and Xu were not formally learning English in the class this term.

Lan: Ah?

Xu: Not in the EAP class

Lan: Ah, yes

Renfeng: And other students will soon complete your English class at Trinity. So how would you think of English learning in the future?

Li: We still need to learn English?

Renfeng: I mean, you can broaden your view. I have learned English for 17 years and I am still doing it.

Zhuan: It depends on whether I will consistently use English in my later career. If I don't stay abroad or use English a lot in my future job, like teaching English. I think my English is sufficient.

Xu: I wouldn't say so. For me, learning English doesn't mean you need to learn in a class or you use a specific method. I am not in the EAP class this year but I am still improving my English because I keep reading, speaking, listening and writing. English learning is everywhere. You don't need to give yourself a condition.

Renfeng: How about the time? I mean the future.

Li: I think both Zhuan and Xu are right. It really depends whether you have the need to use English. If you get the degree and don't want to stay here. And you go back to China and find the job has nothing or very few to do with English. And for us, our current English level is enough for things like travelling abroad or reading simple

information. But if you need it, you will be able to find your own way to learn, even like talking to native speakers…

Xu: Not 'need to', it's 'want to'.

Yu: I would agree with Xu. I feel it's more about a concept…yes, most of us are still at the stage of seeing whether it's useful and traditionally we were taught so. But sometimes how can you tell whether it is useful later? I know a person who self-studied French. And one day she met a French couple on the bus and talked with them in French. And the husband is the head of a bank. He thought the girl's French was excellent and gave her a job in France! So I mean, language is a skill. It won't harm you If you learn and improve it…

Xu: I would learn as many as possible. (chuckles)

Renfeng: You just said concept?

Yu: Yes, I think it's time to change the idea of learning for something.

Li: That's impossible.

Qi: I think you want to express the meaning of lifelong learning.

Yu: Yes, yes, yes

Lan: The term sounds positive.

Zhuan: That's a different thing. I wouldn't say no to lifelong learning and I wouldn't argue language learning process can't be lifelong lasting. But what's the reasons?

Renfeng: Okay. I can see different people have different opinions on this. It doesn't matter, let's talk about something easy. And we have talked about this many times, your life in Ireland. Do you want to give a summary on that?

Li: In retrospect…(laughs)

Xu: Why so formal?

Li: Alright, I would say I like it most of the time. Irish people are very nice, virtually speaking. Although I had some bad memories, but I like to stay here.

Renfeng: Bad memories? Like what?

Li: I had problems with my former landlord, but he is a Chinese. And my wallet was once stolen on the street. Just these trivial issues.

Zhuan: I don't call that a trivial issue.

Li: But you may have these problems everywhere.

Zhuan: Well, that's true.

Xu: My bike was also stolen, twice, but I like the country and the countryside. (laughs) It's a brilliant place for people doing literature, the famous authors, the activities, the atmospheres…it's really good for a 'green' and free person to live. But I hate the weather. Come on. It's May now, still cold…

Lan: I don't like the winter here. I like everything else, especially Trinity.

Yu: I don't like the weather either. I don't like the winter.

Zhuan: The wind is so strong. I don't mind it rains, but why the rain comes with the wind. You can't hold an umbrella in this weather.

Yu: I feel people here have a quite simple life. Life is so simple, because they do nothing except drinking, keep drinking.

Zhuan: Their life is simple

Qi: They are easy to satisfy.

Renfeng: So you make lots of Irish friends?

Qi: There are no Irish people near where I live.

Yu: Irish classmates, they are our friends.

Lan: Just classmates

Xu: Sometimes I had a trip with some Irish people.

Renfeng: So your life is always in the library?

Li: Not that hard working. I will hang out on weekends, like eating outside.

Yu: Shopping, eating, drinking, watching films, swimming…

Zhuan: Travelling all the time

Xu: Yes

Qi: I joined the flying disc club

Renfeng: What's that?

Qi: Just flying disc, the one you can throw. But I haven't played for two months. Because it's all arranged at night, too late…

Yu: She's really good at it.

Lan: I went to theatres, not always. I want to go to the concert in the summer time. I feel people here are very rich in spiritual life. I feel there are various concerts here, and stage performance like drama, very professional.

Renfeng: So do you have anything giving you a deep impression here? I mean positive things.

Xu: Negative issues are easier to remember. (chuckles)

Lan: I can't think of any. One year is too short…

Zhuan: I've been to many countries during the time, but I don't think any particular here. Probably I start to like the feeling of stay in pubs. I never did that in China.

Qi: Me too

Yu: Pub culture is good here.

Li: I remember… something left me a great impression. I probably will never forget.

Xu: What's it?

Li: It was on New Year's Eve. I heard there were fireworks and new year's count down in front of Trinity. So I went there, but an hour earlier. The roads were closed there only allowing people to walk from one direction, so I need to walk outside the campus to get to the point. When I was walking to the back of the campus, near Pearse St, I found a homeless man lying at a corner between two shops. He was reading a book, with one hand holding a very small torch and the other hand turning the pages.

Lan: Oh my god!

Yu: Wow!

Li: There were not enough light poles there and the light from the torch was so dim. And at the same time, on the other side of the campus, there was a concert and thousands of people were cheering for the coming new year.

Renfeng: I see

Li: I couldn't tell how much it stroke me at the time. The scene is something I think only exists in stories on the book.

Xu: I found many homeless people or, I don't know their identity, were reading books on the street. There is one always in Nassau St.

Zhuan: I also find Irish people like reading. They always read on the bus.

Li: But the thing for me is…the contrast, a man has nowhere to stay on New Year's Eve reading alone at a corner, people celebrating the new year. I really wanted to take a photo of him, but I thought it's rude and I didn't want to interrupt his reading, so I just keep this image in my head.

Renfeng: Well, that's really something impressive, at least very impressive for me.

Qi: Yes

Xu: I can see it. It's really touching.

Li: And I think I was stimulated by it. I decided to work hard on my study this year. Because I was a very… I wouldn't push myself to do something. And also the English, I thought the EAP class was not that helpful and I didn't it this year. But after this, and my experience in the essay writing made me choose to attend this class. I found I was really motivated by him, in sprit. So I hope in my position, I won't waste the time, and to achieve the goals.

Renfeng: What goals do you have this term?

Li: I mean, very general, just work hard. And at least I can complete all the thesis… in a way…I am satisfied.

Renfeng: Do other people have different goals this term in your major study?

Qi: Still, first graduate

Yu: Dissertation writing

Lan: Graduate

Zhuan: Same

Renfeng: How about English?

Yu: I think now English is not the major concern in making the objectives, because first, we have been here for quite long, and we won't actively see where our English is still not enough. We are used to the English context. It doesn't mean we don't need to improve English. Just like, for me, I won't say I give a very concrete goal on this.

Zhuan: To improve my writing ability, I think.

Qi: Yes, writing is the one I want to improve the most.

Lan: Yes

Renfeng: Of the four skills, you all think writing is the skill you want to improve the most?

Lan: Yes, and also the speaking.

Yu: I think speaking and writing

Li: For me, I would say listening.

Zhuan: All of them

Renfeng: Which one do you think is the hardest to improve?

Qi: Writing

Yu: Definitely writing

Zhuan: I received the feedback of my essay. Terrible.

Yu: The writing is really, you don't know how to do it correctly and it is the most boring part of learning English.

Xu: I would say, just keep writing, it's about a feeling. The more you write, the better you are.

Zhuan: I have completed five essays, but I still have similar problems. Like the sentences I used are very boring, like 'sth shows that'

Li: You can use the academic vocabularies in the writing course. Vocabulary list.

Zhuan: I know. But I don't know how to deal with the sentence. I was told to write from general to specific, but how?

Renfeng: You need a sample.

Zhuan: Something like that. I am still confused with the structures. It seems that different module has different structures.

Qi: In the first term, I am not that clear about how to write an essay, but I got a pretty good result. This year I thought I understand everything, but the result of an essay is worse.

Li: Yes, yes. I spent the most time on one essay and the score for that essay is the lowest.

Yu: They will give you the feedback with criteria. I feel it's not about writing, also your critical thinking and data…

Zhuan: I got not very good feedback on 'presentation'.

Li: Me too.

Qi: That is about writing.

Renfeng: How about literature?

Lan: Literature is more about your idea I think. I don't know how to write at first but it seems that it didn't bother me a lot. I may think listening is very difficult.

Xu: Yes, I think so. Teachers in our school are from different countries. They have very strong accents, so understand the class is the problem.

Lan: Even in Ireland, people may speak English with different strange accents. I found it hard to understand. I guess you really need to practice a lot. I was talking to a shop assistant the other day, I felt it difficult to understand him.

Xu: Yes, it's quite hard, but also interesting.

Renfeng: Now we talk about the writing course, I know Lan and Xu were not there this term.

Xu: Yeah

Renfeng: So I would like to know from the others about your evaluation of the course.

Yu: I think the classroom is much better.

Zhuan: The new room is brilliant, very comfortable, in all aspects. I really think it is much better than the room we used before. One thing probably is, the room is a little bit small. Sometimes when we were doing group work, it's not very convenient for us to move around. But it is fine for me.

Yu: I feel the class' pattern is very good, and the content is also very good. But I feel he can talk something deeper. For example, the academic words list, they are very good, but he didn't talk about much about this part. Most of the time we were doing games like guessing the words. I think we can do it in a more…

Zhuan: I feel perhaps different teacher used a different method. I feel other teachers taught more in their classes.

Yu: I feel it could be more academic. He can teach more in the class.

Renfeng: So do you like the class?

Qi: Yes

Yu: I like the class, but I am not saying I learned much from it.

Li: Yes

Renfeng: Do you still enjoying learning English?

Yu: I am… Yes, I didn't change my attitude. I think learning English is enjoyable. If I didn't learn it, I wouldn't have the current experience.

Xu: Me too. Learning language, the thing itself is interesting. And you can know other things from it.

Renfeng: Others?

Lan: I like the language…and I like to know other things like culture, sports, literature…So I like the process of using English to explore other fields.

Qi: I am teaching Chinese to some students this term, so I have a better understanding of the language learning and teaching. I really like teaching languages. I feel it's a pleasure to teach a language through another language. So I think I like it.

Li: I like to know news things. Although English is not something new for me, it's indispensable for me to explore things here. And also I speak three languages, so I like speaking and learning different languages.

Renfeng: Zhuan?

Zhuan: I have no idea. I am using English every day here, but I don't know whether I like it. Perhaps I like. Because when I took a trip to other countries I could always find lots of Koreans. You know, I like K pop, so I would talk to them. And most of them said my English was very good and they couldn't speak English as good as me. And Okay, I have to admit I was happy to hear that. So I like it.

Renfeng: A sense of self-accomplishment?

Zhuan: A kind of.

Renfeng: Okay, you are very familiar with this question. You family influence. Does your family influence your decision making?

Zhuan: No

Xu: No

Lan: I don't think so.

Li: No

Renfeng: But will you think about your family factors in making a decision?

Li: Well…

Qi: More or less. I don't want to stay too far from them.

Yu: Yes

Renfeng: You say yes?

Yu: I knew my boyfriend in Ireland.

Lan: Is he an Irish?

Yu: No, he is Chinese. And he is working for a computer company here. I would consider about us in making decisions.

Renfeng: Can he speak fluent English?

Yu: Yes, but I can do some writings or translations for him, for some documents. I am professional on this. (laughs) So I did have a place to use my academic writing. (laughs)

Renfeng: As we are coming to the end of the interview, so I would like each of you to briefly conclude the motivations you had in English learning.

Yu: I think I enjoy the feeling of learning English and my English result was always good through the years of learning English. It gave me a pleasant feeling. And this continues motivating me. And also since I came here, the need to complete the degree.

Xu: I like the language and I am interested in the language related knowledge, such as culture and literature. And I enjoy using the language to communicating with people from different places.

Li: I was more influenced by the environment in my hometown and gradually I began to love the language. And now I have another reason, because I recognised my boyfriend here. He is Irish.

Renfeng: Congratulations!

Lan: You speak to each other in English?

Li: Yes, I must be more fluent in using English.

Lan: Wow

Zhuan: I don't have a specific reason. I think because at a different time, I just want to improve my English. One reason could be I want to have a very free life, so learning English can help to achieve that. And also I want to know different cultures.

Xu: I think of another reason. It's funny. It's when I was studying English in college in China, I found that people took it for granted that girls should learn English better, because very few boys study English in China. So I need to work harder to let others believe I could stand out in the class. You know, teachers paid more attention to boys and boys are praised even if they just complete a very small task. It's not easy for girls to survive in language school.

Qi: I think it's more like a personal interest for me. Teaching languages is something I like and I can do it well.

Renfeng: You don't have other hobbies?

Qi: Travel, playing flying disc and watching football.

Renfeng: I think all of you like travelling. I can see your pictures on Wechat from time to time.

Xu: Yes, I like anything to do with different cultures, also including travelling. I also like cycling.

Renfeng: Do you want to stay in Ireland after finishing your degree?

Lan: I will go home or to other countries. But I don't know now. I need to complete the course and see.

Li: I will try. We have one year visa for graduation, so I may stay to see whether I can find a job here.

Renfeng: I remembered some of you said you are going to do PhD?

Xu: Yes, I already got the offer and the funding, so I will start from this September.

Renfeng: Good to hear that! Which school?

Xu: I will move to your school. Yes, school of linguistics. I am going to do something combining literature and linguistics.

Renfeng: That's nice.

Qi: I can't do it this year. I think I will do it next year and during the time I will stay in Ireland teaching kids Chinese.

Renfeng: Good, and Yu?

Yu: I won't think of doing PhD at the moment. I planned for that to stay in Ireland. Because my boyfriend is here. We need to think about our future. I feel we can be very free here because we have many relatives in China. And if we go back together, we will have many pressures. They will ask you to do this and that. You know the environment in China. You will be easily influenced by them. And we don't have so many pressures here.

Renfeng: Yeah, I know

Yu: And I find an internship in a game company working as a translator. So it's a good start I think.

Renfeng: So English is an indispensable part of your future career?

Yu: Yes

Appendix C: The attitudinal questionnaire

A survey on motivation for learning English

Hello, my name is Renfeng Jiang, and I am a Ph.D. student in Applied Linguistics at Trinity College Dublin (TCD). My research is about motivation for learning English. Your participation is voluntary and you can stop answering the questions at any time without any consequences. It takes about 5 minutes to answer the questions. Please note that there are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers, I'm just interested in your personal opinions. Your answers will be entirely anonymous. If you have any questions about the research project, you can ask me at jiangr@tcd.ie or you can contact my supervisor in TCD, Dr Lorna Carson (carsonle@tcd.ie).

Please give your feedback on each point by putting a tick in one of the spaces ( )

1. I feel learning English is interesting.
   agree ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) disagree

2. I feel ashamed if I could not speak good English in front of my classmates and friends in Ireland.
   agree ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) disagree

3. I find learning English is useless to a growing understanding of my major subject.
   agree ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) disagree

4. I do not think it is necessary to learn English to be a well-educated person.
   agree ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) disagree

5. I learn English because I have the impression that it is expected of me.
   agree ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) disagree

6. I can feel my English improved during the learning.
   agree ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) disagree

7. I learn English in order to find a more prestigious job later on.
   agree ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) disagree

8. I have to learn English for exams and assignments
   agree ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) disagree

9. I learn English because other people will respect me more if I can speak a fluent English.
   agree ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) disagree

10. My parents want me to learn English.
    agree ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) disagree

11. I want to improve my English-speaking skills
    agree ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) disagree

12. I learn English because I want to set a good example for my friends and relatives
agree ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) disagree

13. I enjoy the feeling of accomplishing difficult exercises in English learning
agree ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) disagree

14. I am sure that I will be able to learn English well
agree ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) disagree

15. English learning had a great influence on my life
agree ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) disagree

16. I think English learning is a lifelong learning process.
agree ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) disagree

17. I want to improve my English writing ability
agree ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) disagree

18. I enjoy the feeling of acquiring knowledge about English culture and society.
agree ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) disagree

19. I learn English because I want to be able to read the English written context.
agree ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) disagree

20. I am determined to improve my English because of bad experiences on previous English learning.
agree ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) disagree

Appendix D: Demographic questionnaire

Individual Information:

Gender:

Age at start Master program at Trinity: 16 -20 21- 25 26- 30 31- 35 36- 40 Over 40

Marital status:

Working experience: None 1-2 years 3-5 years 5-10 years Over 10 years

Previous /current employment:

Previous degrees earned and major studies:

Years/months in Master program at Trinity: Area of research:

Expected date of graduation:

Years of studying English:

IELTS/TOEFL result: Other English test result in China (CET/TEM):

My current English level: A2 B1 B2 C1 C2

Family Background:

How many siblings do you have?

How many of your siblings learned English? What are their English levels?

Siblings	Never study English	Study English in elementary school	Study English in high school	Study English at college	English major at college	Study in English speaking countries	others
Brother							
Sister							

Did either of your parents learned English? Yes No

Through what way they learned English? What are their English levels?

Mother:

Father:

Appendix E: Longitudinal qualitative data summary matrix

Data time pool/pond: from _____ through _____

Study: _____ Researcher (s): _____

Increase Emerge	Cumulative	Surgeiepiph Turn Point	Decrease Cease	Constant Consistent	Idiosyncratic	Missing
Differences above from previous data summarises						
Contextual/intervening conditions influencing/affecting changes above						
Interrelationships		Changes that oppose/harmonise with human dev/social processes			Partic/concept rhythms (phases, stages, cycles, elc. ln progress)	
Preliminary assertions as data analysis progresses (refer to 10 previous matrices)						

A longitudinal qualitative data summary matrix (from Saldafia, 2003 and 2008, courtesy of Elsevier/Academic Press, and Rowman and Littlefield Publishing Group/ AltaMlra Press)

Appendix F: Research ethics and consent forms

SCHOOL OF LINGUISTIC, SPEECH AND COMMUNICATION SCIENCES
TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN
RESEARCH ETHICS APPLICATION FORM

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING:

- **Incomplete applications cannot be processed and will be returned for completion.**
- **Forms without applicant(s) signature and research supervisor(s) signature (for student applications) cannot be processed.**
- **Forms without a completed checklist (Section 1) cannot be processed.**
- **Applications must be typed and not hand-written.**
- **If you have any difficulties completing this form, please contact your research supervisor.**

Please complete the application form and return SIX hard copies (one copy to include original signatures) to: Chair, Research Ethics Committee School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences Room 4091, Arts Building Trinity College Dublin Please also email your application in full to: slscs@tcd.ie	Office use only: *REF NO:* *Meeting date:* *Decision:* *Remarks:*

APPLICANT NAME:	Renfeng Jiang
ROLE IN PROJECT:	Single researcher ☑ Principal investigator ☐ Co-investigator ☐ *List any other researchers involved:*
APPLICANT EMAIL:	*Please provide your tcd.ie email address:* *jiangr@tcd.ie*
STUDENT NUMBER:	13312278
SLSCS STUDENT?	UG ☐ M.Sc. ☐ M.Phil. ☐ M.Litt. ☐ Ph.D. ☑ CLCS ☐ CSLS ☐ CDS ☐
SUPERVISOR NAME:	Dr. Lorna Carson
SHORT TITLE:	The language learning motivation of Chinese postgraduate students in Ireland: From the perspectives of Neo-Confucian learning philosophy
DATE OF SUBMISSION TO REC:	Full resubmission of a previous application? Yes ☐ No ☑

ase complete the checklist below before submitting your application to the Research Ethics Committee.

SECTION 1: CHECKLIST (MUST BE COMPLETED)

PLEASE TICK THE APPROPRIATE BOX	YES	NO
If you are a student, has your supervisor signed this completed form?	☑	☐
Have you attached the following?		
(a) The consent form you propose to use	☑	☐
(b) The participant information leaflet you propose to use	☑	☐
(c) Letter seeking access to sample population (if your proposed study requires access to an external research site)	☐	☐
(d) A copy of any data collection tools you propose using in your proposed study (i.e. questionnaire, interview questions, observation plans, etc.)	☑	☐

SECTION 2 – DETAILS OF RESEARCH PROJECT AND PARTICIPANT SELECTION

Title of research project and details of any funding body:

The language learning motivation of Chinese postgraduate students in Ireland: From the perspectives of Neo-Confucian learning philosophy

Dates & duration of research activities:

Proposed start date for fieldwork/data collection (*please provide specific planned start date which should not precede research ethics approval*):	01/09/2015	Proposed end date of fieldwork/data collection (*please provide specific planned end date*):	31/05/2016

What are the primary location(s) for data collection? E.g. classroom, clinic, lab, participants' home, place of convenience for participants. Researchers conducting fieldwork in participants' home should ensure they have familiarised themselves with the Lone Researcher Guidelines on the School website.

English for Academic Purposes classrooms in Centre for Language and Communication Studies

2.4 Please provide a brief outline of the proposed project (maximum 400 words in total). This should include aim(s) and objective(s), background, research question(s) or hypothesis, research design, recruitment and sampling, and data collection procedures/instruments.

(a) Aims/objectives and theoretical background

This research aims to integrate the evolving Western motivational theories of second language learning with Neo-Confucian learning philosophy to examine the English learning motivation of a group of Chinese postgraduate students studying at Trinity College Dublin. To be specific, it develops the Neo-Confucian motivational construct to describe these students' personal interest in language and language-related knowledge learning, their expectations and perceptions of language improvement, and their situated reflections on language experience prompting changes in values or beliefs. This research also explores participants' expectations to fulfil obligations in relationships to family members, organisations and communities. An additional purpose of the study is to identify the potential motivational change of the learners throughout their English learning in Ireland, and to further understand in what way those Confucian heritage learners preserved or lost this cultural identity, which is of significance in deciphering the influence of culture or community identity on language learning motivation.

(b) Research question(s) or hypothesis

In order to achieve these aims, two main research questions were articulated as follows:

RQ1: What factors motivate Chinese postgraduate students to select and to keep attending optional English for Academic Purposes classes at Trinity College?

This first research question contains four subquestions:

RQ1a: What kinds of personal interest have encouraged them to learn English as a second language? (Self-Cultivation)

RQ1b: Has the expectation or perception of language improvement influenced their decision to learn English in this optional class? (Self-Improvement)

RQ1c: Has students' language experience influenced their values or beliefs in English language learning? (Self-Transformation)

RQ1d: How do students plan to fulfil role obligations in relationships with their improved English language skills? (Sense of Responsibility)

The second research question addresses the longitudinal aspect of the study:

RQ2: Is there any observable motivational change in students during their English learning period in Trinity?

(c) Research design. Please briefly describe the project research design/methodology.

To answer the above research questions, I employed mixed and longitudinal approaches to capture the dynamic system in the interaction of the students' motivation, cultural identity and learning context. The design of the empirical study involves three main instruments, namely, participant observation, focus group interviews and a questionnaire

(d) **Recruitment and sampling.** Please specify (i) **who** may be contacted by you during fieldwork/data collection, e.g. in seeking access to research population or a gatekeeper, (ii) **how** they will be contacted by you, and (iii) **expected sample size and composition.**

Permission will be asked from the module coordinator and English teacher of the EAP class to choose one class to observe. All the Chinese Masters students in the observed EAP class will be invited to participate in the research. At each data collection stage, questionnaires will be distributed in hard copies by the researcher at the end of class. The questionnaire will ask respondent who would like to take part in the focus groups to provide their email address. In total, 10-15 students are anticipated to take part in both parts of the data collection.

(e) Data collection procedures. Please tick the research instruments you intend to use (ensuring you append copies of each instrument) and (ii) provide an estimation of the time commitment involved for participants/respondents.

(i) Please tick as many boxes as relevant to your project:

☑ Questionnaires	☐ Video recordings
☑ Interviews	☑ Observations
☑ Focus Groups	☐ Classroom intervention
☑ Audio recordings	☐ Ethnographic research
	☐ Other (*please specify*):

(ii) *Estimation of the time commitment involved for participants:*

(1) During the 12-month class observation, the researcher will take part in a two-hour EAP class each week. In class, the researcher will keep a logbook of observations recording activities, participants and events. After the class, the field notes will be kept and will include the researcher's own perceptions of what happened in the language classroom.

(2) A closed-format questionnaire will be distributed to the students four times at the end of the class, which will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Sample questions are provided in the appendix.

(3) Focus group will be administered to small groups of students who volunteered to take part. There will be totally four focus group interviews. Each will take about 40 minutes of students' time. The focus will be audio recorded, and will be transcribed.

SECTION 3 – CONSENT AND CONFIDENTIALITY (INCLUDING DATA PROTECTION)

3.1 Will informed consent be obtained from the adult research participants?

YES ☑ NO ☐ N/A ☐

If YES, please give details of who will obtain consent from participants and how it will be done. Please attach a copy of any letters, consent form (if required) and information leaflet (where appropriate). Please see guidelines on how to prepare these documents on the School website, and adapt the examples provided to suit your study and participants.

If NO, please explain what alternative approaches are being implemented.

If Not Applicable, please explain why.

The Chinese Masters students in EAP class will be asked for their consent through the information on the questionnaire (where the completion of the questionnaire will signal their consent), and if they indicate that they would like to take part in the focus group. In this case, the participation information leaflet and consent form will be sent to them via email one week before the each focus group interview, and the researcher will remind them of the consent process at start of the focus group.

3.2 Working with children: will assent be obtained from any children under 16?

YES ☐ NO ☑ N/A ☐

Will informed consent be obtained from parents/carers on behalf of any children under 16?

YES ☐ NO ☐ N/A ☑

If YES, please give details of who will obtain assent from children/consent from parents/carers, and how it will be done. Please attach a copy of any letters, assent/consent form (if required) and information leaflet (where appropriate). Please see guidelines on how to prepare these documents on the School website, and adapt the examples provided to suit your study and participants.

If NO, please explain what alternative approaches are being implemented. (See *Introduction to Research Ethics* document and *Frequently Asked Questions* for more information about the difference between *assent* and *consent*).

If N/A, please comment.

3.3 Please specify if you will allow for a time interval between providing your participants with information about the research and seeking their consent:
(For example, in some research methodologies, it is recommended that a period of 3 to 7 days be provide for reflection before asking individuals to participate in an experiment.)

A time interval of one week will be provided as described above.

3.4 Will the participants be from any of the following groups (tick as appropriate):

	YES	NO
Children under 16 years of age	☐	☑
Adults with learning disabilities	☐	☑
Adults with language or communication difficulties	☐	☑
Adults with mental illness	☐	☑
Clinical population	☐	☑
Other groups who may be considered vulnerable Please specify:	☐	☑

3.5 If participants are to be recruited from any of the potentially vulnerable groups listed above, please give details of:

(a) Any special steps taken to ensure that participants from vulnerable groups are as fully informed as possible about the nature of their involvement:

(b) Who will give consent:

(c) How consent will be obtained (e.g. will it be verbal, written or visually indicated?):

(d) The arrangements that have been made to inform those responsible for the care of the research participants of their involvement in research:

(e) The use of a gatekeeper in accessing participants

3.6 During and after the study, what steps will you take to protect:

(a) Participant identities?

During the study, the researcher will not carry any accumulated data in the classroom observation. All the field notes will be finished in researcher's personal laptop after class. In terms of the questionnaire, students will be asked to complete the questionnaire in class and submit to the researcher immediately after the completion. For the focus group, no sensitive information will be discussed. Students name will be replaced by pseudonyms to disguise their identities when the research is written up.

(b) Hardcopy records?

The original hard copy records of field notes and questionnaires will be stored in a locked cupboard at home.

(c) Digital data? Please describe measures to be taken during transfer and storage.

The audio transcripts and the digital files from the project will be kept in the researcher's password protected computer.

3.7 If the data is sensitive, what other person(s) other than the researcher(s) named in this form will have access to the data collected, and what steps will be taken to protect confidentiality?

The data are not sensitive.

3.8 Will participants be given access to a copy or transcript of any recorded material (including audio or video files), if they so wish?

The participant's entitlement in this regard should be mentioned in the consent form and participant information leaflet (if these forms are used).

YES	NO	N/A	PLEASE EXPLAIN WHAT YOU WILL DO:
☑	☐	☐	Focus groups transcripts will be shared with the participants who request it following their completion.

3.9 Who will take responsibility for the secure storage of, and access to, the data generated by the research during and after the project?

The research supervisor ☐

The student researcher ☑

Research supervisor/student researcher, jointly ☐

Principal researcher ☐

Other researcher(s) (*please state their name(s) and contact details*) ☐

3.10 Who will be responsible for archiving or destroying the data?

Please provide the name of the person responsible, and details of what will eventually happen to the data. In the case of student researchers, it is generally the research supervisor who will take responsibility for storage and destruction of data after a five year period.

The researcher will archive the data following the writing up of the dissertation, and will destroy the hard copies after five years

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SECTION 4 - RISK, HARM AND BENEFIT

4.1 What is the potential for an adverse outcome for research participants? (For example, inconvenience, physical or emotional risk, discomfort, stress, anxiety, fatigue or embarrassment. In low risk projects, adverse outcomes are usually rare.) NOTE: for the protection of both the researcher and participants, this list must appear in full in the participant information leaflet.

There is no anticipated adverse outcome for research participants.

4.2 Please indicate what steps you will take in order to minimize any potential adverse outcomes for research participants:

N/A

4.3 What is the potential for benefit, if any, for research participants?

There is no potential benefit for research participants, but findings may be interesting for those who want to be more autonomous in language learning.

4.4 Will payment be made to research participants?

☐ YES

☑ NO

☐ Minimal payment to cover travel costs etc.

4.5 If you answered **YES** to the previous question, please specify for what purpose the payment will be made and the amount per participant:

4.6 Are you aware of any conflicts of interest that could arise in the course of this project? If your answer is **YES**, please give full details below:

4.7 Are there any other ethical considerations which you anticipate in relation to your study that have not been covered by the questions above? If so, what steps will you take to address these?

SECTION 5 - DECLARATION OF APPROVAL AND SIGNATURES

APPLICANT DECLARATION: I confirm that the information provided in this form is correct, that I am not aware of any other ethical issues not addressed within this form. I understand the obligations to and the rights of participants (particularly concerning their safety and welfare, the obligation to provide information sufficient to give informed consent and the obligation to respect confidentiality).		
APPLICANT NAME:	Renfeng Jiang	
SIGNATURE (for hard copies):		DATE:

RESEARCH SUPERVISOR SIGNATURE Student applicants are required to have their Research Supervisor complete this section.
SUPERVISOR NAME : LORNA CARSON
As the student's supervisor, I have read this document, and to the best of my knowledge, this project conforms to the School's Research Ethics Guidelines. SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE & DATE

TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

SCHOOL OF LINGUISTIC SPEECH AND COMMUNICATION SCIENCES

Consent Form

The language learning motivation of Chinese postgraduate students in Ireland: From the perspectives of Neo-Confucian learning philosophy

Ph.D. student researcher: Renfeng Jiang
Academic supervisor: Dr . Lorna Carson

I am invited to participate in this research project which is being carried out by Renfeng Jiang. My participation is voluntary. Even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time without any consequences of any kind.

The study is designed to investigate English learning motivation of Chinese postgraduate students studying at Trinity College Dublin

If I agree to participate, this will involve participating in a short focus group, discussing several topics which are related to the English language learning. The focus group will take place with about 3-5 other Chinese students from the English for Academic Purposes class. The discussion will be audio recorded.

I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.

This research may benefit the EAP programme and the development of Neo-Confucian motivational construct in L2 motivation

Any information or data which is obtained from me during this research which can be identified with me will be treated confidentially. Sensitive information will not be discussed during the focus group, and my real name will not be used when the project is written up. The data will be kept in a locked cupboard in researcher's place

Portions of the recording may be played in linguistics classes or during conference presentations, or written transcriptions may be made for teaching purposes or for linguistic analysis. Data from this research project may be published in future. The original recording and all copies will be available only to the present investigator and research supervisor. Transcripts will be shared with me if I request it.

If I have any questions about this research I can contact Renfeng Jiang by jiangr@tcd.ie. I am also free to contact his research supervisor, Dr Carson by carsonle@tcd.ie. to seek further clarification and information

I understand what is involved in this research and I agree to participate in the study.

---------- ----------
Signature of participant Date

Signature of researcher
I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study.

---------- ----------
Signature of researcher Date