The Positive Psychology of Chinese Students Learning English at UK Universities

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of the study was to investigate the relationship between positive psychology (PP) variables, namely, self-regulation, mindset, psychological well-being and psychological adjustment, in a sample of Chinese master's students studying in the UK on the one hand, and the English language learning activities in social and educational settings that they reported using to improve their English language proficiency on the other hand; and how the scores on the variables and the relationships between the variables changed between the beginning of the academic year (time 1) and mid-way through the academic year (time 2).

A mixed-method research approach was adopted. Questionnaire and interview data were collected at time 1 (T1) and time 2 (T2). 152 and 167 participants completed questionnaires at T1 and T2 respectively, and face-to-face interviews were conducted concurrently with sixteen and fourteen participants at T1 and T2 respectively. SPSS and NVivo were the statistical tools used for questionnaire and interview data analyses.

Analyses of the data indicated that there was a significant decrease in growth mindset and psychological adjustment scores ($p<0.01$) between T1 and T2. Concerning English language learning activities, there was a significant increase in scores of 'I join social activities where English is used'; and a significant decrease in scores of 'I keep a notebook of new vocabulary that I have learned' between T1 and T2. Regarding perceived language proficiency, however, there were no significant score changes between T1 and T2. In terms of the relationship between scores of PP variables and English language learning activities, more correlations ($\geqq 0.2$) were found at T2 than T1. Similarly, more correlations ($\geqq 0.2$) were found between scores of PP variables and perceived language proficiency at T2 than that at T1. In conclusion, this study contributes to our understanding of the complex relationship between PP variables and language learning activities.

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proofreading of all of the remaining chapters of this thesis.

I owe my deepest gratitude to my dear parents whose supports of various kinds were made available in a number of ways and regardless of what. They are always there to address issues in relation to my PhD study and situations surrounding my daily life in the UK. Last but not least, I should not forget about Ingrid, my younger sister, who always rendered her psychological supports even in times of hectic working schedule at her workplace in Hong Kong.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief insofar as it is possible, this thesis reproduces no materials that have been previously published or written, except where due acknowledgements have been made in the text. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University.

INTRODUCTION

The main aim of the study is to investigate the relationship between positive psychology (PP) variables, namely, self-regulation (SR), mindset (MS), psychological well-being (PWB) and psychological adjustment (PA) in a sample of Chinese master's students studying in the UK on the one hand, and the English language learning activities in social and educational settings that they reported using to improve their English language proficiency on the other hand; and how the scores on the variables and the relationships between the variables changed between the beginning of the academic year (time 1) and mid-way through the academic year (time 2).

A mixed-method research approach was adopted. Chinese university students in the UK were chosen as participants for this study because they are known to have contributed a sizeable share of the international student group as far as tertiary education programmes are concerned particularly in post-graduate studies. Notably, the aforesaid participants have learned English as a foreign language (EFL) primarily in the classroom where the language plays a much less major role in daily communication in Mainland China. However, when they come to the UK, they have to use English as a second language (ESL) extensively in social and academic contexts where the language is the means of daily survival and communication with countless opportunities to practise the language. That being the case, they have become ESL learners in the context of the UK rather than having been EFL learners in the context of their home country. Hence, this might have created a psychological impact arising from language-related cultural adjustment especially towards the start of their academic year.

Based on a number of studies involving EFL or ESL students studying in US, Canadian, Australian, New Zealand and UK educational institutions, the most commonly cited language-related problems inside and outside the classroom are: English language proficiency or language standards; academic writing; oral comprehension and communication; lack of knowledge of local contextual references;

and inadequate vocabulary (for example, Cownie & Addison, 1996; Daroesman *et al.*, 2005; Hellstén & Prescott, 2004; Lee, 1997; Lin & Yi, 1997; Pantelides, 1999; Robertson *et al.*, 2000; Sawir *et al.*, 2012; Singh, 2005). Because of this, the Chinese university students recruited for this current study were viewed as language learners, and the study was designed to contribute to our understanding of their language learning.

From the literature, the PP of individuals could generate strengths and virtues that could make life good or even better (Csikszentmihalyi & Nakamura, 2011; Lopez & Snyder, 2009; Peterson, 2006; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). That being the case, based on the literature, I discovered that very little is known about how the above PP variables affect the language learning and language proficiency of international students. This aroused my interest in performing this study so as to contribute further knowledge in those areas. As well as this, there is a paucity of literature that could provide understanding as to how the abovementioned PP variables *simultaneously* affect the language learning of those students in terms of language learning engagements and perceived language proficiency. In addition, this current research has been reaffirmed by MacIntyre and Mercer's notion (2014, p. 156) that " … second language acquisition (SLA) rarely deals with these (PP-related) topics at present; however, their relevance in the field is immediately apparent when one considers the practical, human, and social dimension of language learning." It follows that their connectedness in the field of SLA is easily envisaged when researchers consider all possible related dimensions of language learning as aforementioned. MacIntyre and Mercer (2014) further suggested that language learning educators have fully acknowledged that there is significant importance as to the role of motivation, perseverance, resiliency, and positive emotions in improving students' language learning. To illustrate that "PP in SLA could perhaps be viewed as having a short history and a long past", MacIntyre and Mercer (2014, p. 158) recognised Lake (2013)

as "one of the first to explicitly adapt and apply PP concepts in his study of Japanese learners' positive L2 self, self-efficacy, and intended effort" where such topics have become increasingly popular in the research community.

In answering questions such as 'what is it that makes a good language learner' and 'why are some learners more successful than others', Griffiths (2008) highlighted an important point that language learning could be viewed through a PP lens where its learning process should be more focused rather than its outcomes for example levels of proficiency, language competence and achievement. Hence, I would like to apply the above PP concepts to this current study so as to explore the participants' changes in the above PP variables in their language learning engagements in between the two time-points, and their relationships with the simultaneous changes of those PP variables, as well as the changes associated with their perceived language proficiency.

Inspired by the literature, I adopted a mixed-method research for this study. This was emphasised by MacIntyre and Mercer (2014) that mixed-method research has been popular in SLA research in recent years. The writers also agreed with the notion that where "the strength of the large-scale quantitative approach lies in assessing the reliability and generalisability of the findings" (*ibid*. pp. 165-166), its weakness also lies in the generalisation that might be at issue when applying to certain individuals. Hence, MacIntyre and Mercer (2014, p. 165) stated that "the strength of individual-level qualitative data is that a rich description of the relevant factors for an individual can be proffered, with the weakness that reliability and generalisability typically cannot be assessed." Together with other perspectives described in Section 2.4, this current study adopted a mixed-method approach with two groups of participants recruited for the conducting of questionnaires and face-to-face interviews at the same time-points.

Background. The number of international students in different countries varies. For instance, overseas students in Ireland account for only 2% of students in higher

education (Andrade, 2006). However, in general, there are around 12% of international students enrolled in UK learning programmes (Andrade, 2006). Moreover, some countries have experienced a dramatic increase in the number of overseas students, whereas other countries have faced a decline in the intake of students to a certain extent. Notably, the number of international students enrolled in China doubled from 1998 to 2003 (Andrade, 2006). However, the US experienced a drop by 1.9% in incoming students from other countries from 2003 to 2005 (Andrade, 2006). In recent decades, UK universities have actively joined the global marketplace and have been very much internationalised (de Wit, 2002). This context relates greatly to the cross-cultural experiences of Chinese students at UK universities, in which the pedagogical and psychological aspects of teaching this group of students have been much emphasised, not to mention their cross-cultural adjustment in social and educational settings in the UK. As a matter of fact, the number of Chinese university students in the UK reached 25,000 in 2003 (Spencer-Oatey & Xiong, 2006), leading to the largest national group of international students in UK higher education. It should be noted that there was a 12-fold increase in Chinese applicants within the period from 1998 to 2002 (Spencer-Oatey & Xiong, 2006). The reason behind this increase might be due to the economic growth of China at the time, and also the high reputation of UK higher education within the worldwide market (Spencer-Oatey & Xiong, 2006). From 2007 to 2012, there was a growth by 32% in the number of non-EU students admitted to UK universities, from 229,640 to 302,680; among which, students from China increased by 74% (Parliament, 2013).

However, the rapid growth in numbers of Chinese university students does inevitably have associated problems. Gu and Maley (2008, p. 225-226) pointed out that problems might include "culture shock (Adler, 1975; Oberg, 1960; Ward, *et al.*, 2001), learning shock (Gu, 2005) or education shock (Hoff, 1979; Yamazaki, 2005), language shock (Agar, 1996; Smalley, 1963) and role shock (Byrnes, 1966; Minkler & Biller,

1979)." Hence, Gu and Maley (2008, p. 227) shed important light on addressing the above problems. It is their belief that from the teachers' side, "many, if not most, British lecturers have had little or no training in how to effectively teach overseas students in these numbers." As for Chinese students, according to Gu and Maley (2008, p. 227), "most Chinese students have never before had to adjust to an alternative teaching and learning style. The encounter is therefore rich with possibilities for misunderstanding, stress and failure." In view of the aforementioned, together with limited literature evidence, I recognised that there is an obvious need for studies such as this current study in order to help provide new knowledge that could help understand better and ultimately duly address possible situations with regard to the abovementioned PP variables in relation to language learning engagements and perceived language proficiency. As Gu and Maley (2008, p. 227) put it, "consequences of widespread dissatisfaction on the part of students, and of disaffection on the part of teachers would be dire, both for the British universities … and for the students, who have come to the UK at considerable cost to their families and sponsors."

Chinese university students in the UK are not alone. Some studies have suggested that there are differences in adjustment for local and international students including those Chinese university students who face various social and academic adaptation issues in their first year of university in the host country (for example, Andrade, 2006; Kormos *et al.*, 2014). Andrade (2006) quoted five studies that compared local and international first year university students. In four of the studies, results showed that international students experienced more difficulties in relation to social or academic adaptations than local students. The main reason tended to focus on language issues (Hechanova-Alampay *et al.*, 2002; Kormos *et al.*, 2014; Rajapaksa & Dundes, 2002; Ramburuth, 2001; Ramsay *et al.*, 1999). The results of the fifth study also showed differences in that international students spent less time socialising and relaxing than their local peers (Zhao *et al.*, 2005). As the Chinese learned English as a

foreign language in the context of Mainland China, hence, I took the view that Chinese university students in the UK might face similar problems as abovementioned as they have become ESL students in the context of the UK.

In view of the importance of the above PP variables for international EFL / ESL students in the UK, and the likely issue of language-related cultural adjustment in their first year of university studies (Clément *et al.*, 2001; Cohen & Norst, 1989; Hsieh & Kang, 2010; Petrides & Furnham, 2001), I conducted an extensive study on a sample of Chinese university students in the UK in order to examine how the above PP variables might affect their language learning engagements and their perception of language proficiency through the use of a mixed-method research design.

Contributions of this Study. This study contributes to the area of research on language learning by focusing on a specific group, that is, Chinese master's degree students in the UK, to inform our understanding of how such students' PP variables are associated with their use of language learning activities and English language proficiency during their first year of study in the UK. The findings indicated that this is a complex relationship. Such research could provide a useful basis to enable students and language-learning educators to better understand how their own second-language learning behaviour may be shaped by the above PP variables, and may also be of use to second-langauge learning educators and university teaching staff. Moreover, it also serves to inform the development of a theoretical framework of second language learning in considering the role of PP.

Based on the main aim of this study, the following were the research questions:

1.   What were the students' positive psychology scores at the start and then mid-way through the academic year, and did those scores change between T1 and T2?

2.   What activities did the students report using to improve their English at the start and then mid-way through the academic year, and did those activities change between T1 and T2?

3.   How did the students perceive their proficiency in English at the start and then mid-way through the academic year, and did those perceptions change between T1 and T2?

4.   What is the relationship between their positive psychology and the activities they reported using to improve their English at the start and then mid-way through the academic year, and did those scores change between T1 and T2?

5.   What is the relationship between how their positive psychology scores changed between T1 and T2 and how did the activities which they reported using to improve their English change between T1 and T2?

6.   What is the relationship between their positive psychology and their perceived proficiency in English at the start and then mid-way through the academic year, and did those scores change between T1 and T2?

7.   What is the relationship between how their positive psychology scores changed between T1 and T2 and how their perceived proficiency in English changed between T1 and T2?

Structure of the Thesis. This thesis starts with the Introduction which states the main aim of this study, gives justifications for the selection of Chinese university students as the study participants, highlights the issues of the PP variables in affecting language learning & language proficiency as illustrated by studies, and examines the differences in local and international students' social and academic adaptation issues including language-related cultural adaptations.

The Literature Review focuses on the theoretical background of PP and the PP variables, namely, SR, MS, PWB and PA. Language-related issues for international

EFL / ESL students will also be explored. Literature on the language-learning experiences of Chinese students will be studied to better understand their issues of learning English in Mainland China. To set the scene, information about the UK's relationship with Chinese universities will be included to support the view that Chinese students are the largest national group of students studying in the UK. Constructs of Language learning strategies and language proficiency and studies involving international EFL / ESL students studying in English-speaking countries will be highlighted. To conclude, summaries of literature reviews on PP variables, language learning experiences of Chinese students, language learning strategies in EFL / ESL learners and their perceived language proficiency will be made whereby literature gaps will be identified with justifications.

The Methodology will highlight the rationale, main aim and research questions for this study. Constructs of respective quantitative and qualitative approaches will be described. As this study adopted a mixed-method approach and so its constructs will be explored and highlighted. Details about the evaluation, modification and validation of questionnaire and interview questions will also be provided and highlighted. A pilot study will be conducted, aimed at areas for finetuning the methodology elements as appropriate. Questionnaires and face-to-face interviews are involved in this study where the reliability and validity of various data-gathering instruments will be appropriately addressed prior to the actual conduct of the main study. SPSS and NVivo will be the statistical tools involved for the quantitative and qualitative data analyses.

The results and analyses of questionnaires and face-to-face interviews data will be presented and described in Chapters 3 and 4 following the Methodology. Detailed explanations of possible reasons behind the participants' behaviour and actions will be discussed and explained based on the results of the available quantitative and qualitative data obtained.

The Discussion and Conclusion will comprise the last two parts of this thesis.

They will attempt to address all the research questions as identified earlier. I will attempt to link the available findings with the literature set out in the Literature Review, and I will attempt to link the quantitative findings with the qualitative ones. Therefore, the likely extension of the present knowledge as mentioned in the Literature Review could contribute to the filling in of literature gaps as identified in the Literature Review. Finally, I will summarise the significance of the findings, implications, contributions, limitations and strengths of this study; and not least, the possible research work in the future.

CHAPTER 1 LITERATURE REVIEW

This Chapter will firstly focus on the theoretical background of positive psychology (PP) and the constructs of PP variables, namely, self-regulation (SR), mindset (MS), psychological well-being (PWB) and psychological adjustment (PA). There will be a discussion on the relationship between PP and the language learning strategies that may help international EFL / ESL students, including Chinese ones, in English-speaking countries to improve their English language proficiency. This will be followed by a discussion of the issues with studying abroad and associated language-related challenges encountered by international ESL / EFL students in social and educational settings. The English language learning experiences of Chinese students in Mainland China will be examined to facilitate further understanding of language-related issues and challenges in their home and host countries. Information about the UK's relationship with Chinese universities will provide a context for the current situation and future trend whereby Chinese students are the largest national group of students studying in the UK.

1.1   Positive Psychology (PP) Variables in Foreign / Second language Learners

Psychology and PP. Before introducing the concept of PP, there is a need to briefly describe the major role of psychology since World War II and why PP has come into play in recent decades.

After World War II, the science of psychology largely focused on repairing damaged habits, drives, childhoods and brains within a disease and human functioning model (Snyder & Lopez, 2002). Topics for research at the time were mostly concerned with related disorders and environmental stressors, such as the negative effects of parental divorce, deaths of loved ones, and physical and sexual abuse. With the establishment of the Veteran Affairs in 1946 and the National Institute of Mental Health in 1947, the majority of psychologists found that they could have financial support

through treating mental illness and conducting research on the pathology of mental illness (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). As such, the field of psychology has focused mostly on mental illness, resulting in relatively less emphasis being placed on the positive traits that make life worth living. However, according to surveys on the historical background of psychology (for example, Benjamin, 1992; Koch & Leary, 1985; Smith, 1997), psychologists at the time not only focused on how people survive and endure in circumstances of adversity, but they also extended their research into examining how normal people could flourish in more benign conditions. It appears that psychology is not merely concerned with pathology or mental illness, but also with the strength and virtue of individuals. In other words, psychology is not just about fixing mental illness; it is also about taking care of individuals' mental health to the best of its ability in areas of work, education, insight, love, growth and play (Benjamin, 1992; Koch & Leary, 1985; Smith, 1997). Psychologists nowadays aim to prevent problems like depression, substance abuse and so on in young people who are vulnerable for whatever reasons or who live in social or environmental conditions that cultivate these problems (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Hence, the aforementioned reasons constitute the development of PP.

Presumably, psychology should be about establishing a prosperous society through which mental strength building could act as a means to prevent any potential psychological illness or related disease. As such, PP should help speed up psychological changes through being well-prepared for the worst and providing the best quality of life possible. It is meant to be addressed by strength building and prevention of potential mental illnesses (Snyder & Lopez, 2002). PP in its broadest context sees the importance of learning and SR within the framework of Self-determination Theory (SDT) to enhance the positive aspects of human conditions (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

According to the *Handbook of Positive Psychology* (Snyder & Lopez, 2002),

other books (Corrie, 2009; Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 2006), and papers (Al Fallay, 2004; Fredrickson, 2001; Miller *et al.*, 2008), there are many variables in relation to PP. However, this current study will mostly focus on the PP variables of SR, MS, PWB and PA as they are found to be employing well-developed theoretical frameworks in connection with language learning (Clément *et al.*, 2001; Cohen & Norst, 1989; Hsieh & Kang, 2010; Petrides & Furnham, 2001), particularly international EFL / ESL students' language-related issues in English-speaking countries including the UK (Andrade, 2006; Kormos *et al.*, 2014; Ramsay *et al.*, 1999).

Schools could play an important role in the PP movement via creating positive environments for students so that the development of individual strengths would be promoted and facilitated (Clonan *et al.*, 2004). Notably, PP in schools tends to promote prevention-oriented practice by experience and ensure the academic and social capabilities of all students (Clonan *et al.*, 2004). By viewing the nature of PP and its movement towards education, it can be seen that one of its functions is to help a learner emotionally in building positive personal traits (Snyder & Lopez, 2002). As pointed out earlier, conventionally, the field of psychology focuses mostly on mental illness, resulting in relatively less emphasis being placed on those positive traits that make life worth living. In contrast, the science of PP has been called upon to address the need of taking care of individuals' mental health to the best of its ability in areas such as work, education, insight, love, growth and play.

Therefore, the main aim of PP is to build positive qualities of individuals. As Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000, p. 5) put it:

> "The field of positive psychology at the subjective level is about valued subjective experiences: well-being, contentment, and satisfaction (in the past); hope and optimism (for the future); and flow and happiness (in the present). At the individual level, it is about positive individual traits: the capacity for love and vocation, courage, interpersonal skill, aesthetic sensibility, perseverance, forgiveness, originality, future mindedness, spirituality, high talent, and wisdom.

At the group level, it is about the civic virtues and the institutions that move individuals towards better citizenship: responsibility, nurturance, altruism, civility, moderation, tolerance, and work ethic."

Accordingly, the developing movement in the field of psychology is built upon a simple model in solving deficits and disorders or problems with a view to establishing strengths and capacities which is known as PP (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). PP may also be defined as general human power and maximisation of human performance as a result (Linley *et al.*, 2006). Apparently, this notion concurs with the point made by Massimini and Delle Fave (2000), which is pivotal in that psychological choice is driven not merely by adaptation and survival forces but also by will power to reproduce optimal experiences. Hence, people with positive emotions very often choose preferred behavioural patterns to make them feel competent and creative.

More importantly, PP promotes important positive views towards life, for instance, happiness and subjective well-being (Diener, 2000), positive emotions (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005), social construction of MS and optimism (Snyder & Lopez, 2002) and so on. In a much wider context, the major aim of PP is to comprehend and help nurture people and societies to grow (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). An additional role of PP is to promote positive emotions, which include joy, interest, love and contentment, in order to establish the optimal PWB of an individual. This occurs especially when individuals are not being disturbed by negative emotions, for instance, anxiety, sadness and anger. For this reason, individuals' positive and negative emotions have been perceived in a balanced way as a means of judging their PWB (Diener *et al.*, 1991). On the other hand, Kahneman (1999) indicated that 'objective happiness' describes an individual's encounter of good or positive feelings in a particular moment and as such, positive emotions mean development. At the same time, positive emotions help develop well-being which could

last for a longer period of time. In short, the process of growth and development of positive emotions could be emphasised instead of simply focusing on their results (Fredrickson, 2001).

Furthermore, PP can assist psychologists in observing human potential, motives and abilities. This may create great difficulty since most psychologists appear to be trained to view things sceptically with a mixture of wishful thinking and denial. However, PP should be acceptable for psychologists since individuals are often subjected to their own false beliefs, impressions and wishes. In this regard, one might be prevented from having a true perception of the world due to illusions of different kinds in their mind. It is likely that a purely negative bias might not be the overall picture of the normal functioning of human beings (Sheldon & King, 2001). This is well illustrated by the belief that one might hold a fixed MS within a certain perspective, a trait which will be elaborated in Section 1.1.2. Most people perceive themselves as happy and satisfied when their lives are prosperous (Myers, 2000). However, certain psychologists may have little knowledge about how to be prosperous in life as they may not be willing to invest time exploring this area, or they may deny the value of this field in general (Sheldon & King, 2001).

The Meta-psychological Level's View of PP. Meta-psychological level means the understanding of the entire PP field with a 'grand vision' as a whole in psychology. Both theoretical and philosophical aspects of PP are usually mentioned at this level, and the corresponding value bases are commented on (Linley *et al.*, 2006). At this meta-psychological level, PP focuses on speeding up the process of dealing with current issues with a view to developing a positive quality of life (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). PP has been found to have a large impact on psychology in different areas, such as economics, sociology or natural sciences. Furthermore, the main emphasis of this research on PP is to get to know more about a range of human

experiences: from suffering, illness, and distress to fulfilment, health and well-being. In addition, people with PP tend to focus on the positive side of life much more than its negative side (Held, 2004).

Given so many reported positive views of PP, the PP variables of SR, MS, PWB and PA were selected to see how they might positively affect English language learning by international EFL / ESL students such as Chinese as targeted in this study (for example, Clément *et al.*, 2001; Cohen & Norst, 1989; Hsieh & Kang, 2010; Petrides & Furnham, 2001). These variables will be widely discussed in the subsequent sections of this chapter.

1.1.1 Self-regulation (SR) in Self-determination Theory (SDT)

Overview. SDT has been regarded as a major trait central to PP. It has been widely discussed and extensively studied. According to Deci and Ryan (1985a), SDT involves a distinction in various types of motivation in relation to different reasons and goals with actions. Using an organismic meta-theory based on conventional empirical methods, SDT is an approach used to understand human motivation and personality so that the significant role of the inner resources of humans for personality development and SR of behaviour is emphasised (Ryan *et al.*, 1997). Thus, broadly speaking, SDT investigates inherent growth tendencies of humans according to their innate psychological needs. Such innate psychological needs could act as mediators that support their self-motivation continuum and personality integration as well as the conditions that foster their positive processes. These innate basic psychological needs include the need for autonomy (deCharms, 1968; Deci, 1975), competence (Harter, 1978; White, 1963), and relatedness (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Deci & Ryan, 1985a; Reis, 1994; Ryan *et al.*, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000b). These needs appear to be essential for facilitating optimal bodily functioning so as to achieve constructive social development and personal well-being.

Given the importance of understanding SDT in social contexts concerning the optimisation of bodily functioning, it is therefore imperative to understand the constructs of SDT, basic psychological needs, human motivation and SR as set out in the following paragraphs. Further, due to the distinct construct of the SR of extrinsically motivated behaviour in SDT, its autonomous regulation (AR) and controlled regulation (CR) will be regarded as two variables in this study.

SDT. Ryan and Deci (2000a) suggested that human beings can behave proactively and engage themselves in social activities. Conversely, they can behave passively and detach themselves from social involvements. The aforesaid situations are by and large the consequence of a function of the social conditions in which they develop and function. SDT highlights social-contextual conditions by using the meta-theory of motivational studies and healthy psychological development (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). SDT not only focuses on the amount of motivation but also examines the types of motivation. In this respect, SDT defines a continuum of motivation with intrinsic motivation on one end of the spectrum, amotivation on the other end with extrinsic motivation in between. SDT further delineates intrinsic and various sources of extrinsic motivation and describes the respective roles of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in cognitive and social development, together with individual differences (Ryan & Deci, 2000a).

SDT provides predictors of performance, as well as relational and well-being outcomes. It guides, proposes and finds the degrees of innate basic psychological needs for 'autonomy', 'competence' and 'relatedness' that may affect the type and strength of motivation that people have within set circumstances. Autonomy refers to a sense of volition that guides people's desire to organise their experiences and behaviour and perform activities that are in harmony with an integrated sense of their own self (Ryan & Connell, 1989; Sheldon & Elliot, 1999). Competence refers to people's feelings

when successfully mastering their set tasks (Harter, 1978). Relatedness refers to people's desire to feel in connection with others, for example, to love and care, and to be loved and cared for (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Reis, 1994). Through examining people's engagement in relevant behaviour, SDT explains what and why people, with various support for the satisfaction of innate basic psychological needs, choose (or do not choose) to actively synthesise cultural demands, values, and regulations, and to incorporate them into their own self (Ryan & Deci, 2000a).

SDT helps to differentiate between various types of SR behaviour based on relevant regulatory processes. Amotivation may involve people's incompetence, lack of control, non-intentional or non-valuing reasons and so on. Extrinsic motivation may involve people's compliance, external or internal rewards and punishment, self-control, ego-involvement, personal importance, conscious valuing, congruence, awareness, synthesis with their own self and so on. Intrinsic motivation may involve people's interest, enjoyment or inherent satisfaction. It is said to be 'highly autonomous' in representing the 'prototypic instance of self-determination'. Therefore, the continuum of extrinsic motivation is governed by a range of SR behaviour (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). When people are intrinsically motivated, they are said to be self-determined. But when they are extrinsically motivated, they may exhibit CR or AR depending on their perceived locus of causality.

According to SDT, different motivations reflect different degrees of value and SR behaviour that may have been 'taken in' or internalised, or 'further transformed' or integrated. Hence, 'internalisation' denotes that people have 'taken in' a value or regulation, and 'integration' denotes that people have 'further transformed' that value or regulation into their own self. It follows that 'integration' emanates from their own self. From the literature, I noted that SDT has posited three basic psychological needs that can act as mediators to organise and interpret a wide range of empirical results that appear to be convincingly or satisfactorily interpretable through the use of the

constructs of these needs.

Basic Psychological Needs. A basic need may be defined as either a physiological need or psychological need (Hull, 1943). Ryan and Frederick (1997) as well as Waterman (1993) suggested that people's basic needs for competence, autonomy and relatedness should be satisfied so that their sense of integrity or well-being could be attained. As discussed above, these needs are chosen to explain a wide range of phenomena (Ryan & Deci, 2000b). Such needs could help to address the questions or issues that the authors usually raise (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Ryan and Deci (2000b) maintained that the utility of those needs stems from practical situations where such needs widely and relevantly apply across multiple facets of human experience. Life cannot be prosperous without satisfying all these needs. For instance, a social environment that supports the need for competence but not the need for relatedness might result in the undermining of well-being. Moreover, there are some conflicts among these needs in certain social or environmental circumstances, especially in the contexts of alienation and psychopathology; for instance, parents may require their children to give up autonomy for the sake of feeling loved (Ryan *et al.*, 1995). Several studies in work settings (for example, Baard et al., 2004; Ilardi *et al.*, 1993; Kasser *et al.*, 1992) have in fact consistently supported that competence, autonomy and relatedness are true needs.

The Need for Autonomy. The need for autonomy is unique and debatable in SDT research, though relatedness and competence are widely accepted and researched in psychology. Some even argue that autonomy is not a need but part of Western ideology. In addition, autonomy could mean self-governance in a broad sense. Yet, self-governance does not imply that people's behaviour could be free from the influence of social or environmental factors. Autonomy could be 'an internal perceived locus of

causality' (deCharms, 1968). Though the term autonomy is debatable, it is highly connected with motivation. It functions across cultures, including those formed on a collectivistic basis and those on an individualistic basis. Stability within collectivistic cultures depends on people's relative willingness to adhere to their cultures' norms, practice and values. It is based on the magnitude of the need for autonomy if people's health and performance outcomes are involved. Accordingly, SDT is a scientific framework that presents lawful and causational behaviour.

Some forms of behaviour could be self-determined when it is autonomous in nature, whereas other forms of behaviour could be self-regulated when it is controlled in nature. In extreme cases, some forms of behaviour are amotivational. According to SDT, in order to regulate one's emotions, all three basic psychological needs have to be satisfied to a certain extent. This serves the purpose of developing and maintaining intrinsic motivation, facilitating and integrating extrinsic motivation and fostering intrinsic aspirations. The emotion concerned could hopefully become integrated eventually (Ryan & Deci, 2000b).

The Need for Relatedness. When the concept of relatedness was first introduced (Deci & Ryan, 1985a; Ryan *et al.*, 1985), the concept and determinants underlying intrinsic motivation and the internalisation of extrinsic motivation were widely discussed. Relatedness can be described as a sense of mutual respect, caring and reliance with others (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Harlow, 1958). From my reading, I realised that support for relatedness could lead to intrinsic motivation but its concept could be extended further. For example, Anderson *et al.* (1976) pointed out that proximal relational supports can facilitate intrinsic motivation. They also acknowledged that there are many circumstances in which people can sustain their interest and vitality when they are engaging in intrinsically motivated activities. Other studies (for example, Grolnick & Ryan, 1989) supported a similar view that relational factors could facilitate

internalisation and autonomous regulation.

However, some writers (for example, Sansone *et al.*, 1992; Vallerand *et. al.*, 1992) held another view. They argued that proximal relatedness might be not necessary for intrinsic motivation in some people who are working alone. Hence, intrinsic motivation could be sustained without the need for relatedness. Moreover, Ryan and Deci (2000b) emphasised that the presence of proximal feelings of relatedness is even more important for internalisation and integration of regulation than for intrinsic motivation itself. They postulated that people have "the desire to belong and feel connected" (*ibid.* p. 334) as such can facilitate their determination to "take in and endorse" (*ibid.* p. 334) values and behavioural regulation that their significant others have already recognised. For instance, people tend to be harmoniously integrated within certain social environments that favour the internalisation of SR behaviour.

The Need for Competence. SDT supports the need for competence, which includes optimal challenges and performance feedback. However, SDT appears not to support intrinsic motivation and integrate internalisation if they are not accompanied by autonomy and relatedness. The relationship between competence and internalisation has been discussed in a number of studies. For instance, some studies argue that positive feedback could strengthen the nurture of intrinsic motivation as it would help increase perceived competence (for example, Blanck *et al.*, 1984; Harackiewicz & Larson, 1986; Vallerand, 1983), although they conclude that a strengthening effect only appears when positive feedback is accompanied by autonomy (Fisher, 1978; Ryan, 1982).

If the circumstance is of the controlled type, controlled forms of extrinsic motivation may appear as an outcome (Deci *et al.*, 1994). For instance, praising learners after they have performed well in a self-initiated educational activity could help to enhance their feeling of competence and increase their level of intrinsic

motivation. However, telling them what they should have done could make them feel that they are being controlled, which may result in their level of intrinsic motivation being decreased and promote a non-autonomous style of extrinsic motivation. On the other hand, negative feedback may lead to a reduction in intrinsic motivation due to a reduction of perceived competence (Deci *et al.*, 1973). Furthermore, some studies (for example, Boggiano & Barrett, 1985) suggested that low perceptions of self-competence would in turn make a person feel amotivated and helpless. In Vallerand and Reid's (1984, 1988) studies, the results suggest that intrinsic motivation could be strengthened after positive feedback rather than negative feedback. As well as this, the path analyses suggest that one's perceived competence changes in between feedbacks. Some studies (for example, Grolnick *et al.*, 1991; Vallerand *et al.*, 1989) suggest that a connection could exist between perceived competence, intrinsic motivation and identified SR behaviour in the field of regular or special education (Deci *et al.*, 1992).

Human Motivation. Motivation is often regarded as a distinct construct in that people are driven to act through various types of 'force' resulting in highly diverse experiences and outcomes. It relates to all kinds of activation and intention. More importantly, it generates outcomes and is therefore of predominant importance to managers, teachers, coaches, parents and so on. It could help to explain why people select certain activities, how long they persist in performing them, and the extent to which they invest effort in them (Dörnyei, 2001). By examining the perceived 'forces' that drive a person to action, SDT could help to differentiate several significant types of motivation, each of which has been related to outcomes such as learning, performance, well-being and so on. The process of differentiating between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation has been widely studied and has helped to provide insights on developmental and educational practice, particularly within social and environmental contexts. Those who have no inspiration for action are categorised as unmotivated,

whereas an energetic person who moves towards an end is said to be motivated. Many writers take the view that a particular orientation of motivation is very often decided by the goals which lead to certain actions being taken. It is also related to possible reasons behind a particular action (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). For example, the eagerness of a student to learn at school may be based on their curiosity or interest, otherwise, they may be driven by the approval of teachers or parents. Students could be highly motivated to learn certain skills due to the fact that they want to develop their potential or just because they wish to obtain a decent grade at the end. However, it is noted that while the degree of motivation does not change in this example, the nature and focus of motivation could vary (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). Various SR behavioural patterns in terms of English language learning activities that the study participants are engaged in will be explored and analysed in this current study.

Regarding SDT, Deci and Ryan (1985a) suggested that various types of motivation are related to differing reasons and goals for respective actions. The most basic and convenient way to distinguish the types of motivation is to divide them into two groups: intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation means taking action because of interest and enjoyment, and extrinsic motivation means taking action based on a separable outcome. However, from a practical point of view, both goals and actions may be dynamic in nature in that they may be subtly affected by social and environmental contextual factors such as peer influence and reward systems.

Intrinsic Motivation. Intrinsic motivation was firstly acknowledged in some experimental studies on animal behaviour where the animals involved were found to have exploratory, playful and curious forms of behaviour even in the absence of any provision of external reinforcement or reward (White, 1959). In humans, intrinsic motivation is a kind of inherent tendency to challenge one's ability, or to explore and learn, even in the absence of available specific rewards (Harter, 1978). Intrinsic

motivation explains distinct human nature in relation to personal development and growth, mastery, sustainable interest and enduring exploration; and it may establish principal sources of enjoyment and vitality of life (Csikszentmihalyi & Rathunde, 1993; Ryan, 1995). Intrinsic motivation may be defined as the performance of certain tasks based on their inherent satisfaction instead of some separable consequences. An intrinsically motivated person usually acts due to interest or challenge instead of external pressure or reward (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). Some researchers suggest that a person is intrinsically motivated when performing an interesting task, whereas other researchers highlight personal satisfaction as the key factor behind intrinsically motivated tasks. It appears that 'the task is interesting' and 'personal satisfaction' arguably interplay, whereas the degree of 'interesting' and the level of 'satisfaction' vary among individuals, including the researchers themselves.

Intrinsic motivation appears to be a vital condition for educational researchers, and it is the driving force of learning and achievement which is often overlooked by parents and teachers (Ryan & Stiller, 1991). As intrinsic motivation helps learners to learn in a high quality way resulting in creativity, it is important to emphasise the cultivation of those factors and forces that contribute to the intrinsic motivation of learners. In this current study, such factors and forces that contribute to the SR of Chinese university students in English language learning will be explored. However, it should be noted that in the case of human beings, intrinsic motivation should not be the one and only one form of motivation though it is an important one. That being the case, SDT suggests that there are diverse types of extrinsic motivation: some denote impoverished forms of motivation, whereas others represent active forms of motivation. Without external incentives, healthy individuals may remain active, caring and playful; and at the same time, they may be ready to learn and explore (Ryan & Deci, 2000a).

A few theories which were developed decades ago deserve our revisiting. Skinner's (1953) operant theory suggests that rewards are the source of all motivated

behaviour, and intrinsically motivated behaviour is usually generated from the task itself. On the contrary, Hull (1943) argued that all motivated behaviour may originate from physiological motives; for instance, intrinsically motivated tasks contain some factors that could satisfy a person's psychological needs. According to Ryan and Deci (2000a), intrinsic motivation is a highly valuable innate driving force that appears only in certain conditions. Some specifiable conditions are supportive, enhancing and conducive to intrinsic motivation, whereas other conditions may undermine and diminish intrinsic motivation. In this connection, SDT contains a framework of social and environmental factors which conceptualise the support and undermining of motivation, together with a continuum of types of motivation and the corresponding regulatory styles of behaviour that may be exhibited.

As to the social factors of intrinsic motivation, Deci and Ryan's (1985a) Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET) provided its variability as a sub-theory of SDT. It proposed that an interpersonal situation such as rewards, communication and feedback could induce a feeling of competence during the performance of a task. It follows that intrinsic motivation could be enhanced due to the fact that needs for competence are satisfied. CET further provides evidence that intrinsic motivation cannot be established just by a feeling of competence unless a sense of autonomy has been achieved; or to be specific, an internal perceived locus of causality (deCharms, 1968) appears. Therefore, a person may not just perceive competence but also exhibit a self-determined behaviour when intrinsic motivation persists. In other words, people who experience a high degree of intrinsic motivation may enjoy the satisfaction of needs, including competence and autonomy. Some studies (for example, Deci, 1971; Harackiewicz, 1979) in the early years suggested that positive performance feedback could support intrinsic motivation, whereas negative performance feedback could undermine it. Several other studies (for example, Vallerand & Reid, 1984) suggest that perceived competence may follow the effects of performance feedback. Yet other studies (for

example, Ryan, 1982) suggest that a higher level of perceived competence would be followed by perceived autonomy as it is an important factor in increasing the feeling of competence, and higher intrinsic motivation could result.

Most environmental-event-focusing studies focus on intrinsic motivation in autonomy versus control aspects instead of competence. Therefore, the issue has become controversial. Some even suggest that extrinsic rewards could weaken intrinsic motivation (for example, Deci, 1971; Lepper *et al.*, 1973), which means it is possible that people may shift from an internal to external perceived locus of causality. Despite the frequently debated issue of rewards, Deci *et al.*'s (1999) study proposed that any tangible rewards given after the performance of certain tasks may weaken intrinsic motivation. Not only tangible rewards but treats (Deci & Cascio 1972), deadlines (Amabile *et al.*, 1976), directives (Koestner *et al.*, 1984), and competition pressure (Reeve & Deci, 1996) undermine intrinsic motivation since people might think that these factors appear to control them. In contrast, choices and opportunities (for example, Zuckerman, *et al.*, 1978) might strengthen intrinsic motivation because of people's higher sense of autonomy.

People are not intrinsically motivated after early childhood, when their freedom of choice has been limited by social demands and the responsibilities that they have assumed in fulfilling certain not-too-interesting tasks. For example, intrinsic motivation appears to decrease in subsequent advancing grades. When it comes to extrinsically motivated students, their motivation may be based on resentment, resistance and disinterest in an inner acceptance of the value or usefulness of the given task. In this case, they could feel either that they are being propelled into action or that they are being self-approving to achieve certain goals (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). It may be difficult for educators to rely on intrinsic motivation to cultivate learning in students. At the same time, educators often do not only want their students to perform interestingly and enjoyably but they understand the importance of promoting various types of extrinsic

motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). Hence, educators need to understand these types of extrinsic motivation and associated SR behaviour in order to address each of them accordingly. This SR behaviour will be further discussed in the final part of this section.

Extrinsic Motivation. Although intrinsic motivation is of utmost importance in motivation, the majority of the activities that people perform are not actually intrinsically motivated. For most students, for instance, their intrinsic motivation may become weakened with each advancing grade as they may have to assume more and more responsibilities for intrinsically non-interesting commitments.

Extrinsic motivation is a construct in that it is a driving force that moves a person to perform a task in order to attain a separable outcome. In contrast with intrinsic motivation, performing the task is no longer for the sake of enjoyment or satisfaction but rather for its instrumental value. For instance, school children do their homework as they are afraid of parental sanction; therefore, doing homework from their perspective is merely for the sake of attaining a separable outcome of preventing sanction. Similarly, when school children complete their work because of their foreseeable bright future, they are also extrinsically motivated as they may see the instrumental value of their work instead of finding interest in it. These two examples involve intentional behaviour where the degree of autonomy associated with extrinsic motivation varies with the corresponding perceived locus of causality (Ryan & Deci, 2000a), the results of which will be explored in this study.

Since many school activities may not be designed to be intrinsically interesting to students, the most important question is how to motivate students to value and, at the same time, to self-regulate educational activities. This should be carried out without extra pressure, and students should be the ones who take the initiative to work on their own. This is called internalisation and integration of values and behavioural regulations in SDT where internalisation means the intake of value or behavioural regulation,

whereas integration describes the process of transforming the value or behavioural regulation into the person's own self (Ryan & Deci, 1985). Moreover, the continuum of internalisation accounts for the pathway of a person's motivation for value or behavioural regulation and may range from an amotivated regulation to a passively participated one (controlled regulation, CR), or progress to an actively committed regulation (autonomous regulation, AR). The greater the internalisation and personal commitment, the better will be the self-perception and self-engagement. In this connection, this current study will explore both AR and CR in SR of extrinsic motivation in Chinese university students' engagement with English language learning.

As another sub-theory of SDT, Organismic Integration Theory (OIT) describes different forms of extrinsic motivation and related factors that support or undermine internalisation and integration of value and behavioural regulation. Figure 1 illustrates the OIT taxonomy of motivational types, arranged from left to right in terms of the degree to which the motivations emanate from the self, that is, are self-determined. On the left end is amotivation that denotes 'no intention to act'. In the case of amotivation, people lack the driving force to perform any task. They have practically lost connections with others. Amotivation could result from not finding the instrumental value of the work (Ryan, 1995), feeling incompetent to perform the task (Deci, 1975), or not believing that doing the work would obtain certain outcomes (Seligman, 1975). The following figure illustrates the self-determination continuum showing types of motivation with their regulatory styles, perceived loci of causality and corresponding regulatory processes.

Behavior   Nonself-Determined   Self-Determined

Motivation	Amotivation		Extrinsic Motivation			Intrinsic Motivation
Regulatory Styles	Non-Regulation	External Regulation	Introjected Regulation	Identified Regulation	Integrated Regulation	Intrinsic Regulation
Perceived Locus of Causality	Impersonal	External	Somewhat External	Somewhat Internal	Internal	Internal
Relevant Regulatory Processes	Nonintentional, Nonvaluing, Incompetence, Lack of Control	Compliance, External Rewards and Punishments	Self-control, Ego-Involvement, Internal Rewards and Punishments	Personal Importance, Conscious Valuing	Congruence, Awareness, Synthesis With Self	Interest, Enjoyment, Inherent Satisfaction

Figure 1.The Self-determination Continuum Showing Types of Motivation
Source: Ryan, R. M. and Deci, E. L. (2000a)

On the right of amotivation comes the lowest degree of autonomous forms of extrinsic motivation, called external regulation. An external reward (or prevention of a sanction) is obtained after performing a certain task or satisfying a particular demand. This externally regulated behaviour is a controlled one (CR) with an external perceived locus of causality (deCharms, 1968). External regulation is the kind of motivation mentioned by operant theorists (for example, Skinner, 1953), and was most often contrasted with intrinsic motivation in early research studies or discussions. The second left motivation shown in the continuum is called introjected regulation. It is somewhat externally regulated where people may be pressurised into performing a task in order to avoid feeling guilt or anxiety or they may attempt to obtain pride in so doing (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). A more autonomous style of extrinsic motivation appears in identified regulation. The level of importance that a person attaches to a particular behaviour is identified and regulated as their own behaviour. For example, a person memorises a vocabulary list because they believe that such an act could help improve their writing ability. This could therefore be identified as a goal (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Finally, integrated regulation is considered by Deci and Ryan (2000) the most autonomous form of extrinsic motivation. It occurs when identified motivation is

completely assimilated to the self. This happens when self-examination occurs and new regulation coincides with the person's new values and needs. The far right hand side of Figure 1 denotes intrinsic motivation. It accompanies self-determined activities.

SR. Given the understanding of the conceptual framework of SDT and the constructs of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations that SDT embraces, individuals are inclined to fulfil the abovementioned basic psychological needs through goal setting and subsequent SR behaviour. A number of theories in SR affirm that the related types of perceptions and predictions are deemed as important elements of the mental regulation of behaviour (for example, Atkinson, 1964; Bandura, 1997; Bandura & McClelland, 1977; Carver & Scheier, 1981, 1988, 1998). There are many definitions for SR. It may be a meticulous process in which individuals deal with their learning including their control over perceived competence, emotions such as anxiety in learning, behaviour in handling learning tasks, and not least, the learning environment (Pintrich & De Groot, 1990; Zimmerman, 1998). From the perspective of educational psychology, the thinking process accompanying the motivation to learn could also be consciously self-regulated and self-monitored by learners in the course of learning (for example, Sansone, 2008; Winne & Hadwin, 2008). Furthermore, the above conceptualisations of SR have also been highlighted as overlapping with motivation and autonomy in SDT where, as Reeve *et al.* (2008, p. 225) put it, "[autonomous] self-regulation is associated with autonomous motivation and is characterised by a sense of volition and choice." In other words, the SR of learners is the manifestation of autonomous SR (or autonomous regulation, AR) where learners are self-initiating and persistent as they may perceive the learning tasks as interesting or personally significant to them. On the contrary, learners do not endorse those tasks that are not interesting or not personally significant to them, or worse, imposed on them. Such behaviour is said to be of a controlled SR (or controlled regulation, CR) type.

For a better understanding, Ryan and Deci (2000a) suggested four types of regulatory style on a continuum where extrinsically motivated activities are engaged in to various degrees, with 'external regulation' at one end of the continuum and 'integrated regulation' at the other end of the continuum, and with 'introjected regulation' and 'identified regulation' in between (Figure 1). External and introjected regulations are considered to lean more towards controlled forms of extrinsic motivation or CR, whereas identified and integrated regulation are regarded to lean more towards autonomous forms of extrinsic motivation or AR. It should be recalled that SR behaviour may vary on a continuum from autonomous to controlled forms. AR arises out of interest and personal importance, and possesses an 'internally perceived locus of causality' (deCharms, 1968). It 'flows out' from one's integrated sense of self (Deci & Ryan, 1991). On the other hand, CR has an 'externally' perceived locus of causality; it exhibits as being pressurised interpersonally or it is involved in intrapsychic contingencies or demands (Ryan, 1982).

Intrinsically motivated behaviour represents the prototype of autonomy, and the people involved could be said to be in a state of self-determination. Such behaviour 'flows out' of personal interest and is sustained by an internal driving force underpinned by spontaneous thoughts, feelings of values and feelings of importance that emerge in the course of the activity participation. In contrast, to accommodate the reality of social-contextual needs, extrinsically motivated behaviour is usually performed and sustained due to the pursuit of a reward (Ryan & Connell, 1989). This behaviour is considered as CR as it is pressurised by external contingencies; for example, parents force their children to study hard in the hope that they could achieve better academically. If one could 'take in' the values and regulation through the process of internalisation, the initially deemed external regulation could eventually be transformed into internal regulation. SDT helps to explain that integrated regulation could occur when identified regulation has become integrated with one's own sense of

self, then their perceived locus of causality could be fully internalised, and their behaviour would thus become fully autonomous or AR (Deci *et al.*, 1994; Deci & Ryan, 1991).

To enrich the construct further, some authors suggest that SR could be a kind of human motivational behaviour which directly relates to people's goals pursuit and their corresponding attitude in determining goals-pursuit behaviour (Cantor, 1994; Grant & Dweck, 1999). Also, some lay observers are interested in exploring what goals lie behind people's behaviour, and so predict their forthcoming behaviour based on related goals assumptions (Bassili, 1989; Read & Miller, 1993). Acutally, potential rewards or penalties in certain circumstances could help them to identify the goals behind their behaviour (Chun *et al.*, 2002; Trope & Alfieri, 1997). Hence, it is envisaged that different goals in different situations would have different goals-related behaviour (Cantor *et al.*, 1982). In other words, people in pursuing goals are limited by situations and associated constraints (Andersen & Chen, 2002; Moretti & Higgins, 1999). To achieve better outcomes in goals pursuit, it is essential to identify all possible situational cues so as to facilitate anticipation and guidance in SR efforts. To achieve SR, the most fundamental task is to match visualised long-term aims against instant, real experiences (Rachlin, 2000; Trope & Fishbach, 2000). In borrowing others' life situations and focusing on their 'low-level, concrete experiences' or borrowing others' life situations and focusing on their 'high-level, abstract aims', one is able to expect and decide the most suitable, important and feasible course of action in goals pursuit for rewards and punishments with which they are associated. However, for the latter scenario, the action of goals pursuit provides the greatest long-term benefits once attained (Liberman & Trope, 1998; Vallacher & Kaufman, 1996).

In the interests of this current study, some writers highlighted that some of the Chinese students who are studying English language do so for reasons of upward social and economic mobility. They learn English language based on certificate motivation

rather than integrative reasons (Jin, 2014; Kormos et al, 2014). Though an understanding of complex motivation is crucial for English language learning in Chinese students, it is the Chinese social and educational backgrounds which impose a certain level of certificate motivation on them. The lower the Chinese students' English language grades, the higher the expected level of certificate motivation where they may have pressure to pursue a better academic position at school or university. In this regard, they may conceivably have higher chances of obtaining a better job in the future (Jin, 2014; Kormos et al, 2014). Given the understanding of SR in the SDT framework, AR and CR in the Chinese university students' English language learning are regarded as two variables that will be explored and analysed in this current study.

From the literature outlined above, I was much inspired by the Learning Self-regulation Questionnaire (LSRQ; Ryan & Connell, 1989), which can be used by older students. The questionnaire asks three main questions as to the reasons behind people's engagement in learning-related behaviour. The questionnaire comprises two subscales: CR and AR. To serve the purpose of this current study, I considered and evaluated nine of the fourteen items of the LSRQ version which was originally intended for medical students. With modifications, the nine question items were incorporated into the questionnaire so as to explore the Chinese university students' perceptions about their engagements with English language learning in the UK (*see* Section 2.4.1 for the detail).

1.1.2 Mindset (MS)

Construct of MS in Educational Psychology. The construct of MS could be dated back to Kelly's (1955) work which presents some lay theories of the way people perceive the self and others. Recently, in the area of educational psychology, more concepts have been contributed via the construct of implicit theories, in which the assumptions and beliefs of certain human traits have largely been connected to Carol

Dweck and her associates' works (for example, Blackwell *et al.*, 2007; Chiu *et al.*, 1997; Dweck, 2000, 2006; Dweck & Molden, 2007; Dweck *et al.*, 1995; Hong *et al.*, 1999). Also, MS have a close association with a number of second language learning's theoretical and empirical studies (for example, Barcelos, 2003; Benson & Lor, 1999; Cotterall, 1995, 1999; Horwitz, 1987, 1998, 1999; White, 2008) where the relationship between MS and language learning behaviour has been vigorously investigated. In this thesis, the word 'mindset' (MS) is chosen since it is a widely and easily understood term though the term 'implicit theories' is often used in the field of psychology.

General Belief of Fixed *vs* Growth MS. MS is lay people's general beliefs in the nature of human attributes such as intelligence and personality. People who have a fixed MS simply believe that the nature of human attributes is fixed. They may think that everybody's intelligence is fixed and therefore cannot be changed. As for personality, people may believe that people's moral character cannot be changed. On the contrary, people who have a growth MS believe that everybody could become more intelligent through training or effort. As well as this, the personality of people could change over time if they are willing to take steps to develop their moral character.

Recent Studies. In the past two decades, a number of researchers have worked on MS, and propose that people with a fixed MS in their own traits such as level of intelligence could try to avoid challenges in order not to show their lack of intelligence (for example, Blackwell *et al.*, 2007; Robins & Pals, 2001). They might also exhibit less resilience after facing certain setbacks. Such setbacks could make them feel incapacitated and they might appear defensive and feel discouraged because of them (Blackwell *et al.*, 2007; Hong *et al.*, 1999; Nussbaum & Dweck, 2008; Robins & Pals, 2001). On the contrary, people with a growth MS tend to believe that their traits could be further developed, and therefore, they may try to seek challenging opportunities to

learn and they tend to be resilient when there are setbacks. They believe that setbacks are not offences to their own self, but rather, they are opportunities for personal learning and growth. Some studies also suggest that transmitting a growth MS to students via teaching could help to raise their motivation and academic achievement (for example, Aronson *et al.*, 2002; Blackwell *et al.*, 2007; Good *et al.*, 2003). Also, people with a growth MS are less likely to cultivate negative stereotypes from poor academic achievement (Aronson *et al.*, 2002; Good *et al.*, 2012). At this juncture, it can be said that growth MS believers may look for opportunities or challenges to learn and grow, whereas fixed MS believers may try to avoid challenges as they might wish not to face any setbacks that may occur.

Perceptions of Others. It is possible that people may have a fixed or growth MS in their perception of other people. Fixed MS people might provide quick trait-based judgmental perceptions of others, both on an individual basis (Chiu *et al.*, 1997; Erdley & Dweck, 1993; Molden *et al.*, 2006) or by groups (Levy & Dweck, 1999; Levy *et al.*, 1998; Rydell *et al.*, 2007). It is possible that such people think that traits are fixed, and people (or a group of people) may have been labelled or stereotyped; hence, they may reject information that is contrary to their label or stereotype (Erdley & Dweck, 1993; Plaks *et al.*, 2001). Conversely, growth MS people could understand others more via observing their behaviour according to situations and psychological processes (for example, needs, beliefs, emotions, goals) instead of fixing them in terms of traits (Chiu *et al.*, 1997; Levy & Dweck, 1999; Molden *et al.*, 2006). They tend to update their impression of others according to the new information that they received. Hence, it could be easily envisaged that people with a growth MS are learners who have a strong motivation for personal development.

Other Applications. The notion of MS has also been widely applied to the field of

intelligence. In essence, MS with the belief that intelligence is 'fixed versus growth' has an important impact on learning behaviour (Mangels *et al.*, 2006) and academic achievement (Dweck, 2006). MS affects school students' academic performance (Blackwell *et al.*, 2007) as well as that of college students (Aronson *et al.*, 2002). MS theory could also be applied to morality (Kray & Haselhuhn, 2007), body weight (Burnette, 2010), and peer relationships (Rudolph, 2010).

Language Learning MS. Foreign language education is found to have a close relationship with mainstream psychology (for example, Dörnyei, 2001, 2009; Mercer *et al.*, 2012). Apart from the works of Carol Dweck and her associates (Blackwell *et al.*, 2007; Chiu *et al.*, 1997; Dweck, 2000, 2006; Dweck & Molden, 2007; Dweck *et al.*, 1995; Hong *et al.*, 1999), that of Sarah Mercer has provided this current study with further insights as she is one of the early researchers to have had ongoing studies on second language learning within the context of MS and the educational psychology of language learning at large (for example, MacIntyre & Mercer, 2014; Mercer, 2011, 2012; Mercer & Ryan, 2010; Mercer *et al.*, 2012).

Within the context of language learning, the fixed MS belief in language learning depends on a fixed and inborn talent and the growth MS belief depends on controllable factors such as hard work and continuous training. Even though there are fixed and growth MS in the field of psychology, people tend to have a fixed MS in the area of foreign language teaching and learning (Mercer & Ryan, 2010). It is common for people to possess the belief that some people are born with a special talent in a certain domain. As for foreign language learning, there is a belief that those who are naturally born to be language learners or good at languages prevalently become language teachers or researchers. In the domain of second language learning, such 'talent' is called aptitude and its development in language learning is significant (Robinson, 2005; Sternberg, 2002). People with a fixed MS may hold the belief that

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having a 'gift' for languages is important in learning a language; therefore, it is a waste of effort to attempt to improve the language in question since it is impossible for poor language learners to develop as a linguist by any means (Mercer, 2012). In this regard, the aptitude of individuals with a fixed or growth MS could be observed to have different learning outcomes. However, the implicit message of an aptitude test is that some people could have a certain fixed and unchangeable learning ability for languages regardless of the motivation and other personal factors of the person concerned (Mercer, 2012). Hence, multiple perspectives of aptitude in learning language at different stages should be assessed in order to understand more about an individual's language ability. Aptitude tests tend to adopt more context-sensitive items with various understandings of a person's development, which covers a wide range of language learning capacity and multiple intelligences (Mercer, 2012). That being the case, it is not the main aim of this current study to explore the participants' language learning ability as such.

From the point of view of psychology, individuals with a fixed MS feel the importance of a natural acquisition process instead of conscious learning (Mercer, 2011). Moreover, they hold the belief that natural talent is necessary for language learning. The belief in natural talent plays a main role in language learning rather than the training or hard work that symbolises the growth MS. Individuals with a fixed MS divide language learning into areas related to different skills (Mercer & Ryan, 2010). In the pronunciation domain, fixed MS learners believe that it is impossible for a person to change their capacity since natural talent is essential in language learning. They do not think that training or hard work could improve the situation (Mercer & Ryan, 2010). On the contrary, individuals with a growth MS agree that training or hard work could help people to develop better no matter what domain of language learning they are in. They even suggest that new learners can be industrious in language learning. In addition, they understand that some learners may have a natural talent for language learning. However, it is necessary for them to work hard in addition to this talent in

order to become successful in language learning. Learners with a growth MS are likely to think that their success is due to their own effort instead of mere natural intelligence (Mercer, 2011, 2012).

In addition, fixed MS theorists think that people will make an effort to learn a language according to their level of ability. Thus, they may perform poorly and be less likely to master their learning. In contrast, growth MS theorists treasure motivation and the use of learning strategies (Yan *et al.*, 2014). They believe that intelligence could increase through effort. Therefore, they tend to interpret effort in a productive way, and are more likely to engage themselves in related learning. In general, the growth MS theorists regard learning to be more productive than fixed MS theorists (Yan *et al.*, 2014). For instance, it is easier for them to understand the importance of self-testing as a kind of pedagogical support in learning; and they also tend not to believe that testing is just for checking knowledge. They tend to make more effort to restudy information so that they can learn more from the reading context in the progress of restudying. However, the fixed MS theorists tend to believe that what has been learned is still retained in their mind and the method of restudying reflects a lack of ability rather than a learning strategy that boosts the progress of learning (Yan *et al.*, 2014).

It is important for teachers to promote a growth MS in language learners (Dweck *et al.*, 1995) and so learners are encouraged to make an effort in their language learning and have a positive learning attitude. Dweck (2002) suggested that appropriate feedback and encouragement may help to develop a growth MS so as to cultivate the expected positive language learning attitude, motivation and outcome. Also, it is necessary for teachers to ask learners to reflect on their learning process, and encourage them to set personal goals but not to compare themselves with one another (Ommundsen, 2003).

Given the established constructs of fixed and growth MS in language learning as set out in the above paragraphs, it is believed that they should be valid for this

current study's research main aim as outlined in the Introduction. As for the collection of quantitative data, sources for the creation of respective question items as a data gathering instrument have been documented in detail in Section 2.4.1.

1.1.3 Psychological Well-being (PWB)

In practice, it is not easy to define the concept of wellness though the term is widely applied in daily language. According to the literature, Larson (1999) supported the holistic definition of health as firstly introduced by the World Health Organisation (WHO). It is related to a central concept that embraces physical, mental and social well-being as a whole but it is not only the absence of disease and infirmity. Dunn (1977) enhanced the WHO definition by positing that wellness is a positive state that is more than non-sickness. He tried to connect the nature of wellness in mind, body and environment as a means of achieving dynamic equilibrium within oneself. Egbert (1980) believed that wellness could be obtained by combining one's sense of identity with an understanding of reality, a purpose in life and motivational forces. In addition, the writer suggested that wellness could also be obtained by managing one's tasks innovatively, maintaining views positively, and establishing relationships constructively. PWB is a positive result of conceptualising awareness and mastering feelings experienced in our life. It involves being realistic, positive and inspirational towards oneself in different life circumstances, especially when facing conflicts and stress, and building and maintaining relationships with people (Adams *et al.*, 1997). Hettler (1980) suggested that PWB was an uninterrupted process which viewed self, the world and relationships in a positive manner and contained awareness and control of feelings. Renger *et al.* (2000) described PWB as a person's degree of depression, anxiety, self-control and optimism. It consists of different positive feelings towards life such as satisfaction, curiosity and enjoyment; and at the same time, an optimistic regard for the future (Foster & Keller, 2008). PWB is a state of mental health in which

people can realise their own potential in order to cope with their normal stresses, to work productively and can make a contribution to their community (WHO, 2011).

Development of Constructs of PWB. According to the literature going back to more than 40 years ago, PWB was divided by two major constructs of positive functioning. The first construct started with Bradburn's (1969) classic research, which differentiated between positive and negative affects and used the definition of 'happiness' to strike a balance between the two. The question of 'who is happy' was widely surveyed in American society by researchers at the time (for example, Campbell, 1981; Herzog *et al.*, 1982; Veroff *et al.*, 1981). At the same time, social psychologists tended to be more focused on factors that might affect the judgement of people concerning PWB, including their mood states during the time of assessment (Schwarz & Clore, 1983), or whether or not their judgements were influenced by the frequency or intensity of their states of positive feeling (Diener *et al.*, 1985). The concepts and methods used in the later studies were mainly based on this early definition of PWB. For instance, the hypothesised independence of positive and negative affect was being questioned, and was connected with an incapacity to differentiate between the intensity and the frequency of affect (Diener *et al.*, 1985). A negative correlation of the frequency of positive and negative affect, together with a positive correlation of the intensity were found to counteract the association between positive and negative affect. At present, however, the frequency of affect has been widely accepted as a better indicator than intensity in terms of ease of measurement and the strong linkage to long-term emotional well-being (Diener & Larsen, 1993; Diener *et al.*, 1991).

The second construct, as widely recognised among sociologists, suggested that life satisfaction could help to indicate the degree of PWB. In earlier research, life satisfaction was mostly viewed as a factor to complement happiness and contribute to the affective dimension of positive functioning (for example, Andrews & McKennell

1980; Andrews & Withey, 1976; Bryant & Veroff, 1982; Campbell *et al.*, 1976). Other studies tried to relate PWB to overall life satisfaction as generic questions; and work, income, social relationships and neighbourhood as domain-based questions (Andrews, 1991; Diener, 1984). At the time, all these factors were highly correlated to social change as shown in an American study, which resulted in a change of meaning of quality of life from era to era, and reported change of level of PWB including its correlates over time (Bryant & Veroff, 1982).

Though the abovementioned elements in PWB were widely assessed in previous studies (for example, Diener, 1984; Larsen *et al.*, 1985), emphasis was mainly placed on the reliability and validity of all the existing measures and a possible measurement error that might blur the bipolarity of positive and negative affect (Green *et al.*, 1993). In addition, when the basic construct of PWB was discussed, emphasis was mostly placed on the differentiation between positive and negative affect and the life satisfaction of a person (Andrews & Withey, 1976; Bradburn, 1969; Bryant & Veroff, 1982; Diener & Emmons, 1984; Liang, 1984, 1985; Stock *et al.*, 1986). For instance, in Bradburn's (1969) study, not much emphasis was placed on the fundamental meaning of well-being. At the time, life satisfaction measures were used due to the fact that practical applications were required in the studies rather than an extension of the meaning of wellness (Sauer & Warland, 1982). Later on, the research conducted on quality of life was also regarded as data driven instead of developing a well-defined conceptual framework (Headey *et al.*, 1993).

Alternative Perspectives. From the literature, I have noted that alternative perspectives on defining the contours of well-being have developed. Previous studies were very often targetted at defining positive psychological functioning, including Maslow's (1968) conception of self-actualisation, Rogers's (1961) viewpoint of a fully functioning person, Jung (1933) and Von Franz's (1964) formulation of individuation,

and Allport's (1961) formulation of maturity. Hence, a more extensive definition of PWB could be sought following the studies of life span developmental perspectives, which describe different challenges laid upon various stages of life. Such work could be found in for example, Erikson's (1959) psychosocial stage, Buhler (1935) and Buhler and Massarik's (1968) basic life tendencies which are related to the fulfilment of life, and Neugarten's (1968, 1973) view which is related to personality change in adulthood and old age. Jahoda's (1958) work on positive criteria of mental health successfully redefines PWB as the absence of illness and gives a comprehensive description of the meaning of good psychological health in general. At the time, Ryff (1989) disagreed with the perspectives of various researchers as mentioned above. Despite loose conceptualisations, he opined that many of the points made by other researchers could be summarised concisely and precisely. In this connection, Ryff (1989) argued that all the characteristics of PWB viewed by various researchers are similar in terms of PP functioning.

Multidimensional Structure of PWB. According to Ryff (1989), the characteristics of PP functioning could be categorised as six scales. They are 'Self-acceptance' (positive evaluations of oneself and one's past life), 'Positive Relations with Others' (the possession of quality relations with others), 'Autonomy' (a sense of self-determination), 'Environmental Mastery' (the capacity to manage effectively one's life and surrounding world), 'Purpose in Life' (the belief that one's life is purposeful and meaningful) and 'Personal Growth' (a sense of continued growth and development as a person).

To further define the nature of wellness, research studies have attempted to group people based on age group and gender. In Ryff's (1989) study, the participants were divided into groups of young adults (18-29 years old), midlife adults (30-64 years old) and old-aged adults (65 years old or more). The writer found an increase in 'Environmental Mastery' and 'Autonomy' with an increase of age, especially from

young adulthood to midlife; an increase in 'Purpose in Life' and 'Personal Growth' with a decrease of age, especially from midlife to old age; and no age differences in 'Self-Acceptance' and 'Positive Relations with Others'. In another study, Ryff (1991) used the three age groups categorised above and obtained similar results. In both studies, females obtained much higher scores than males on 'Positive Relations with Others' and 'Personal Growth', which was verified by some other studies (Ryff *et al.*, 1993, 1994). This multidimensional structure of PWB underwent analytical studies, in which the fitting of a theoretical model with empirical data was tested with a national representative sample. Additionally, a test on the generalisability of various age and sex differences was performed after collecting data from representative participants (Ryff, 1995). In summary, PWB consists of the integration of mental health and clinical and life span development theories as the foundation of PP functioning.

Needs Satisfaction and PWB. As pointed out in Section 1.1.1, people's basic needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness should be satisfied so that their sense of integrity or PWB can be attained (Ryan & Frederick, 1997; Waterman, 1993). Some studies show that PWB has a direct linkage with the satisfaction of autonomy, competence and relatedness needs. PWB concerns the experience of psychological health and life satisfaction in that a person perceives vitality, psychological flexibility and a deep inner sense of wellness (Ryan *et al.*, 1995; Ryan & Frederick, 1997). Ryan and Deci (2000a) suggested that it was the 'what' and 'why' of goals pursuit that affected PWB as it had a strong relationship with needs satisfaction. Sheldon *et al.*'s study (1996) suggested that at the individual-difference level, daily fluctuations in the needs satisfaction for 'autonomy and competence' had a predictive relationship with fluctuations in daily PWB. This was confirmed by Reis *et al.*'s (2000) study. It further indicated that between-person predictions might be confirmed by observation that could involve aggregates of the daily measures of trait measures of autonomy,

competence and relatedness; and that their individual trait components might correlate with aggregate indices of well-being. The study also confirmed that independent predication in daily fluctuations of PWB could be made possible by studying fluctuations in the three needs satisfaction. A linkage between the three needs satisfaction and PWB was therefore demonstrated in both studies at the levels of within-person and between-persons. The two studies also showed independent contributions of each need satisfaction for PWB on each day. As mentioned above, I noted the linkage that exists between the 'what' and 'why' of goals pursuit via motivational forces in the attainment of needs satisfaction and, subsequently, the achievement of PWB in various degrees.

Cross-cultural Autonomy. It is one of the central notions of SDT that for people of all cultures, satisfaction of the three basic psychological needs for relatedness, competence and autonomy is universal and important. In contrast, many cross-cultural psychologists (for example, Markus *et al.*, 1996) hold the cultural-relativist view that such needs are developed within cultures. Particularly, in cultural relativists' arguments, autonomy is a principle that is practised in Western culture. It focuses on individualism. But in Eastern culture, individualism is not as explicit, so autonomy may play little role in Eastern culture, and may not greatly affect the daily lives of Eastern peoples or of other traditionalist cultures. Rather, in cultural relativists' arguments, relatedness is the essential psychological need in Eastern culture, focusing on collectivism and interdependence. Going back to the SDT's view, however, it is suggested that cultures profoundly influence people's PWB. Hence, the way in which people are inclined to attain satisfaction concerning their psychological needs may differ from culture to culture (Markus *et al.*, 1996).

In fact, people's need to satisfy their basic psychological needs so as to acquire optimal PWB may be independent of cultures. Some studies on Western and Eastern

cultures have pointed out that it is equally important to let people in those cultures know that satisfaction of the autonomy need requires the promotion of PWB. For instance, in Chirkov *et al.*'s (2003) study, the findings showed that in South Korea, Turkey, Russia and the US where cultural values are more fully internalised and enacted, autonomy-related behaviour was associated with better PWB. It is interesting to note that regardless of whether cultures are based on collectivism or individualism, the ability of a culture to enact autonomy-related behaviour is important for the attainment of PWB. Hence, satisfaction of the need for autonomy is important in any culture. In addition, Ryan *et al.*'s (2005) study showed that reliance on others across different cultures could be made easy by autonomy support. Hence, despite superficial differences in cultural values, the need to fully satisfy optimal motivation and PWB holds true in all cultures, which have basic and common psychological needs as evidenced by a large body of research.

Autonomy support in schools: various factors may affect the interpersonal climate of a classroom that is inclined to operate in a more autonomy supportive or a more controlling way. Some teachers may take the role of ensuring that students are performing tasks correctly as instructed. Other teachers are more likely to initiate students to learn through positive and negative experiences in problem solving (Deci & Ryan, 2008). In Deci *et al.*'s (1981) study, teachers who were teaching fourth to six grades were assessed at the beginning of a school year. Some of them were found practised controlling students whilst all the others practised providing students with autonomy support. It was discovered two months later that students in classrooms in which teachers were autonomy supportive were more intrinsically motivated. They showed curiosity, preferred challenges and made an independent effort at mastery. They gained a sense of competence at schoolwork and higher self-esteem. In Chirkov and Ryan's (2001) study, teachers who provided autonomy support for high school students in both Russia and the US helped them internalise motivation for doing schoolwork,

become well-adjusted and feel good about themselves. In Vansteenkiste, Simon and others' (2004) study, the results indicate that the autonomy-supportive style achieves greater learning and performance outcomes when compared to the controlling style. Notably, the findings of Sheldon and Krieger's (2007) study are worth noting in that over three years of law education, students who experienced less autonomy support exhibited obvious decreases in needs satisfaction and PWB. At the same time, students who experienced more autonomy support from their faculty personnel exhibited fewer decreases in needs satisfaction and PWB. Similarly for medical students, results indicate that autonomy support was affirmed to be essential in needs satisfaction and PWB (Williams & Deci, 1998; Williams *et al.*, 1997). Indeed, practice and policies in school management are multifaceted. If they rely on motivators such as sanctions, rewards, evaluation or other external agents, students may be weak in their study engagement. However, if they rely on motivators that enhance interests, values and volition, students may show greater persistence in learning tasks and better quality in learning outcomes (Ryan & Brown, 2005).

Autonomy support in homes: some SDT studies have explored parents' autonomy support in relation to children's motivation, learning, school performance and psychological well-being in the US and other countries. These studies collectively suggest that parents play a critical role in supporting children's basic psychological needs for enhancing growth and adjustment (Grolnick & Ryan, 1989). In their study, mothers and fathers were separately interviewed as to how they linked the schoolwork and domestic chores of their children. Each parent was rated on target dimensions including autonomy support. At the same time, the children of these parents completed questionnaires and their teachers rated the children's motivation, performance, and adjustment. The results showed that for parents that could provide more autonomy support, their children became more autonomously motivated to complete schoolwork and domestic chores and they perceived themselves to be more competent. Williams *et*

al.'s (2000) study indicated that those adolescents who felt their parents to have provided them with autonomy support were more likely to develop stronger aspirations for personal growth, meaningful relationships and community contributions rather than going for the extrinsic aspirations for wealth, fame and image.

Autonomy support in workplace: in Deci *et al.*'s (1989) field study, the role of autonomy support in workplace was explored. The results suggest that managers who had provided employees with autonomy support were more satisfied with their employment, including various aspects of the workplace. They tended to perceive less pressure and control from top management. Baard *et al.*'s (2004) study showed that with managers' autonomy support, employees tended to experience greater satisfaction regarding the three basic psychological needs, and were more engaged in their work, exhibited greater PWB, and achieved higher performance ratings than those employees whose managers had adopted a more controlling approach. Lynch *et al.*'s (2005) study showed that at a psychiatric hospital, the employees who experienced more autonomy support from their managers reported greater PWB at work and more intrinsic job satisfaction. More importantly, they were more likely to be less controlling towards their patients. In a cross-cultural study conducted in Bulgaria and the US (Deci *et al.*, 2001), the findings indicate that the employees who were given autonomy support experienced satisfaction in the three basic psychological needs which led to better engagement in their work and better PWB.

Goals Pursuit and PWB. Whether for autonomous or controlled reasons, some studies on goals, aspirations or outcomes that people pursue have also been conducted within the SDT framework. Kasser and Ryan (1996) suggested that people's goals such as making wealth, becoming famous and so on could be regarded as extrinsic goals because they are external indicators of worth. But on the other hand, goals such as developing personal growth, building relationships, being productive for the

community and so on are labelled as intrinsic goals. It is because such goals are more directly connected to satisfaction of the three basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness. Kasser and Ryan's (1996) study also showed that people who strongly focused on extrinsic aspirations tended to exhibit low levels of PWB, whereas people who strongly focused on intrinsic aspirations tended to exhibit high levels of PWB. The study also showed that people who focused on extrinsic aspirations were likely to be more controlled in their goals pursuit, whereas people who focused on intrinsic aspirations were likely to be more autonomous. Nonetheless, Sheldon, Ryan and other writers (2004) showed that it should be the contents of the people's goals that predict their mental health even after having controlled the reasons or motives for the pursued goals. In Vansteenkiste *et al.*'s (2004) study, some participants in performing a learning task were advised that the task would help them to make money (an extrinsic aspiration) whilst others were advised that the task would help their personal growth (an intrinsic aspiration). Consequently, the former group of participants learned the material less well; and subsequently, they performed more poorly than the latter group of participants.

Motivational forces could be called upon in the course of goals pursuit. As pointed out in Section 1.1.1, motivation is a distinct construct in that people are driven to act by various types of 'force' resulting in highly diverse experiences and outcomes. It relates to all kinds of activation and intention (Dörnyei, 2001). Hence, human motivation could be described as a function of social or environmental conditions such as rewards, incentives and relationships in which people are playing their respective roles (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Referring back to SDT, people are assumed to be self-motivated, curious and interested; and they are eager to succeed because success could make them feel personally satisfied and rewarded. However, in SDT, it is recognised that people may also feel alienated and mechanised, or submissive and dissatisfied. Hence, the social environmental conditions for the attainment of needs satisfaction and

PWB could either support or hinder human nature (Deci & Ryan, 2000). As well as this, I noted that in SDT, individuals presumably have autonomous and controlled motivation where autonomous motivation could trigger behaviour with a full sense of volition and choice, whereas controlled motivation could trigger behaviour with an uncomfortable experience of pressure and demand in being asked for specific outcomes. Therefore, social or environmental conditions could play a facilitative role in promoting or optimising individuals' motivation to yield the most positive outcomes psychologically, developmentally and behaviourally (Deci & Ryan, 2000b).

A number of studies (for example, Deci & Ryan, 2008; Fernet *et al.*, 2004; Grolnick & Ryan, 1987; Koestner *et al.*, 1984; Legault *et al.*, 2007; Pelletier *et al.*, 2001; Ryan *et al.*, 1993; Vallerand & Bissonette, 1992) have explored the correlates and consequences of autonomous and controlled motivation. The findings are consistent: AR has been associated with greater tenacity, more positive feeling, enhanced performance especially on heuristic activities and greater PWB. Among other positive outcomes, autonomous motivation promotes more creativity (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Koestner *et al.*, 1984), achieves greater conceptual understanding (Grolnick & Ryan, 1987), attains better grades (Black & Deci, 2000), exercises enhanced persistence at school and sporting activities (Pelletier *et al.*, 2001; Vallerand & Bissonette, 1992), issues better productivity and less burnout at work (Fernet *et al.*, 2004), gains more control over prejudice (Legault *et al.*, 2007), practises healthier lifestyles and behaviour (Pelletier *et al.*, 2004) and reaches higher levels of PWB (Ryan *et al.*, 1993).

Inspired by Ryff's (1989) study and its results, I evaluated and modified one to three items as identified from his six 14-item scales of PWB outlined above as question items for the questionnaire of this current study. The purpose was to explore the participants' feelings about their PWB during their stay in terms of their English language learning in the UK (see Section 2.4.1 for further details).

1.1.4 Psychological Adjustment (PA)

Castro (2003) mentioned that self-esteem (also *see* Verkuyten, 1998) could be regarded as an important source of PA, and is one of the major concerns in acculturation in ethnic minorities and majorities in Latin American settings. Depression induced in daily interactions (Abouguendia & Noels, 2001) and stress in social aspects of second language acquisition (Clément *et al.*, 2001) have also been widely studied. Some studies indicate that minority group members have higher degrees of psychological distress in meeting challenges in their daily lives (for example, Taylor *et al.*, 2002). The inner processes of the human being, for instance, self-esteem and possible PA index, are generally being applied in the field of acculturation as it shows how one feels about oneself in relation to the corresponding group belonging (Castro, 2003; Phinney, 1990). Although Chinese university students in the UK are not in a minority group, the literature shows that they are no exception to the encountering of emotional or psychological difficulties due to the English-speaking environmental needs in their social and educational settings, and the obvious cultural differences between their home country and the host country (Agar, 1996; Andrade, 2006; Hechanova-Alampay *et al.*, 2002; Kormos *et al.*, 2014; Rajapaksa & Dundes, 2002; Ramburuth, 2001; Ramsay *et al.*, 1999; Smalley, 1963).

Studying Abroad (SA) and PA. Owing to different reasons such as pursuing a higher quality of life and education, people from different countries choose to study in popular countries like the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the UK. Earlier SA studies mostly highlighted the change in language proficiency of study participants. Davidson's (2007) study focused on Russian SA students' English language learning at US universities in respect of their listening, writing, speaking and reading skills. The outcome indicates the success in language learning and the gain in English language

proficiency after having prolonged exposure to target language and cultures during the SA process including several language-learning courses. O'Donnell (2004) tried to relate students' self-perceptions of their L2 learning progress and effectiveness with their performances on pronunciation and oral fluency, grammar, vocabulary, communicative ability and cognitive capacity. Results indicated that those SA students who had been exposed to English-speaking environments could improve their oral communication skills. Taguchi (2008) supported the notion that people could improve their listening comprehension through increasing contact hours with the target language, though this process could only help SA learners to acquire a higher comprehension speed but not the skills for comprehension accuracy (Wang, 2010). The results of Krashen and Seliger's (1976) study do not agree that SA could help advanced L2 learners to develop better L2 grammar. Therefore, it indicates that the SA setting alone is not enough for acquiring L2 grammar at a higher level.

However, Isabelli's (2008) study and Regan's (1995) study show some positive results which did not agree with the above findings. Isabelli (2008) suggested that advanced L2 learners could indicate their improvement in grammar in the process of SA *after* being explicitly taught in their home country, whereas Regan (1995) argued that the SA experience could help advanced L2 learners to gain vernacular grammar and sociolinguistic competence. Cubillos *et al.*'s (2008) study indicated that even though improvement in the listening proficiency of SA students and at-home students could be similar, a higher benefit could be found in the SA groups. For L2 learning beginners, Spenader's (2008) study on two SA high school students in Sweden suggested that even zero-start L2 learners could definitely benefit from target language learning in the SA setting with an improvement in oral and global proficiency. Huebner (1995) concluded in his study that SA might be beneficial for L2 learning beginners since they could gain much from print setting such as exposure to all target language written words in early-stage L2 literacy development. Although many SA studies

highlight L2 learners' learning experience outside the classroom, the effect of target language learning through classroom instruction in the host country should not be neglected. Kruse and Brubaker (2007) argued that SA programmes should begin with the assessment of assignments and examinations, and the conduct of lectures provided by instructors and professors in the host country. Freed (1990) highlighted the differences between learners' interactive and non-interactive contacts outside the classroom and pointed out that intermediate level L2 learners would gain most from interactive contacts, whereas advanced L2 learners would gain most from non-interactive contacts, for instance, reading and watching television and so on.

Generally speaking, international EFL / ESL students may experience difficulties of various kinds during their SA in host countries (Lacina, 2002), for example, 'culture shock' (Adler, 1975; Oberg, 1960; Ward, *et al.*, 2001), 'learning shock' (Gu, 2005) or 'education shock' (Hoff, 1979; Yamazaki, 2005), 'language shock' (Agar, 1996; Smalley, 1963) and 'role shock' (Byrnes, 1966; Minkler & Biller, 1979) as well as language-related issues (Agar, 1996; Andrade, 2006; Hechanova-Alampay *et al.*, 2002; Kormos *et al.*, 2014; Rajapaksa & Dundes, 2002; Ramburuth, 2001; Ramsay *et al.*, 1999; Smalley, 1963). These difficulties may, in one way or another, or cumulatively, contribute to complex problems where international students need to adapt to the host cultures (Yang *et al.*, 2006). Complex problems might be even more serious for students who have been granted scholarships, and anticipate seeking good jobs in their home country after their graduation (Pedersen, 1991). Nonetheless, some international students in the US could fit into the education system and gain much in the academic field (Yang & Clum, 1995), whereas other international students could have problems with cultural differences and language barriers besides handling their daily academic tasks (Essandoh, 1995; Mori, 2000). Those who fail to cope with the accumulation of stressors from life changes and cultural adjustments (Mallinckrodt & Leong, 1992) could be more vulnerable to suffering physical illness or psychological

distress which could lead to serious consequences (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Pearlin, 1999). Understanding that the physical journey of international students from their home countries is comparable to their psychological journey, international EFL / ESL students' PA should be duly addressed in terms of their SR behaviour, thoughts and feelings (Yang *et al.*, 2006).

Some researchers suggest that international EFL / ESL students' language proficiency in the host country is very important for their daily interactions with the locals and other people. Therefore, the well-being of individuals in cross-cultural adjustment including language adjustment is important (Noels *et al.*, 1996). It is observed that British Canadians and French Canadians could have a higher level of language-related PA as they might be better users of English and display greater confidence compared to people from other countries (Noels & Clément, 1996). Nonetheless, Noels *et al.*'s (1996) study reported that some Chinese students at the Canadian universities had a better PA when they were in contact with the Canadian community due to their self-confidence in using English (Noels & Clément, 1996). Hence, confidence in using the language of the host country is essential as it could facilitate interactions in the host cultures resulting in a better PA (Yang *et al.*, 2006). For the majority of international EFL / ESL students, English language proficiency (Mori, 2000) is one of the major issues that might affect their academic performance and subsequently their PA (Lin & Yi, 1997). Therefore, language-related barriers could hinder their social interactions with their local peers (Hayes & Ling, 1994), which could result in persistent cross-cultural differences, prevention of forming close relationships with their local peers and accordingly, might induce acculturative stress (Mallinckrodt & Leong, 1992).

The cultural backgrounds of international students may be viewed differently regarding relationship formation of groups or individuals. For instance, students from collectivistic cultural backgrounds (Markus & Kitayama, 1991) are more likely to be

interested in prioritising close relationships. When interacting with American students, they may feel confused as Americans are more likely to emphasise aspects of individualism: independence, assertiveness, self-reliance and so on (Cross, 1995). In this regard, many international students might feel that social relationships established in the US cultures are rather superficial (Bulthuis, 1986; Cross, 1995) and thus interpersonal relationships are disappointing and discouraging (Mori, 2000). Even though they have formed close relationships with American peers (host nationals), which may be predicted as a sign of adjustment (Furnham & Alibhai, 1985), international students are inclined to maintain limited groups with their home country friends (fellow nationals).

Moreover, loneliness and depression due to separation from their families and friends could exert a negative effect upon Chinese students studying in the host country (Hanassab & Tidwell, 2002). Some Chinese students who are studying in the US suffer from more psychological problems such as depression than those who are studying in Taiwan (Hsu *et al.*, 1987). This issue might be equally applied to Chinese students who are studying in the UK. Some writers indicate that Asians are usually more reserved when addressing personal problems and mostly deny having depression symptoms (for example, Futa *et al.*, 2001). Hence, greater psychological distress could occur (Carver *et al.*, 1989) as some students might have great difficulties in adapting to the host cultures.

Acculturative adjustment to various stressors as abovementioned might be settled over time and with strategies (Berry, 1997). In Berry's (1997) model, there are seven variables that could be used to predict various acculturative adjustment patterns of international students (also *see* Zhang & Goodson, 2011), and they are acculturative stress, perfectionism, self-esteem, social support, English proficiency, problem-solving appraisal and collectivistic coping. Berry emphasised the role of pre-arrival (for example, maladaptive perfectionism, that is, the tendency to experience negative affect)

and post-arrival factors (for example, length of stay in the new cultures, perceived stressors and social support) that might influence their PA. Ying and Liese's (1991) study found that more than 50% of Chinese international students from Taiwan experienced depression after coming to the US. Moreover, pre-arrival depression appeared to be the strongest predictor of post-arrival depression in the study groups. However, that was a study conducted more than two decades ago and the subjects involved were Taiwan Chinese. As such, I have reservations as to the applicability of those study results to Mainland Chinese students as Taiwan Chinese and Mainland Chinese come from different educational and political systems. In addition, in Cemalcilar & Falbo's (2008) study, the international students' acculturative adjustment and their PWB were declined after three months. In this regard, some longitudinal studies examining variables in Berry's (1997) model in the PA of international students are anticipated (also *see* Sümer *et al.*, 2008; Wei *et al.*, 2008).

A number of studies show that when compared with other ethnic groups, Chinese and other Asian students studying in the US have shown higher levels of maladaptive perfectionism, that is, a higher tendency to experience negative effects (Castro & Rice, 2003; Chang, 1998; Wang, 2010). Faced with cultural challenges in the US, perfectionism could have an obvious effect on Asian international students. Furthermore, it could be stressful for those who have attained a high academic achievement in their home countries but cannot express themselves well in academic English in the host country (Pedersen, 1991). Therefore, this could pose extra challenges for international students who are studying in a different language, educational system and cultural context in that they have to achieve the high level they were once at. This might augment the negative impact of maladaptive perfectionism as they are inclined to focus on the gap between their performance and standards. Notably, self-esteem is another variable that could affect the acculturative adjustment of international students during their cross-cultural transition to the US (Barratt & Huba,

1994; Bektaş *et al.*, 2009). This situation well echoes what Castro (2003) and Verkuyten (1998) have highlighted in that self-esteem is an important source of PA and is one of the major concerns in acculturation.

Motivation and PA. In SDT (Deci & Ryan, 1985a, 1985b, 2000), people's PA could be facilitated when they are in environments where their autonomy is objectively supported. Hence, people's perceptions of autonomy and self-determined motivation could have the expected results. Actual environments have an impact upon individuals' motivation and subsequent PA (Philippe & Vallerand, 2008). However, it would be interesting to explore the possible environmental factors that might make individuals feel energised, optimistic and excited; or on the other hand, environmental factors that might make them feel worried and depressed.

Also, in SDT (Deci & Ryan 1985a, 2000), environmental factors may trigger sequential changes in individuals' motivation that may in turn have an impact on their perceptions of autonomy and SR behaviour, resulting in a change in PA and subsequent personal development (Deci & Ryan, 1985a). Notably, autonomy refers to a state where individuals are able to have self-initiation in regulating their actions and to make independent choices that have not been constrained by others. As such, individuals may have adequate opportunities for self-expression (Koestner & Losier, 1996, 2002). Some studies suggest that a strong perception of autonomy-supportive environments could facilitate one's perceptions of autonomy. People tend to be self-determined when they are free to choose their course of action (Deci *et al.*, 2001; Koestner *et al.*, 1984). But on the other hand, non-autonomy-supportive environments are full of restrictions and controls that contain strict rules and regulations, leading to constraints of self-expressivity and are more likely to cause non-self-determined motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1987; Vallerand *et al.*, 1997). For instance, if parents provide their children with autonomy support in education, they may regard it as autonomy toward education (for

example, Grolnick *et al.* 1991; Vallerand *et al.* 1997). Similarly, if employees are given autonomy support from their employers, they may perceive it as autonomy in workplace (Baard *et al.* 2004; Deci *et al.* 2001). Likewise, I took the view that if Chinese university students in the UK could be given sufficient autonomy support in English language learning, they might have stronger perceptions of autonomy, resulting in better language-related PA (Andrade, 2006).

Lastly, SDT presumes that the degree of motivation within a person's life context has a direct bearing upon different levels of PA. In particular, self-determined motivation or self-determination could help with PA, whereas non-self-determined motivation could lead to psychological dysfunction (Deci, 1980; Ryan, 1995; Ratelle *et al.*, 2004). Subsequently, a host of variables have been identified in relation to PP or mental health issues such as life satisfaction, general positive emotions, creativity, feelings of hope in life, vitality and the absence of suicidal ideation (for example, Deci & Ryan, 1985a; Ryan, 1995; Vallerand, 1997), making reference to different age groups ranging from children (Gottfried 1985) to the elderly (O'Connor & Vallerand, 1994; Vallerand & O'Connor, 1989; Vallerand *et al.*, 1995).

Autonomy-supportive Environments and PA. Some experimental and correlational studies have affirmed an integrative sequence of each specific part of the sequence: 'Autonomy-supportive Environments → Perceptions of Autonomy → Self-determined Motivation → PA' (Vallerand, 1997). Other studies have tested various kinds of similar sequences and reached the same conclusions. For example, if a person perceives autonomy towards a task, he or she will be motivated to have a high level of concentration and will have a deliberate future intention to perform that particular task (Grouzet *et al.*, 2004). Likewise, if a person perceives autonomy at work that is subsequently conducive to needs satisfaction, that person will have a positive PA that will be conducive to PP consequences (Deci *et al.*, 2001). Vallerand *et al.* (1997) also

confirm that if students have perceptions of autonomy support from parents, teachers and school administrators, then it is predicted that they will have perceived school autonomy. In this connection, the following sequence of events would exist: autonomy support → perceived school autonomy → self-determination motivation at school → intentions to dropout and actual dropout one year later could be predicted.

In Philippe and Vallerand's (2008) study, the findings support the existence of the integrative motivational sequence 'Actual Autonomy-Supportive Environments → Perceptions of Autonomy → Self-determined Motivation → Changes in PA' with respect to the role of the environment (a nursery home) in PA changes of the elderly over a one-year period. Notably, Philippe and Vallerand's (2008) study was one of its kinds at the time in showing the existence of impact arising from objective autonomy-supportive environments upon involved persons' subjective perceptions of autonomy. The results demonstrate the association of the aforesaid variables: the more autonomy support the actual environment provides, the greater the perceptions of autonomy one appreciates. These findings echo what SDT posits in that the actual environment plays a definite role in allowing people to have opportunities to meet their needs (Deci & Ryan, 2002). The results of Philippe and Vallerand's (2008) study also affirm SDT about perceptions of autonomy as a predictor of self-determination motivation in major life contexts over a period of time. Also, the results affirm past research findings (for example, Pelletier *et al.*, 2001; Vallerand *et al.*, 1997; Zuckerman *et al.*, 1978) that satisfaction of one's need for autonomy would subsequently be conducive to self-determined motivation in a number of situations. However, Philippe and Vallerand's (2008) study further extended those findings: besides using the elderly as the study subjects, the study shows that perceptions of autonomy agreed with the total effect of a relationship that fluctuates between an autonomy-supportive environment and self-determined motivation in major life situations. In other words, these findings agree with previous research findings and embrace SDT in that actual environments could

influence one's need for autonomy and thus have an impact on one's motivational processes. The findings of Philippe and Vallerand's (2008) study further support SDT's assertion that self-determined motivation in one's life completely mediates the relationships between perceptions of autonomy with changes involved in PA over a period of time. This study extended the results of previous studies (for example, Grolnick & Ryan, 1989; Niemiec *et al.*, 2006; Sheldon & Kasser, 1998). Indeed, Philippe and Vallerand's (2008) study was the first ever to explore the whole sequence involving actual autonomy-supportive environment and changes in PA within the study limitations. The findings of the study concord with the notion that actual autonomy-supportive environments do have an indirect effect on people's PA over a period of time through the motivational sequence presumed by SDT: definite relationships exist between perceptions of autonomy and self-determined motivation (Philippe & Vallerand, 2008).

In summary, studies support the existence of the integrative sequence 'Actual Autonomy-Supportive Environments → Perceptions of Autonomy → Self-determined Motivation → Changes in PA'. In line with SDT, environments appear to provide a time-determined impact on one's PA through one's perceptions of the environment-related autonomy and subsequent self-determined motivation.

Language Learning and PA. In the SLA literature, language learners are mostly emphasised rather than teachers in relation to instructional background. Since SLA is derived from L1 acquisition, the study of immigrants' L2 learning in the host country has not been confined to schools, but takes place on the street or in their working areas. The connection of immigrants and the necessity of intercultural communication are the main factors that have caused social and political concerns from the host country. Research on SLA aims to observe the process of learning rather than merely speaking in the native language of the host countries (Kramsch, 2000). SLA research

concentrates on learners' general knowledge about their L2, especially the exploration and understanding of their competence in L2. However, the L2 knowledge takes place mentally, which means that it cannot be observed directly but can only be interpreted and examined through their performance so as to reflect their competence (Ellis, 1994).

As highlighted in the Introduction, based on a number of studies involving international ESL or EFL students studying in US, Canadian, Australian, New Zealand and UK educational institutions, the most commonly cited language-related problems inside and outside the classroom are: English language proficiency or language standards, academic writing, oral comprehension, communication, lack of knowledge of local contextual references, and inadequate vocabulary (for example, Cownie & Addison, 1996; Daroesman *et al.*, 2005; Hellstén & Prescott, 2004; Lee, 1997; Lin & Yi,1997; Pantelides, 1999; Robertson *et al.*, 2000; Sawir *et al.*, 2012; Singh, 2005). Moreover, a number of studies show that international EFL / ESL students experience more difficulties in academic or social adaptations than local peers because of language issues in the host country (for example, Hechanova-Alampay *et al.*, 2002; Kormos *et al.*, 2014; Rajapaksa & Dundes, 2002; Ramburuth, 2001; Ramsay *et al.*, 1999). In this regard, the Chinese university students recruited for this current study were viewed as language learners in the UK.

To predict the degree of acculturative consolation of international EFL / ESL students in the host country, Yeh and Inose (2003) suggested that frequency of English language used, level of fluency and index of comfort in speaking English could be used. The results of Barratt and Huba's (1994) study suggested that there could be a relationship between higher English language fluency and better communication with the locals in the host country. Furthermore, international students who are confident in their English language fluency might feel less embarrassed and put less emphasis on their use of accent and cultural background. They would be more willing to communicate in English language inside and outside the classroom, for example,

asking for assistance, buying food, and making friends with the locals and other international EFL / ESL students (Barratt & Huba, 1994; Kao & Gansneder, 1995; Yeh & Inose, 2003). As the language barrier is an enemy to classroom participation (Yum, 1998), some Chinese students seem never to have the feeling of truly participating in class (Sun, 2005). According to the interviews conducted in Sun's (2005) study, one of the students said she thought she was dumb in the classroom as she was unable to communicate in English. Huntley (1993) believed that Asian students might generally feel culturally alienated in US schools where much pressure was exerted during their oral presentations, group activities and asking of questions. A US professor recalled that she felt it impossible to finish her academic tasks or be well-spoken like her American peers during her studies in the US (Zou, 2000). As these were cases studied in the US, I believe that it is reasonable to assume that similar situations could happen among Chinese students studying in the UK for the reasons already given. Hence, their language learning, self-reported language proficiency and subsequent PA in the host country would correlate with each other to a certain extent. From the literature, there are language learning strategies which EFL / ESL learners commonly use to suit their daily needs inside and outside the classroom (*see* Section 1.4 for further details). To this end, their language proficiency (*see* Section 1.5 for further details) could be reasonably enhanced and their PA could be duly made.

International and Local Students in PA. Andrade (2006) examined empirical research papers published between 1996 and 2005 in relation to international students' educational adjustment issues in the host countries, where the search covered varying numbers of papers (indicated in parentheses) from the following countries: the US (36), Australia (9), Canada (7), New Zealand (2) and the UK (2). Though the majority of investigations are from the US, Australia and Canada, the data could be applied to international EFL / ESL students such as Chinese students studying in the UK

universities. Andrade (2006) highlighted the fact that international EFL / ESL students had to face various academic and social adaptation issues in their first year of university. Andrade (2006) quoted five studies that compared an international group with a local group of first year university students. In four of the studies, the results showed that international students experienced more difficulties in relation to academic or social adaptations than their local peers. The main reason was due to language issues (Hechanova-Alampay *et al.*, 2002; Rajapaksa & Dundes, 2002; Ramburuth, 2001; Ramsay *et al.*, 1999). The results of the fifth study also showed differences in that international students spent less time socialising and relaxing than their local peers (Zhao *et al.*, 2005). As Ramburuth's (2001) study showed, the adjustment problems of international students were mostly related to language issues. For instance, around 80% of the non-native English-speaking students in Australia were asked to take extra intensive English language training lessons based on their writing sample, whereas only 20% of native English-speaking students needed to have the same training. The results of Ramsay *et al.*'s (1999) study indicate that the international university students in Australia experienced negative learning incidents such as not being able to understand difficult vocabulary used by tutors in their first year studies, lectures being conducted in high speed and insufficient input from teaching staff. Local students merely had problems with particular lecturers or lectures. In addition, the two groups of students focused differently in the learning incidents: international students believed that critical thinking development and written assignments were vital in the process of learning, whereas the local students emphasised collaborative work and peer support.

Some studies (for example, Hechanova-Alampay *et al.*, 2002) indicate that international students are actively involved and demonstrate diligence through positive learning incidents, whereas negative learning incidents could result in difficult situations, disappointment and depression. With various learning strategies, adjustment may take place in both positive and negative learning incidents. However, international

students tend to face more challenges and make more effort in handling stress and anxious feelings than local students. Reports also support the belief that international students encounter greater difficulty in social adjustment than local students, especially in terms of family and friends' support. On the other hand, their interactions with international and local peers might help to speed up the process of adjustment. Not many international students claimed to have close friendships with their local peers because they did not have such opportunities. Rather, they preferred to make friends with people who came from their home countries. Hence, it is more likely that international students will perceive loneliness and homesickness when compared to their local peers (Rajapaksa & Dundes, 2002). In addition, an investigation of engagement levels in educational activities (Zhao *et al.*, 2005) showed that first year international students focused more on academic work, departmental issues, personal growth and community than their local peers. Their way of life also comprised fewer socialising elements and relaxation time when compared to their local peers (Andrade, 2006).

Teaching Staff and Students' Views of Adjustment Challenges. Trice (2003) highlighted the fact that professors in general might believe that international students tend to face more academic and personal challenges than local students. They might agree that the major problem of international students derives from English language proficiency. They perceive that international students often need their assistance and that language barriers have an adverse influence on their academic performance. Other issues might have to be addressed, for instance, mixing international and local students in a balanced proportion so that both groups could feel comfortable with each other, satisfying their learning goals and providing sufficient funding and career placements for both groups of students. The staff hoped through the findings of this study that local students could gain international perspectives through interactions with their

international peers, provision of assistantships for research, academic reputation building in departments, formation of international networks, achievement of good performance in academic fields, and assistance of the local peers in gaining experience for the future diversified world (Andrade, 2006).

Some studies show that professors and students' points of view towards adjustment could be different. For instance, in Robertson *et al.*'s (2000) study, international students studying in Australia explained that their failure to participate actively in class was due to their language weakness and lack of language sensitivity. Some professors, however, believed that international students' problems in adjusting to class activities might be due to cross-cultural issues rather than the language. Based on the data collected from business professors (Tompson & Tompson, 1996), certain practice might occur with international students when they interact with co-nationals inside and outside the classroom. For example, they might be reluctant to join the class activities or to clarify their problems when they do not fully understand certain academic requirements. Furthermore, international students might think that it would be very difficult for them to establish a social network, be proficient in language, and get used to local norms, rules and regulations. The international students explained that they chose to sit with co-nationals because they could answer questions during lectures conveniently when problems arose. Robertson *et al.*'s (2000) study indicated that international students' perceived difficulties in language, feelings of anxiety and lack of confidence could hinder their willingness to participate in class. As such, professors commented that international students often retained the previous practice used in their home countries' education system where they might have adopted their most accustomed learning style. However, Ladd and Ruby's (1999) study presented another viewpoint from international students. It was found that even though 80% of them admitted that direct lecturing had been the usual mode of teaching in their home countries, they regarded interactive methods such as having a direct learning

experience or getting in touch with lecturers about the topics and issues surrounding their studies as good learning strategies. This group of international students in the study enjoyed working alone, which has echoed the general comment that international students do not like working in groups (Sarkodie-Mensah, 1998). However, they supported the importance of having warm and friendly relationships with their instructors which might contradict the common belief that international students are keen on maintaining formal student-professor relationships (Sarkodie-Mensah, 1998). In Treisman's (1992) study, it was suggested that Chinese students performed better in calculus than their international peers as the former were used to studying in groups, whereas the latter might choose to work by themselves. Again, this study contradicts the belief that international students including Asians choose to study individually. However, it is generally agreed that international students like to form groups with people from the same culture (Sarkodie-Mensah, 1998). 'Misleading Culture-based Characterisations of Chinese Students' and 'Misconceptions about Chinese Learners' in Section 1.2 have provided further elaboration on these issues.

Adjustment problems may arise from both international students and teaching staff. Robertson *et al.* (2000) suggested that teaching staff might opine that international students have weak critical thinking, listening comprehension and writing skills, whereas international students might feel that teaching staff often use colloquial English and speak at high speed. At the same time, teaching staff might feel that international students are not responsible enough for their learning, whereas international students might say that teaching staff are not responsive enough to their learning problems. International students might know that assistance from professors is useful for their learning but they might also understand that it is more meaningful to try out new learning methods and demonstrate self-learning skills, especially when an independent learning style could help to improve their English language proficiency. In this regard, they might get to know more about their English-speaking friends. At the

same time teaching staff might ignore the emotional and psychological problems of international students such as stress, homesickness and loneliness, which could negatively influence their learning (Andrade, 2006). In writing tasks, teaching staff might find it culturally and technically difficult to modify international students' written submissions. Fox (1995) suggested that teaching staff believe that the failure of some international students in logical and analytical aspects of writing papers could be due to their cultural and communication problems but not due to lack of English language proficiency. He supported the view that written submissions of international students are culturally-related, which might reflect their observation of the world and their own identities. That being the case, he further opined that different modes of expression in Western style of academic writing should be recognised in higher educational institutions.

International EFL / ESL students at universities generally have problems with English language skills, for instance, listening skills, reading comprehension, note taking and writing, communication and use of vocabulary (Lee, 1997; Senyshyn *et al.*, 2000). The findings indicate that international students do not have enough confidence in mastering these skills (Robertson *et al.*, 2000; Senyshyn *et al.*, 2000), or they are afraid of making mistakes in front of others (Jacob & Greggo, 2001). Therefore, this could negatively influence student participation in class (Robertson *et al.*, 2000; Tompson & Tompson, 1996). Holmes's (2004) study conducted in New Zealand highlighted the issue that there is not a direct relationship between hard work and good academic performance with international Chinese students, particularly those who have inadequate discussion, listening, and comprehension skills in the classroom. Moreover, other sources of adjustment challenges for international students might be due to teaching staff's accents, use of idioms, sense of humour and examples given in the classroom. It is commonly observed that international EFL / ESL students tend to read a text slowly multiple times compared to their local peers. They understand that they

have to be responsible for their own academic adjustment to the local education system, using their diligence, learning methods and family support. In Mendelsohn's (2009) study in Canada, the international EFL / ESL students also faced difficulties in note taking, use of vocabulary, non-textbook content and reading requirements. The study participants perceived that they could not obtain sufficient help when in need, hence, they felt insecure and discouraged in their studies though they had lived in Canada for three years. This study might confirm the view that English language proficiency could be directly related to students' academic and PA.

A study on international EFL / ESL students at a Canadian university highlighted the belief that writing and speaking could be the most difficult aspects of academic language; however, joining class presentations and observing sample papers from textbooks or journals could improve the situation (Cheng *et al.*, 2004). Another Canadian study (Parks & Raymond, 2004) supported the notion that interacting with local peers could help international EFL / ESL students to enhance their English language ability and learning skills. Very often, they are asked to communicate more with English-speaking students in order to improve their English skills. However, this might not work as the local students might consider their international peers to be insufficient in English language proficiency. In general, evidence shows that international students feel contented with their learning experiences (Schutz & Richards, 2003; Senyshyn *et al.*, 2000), and are satisfied with their cross-cultural learning style even though they sometimes feel anxious and experience difficulties (Lewthwaite, 1996). Research cases that were conducted in New Zealand (Lewthwaite, 1996) suggest that academic adjustment could be facilitated by teaching staff through small group seminars and courses. At the same time, understanding the background of the content, reading the assigned textbooks, seeking help for clarification during lectures, joining extra lectures and practising note-taking method are also advantageous to effective learning (Mendelsohn, 2009). Lee (1997) noted that international students

recognise their responsibility to adjust to the local education system. However, teaching staff could also consider changing their teaching styles in order to help international students learn the subject matter efficiently and effectively. It is believed that in the classroom, teaching staff could help international students to learn more easily by, for example, highlighting key words and assignments, lowering the pace of speaking, giving background knowledge to the lecture contents, using simple examples as illustrations, understanding more about culture shock, giving detailed expectations for the studies, providing samples of the expected submissions, making announcements comprehensible, allowing time for them to think through before requesting for their answers and minimising the use of colloquial English (Lee, 1997). Lewthwaite (1996) indicated that international students might over-emphasise academic adjustment and graduation requirements rather than the need for social adjustment at the same time. Students might spend much time on academic work resulting in insufficient focus on social activities. Therefore, they might be academically satisfied but unfortunately, they might also lack socio-cultural engagement and integration. In this connection, Senyshyn *et al.*'s (2000) study reports that students who have the feeling of being accepted are better at social adjustment.

In assessing students' adjustment to university life, as well as the literature mentioned above, I was much inspired by the merits of the College Adaption Questionnaire (CAQ; Crombag, 1968) as reported by Van Rooijen (1986) wherein the reliability and validity of the CAQ for the aforesaid assessment have been well documented. For the main aim of this current study, I evaluated and considered nine of the 18 items of the CAQ with modifications so that they could become question items for the questionnaire of this main study. With this in mind, the participants' perception of their PA during their stay in the UK in terms of English language learning will be explored (*see* Section 2.4.1 for further details).

1.2   Language Learning Experiences of Chinese Students

Misleading Culture-based Characterisations of Chinese Students. In the literature about self-directed learning or related autonomy, 'Eastern culture' or 'Western culture' has often been highlighted for discussion. In current TESOL / TEFL literature, students from Eastern culture such as China are often described as passive, compliant and rote learners, and are often compared with their Western counterparts (Atkinson, 1997; 2000; Ramanthan & Kaplan,1996; Stapleton, 2002). This culture-based characterisation of Chinese learners might mislead some practitioners into believing that their learning style is different and even problematic. Furthermore, the characterisation of Asian students including the Chinese as rote learners and having a strong preference for group learning as a result of Confucian traditions has also been discussed and overly stated in the literature of language learning strategies (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996a; Oxford & Ehrman, 1995).

In education and applied linguistics literature, Eastern culture is often perceived as valuing collectivism, conformity and respect for authority, whereas Western culture reflects and promotes individualism. The concept of collectivism denotes a social pattern comprising closely-linked individuals ('collectives') who prioritise the collective goal over their own personal goals (Triandis, 1995). Power and authority are readily accepted in collectivist culture (Hosftede, 1994; Triandis, 1995). Pennycook (1998, p. 36) mentioned that the concept of individualism is "based on a belief in a developed self – a self-conscious, rational being able to make independent decisions – and an emphasis on freedom from external constraints – a sense of liberty bestowed by social and political structures."

Misconceptions about Chinese Learners. From the literature, I noted that the term 'the Chinese learners' might have implications that their needs in daily life and education are homogeneous and determined by their own culture. However, it is

apparent that other factors have to be taken into consideration such as the learners' backgrounds, motivation for learning and settings in which they are interacting and relationship with teachers. Such 'cultural blinkers' might screen out the significance of personality differences of individual learners (Watkins & Biggs, 1996; 2001). This view was supported by Gu and Schweisfurth's (2006) study, which indicated that apart from their own culture, the Chinese learners' identities, motivations and power relationships with their teachers might also be significant issues that should be strategically adapted or adjusted by them while studying abroad. At this juncture, I recognised that some Chinese learners might show certain observable features that could be culture-related, whereas others might be contextual-based and related to personal needs and situational demands. Accordingly, their learning strategies tend to be based on specific situations rather than cultural reasons.

English Language Teaching in China. During the last three decades or so, greater significance has been attached to English language in China and at an accelerated rate. This has had a significant impact on China's modernisation drive as well as the Chinese people's pursuit of personal gain (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996b; Ross, 1992). Subsequently, political, economic and social domains have undergone rapid development in cross-cultural exchanges with other countries via English language as the medium of communication. Accordingly, the great need for English language proficiency has acted as a catalyst to sustain the improvement in English language teaching (ELT) since the mid-1980s (Maley, 1995; Ministry of Education, 2000).

Accordingly, there has been a focus on various supporting components of ELT such as curriculums, syllabuses, textbooks, tests and teachers' professional competence, combined with tremendous effort and resources of all related stakeholders including the government, educational sectors, students and parents (Hu, 2002; Ross, 1993). As a result, the quality of ELT has much improved over the years. As Cortazzi and Jin

(1996b, p. 61) pointed out, "there are significant differences in language teaching developments between the major cities and small cities, between rural towns and countryside, between coastal and inland areas, between north and south, between key and non-key schools /universities."

Not only has English language proficiency been regarded as a foundation for individual and national development (Gao *et al.*, 2002), but it is also a gateway to various tertiary and job opportunities at home and abroad, or qualifications for professional promotion (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996b; Ng & Tang, 1997). Hence, EFL has been included as a core subject for millions of junior and senior secondary school children since the early 1980s (Adamson, 2001; British Council, 1995). International links such as cooperation with the British Council were established with a view to targeting English promotion and improvement in ELT. For instance, a series of English teaching development projects were administered in a number of Chinese universities (Gu, 2004). At the time, British ELT specialists were assigned to collaborate with Chinese university teachers in undertaking teacher-training programmes. The communicative language teaching (CLT) approach was introduced to Chinese ELT classrooms and most of the Chinese project teachers recognised the merits of this input by British ELT specialists in theory and practice (Gu, 2004). Nonetheless, this study also shows that some project teachers would not give up their traditional teaching approaches. In spite of this, they were shown to have critically reviewed their traditional teaching approaches and the suitability of the Western methodological innovations that were incorporated in the project at the time.

Although CLT has been widely promoted in China, many Chinese teachers and students might not have a full concept of English language teaching and learning in the classroom. In other words, CLT has not been generally supported and accepted by Chinese teachers for whom the traditional Chinese teaching approach is still popular (Hu *et al.*, 2002). At the same time, limitations in applying CLT to Chinese learners

could be due to the lack of appropriate resources, large class sizes, inadequate teaching time, insufficient language skills and sociolinguistic competence of teachers, stressful tests and examinations and Chinese cultural factors. In short, it has been difficult to change common educational practice in the classroom to CLT as Chinese teachers have completely different social, cultural and economic backgrounds compared with Western teachers (Chen, 1988; Coleman, 1996). The results of Hu's (2003) study indicate that ELT improvements could more obviously be made in economically and socio-culturally 'developed' regions than in the 'less developed' regions, resulting in a possible disparity in ELT. As Hu (2003, p. 313) concluded, the aforesaid gap could be partly due to " … teachers' lack of professional training and students' insufficient exposure to English."

Major English Language Testing in China. English is a mandatory subject and is employed as the national university entrance test for all types of tertiary institutions. Students are required to achieve a pass in English if they wish to be graduates or post-graduates in China or in English-speaking countries, or if they hope to emigrate (Cheng, 2008). The same applies to those who wish to seek job promotion in the public or private sectors (He, 2001).

In China, students are currently required to achieve a pass in one or more English tests to satisfy specific circumstances such as the National Matriculation English Test, the College English Test, the Test for English Majors, the Graduate School Entrance English Examination and so on. In China, the recent development in English testing systems, together with the tradition of using tests and examinations in the process of differentiating candidates, has imposed a certain amount of challenges on English language teaching and learning in China. The Chinese generally recognise test and examination results as an accurate means of measuring the academic performance of students in China. Consequently, the success of teaching and learning

in China is usually based on test and examination results where both teachers and students set 'passing the tests and examinations' as their main goal in English language education. Given this understanding, I noted the extrinsic motivators of teachers and students involved within the context of ELT in China.

Chinese Students in the UK. In general, language difference is a distinctive feature between cultures and thus hinders the adaptation of many migrants. International students have to adjust to the community and learn quickly when they are studying in foreign- language-speaking countries. They might have to face problems in understanding local accents and idioms even if they can speak the language of the host country (Ng, 2006; Poyrazli *et al.*, 2001).

Owing to a lack of English-speaking environments in China, it is common for Chinese students to face language barriers when they are studying in English-speaking countries. The majority of them have their first-ever lesson through the medium of English with English speakers as the target listeners (Li, 1993). Wang (2003) identified four major factors that could attribute to Chinese students' English language problems: the use of 'Chinglish' due to the influence of Chinese language, limited understanding of the host culture, inadequate training in English language skills, and limited usage of English in their home country. Moreover, Chinese students might create further obstacles to their English language learning because many of them prefer socialising with Chinese peers rather than with local peers. As highlighted in Section 1.1.4, four studies showed that international EFL / ESL students experienced more difficulties in relation to academic or social adaptations than local students. The main reason was mostly language issues (Hechanova-Alampay *et al.*, 2002; Rajapaksa & Dundes, 2002; Ramburuth, 2001; Ramsay *et al.*, 1999).

Following the booming Chinese economy and the UK government's global campaign to attract international students to study in the UK, there was a 12-fold

increase in Chinese applicants within the period of 1998 to 2002 (Spencer-Oatey & Xiong, 2006). From 2007 to 2012, there was a growth by 32% in numbers of non-EU students to be admitted to UK universities or the like, from 229,640 to 302,680, among which, students from China increased by 74% (Parliament, 2013). However, the rapid growth in numbers of Chinese university students in the UK arguably has associated problems. Gu and Maley (2008, p. 225-226) pointed out that problems might include "culture shock (Adler, 1975; Oberg, 1960; Ward, *et al.*, 2001), learning shock (Gu, 2005) or education shock (Hoff, 1979; Yamazaki, 2005), language shock (Agar, 1996; Smalley, 1963) and role shock (Byrnes, 1966; Minkler & Biller, 1979)." Gu and Maley (2008) gave important advice for addressing these problems. It was their notion that from teachers' point of view (*ibid*. p. 227), "many, if not most, British lecturers have had little or no training in how to effectively teach overseas students in these numbers." As for Chinese students, according to Gu and Maley (2008, p. 227), "most Chinese students have never before had to adjust to an alternative teaching and learning style. The encounter is therefore rich with possibilities for misunderstanding, stress and failure."

Overall, I found the interview data in Gu and Maley's (2008, p. 229-230) study inspiring and worth noting in that Chinese students studying in the UK have been undergoing a changing process involving PA as well as sociocultural adjustment (Ward & Kennedy, 1993). The following interview data highlight the Chinese students' lack of involvement in class discussions due to their stress and struggle as the result of their language ability (*ibid*. p. 222):

"Sometimes we don't understand what the teacher is talking about, so how to respond? We feel language is the biggest barrier. It is not because we don't know the subjects or topics for discussion."

" … It is a matter of habit, psychologically. You have been quiet in class for over ten years. You are so used to the teacher naming a student to answer

questions. So when you don't feel totally confident about the answer, you would not like to open your mouth. It is difficult to change such a long-term habit in a short period of time."

"Sometimes I feel 'yes, I know the answer, but why do I have to answer it in class?' It looks as if I want to show off."

Furthermore, the results of Gu and Maley's (2008) study show that the questionnaire data supports the above quoted interview data where 33% of the questionnaire respondents have reported the following unsatisfactory learning experiences in areas of teaching, teachers and learning (*ibid.* p. 230):

"a. Teaching: 'not very systematic'; 'unclear criteria for assessment'; 'irrelevant and boring';
b. Teachers: 'not too strict with students'; 'don't care if we have understood or not'; and 'teachers' difficult accent'; and
c. Learning: 'too shy to speak' in class; 'class discussions can be a waste of time'; 'too relaxed, not very challenging'; 'too much freedom, not enough pressure– feeling like being on holiday."

Chinese learners might not get used to the UK teaching style as they come from a collectivistic Eastern culture (such as China) where they previously relied on textbooks, and have now entered a teacher-centred, 'how to do' individualist Western culture (such as the UK) where the educational environment expects students to learn 'how to learn' (Hofstede, 1986).

Chinese students might experience discrepancy in academic expectations compared to their own country. Thus learning shock and academic stresses appear, as noted by a postgraduate lecturer in Gu and Maley's (2008, p. 231) study:

"Yes, they have serious difficulty adjusting to expectations of the British education system … We are trying to encourage an autonomous approach to study … Understanding that difference (in teaching) is extremely challenging for learners when they come on the course because they are expecting to be told

what to learn, what to read, the answers to produce, and they are ready to work hard doing that … Some students welcome that. Some students are worried, intimidated, confused by that shift of responsibility … Yes, the language can be a problem. But I think cultural issues are far more important."

Through these case studies, I recognised the kinds of difficulties encountered by Chinese learners due to the language and learning cultures. Their psychological, cognitive and affective struggles largely result from their insufficient language ability as well as totally different teaching and learning conventions in the UK.

1.3   UK's Relationship with Chinese Universities

The UK consistently remains in a leading position as the supplier of joint degrees in the Mainland China. A Parliamentary briefing (Parliament, 2013) states that there have been strong links created between UK and Chinese universities in terms of teaching, research and knowledge transfer. In 2011/12, about 26% of non-EU students at UK universities came from China and strong growth in the Chinese student intake was counteracted by a 3% decrease in student intake from other countries.

Links that are established between UK and Chinese universities have brought benefits to tertiary education systems and students of both countries in terms of business and economy at large. According to the available figures in 2011/12, there were 78,715 Chinese students studying in UK higher education institutions, rendering China the major source of international students in UK universities.

Higher education provision in China has been escalating in the last two decades. Based on the figures from The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), there was a fivefold increase of students enrolled in tertiary educational institutions in China, with 31,308,378 students in 2011 as compared to 6,365,625 in 1999. Nonetheless, it is still a problem for students in China to obtain university places because the number of applicants always outweighs the available

places. The growing number of middle class families combined with family convention for promoting overseas study sustains a continuing drive in the growth in the number of students in China seeking overseas education. However, the current trend of rapid growth in the number of Chinese students studying in the UK may continue due to the aforesaid reasons, even when the increasing competition from the US and Australia has also been taken into consideration (Parliament, 2013).
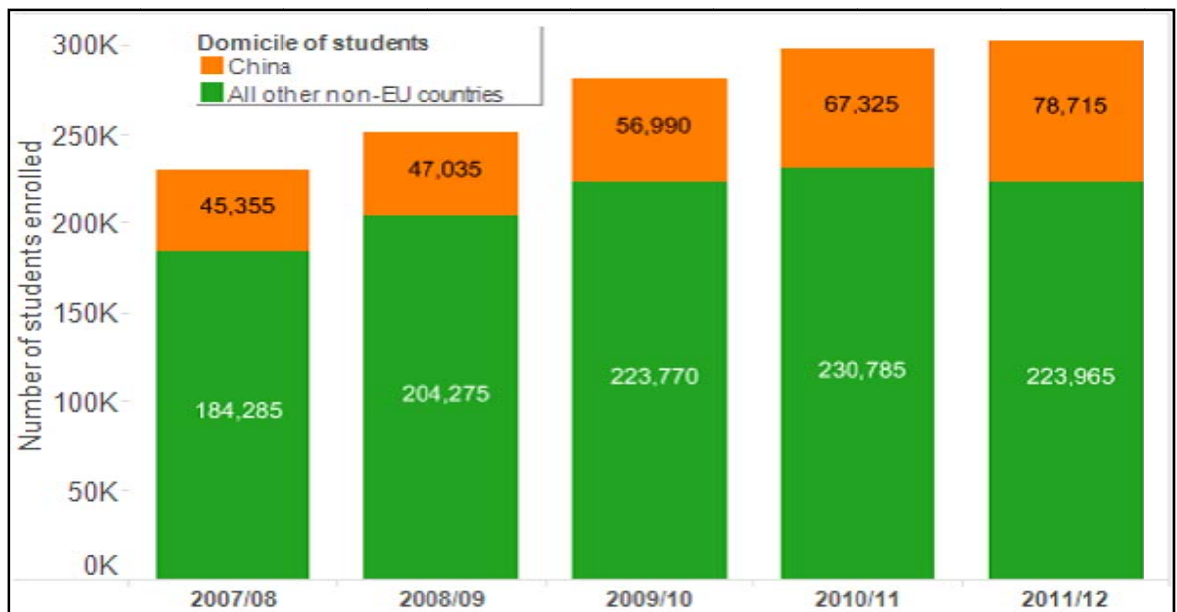
Figure 2. Non-EU Student Numbers – China and Others
Source: Parliamentary Briefing (2013)

From Figure 2, it can be seen that there were increasing numbers of Chinese students receiving tertiary education in the UK from 2007/08 to 2011/12. This has become the largest amount among international students. In 2011/12, 26% of non-EU students were from China. From 2007 to 2012, there was a growth rate of 32% in the number of non-EU students to be admitted to UK universities or the like, from 229,640 to 302,680, among which, students from China increased by 74%. Interestingly, in 2008, one in every five non-EU student was from China, whereas in 2012, this ratio increased to one student from China for every four non-EU student (Parliament, 2013).

1.4 Language Learning Strategies in Foreign / Second language Learners

As well as the PP variables within the context of foreign or second language learning, an increased focus on student-centred learning has drawn my attention to the literature on individual learners' language learning strategies and their subsequent relationships to corresponding foreign / second language proficiency (Bremner, 1998; Green & Oxford, 1995; Griffiths & Parr, 2001; Mansanares & Russo, 1985; Oxford, 1990; Oxford & Ehrman, 1995; Oxford & Nyikos,1989; Park, 1997; Politzer, 1983; Wharton, 2000). The literature reveals that all language learners consciously or unconsciously adopt various kinds of language learning strategies, and the more successful language learners adopt more purposeful language learning strategies than the less successful ones. A number of studies indicate that both the frequency and distinguishing features of applied language learning strategies are contributory elements to the success of language learners (for example, Bremner, 1998; Green & Oxford, 1995; O'Malley *et al.*, 1985; Oxford, 1990; Politzer, 1983).

Rubin (1987, p. 23) suggested that language learning strategies could be defined as " … strategies that contribute to the development of the language system which the learner constructs and affect learning directly." Oxford (1990) further described language learning strategies as a course of action adopted to facilitate the gaining, storage, retrieval and use of language information. O'Malley and Chamot (1990, p. 1) viewed language learning strategies as "the special thoughts or behaviour that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information." Holec (1981) argued that language learning strategies could strengthen learners' language learning autonomy. Therefore, language learning strategies could contribute much to helping learners become efficient language learners and increase their capacity for self-directed learning.

Gender & Culture Differences. A number of studies have confirmed gender

differences in the use of language learning strategies, where females are shown to be more frequent users of language learning strategies (for example, Ehrman & Oxford, 1989; Green & Oxford, 1995; Oxford, 1993). Particularly, females tend to use social language learning strategies more often (Politzer, 1983; Ehrman & Oxford, 1989; Hong-nam & Leavell, 2006), including formal rule-based practice strategies and conversational or input strategies (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989). However, gender differences in the use of socially-based strategies might be influenced by the language learning context. For example, Tran's (1988) study indicated that males use a wider variety of learning strategies than females. In the study, male refugees were highly motivated to learn English as they had survival needs at the time. Nonetheless, gender differences may not be present in all cases. In Wharton's (2000) study, the results showed that there was no statistically significant difference in the effect of gender on the reported strategies used by bilingual college students in Singapore. This could be due to their high competence in language learning, which may have been counterbalanced by the effect of gender differences in their use of strategies.

Some studies, however, show that cultural background (for example, ethnicity or nationality) has been found to be linked to the selection or use of language learning strategies (for example, Bedell & Oxford, 1996; Grainger, 1997; Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995; Politzer, 1983; Reid, 1987; Wharton, 2000). Politzer's (1983) study showed that Hispanics used more social, interactive type of strategies, whereas Asian groups were educated in conventionally didactic settings where they mostly chose memorisation strategies. Wharton's (2000) study further revealed that language learners in learner-centred contexts could have different strategies compared to those who have been educated in lecture- and textbook-centred teaching approaches. Hence, I acknowledged Cheong and Garcia's (2006) suggestion that it would be difficult to identify whether differences between language learner groups are attributed to differences in factors such as instructional delivery, socio-cultural contexts or other culture-specific contexts.

Given that the use and choice of language learning strategies may have gender differences and could be affected by socio-cultural, contextual / culture-specific reasons, the development of language learning strategies in recent decades is worth noting due to reliability and validity issues as set out in the following paragraphs.

Issues of Reliability and Validity of Strategies. Bialystok (1981) created a 12-item rating scale, structured to ask learner participants (grades 10 and 12 French students in Canada) about the strategies that they used for language learning. The scale mainly focused on the extent to which certain strategies were implemented in oral and written tasks in terms of communication and classroom learning. The researcher believed that functional practice had no rules or structure, and could therefore facilitate those who had advanced levels of learning. However, there were no reliability and validity data published for this instrument.

Politzer (1983) created a 1-4-scaled strategy measuring instrument with 51 items all of them fell into three groups, namely, general behaviour, classroom behaviour and interactions outside the classroom. French, German and Spanish students from a US university were recruited in the study. Politzer found that the higher the course level, the more 'positive' strategies were used. At the same time, females tended to use more social learning strategies than males. However, there were no reliability and validity data published for this instrument.

Politzer and McGroarty (1985) published a 66-item behaviour-related questionnaire and all of them fell into three groups: individual study behaviour, classroom behaviour and interactions outside the classroom. There was a barely acceptable reliability (0.51, 0.61 and 0.63) published for this instrument. It was found that learners' academic field was one of the key factors for the choice of strategies. For instance, engineers were commonly found trying to avoid 'positive' strategies that were intended for communicative language proficiency. However, the Asian identity of many

engineers complicated the study because of the nationality factor.

McGroarty (1987) created a Language Learning Strategy Student Questionnaire, which comprised 56 items and they were scored in the range of 0-6. These items fell into the same group as that of the previously mentioned Politzer and McGroarty's (1985) study. Again, there were no reliability and validity data published for this instrument. Although the Spanish university students in the study were taught via communicative methods, they were found to use traditional learning strategies instead of practice strategies, for example, the frequent use of dictionaries.

Chamot *et al.* (1987) published the Learning Strategies Inventory, which was a 48-item scaled 1-4 instrument. These items fell into five parts, namely, listening in class, speaking in class, listening and speaking outside of class, writing and reading. Sixteen strategies with various means of application were demonstrated by those items. From the study, it was found that Russian students tended to employ more strategies than Spanish students. These two groups of students used different strategies at different language levels. However, there were no reliability and validity data published for this instrument.

Padron and Waxman (1988) created a 14-item scaled 1-3 instrument. In this study, the reading strategies of Hispanic English learners who were in grades 3 to 5 were examined. Seven items were found to be connected to learning positively, whereas the rest of the items were connected to learning negatively. However, there were no reliability and validity data published for this instrument.

Huang and van Naerssen (1987) created a Strategies Questionnaire for the Chinese students who were EFL learners in China. Scaled items and yes-no items were included in the instrument. As to the strategies component of the instrument, the main focus was on improvement in listening and speaking skills. Wangsotorn *et al.* (1986) employed the Chulalongkorn University Language Institute Learning Strategy Form A for Thai English language learners. Some years later, Wen and Johnson (1991) created

an instrument which was adapted from the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL, Oxford, 1986) for their study. The SILL has been a widely-used instrument in the literature since then.

The SILL. The SILL (Oxford, 1986) was an instrument created at first to measure the frequency of Defense Language Institute students' use of language learning strategies in Monterey, California. At present, there are two further edited versions of the SILL; one is for L1 speakers whose native language is English (80 items in total) and the other for EFL / ESL learners (50 items in total).

In the 1990s, around 40 to 50 major studies and many theses were reported to have used the SILL for research studies that involved 8,000 to 8,500 language learners in total (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995). Notably, the reliability coefficients of the SILL were found within the range of 0.85 to 0.98, rendering the SILL a reliable measurement for assessing learners' use of language learning strategies (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995). In Hong-Nam and Leavell's study (2006), Cronbach's alpha for their study revealed an acceptable reliability (0.67) in their use of the SILL (version 7.0 for ESL / EFL learners, 50 items) as a key instrument in assessing the use of learner participants' language learning strategies.

The SILL uses five Liket-scale responses in order to measure the frequency of the choice of each strategy: 'never or almost never true of me', 'generally not true of me', 'somewhat true of me', 'generally true of me' and 'always or almost always true of me'. The response options of the SILL were based on Weinstein *et al.*'s (1987) response options for the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory, which was generally accepted and widely used at the time. According to the SILL, learners are required to state their response (in terms of 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5) to a description of language learning strategy. In 1989, the SILL was divided into various strategies through a factor analysis. To date, six subscales have been identified in which a number of items are allocated in

each subscale so that an in-depth examination and further research on English language learning strategies can be facilitated. The six subscales are: memory strategies (9 items), cognitive strategies (14 items), compensation strategies (6 items), metacognitive strategies (9 items), affective (emotional, motivation-relate) strategies (6 items) and social strategies (6 items). I noted that cognitive strategies contain the largest group of items (14 items) and these strategies relate to deep thinking processes of learners in terms of analysis, synthesis and transformation of new information (Oxford & Ehrman, 1995).

As mentioned above, many studies have used the SILL as the construct and instrument for language learning strategies with sound validity and reliability. Hence, I preferred the SILL to other strategy rating scales. I decided that some of the SILL could be adopted and translated into the ten Language Learning Activities (LLA) to serve the purpose of the present study in respect of exploration of Chinese students' engagement of language learning in their social and educational settings. Therefore, the learner participants' perception of the extent to which they use these ten LLA for their language learning could be feasibly assessed. The details of adopting the SILL in conjunction with the ten LLA in the present study will be described in the Methodology (*see* Section 2.4.1 for further details).

1.5   Language Proficiency in Foreign / Second language Learners

Language Proficiency (LP) and Academic Learning. In a number of studies, international EFL / ESL students identify LP as the most questionable aspect of academic learning. They face obvious difficulties in listening and oral communication, lack of knowledge of local contexts or cultures and inadequate vocabulary, and they usually struggle to meet the requirements for academic writing (for example, Lee, 1997; Lin & Yi, 1997; Sawir *et al.*, 2012).

English LP is the issue most often mentioned in qualitative research findings

(for example, Gatfield *et al.*, 1999; Malcolm & McGregor, 1995). A number of studies on language-related learning difficulties as encountered by international EFL / ESL students suggest that international students frequently experience language-related challenges in their academic work (for example, Daroesman *et al.*, 2005; Hellstén & Prescott, 2004; Pantelides, 1999; Robertson *et al.*, 2000; Singh, 2005). Similar findings have been indicated in a number of studies in the US, Australia and the UK in that the most frequently quoted language-related learning problems in international EFL / ESL students in terms of priority are writing followed by oral comprehension and communication (for example, Robertson *et al.*, 2000; Singh, 2005). Hellstén and Prescott (2004) highlighted the issue that due to mental translation, international EFL / ESL students have to spend much time on their studies, assignment preparations, lecture playback and verbal communications with the locals at low speed. Some of those students have problems with the local English accent and culture, which differ from the kind of English they acquired in their home countries (Singh, 2005).

LP and Daily Lives outside the Classroom. Sawir *et al.'s* (2012) study confirmed the findings in a number of studies that insufficient LP in international EFL / ESL students hinders their cross-cultural communication, affects their PA and stress level (Andrade, 2006; Hechanova-Alampay *et al.*, 2002; Rajapaksa & Dundes, 2002; Ramburuth, 2001; Ramsay *et al.*, 1999; Redmond, 2000; Yeh & Inose, 2003; Zhao *et al.*, 2005), and isolates them from their local peers (Hayes & Lin, 1994; Ippolito, 2007; Li & Kaye, 1998; Trice, 2003). Hayes and Lin (1994) argued that LP is essential in social communication and adjustment. Besides, Sawir *et al.*'s (2012, p. 15-16) study confirms that "A strong finding of the research is that issues of language proficiency and communication are ubiquitous in the international student experience. They are of much concern for EFL students, who face the most difficulties in communication. … The findings highlight difficulties with writing, oral communication, and

comprehension, as do Robertson *et al.* (2000) and Singh (2005).”

A number of studies highlight the challenges faced by Chinese students in relation to issues of LP in English such as much struggle and frustration with their academic studies and social adjustment (for example, Donovan, 1981; Kao, 1987; Sun & Chen, 1997; Wan, 2001; Ye, 1992; Yeh, 2000).

Language difference is a distinctive feature between cultures, and this might hinder the adaptation of many international EFL / ESL students. They might have to face problems in understanding local accents and idioms (Ng, 2006; Poyrazli *et al.*, 2001). A number of them might have their first-ever lesson instructed in English, and have to communicate with L1 speakers in the classroom (Li, 1993). As highlighted in Section 1.2, for those Chinese students studying in English-speaking countries, four major factors may attribute to their language-related problems. They are under the influence of the Chinese language in which ‘Chinglish’ might be used unconsciously. They might have limited understanding of the cultures of the host country. They might have inadequate training in English lessons, and they might not have many opportunities to practise the English language in their home country. Moreover, some Chinese students might create further obstacles for themselves in English language learning in that they may prefer grouping with Chinese rather than local peers (Wang, 2003).

LP Constructs. To explore the various constructs of LP in the literature, Hulstijn (2012) surveyed empirical studies of all papers published in 14 volumes of *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition* journals from the first issue of volume 1 (1998) to the last issue of volume 14 (2011). I noted one of the writer's comments “ ... In my reading of the literature on bilingualism, more often than not, the notion of LP, be it in a first language (L1) or second language (L2), is often taken for granted, and so are the notion of language dominance and the notion of native speaker (Hulstijn, 2012, p. 423).” In

Hulstijn's (2011) paper, I recognised that the writer endeavoured "to define the construct of LP beyond a general statement, such as 'a person's overall competence and ability to perform in L2' (Thomas, 1994, p. 330, footnote 1)." As such, I attempted to focus on the notion of LP in L1 & L2 speakers as postulated by Hulstijn (2011). In terms of language *skills* in LP, Hulstijn (2011) advocates 'basic language cognition' (BLC) and 'higher language cognition' (HLC). The writer asserted that (*ibid.* p. 230) "BLC is what all native (L1) speakers have in common; HLC is the domain where differences between native (L1) speakers can be observed."

LP Constructs in L1 Speakers. According to Hulstijn (2011, p. 230), the notion of BLC refers to "(a) the largely implicit, unconscious knowledge in the domains of phonetics, prosody, phonology, morphology and syntax; (b) the largely explicit, conscious knowledge in the lexical domain (form-meaning mappings), *in combination with* (c) the automaticity with which these types of knowledge can be processed."

Notably, the writer restricts BLC to oral language: speech reception (listening) and speech production (speaking), which do not comprise reading and writing (written language). The writer elaborates that BLC is restricted to the frequent lexical items and frequent grammatical structures that are used by all adult L1 speakers in any communicative situation regardless of age, literacy or educational level. However, the speed of processing of linguistic information may decrease with increasing age.

Hulstijn (2011, p. 231) postulated that "HLC is the complement or extension of BLC. HLC is identical to BLC, except that in HLC, utterances that could be understood or produced contain low-frequency lexical items or uncommon morphosyntactic structures, whereas HLC utterances pertain to written as well as spoken language. In other words, HLC utterances are lexically and grammatically more complex (and often longer) than BLC utterances and they need not be spoken." HLC discourse refers to topics discussed on special occasions that call upon literacy skills such as topics other

than simple daily matters. To facilitate a better understanding of the writer's postulation of BLC and HLC in LP, Hulstijn (2011) suggested that BLC refers to the language knowledge shared by all adult L1 speakers, whereas HLC demonstrates individual differences in language mastery that could be potentially affected by certain attributes such as literacy, age, and level of education, profession or leisure-time activities. Nonetheless, the LP constructs postulated by Hulstijn (2011) have not yet been empirically tested.

LP Constructs in L2 Speakers. Hulstijn (2011) noted that in the field of L2 teaching and testing, LP levels and components are both commonly emphasised. Early models of LP in L2 speakers consisted of a two-dimensional presentation: components of language *knowledge* (knowledge of lexis, morphology, syntax and phonology */* orthography) crossed with the four language *skills* (listening, reading, speaking and writing) (Lado, 1961; Carroll, 1961, 1972). However, Hulstijn (2011, p. 236) pointed out that "Scholars who had proposed multi-component models of LP soon discovered that obtaining empirical support for their models turned out to be extremely difficult. For example, Bachman & Palmer (1982) … ". Though I noted many studies concerning LP in L2 speakers (Hulstijn, 2011, p. 236-238), it is not the intention of this current study to explore the teaching and testing of LP in L2 speakers. Nevertheless, I was much inspired by the following remark in the Hulstijn's paper (2012, p. 429): "To my knowledge, there is no linguistic, psycholinguistic or sociolinguistic theory on the basis of which one could define LEVELS of LP … Using scores, one could say that a person with an IQ of 107 is more intelligent than a person with and IQ score of 101, but not that the former person *finds* himself or herself at a higher level of intelligence than the latter."

In response to the references mentioned above, it is my intention to assess the participants' perceptions about their LP in terms of listening, speaking (BLC); reading

and writing (HLC), as well as daily vocabulary (BLC or HLC) and academic vocabulary (BLC or HLC). Based on a number of studies involving international EFL / ESL students studying in US, Canadian, Australian, New Zealand and UK educational institutions, the most commonly cited language-related problems inside and outside the classroom are: English language proficiency or language standards; academic writing; oral comprehension and communication; lack of knowledge of local contextual references; and inadequate vocabulary (for example, Cownie & Addison, 1996; Daroesman *et al.*, 2005; Hellstén & Prescott, 2004; Lee, 1997; Lin & Yi, 1997; Pantelides, 1999; Robertson *et al.*, 2000; Andrade, 2006; Sawir *et al.*, 2012; Singh, 2005). In this regard, the Chinese university students recruited for this current study were viewed as language learners, and the study was designed to contribute to our understanding of their language learning.

1.6 Summary and Literature Gaps

The purpose of this section is to summarise the literature review *without* repeating the references for the majority of it, and highlight important points as written in Section 1.1 to Section 1.5 (*except* Section 1.3) in the following paragraphs and, where necessary, present the related literature gaps as identified, which will be appropriately addressed through this current study.

Section 1.1. From the literature, the merits of PP are to build mental strength and prevent potential mental illness. I chose the PP variables of SR (AR and CR), MS, PWB and PA for this current study as there are well-developed theoretical frameworks in connection with language learning and the language-related issues of international EFL / ESL students in their host country. Deci and Ryan (1985a) introduced SDT that has been used to distinguish various types of motivation in relation to reasons and goals with actions. It is an approach that emphasises personality development and SR

of behaviour whereby three innate psychological needs act as mediators that could motivate people in personality integration and other positive processes. They are the need for autonomy, the need for competence and the need for relatedness.

SR within the SDT framework is one of the PP variables that could affect Chinese students' language learning in the UK. SDT is an important framework for seeing the importance of learning, and SR is to enhance the positive aspects of the human conditions. Within the framework, differentiation of SR in terms of AR or CR could be explained as the product of the three basic psychological needs and the spectrum of motivation. People become 'highly autonomous' when they are intrinsically motivated, and become self-regulated in a range of behaviour when they are extrinsically motivated. In that sense, SR behaviour such as 'internalisation', 'integration', 'identification' or 'introjection' may result depending on their perceived locus of causality. In the field of educational psychology, SR could be the thinking process which provides learners the motivation to learn by self-monitoring, self-initiation or persistence with certain interesting or personally significant tasks. In this regard, SR can be said to be an AR. However, CR would occur if those given tasks are not interesting or not personally significant to learners, or worse off, imposed on them. Figure 1 is to illustrate the four types of SR style on a continuum of extrinsically motivated activities, with 'external regulation' at one end of the continuum and 'integrated regulation' at the other end, and with 'introjected regulation' and 'identified regulation' in between.

MS is one of the PP variables that could affect Chinese students' language learning in the UK. In the field of educational psychology, some related concepts have contributed to MS through implicit theories which have largely been connected to Carol Dweck and her associates' works. Other studies on second language learning have indicated their association with MS. In the past two decades, some studies have indicated that fixed MS people avoid challenges, appear less resilient to setbacks, and

seem defensive and discouraged. Conversely, growth MS people believe in possible personal development; hence, they seek opportunities to learn, and appear resilient when there are setbacks as they believe these to provide opportunities for personal learning and personal growth. A number of writers showed that constructs of MS could be applied to the field of intelligence, academic achievement, academic performance, morality, body weight, and peer relationships. In addition, foreign language education is found to have a close relationship with PP such as MS.

Besides Carol Dweck and her associates' works, Sarah Mercer's works have provided me with further insights. Sarah Mercer's published papers indicate that she has been one of the early researchers to conduct ongoing studies on second language learning within the context of MS and educational psychology of language learning at large.

From the literature, it can be seen that a language learning MS highlights either the fixed MS belief that language learning ability is connected with a fixed and inborn talent or the growth MS that it is due to controllable factors such as hard work and continuous training. Mercer and Ryan (2010) showed that people tend to have a fixed mindset in language learning. They believe that a 'gift' for languages is crucial in learning a language; therefore, it would be fruitless for 'ungifted' language learners to become linguists by any means (Mercer, 2012). Unlike growth MS believers, they do not believe in language learning through training or hard work, including aspects of learning such as pronunciation. Mercer (2011, 2012) highlighted that growth MS people also believe in the role of natural talent in language learning, but they believe that learners have to work hard in order to become successful. Yan *et al.* (2014) showed that with sufficient effort given to the learning process, fixed MS people probably reach their limits of learning, and may underestimate their learning capacity. This leads to less likelihood of gaining second language proficiency, whereas growth MS people tend to be motivated to use certain language learning strategies such as restudying to

serve the purpose.

While developing the MS questionnaire for this current study in 2012, I noted that there was a paucity of literature that reported data-gathering instruments for the assessment of MS or MS-related domain such as language learning. In view of this literature gap, I decided to create a new data-gathering instrument for collecting quantitative as well as qualitative data regarding the MS of Chinese language learners in this current study (*see* Section 2.4.1 for the detail). In this regard, I might contribute to further expanding the knowledge and understanding of MS in a sample of Chinese students' language learning within their social and educational settings in the UK.

PWB is another PP variable that could affect the Chinese students' language learning in the UK. A number of writers attempt to define what well-being or wellness is, including physical, mental and social well-being. PWB involves positive, realistic and inspirational feelings in the conceptualisation of awareness and mastery of feelings in various life experiences such as conflict resolution; relationships with people; positive perceptions of self, the world and relationships; and the measure of a person's degree of depression, anxiety, self-control and optimism towards life such as satisfaction, curiosity and enjoyment. WHO (2011) defines PWB as a state of mental health in which people can realise their own potential in order to cope with their normal stresses, to work productively, and can make a contribution to their community.

In the literature, PWB was divided into two major constructs of positive functioning more than four decades ago. The first construct concerns the differentiation of positive and negative affect, using the definition of 'happiness' to strike the balance between the two, judgement about people's mood states, or frequency or intensity of their positive mood states. At present, the frequency of positive mood states has been widely accepted as a better indicator than intensity. Recognised widely among sociologists, the second construct advises that life satisfaction could help indicate the degree of PWB, and could be viewed as a factor to complement happiness and

contribute to the affective dimension of positive functioning. The reliability and validity of measures existing at the time were assessed, and a possible measurement error that might blur the bipolarity of positive and negative affect was mostly emphasised. The emphasis tended to be based on the differentiation between positive and negative affect and life satisfaction of a person. The quality of life research at the time was also regarded as being data driven rather than the development of a clear conceptual framework of PWB.

Besides the factors mentioned above, there are alternative perspectives targeted at defining PP functioning. Also, a definition of PWB could be found in the literature of life span developmental perspectives at various stages of life. However, Ryff (1989, 1995) argued that all the characteristics of PWB mentioned above can be categorised into six scales, namely, 'Self-acceptance', 'Positive Relations with Others', 'Autonomy', 'Environmental Mastery', 'Purpose in Life', and 'Personal Growth', which could be age group and gender based, and multidimensionally.

As highlighted in Section 1.1.1, people's basic psychological needs should be adequately satisfied so that their PWB can be attained. Ryan and Deci (2000a) suggested that it is the 'what' and 'why' of goals pursuit that affects the PWB as it bears a strong relationship with needs satisfaction. In this regard, I recognised the relationship between SR (the addressing of psychological needs within the SDT framework) and PWB, regardless of differences in cultural values. A number of studies have indicated that autonomy support in schools, in homes and in workplace could satisfy people's basic psychological needs resulting in an increased PWB or PA. Also, in Section 1.1.1, motivational forces could be called upon in the course of goals pursuit. Some studies have indicated the positive correlates and consequences of SR and PWB. Once again, I recognised the relationship between SR (address of psychological needs within the SDT framework) and PWB for goals pursuits.

PA is the PP variable that could affect Chinese students' language learning in

the UK. Many writers suggested that besides self-esteem, psychological distress, depression, and stress are common concerns in acculturation or PA of people in host countries. Some studies showed that Chinese university students in the UK may encounter similar emotional or psychological difficulties to those discussed above due to language proficiency (LP) and cross-cultural challenges in their social and educational settings. In general, they may experience difficulties of various kinds during their sojourning in host countries such as 'culture shock', 'learning shock' or 'education shock', 'language shock', 'role shock' and other language-related issues. Some studies showed that the PWB of individuals in cross-cultural adjustment including language adjustment and confidence in using the language of the host countries is important for better PA.

English LP, academic performance, social adjustment and PA could be inter-related in the majority of international EFL / ESL students as their language-related barriers could hinder their building of relationships with their local peers. Some studies showed that their PA could be affected by their diversity of cultural backgrounds (individualism versus collectivism), which might lead to their prioritisation of relationship formation in terms of groups or individuals. Several variables that could be used to predict cross-cultural adjustment patterns of internationals, for example, acculturative stress, perfectionism, self-esteem, social support, English proficiency, problem-solving appraisal and collectivistic coping; and the role of pre-arrival and post-arrival factors. To address PA, autonomous supportive environments should be provided where people's perceptions of autonomy and self-determined motivation in SDT are realised. However, the reverse could lead to psychological dysfunction.

As highlighted in the Introduction, international EFL / ESL students encounter some commonly cited English language-related problems inside and outside the classroom in the host country. These problems could be, for example, LP, academic writing, oral comprehension, communication, lack of knowledge of local contextual

references and inadequate vocabulary. International EFL / ESL students tend to experience more difficulties in academic or social adaptations than their local peers due to language issues in their host countries. In this regard, the Chinese university students recruited for this current study were viewed as language learners in the host country, and the study was designed to contribute to our understanding of their language learning. Willingness to communicate in English language inside and outside the classroom could be another issue rendering challenges to international EFL / ESL students' PA in their host countries. As the studies discussed in this chapter involved cases mostly studied in the US or other non-UK English-speaking countries (Andrade, 2006), I assume that it is reasonable to believe that similar situations could happen in Chinese students studying in the UK.

Based on empirical research papers published between 1996 and 2005 in relation to international students' PA and related issues in the host countries, Andrade (2006) reported that varying numbers of papers (indicated in parentheses below) were published from the following countries: the US (36), Australia (9), Canada (7), the UK (2) and New Zealand (2). In this connection, I recognised that at the time of conducting this current study, there was a paucity of literature that covered international EFL / ESL students studying in the UK in relation to their language-related PA, including cross-cultural adjustment as cultural differences also exist between English-speaking countries such as the US and the UK. Hence, it made sense for me to highlight such a clear lack of research focused on the issues raised above; and this calls for the need to further expand the knowledge and understanding of Chinese students' PA in the UK through this current study.

It is clear that the literature on the PP variables summarised above has recognised that language learning by international EFL / ESL students, including Chinese university students, has respective relationships with each of the PP variables. There is a gap in the literature that needs to be addressed, namely that a complex

relationship may exist in the PP variables in relation to language learning in a sample of Chinese master's students studying in the UK. The main aim of this current study is to address this gap.

Section 1.2. This section first intends to clarify 'misleading culture-based characteristics of Chinese students' (issues 1), and 'misconceptions about Chinese students' (issue 2). Regarding issue 1, students from Eastern culture, such as Chinese students, have been characterised as passive, compliant and rote learners; and have a strong preference for group learning. Eastern culture is often perceived as valuing collectivism, conformity and respect for authority, whereas Western culture reflects and promotes individualism. Regarding issue 2, 'the' Chinese learners might imply that all their needs are homogeneous and culture-based. In fact, other factors have to be considered such as the learners' identities, motivations, and power relationship with their teachers to allow for the significance of personality differences of individual learners. I recognised that 'the' Chinese learners might show certain observable features where some of their learning strategies could be culture-related, whereas others might be contextual-based.

Second, English language teaching (ELT) in China has had a significant impact on China's modernisation and the people's pursuit of personal gains. ELT has been improved through revamping curriculums, syllabuses, textbooks, tests and enhancement of teachers' professional competence. In addition, English LP has been regarded as a gateway to job opportunities at home and abroad, or to qualifications for professional promotion. In this regard, EFL has been included as a core subject for secondary schoolers where the Western type of communicative language teaching (CLT) approach has been introduced through some collaborative projects with British teachers. However, CLT has not been sufficiently implemented due to various practical issues such as resources, class size, teaching time, language skills and sociolinguistic

competence of teachers. Therefore, there are more ELT improvements in the economically and socio-culturally 'developed' regions than the 'less developed' regions.

Third, students in China are required to obtain a pass in one or more English tests to satisfy specific circumstances such as the National Matriculation English Test, the College English Test and the Test for English Majors for their university entrance and future job seeking.

Finally, Chinese students in the UK have to adjust and adapt to the English-speaking requirements in their academic and social settings. They might face problems in understanding local accents and idioms, as the majority of them have their first-ever lesson conducted in English with English speakers as the target listeners. They might experience other English language problems such as the use of 'Chinglish' due to the influence of the Chinese language, limited understanding of the host cultures, inadequate training in English language skills and limited usage of English in their home country.

The rapid growth in numbers of Chinese university students in the UK inevitably has associated problems. Gu and Maley (2008) also point out that problems might include 'culture shock', 'learning shock' or 'education shock', 'language shock' and 'role shock'. Their study indicated that British lecturers have inadequate experience in effective teaching of overseas students, and that most Chinese students have problems adjusting to the UK teaching and learning style. Besides the factors mentioned above, I explored the study difficulties encountered by Chinese learners. These have resulted from insufficient language ability as well as a totally different teaching and learning style in UK educational institutions.

Section 1.4. A number of studies indicate that both the frequency and distinguishing features of applied language learning strategies are contributory elements to the success

of language learners. A number of studies show that there are **gender and culture differences** in the use of language learning strategies. I recognised that females have been shown to be more frequent users of language learning strategies, social language learning strategies, formal rule-based practice strategies and conversational or input strategies. However, I also noted exceptions to these differences as the contextual factors have to be considered. Cultural background affects the use or selection of language learning strategies. Moreover, the selection of language learning strategies could be affected by instructional delivery, socio-cultural contexts or other culture-specific contexts.

Issues of reliability, validity and comprehensiveness of strategies were recognised by me in a number of related papers in the 1980s. In the 1990s, around 40 to 50 major studies and many theses reported to have used the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL; Oxford, 1986) for research studies that involved 8,000 to 8,500 language learners (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995), with the reliability coefficients of SILL ranging from 0.85 to 0.98 (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995).

Six subscales are identified in the SILL and they are 'Memory strategies', 'Cognitive strategies', 'Compensation strategies', 'Metacognitive strategies', 'Affective (emotional, motivation-relate) strategies' and 'Social strategies'. I discovered that 'Cognitive strategies' contain the largest group of items (14 items) relating to deep thinking processes of learners such as analysis, synthesis and transformation of new information (Oxford & Ehrman, 1995). I considered and modified some of the SILL items, and translated them into the ten Language Learning Activities (LLA) to serve the purpose of this current study in respect of exploring the engagement in LLA by Chinese university students in their social and educational settings in the UK in relation to the PP variables, and their scores changed between T1 and T2. As I found that there is a paucity of literature reported on this, it is important for me to highlight the literature gap whereby results of this current study could

contribute to the international literature as anticipated. I was also convinced by Kormos *et al.*'s (2014, p. 152) remark in that " … while a lot of research has focused on American students in study-abroad programmes … , no previous studies have been carried out that investigated how students' contact experiences, language learning attitudes and motivation change in a UK international study context using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods." This current study might have filled gaps or extended our present knowledge as described in the Literature Review.

Section 1.5. International EFL / ESL students frequently experience language-related challenges in their academic work. The most frequently quoted language-related learning problems in terms of priority are writing, followed by oral comprehension and communication, including accents and cultures. Many writers suggested that their insufficient LP hinders their cross-cultural communication, affects their PA and stress levels; and isolates them from their local peers.

Along with the factors outlined above, **LP** in daily lives in social and educational settings is definitely influential. I noted Hulstijn's (2011, 2012) work on the exploration of the constructs of language proficiency. I was impressed by her comment that " … the notion of language proficiency…is often taken for granted … and the notion of native speaker" (Hulstijn, 2012, p. 423). I endorsed her belief (Hulstijn, 2011, p. 230) that "basic language cognition (BLC) is what *all* native (L1) speakers have in common; HLC (higher language cognition) is the domain where differences between native (L1) speakers can be observed." For HLC, it is (Hulstijn, 2011, p. 231) " … the complement or extension of BLC where HLC utterances are lexically and grammatically more complex (and often longer) than BLC utterances and they need not be spoken." To facilitate a better understanding of her postulation of BLC and HLC in LP, Hulstijn (2011) suggested that BLC refers to the language knowledge shared by all adult L1 speakers in terms of listening and speaking, whereas HLC

demonstrates individual differences in language mastery in terms of reading and writing. These could be potentially affected by certain attributes such as literacy, age, and level of education, profession or leisure-time activities. The main aim of this current study is to assess the participants' perceptions of their LP in terms of listening, speaking (BLC); reading, writing (HLC); daily vocabulary (BLC or HLC) and academic vocabulary (BLC or HLC) in relation to changes of scores of the PP variables, and their score changes between T1 and T2. As I found a paucity of literature reported on this, it is essential for me to highlight the literature gap and show how the findings of this current study could contribute to the international literature as anticipated.

CHAPTER 2 METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the methodological approach and other detail of this current study are described. The rationale, main aim of the study, research questions and research design of this thesis are explained. A mixed-method research approach is used and the major advantages and disadvantages of this methodology are critically discussed. Documentation of the evaluation and modifications made to the questionnaire and the interview questions are recorded (Sections 2.4.1 and 2.4.2). Descriptions of the pilot study and the main study, including the recruitment and sampling of participants, the procedures and the process of data analyses are included. Finally, a brief summary of the limitations of this study is presented.

2.1   Rationale, Main Aim and Research Questions

Based on the information and discussions set out in the Literature Review, it is clear that gaps have been identified in the literature and these are highlighted in Section 1.6. In particular, there are gaps in the literature in respect of the complex relationships between the positive psychology (PP) variables and the English language learning activities (LLA) reported by Chinese university students in the UK, as well as between those PP variables in relation to their perceived English language proficiency (LP).

Using a mixed-method research design, the main aim of the study is to investigate the relationship between the PP variables, namely, SR (AR and CR), MS, PWB and PA for a sample of Chinese master's students studying in the UK on the one hand, and the LLA in social and educational settings that they reported using to improve their LP on the other hand; and how the scores on the variables and the relationships among the variables changed between T1 and T2.

The following research questions were drawn up:

1.   What were the students' positive psychology scores at the start and then mid-way through the academic year, and did those scores change between T1 and T2?

2.   What activities did the students report using to improve their English at the start and then mid-way through the academic year, and did those activities change between T1 and T2?

3.   How did the students perceive their proficiency in English at the start and then mid-way through the academic year, and did those perceptions change between T1 and T2?

4.   What is the relationship between their positive psychology and the activities they reported using to improve their English at the start and then mid-way through the academic year, and did those scores change between T1 and T2?

5.   What is the relationship between how their positive psychology scores changed between T1 and T2 and how did the activities which they reported using to improve their English change between T1 and T2?

6.   What is the relationship between their positive psychology and their perceived proficiency in English at the start and then mid-way through the academic year, and did those scores change between T1 and T2?

7.   What is the relationship between how their positive psychology scores changed between T1 and T2 and how their perceived proficiency in English changed between T1 and T2?

2.2   Mixed-method Research

Quantitative and qualitative purists have engaged in disputes for more than a century concerning their respective research paradigms. Both parties support their own research paradigm which includes a set of beliefs, values and assumptions about the nature and conduct of research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Quantitative purists believe that social observations should be treated scientifically similar to the way that scientists investigate physical episodes. Further, they emphasise that the observer is separated from the entities under observation such that time- and context-free generalisations are

desirable and possible, and genuine causes of outcomes can be concluded reliably and validly (Nagel, 1986). Of course, in return, qualitative purists refuse to recognise the quantitative purists' positivist paradigm. They maintain the superiority of constructivism, idealism, relativism, humanism and so on (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Lincoln *et al.*, 2011; Schwandt, 2000; Smith, 1983; 1984). They argue that multiple constructs of realities are occurring in abundance such that time- and context-free generalisations are neither desirable nor possible. They firmly believe that research is value-laden. Hence, it is not possible to differentiate fully causes and effects, and participants and researcher are inseparable because the participants under study are the only source of reality (Guba, 1990).

Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) suggested that in practice many research questions and their combinations are much better addressed through a mixed-method research approach. The writers have defined mixed-method research as (*ibid.* p. 17) "the class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study" through a combination of quantitative and qualitative paradigms, leading to possibly inclusive, pluralistic and complementary effects. In this way, any potential problems arising from the quantitative approach can be minimised. Furthermore, if the findings can be confirmed through the mixed-method approach, then greater confidence could be gained for drawing the conclusion. However, if the findings appear to conflict, then I could have a wider knowledge acquired from using that mixed-method approach to modify my interpretations and conclusions accordingly (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2004). In view of the merits of the mixed-method research approach listed above, I decided to adopt such a methodology for the conduct of this current study, bearing in mind the weaknesses highlighted by Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004). Extra difficulties inevitably arise when a researcher has to conduct both qualitative and quantitative research at the same time, and more time consumption, greater expense, problems of

paradigm mixing and the presence of conflicts were all anticipated.

The Two Paradigms. Combining qualitative and quantitative methods in one study is generally accepted and is a strategy used in various research areas (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Each method is based on its own distinct paradigm with a series of assumptions in relation to reality (ontology), knowledge of that reality (epistemology) and specific ways to understand the reality (methodology) (Guba, 1990).

The quantitative paradigm is based on positivism, in which all phenomena can be demonstrated by empirical indicators in order to account for the truth. This paradigm emphasises that there is only one truth objectively existing, rather than being dependent on human perception. So the researcher can carry out research on a particular phenomenon without directly interfering with it as if it is a one-way mirror (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The aim of this method is to study and analyse causal relationships among variables within a value-free framework (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Farhady (2013) pointed out the positivists' belief that any scientific inquiry should be free from the researcher's values, interpretations, feelings and thinking. Randomised and written or orally conducted questionnaires with a confined range of possible responses are normally used in a quantitative research design. Statistical methods are employed and representative data can be acquired because of the larger sample sizes used in comparison with those employed in qualitative studies (Carey, 1993). There are merits in the quantitative approach. Dörnyei (2007) stated that the quantitative approach is systematic, rigorous, focused and tightly controlled, involving reliable and replicable data which can be generalised to other contexts.

In contrast, the qualitative paradigm mainly focuses on interpretivism (Altheide & Johnson, 1994; Secker *et al.*, 1995) and constructivism (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). It is based on the belief that there are multiple realities or truths underlying a person's construction of reality that is supposedly a constantly changing social construct (Berger

& Luckmann, 2011). With our minds disengaged, it is difficult to discover or observe the reality because external referents always fail to acquire the truth (Smith, 1983). The interaction between the researcher and the object being studied creates the expected findings under a particular condition and a related inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In other words, reality would no longer exist if there were no researchers studying it, so the existence of reality depends on the investigation activity (Smith, 1983). Qualitative research focuses on processes and meanings. The usual qualitative study techniques are in-depth, for example focus group interviews and participant observation. Samples are not usually used to represent large populations. However, a small group could be purposeful and responsive through its provision of important information (Reid, 1996).

The differences between the quantitative and qualitative paradigms originate from their underlying assumptions, which have led to the rise of different journals, sources of funding, expertise, methods and even the use of descriptive scientific languages. For instance, quantitative studies usually use the term 'observational work' for case control studies, whereas qualitative studies refer to an 'ethnographic immersion into a culture' (Smith & Heshusius, 1986). 'Validity' is a term often used by quantitative researchers when they need to express the degree to which the results correspond to the reality. However, the qualitative researcher uses the term 'valid' to label the agreement of a person with an interpretation or description. At the same time, 'research has shown … ' or 'the results of research indicate … ' are formulas usually applied to an accurate reflection of reality in quantitative studies but the same phrases in qualitative studies mean an interpretation of reality (Smith & Heshusius, 1986).

Mixed-method Research Arguments. After discussing the fundamental and philosophical assumptions of the two paradigms in quantitative and qualitative research, it will be easier to analyse the arguments for using a combination of quantitative and

qualitative methods in this current study. Several reasons support this kind of mixed-method research. First, the two approaches share the same goal of understanding our living world (Haase & Myers, 1988). King *et al.* (1994) explained that quantitative research and qualitative research can share the same logic flow with the same rules of inference. Second, the two paradigms could be considered to be compatible with each other because both of them aim at understanding and improving the human condition, helping the spread of knowledge in practical use, and being committed to rigour, conscientiousness and critique in the research study (Reichardt & Rallis, 1994). Casebeer and Verhoef (1997) stated that qualitative and quantitative methods can serve as part of a research continuum with specific techniques selected depending on the research objective. Third, Clarke and Yaros (1988) proposed that it is useful to combine research methods so as to obtain optimal results, especially when a variety of perspectives could expectedly be generated through observing the complexity of a particular phenomenon. Fourth, the quantitative-qualitative debate might not be accurately focused as compromise would not be easily obtained (Miles & Huberman, 1984).

Nonetheless, all the arguments discussed above fail to fully address the paradigmatic differences behind the assumptions of qualitative research and quantitative research. Reichardt and Rallis (1994) pointed out that a conflict between the two paradigms in relation to the nature of reality does exist. This conflict might create incompatibility because of the fact that the qualitative paradigm does not admit the use of external referents in understanding reality. Furthermore, the most complicated issue is to reach an agreement concerning the action of explaining and interpreting the results generated from qualitative and quantitative methods. Using the two paradigms with two different phenomena, it might not be that easy to achieve similar results.

There are, however, some strong reasons to justify the combination of the two research methods. First, cross-validation or triangulation could be achieved by joining two or more theories or sources of data so as to understand more about the same

phenomenon and draw a better picture out of the story (Denzin, 1970). Second, the strengths of one method could complementarily help the other and *vice versa* to achieve more complete results (Morgan, 1998). The first point emphasises the interdependence of the two research methods, whereas the second point helps to show their independence. Dörnyei (2007) succinctly remarked that the quantitative approach has two major demerits: first, it allows averaging of responses in a way that justice to the subjective variety of individuals could not be ensured, and second, it cannot uncover the reasons in detail underlying a situation or a phenomenon. An effective way to address these demerits of quantitative research is to include a qualitative research method in the study design (Dörnyei, 2007). Nonetheless, Leech and Dellinger (2013) emphasised that the researcher has to consider the evidence of validity in mixed-method research in order for the results and the subsequent inferences to be defensible.

2.2.1   Use of Questionnaires

In quantitative research, questionnaires are a necessary nuisance to some people whilst to others they are just a nuisance. In general, members of the public are regularly subjected to them and hundreds of thousands of pounds are spent on them each year. For those who use questionnaire as a tool for information gathering, they provide one of the quickest ways to collect large amounts of data from samples of a large population, they are relatively less costly, and they can often be scattered over wide geographical areas.

Researchers agree that the most commonly used research tool is the questionnaire (Wray & Bloomer, 2006; Cohen *et al*., 2011). In terms of the meaning of questionnaires, it is commonly seen that the terms 'survey' and 'questionnaire' are often used interchangeably. Strictly speaking, that should not be the case. From research purists' perspective, these terms should be differentiated from each other. Fink and Kosecoff (1996) defined a survey as a method of gathering information by asking people directly about specific topics such as their feelings, motivations, plans, beliefs and personal and

financial background. Usually, participants are asked to fill in a self-completed questionnaire or with assistance, or by means of an interview face-to-face or by telephone. Franklin and Osborne (1971) defined a questionnaire as a tool comprising a set of questions and / or attitude opinion statements to elicit responses from participants which could be converted into variable measures for further investigation. Scales are designed to measure concepts such as pain, anxiety or well-being that could also be included in questionnaires to serve that purpose.

Questionnaires can contain predetermined and standardised questions or questions which can be changed or expanded upon. The former type is structured for participants to complete them without assistance and postal questionnaires belong to this category. Self-completed questionnaires could also be administered to participants, for instance, students in a classroom or face-to-face with participants. When the interviewer alters the questions as allowed under the research design or in order to ask further questions, seek clarifications and so on, the list of questions is then regarded as an 'interview schedule'. Hence, the extent to which the interviewer plays a role depends very much on the research design (Parafloo, 1993).

Questionnaire data should be quantifiable in appearance so as to render the results as objective as possible. In this regard, questionnaires are firmly anchored within the quantitative research convention. But if the questionnaire contains open questions which allow the participants to express their responses in their own words, some researchers opine that the questionnaire concerned should then be treated like qualitative research in respect of data analyses. However, this notion may be an over-simplistic view of qualitative research. Data derived from asking open questions in a questionnaire are very often treated at face value as there are no opportunities to unravel the real meaning of each individual's response by asking the participant further questions. There may appear a discrepancy as to what the participant said and what he or she actually meant. To minimise this possible discrepancy, several interviews sometimes have to be conducted

with the same person to collect sensible data. This could become a complex activity if cultural and social environments as well as traditions are taken into consideration in decoding the language in question (Parafloo, 1993). Also, qualitative research is foreseeably affected by various kinds of interaction between the researcher and the participants in the research. Open questions, nevertheless, are more useful than closed questions because they allow opportunities to attach significance to the meanings of the participants' responses. In some circumstances, although participants remain anonymous, issues of embarrassment or stigma or strong reaction can arise as the participants concerned have to provide comments or critical views upon the areas of interest in response to open questions asked. For closed questions in a questionnaire, participants can have more confidence that their responses will be treated with confidentiality, and there is no direct contact with the researcher and the participants remain anonymous throughout. In addition to the issues of the anonymity of the participants and data confidentiality, self-completed questionnaires also prevent the likely occurrence of interviewer bias, which occurs when the data gathered might be influenced by the researcher and by the form and manner in which the researcher conducted the interview (Parafloo, 1993). It should be noted, however, that the wording of set questions could intentionally induce the participants to deliver 'preferred' responses and this practice should not be encouraged.

It is obvious that the type of data, such as scores and the form and manner in which they are collected, could allow for convenient and faster ways of analysis. The popular computer statistical packages, to date, facilitate the analysis of questionnaire data much more easily than is the case with data collected by interviews and observations. More importantly, the questionnaire also demonstrates a reliable and consistent method of data collection as all participants are required to answer the same set of standardised questions. In addition, researchers do not have to rely on their own good memory, tedious audio-recording or note taking.

2.2.2 Use of Face-to-face Interviews

In qualitative research, face-to-face interviews have long been the commonly used interview approach. Kvale (1983) suggested that the purpose of an interview is to collect data from the interviewee regarding his or her interpretation of the meaning of a particular phenomenon. In this regard, collection of such data could be achieved in a few common ways, of which face-to-face interview is the most popular. In addition to face-to-face interview, interviewing by telephone is also frequently adopted. In recent years, interviewing using the convenience of the internet is on the rise.

Owing to rapid developments in information technology, all kinds of computer-mediated communication tools have been advocated: these are a series of steps by which messages are electronically transmitted from a sender (researcher) to recipients (research participants), which can be in real time (synchronous) or independent of time (asynchronous), for example, e-mail and Facebook Messenger. Face-to-face interviews are defined as real-time communication in terms of time and place. Thanks to such real-time communication, face-to-face interviews could take advantage of social cues in a way that no other interview method actually can. Some examples of social cues given by an interviewee are voice, intonation, body language and facial expression. These cues could really provide the interviewer with a large amount of extra information which could enhance the verbal answer of an interviewee to a question (Opdenakker, 2006). Nonetheless, the value of social cues depends on what the interviewer really wishes to get from the interviewee. If the interviewer wishes to know more about the interviewee's attitude towards a particular public body, for instance, then the interviewee's social cues are very important. However, if interviewer conducts a face-to-face interview with a specialist about something or with a particular type of person who has nothing special to offer on a subject, then social cues in this case become less important (Emans, 1986). But in case drawing on social cues becomes 'visible', 'disturbing interviewer effects' can

appear when the interviewer guides the interviewee to behave in a particular direction. This disadvantage could be minimised by adopting an interview protocol and, at the same time, by exercising the self-awareness of the interviewer of this effect if it were to happen (Opdenakker, 2006).

2.3   Research Design

I decided to adopt a mixed-method research approach for this current study given that the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods in one study is a generally accepted research strategy (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). And each method is based on its own distinct paradigm with a series of assumptions in relation to reality (ontology), knowledge of that reality (epistemology), and particular ways to understand the reality (methodology) (Guba, 1990). To actualise this current study, Chinese master's students at a university in the North of England (UNE) and at a university in the Midlands (UML) (a university specialising in vocational training and business) were approached and recruited as two sources of convenience samples in the UK.

The Questionnaire: Closed Questions. Questionnaires include a variety of tools by which the participants respond to written questions (McMillan & Schumacher, 1989) and closed and open questions are the most common formats. An example of a closed question is that the questionnaire provides a set of alternative responses for the participants to tick one or more of them. With open questions, the participants are asked to describe their responses. The purpose of a questionnaire is to provide a tool to collect data from a sample of a population in a relatively short period of time. Theoretically, questionnaires are designed to collect information on facts, beliefs, attitudes, knowledge, opinions and so on. A questionnaire is said to be 'good' if its contents and structure fully match the research objectives. Questionnaires elicit standardised and objective responses from the participants. However, some time must be spent on designing an appropriate and

suitable questionnaire before the conduct of the study. Although a low response rate may happen with this research method, this could be obviously improved by distributing the questionnaires to the participants face-to-face or meeting them on a convenient occasion such as during lecture or seminar time.

In this current study, an introduction and the research purpose of the study were included in the questionnaire so that the participants could understand the main study thoroughly. The questionnaire was written in Simplified Chinese, the participants' first language, in order to ensure a more accurate and rapid response for this study. The questionnaire started with a cover letter which explained the theme of the main study and the rationale behind it. Ethical issues were addressed, including the benefits of joining the study, and the confidentiality and privacy protections involved. My contact detail was given in case any participants had an inquiry or wished to terminate their participation in the study. It was highlighted that consent to participate in this study was regarded as complete once the participants returned the questionnaires. This cover letter was signed by me to serve the purpose of formality.

The first part of the questionnaire was made up of demographic questions, including the participants' self-perception of their engagements of language learning activities and language proficiency in the UK.

The PP variables in this study were SR, MS, PWB and PA pertaining to their English language learning. For the reasons stated on the first page of the Introduction, the Chinese university students recruited for this study were viewed as language learners, and the study was designed to contribute to our understanding of their English language learning.

On top of the 'yes' and 'no' check boxes, some empty lines were provided in the questionnaire in case the participants wished to explain their response in greater detail. By this means, the possibility of them misinterpreting the meaning of the questions would be greatly reduced. The length of their previous stay in any English-speaking country was

emphasised in one question so that it could be ensured that all the participants met the basic requirement of this study. At the end of this demographic section, the participants were required to complete a table of six areas of LP. The scores were rated on a four-point Likert scale, from '1' as 'not proficient' to '4' as 'native-like'. In addition, the participants were required to complete a table of ten LLA. The scores were again rated on a four-point Likert scale from '1' as 'not at all' to '4' as 'always'.

The remaining part of the questionnaire focused on the PP variables of the main study, namely, SR, MS, PWB and PA. The scores were rated on a six-point Likert scale, from '1' as 'strongly disagree' to '6' as 'strongly agree'. There were some questions with similar meanings throughout the questionnaire in order to verify the consistency of the results and the compatibility of the participants' perceptions when faced with similar scenarios. To further confirm the consistency of the results, some questions with similar meaning were put in both negative and positive forms such that any randomly completed questionnaire forms could be identified and discarded easily. The questionnaires were used twice in this longitudinal study in order to observe and compare the participants' English language learning progress at the two time-points.

Interviews. In face-to-face interviews, everything is carried out in real time. There is practically no time gap between question and answer in that the researcher and the participant can instantly or spontaneously respond to what the other says or does. Such synchronous (or real-time) communication carries an advantage that the participant's response to a question can be made in a forthright and spontaneous way. I adopted the technique of 'double attention', which means that the researcher has to be a good listener to the participants' responses so as to comprehend their utterance, and at the same time, has to ensure that all the set questions have been answered at the level of depth and detail needed within the fixed time interval available (Wengraf, 2001).

Audio-recording is often used in the process of face-to-face interviews, of course

with the prior permission of the participants. Making use of audio-recording can have the advantage that the interview report can be more accurately compiled than by writing out notes on site. Nonetheless, there are merits in taking notes in an interview even though it is being audio-recorded: (1) to ensure that all the set questions have been answered; (2) in case the audio-recorder has been unnoticeably dysfunctional; and (3) in case of the 'malfunctioning' of the researcher in the circumstance that he or she has forgotten to push the 'record' button. As to the down side, the disadvantage of audio-recording an interview is that much time has to be spent on transcribing the contents of the audio-recording after the interview (Opdenakker, 2006). Bryman (2012) suggested that five to six hours are required to transcribe one hour of audio-recording. There are useful arguments and studies suggesting that the case for verbatim transcription might not be necessary, and these are discussed in detail in Section 2.9.

I adopted face-to-face interviews for the reasons that (1) social cues given by the participants in the interviews could be seriously considered; (2) the participants could cope with the time and costs of the interviews as they all lived on the same campus; (3) a standardised interview situation (Opdenakker, 2006) could be ensured; and (4) a high response rate could be maintained as all the participants were recruited by my personal invitation.

I conducted face-to-face interviews and questionnaires at the predetermined two time-points (T1 and T2) hoping that both of these research approaches could complement each other in the process of data collection and analyses. As a matter of fact, the use of questionnaires represents just a one-off chance to obtain quantitative data from anonymous participants. Some problems might arise after the data analysis, in which case interview data could provide a back-up of possible solutions. The conduct of the interviews in this study provided a platform for face-to-face clarifications of issues. In this regard, I could have an opportunity to raise questions concerning the themes of the study, and might need to raise follow-up questions based on a participant's answers. This

strategy could specifically address any particular doubts encountered by me as identified from the quantitative data. In addition, face-to-face interviews could provide an interactive avenue for me to understand more about the participants' perceptions of the study variables.

Once all the logistics had been arranged, face-to-face interviews were conducted at UNE. The interview questions were based on the constructs of the questionnaire regarding the PP in SR (AR and CR), MS, PWB and PA. At the same time, language learning activities were discussed with the participants in order to gather information about how and how frequently they had engaged themselves in those reported language learning activities. The rationales behind the interview questions are detailed in Section 2.4.2. Although it was impossible for me to conduct interviews with too many participants, I did select a group of participants from various departments whose voices could possibly reflect the views of most of the Chinese master's degree students at UNE or perhaps in the UK at large.

There were five questions in total in the face-to-face interviews with each question focusing on one particular area. Words such as 'happy', 'anxious', 'well-adjusted' and 'pressurised' were suggested by me in the interviews so that I could better understand the participants' possible emotional feelings in their stay in the UK. Emotions could be a mixture of positive and negative feelings. They would be regarded as part of the social cues in the interview data. I therefore noted down those coexisting emotions for subsequent qualitative data analyses. I could ask the participants further questions so that I might have a better understanding of their feelings about their current issues of English language learning in the UK.

The length of each face-to-face interview was planned to be around 30 minutes. I could encourage the participants to express as much as they could in terms of description of their feelings. Cantonese, Mandarin or English or a mixed code could be selected as the medium of conversation. I clarified that the contents of the conversation and the

points made by them were far more important than their demonstration of spoken English proficiency in the interviews.

All the interviews were recorded by a stereo integrated circuit recorder (an MP4), and notes were taken by me. My peer could then help to translate all the Mandarin conversations into Cantonese so as to facilitate my report writing process later on. As with the questionnaires, the face-to-face interviews were conducted twice with the same scheduled question items included in order to observe and compare the differences between the two groups of collected data at two different time-points, namely, T1 and T2.

2.4   Instruments for Data Gathering

In addition to the demographics component, the essential components of the questionnaire were sourced from various writers' papers according to the constructs of the PP variables guided by the main aim of this study as well as perceived LLA engagements and LP. With evaluation and modifications made by me, the processes described above were followed by discussion with and validation by my supervisor, an expert in the field of educational psychology, and all the question items in the questionnaires and for the face-to-face interviews were finalised as detailed in Sections 2.4.1 and 2.4.2, and as presented in Appendices II-IV.

2.4.1   The Questionnaire

The SR Component of the Questionnaire. On the website, I noted various forms of SR questionnaires (SRQ) for which the format was first introduced by Ryan and Connell (1989). In principle, those writers used self-determination theory to develop a domain-specific strategy which is used to assess the extent to which the forms of regulatory behaviour is 'controlled versus autonomous'. In practice, such SRQ are intended to ask participants the reasons behind their particular engaged behaviour where each form of their behaviour goes with a set of reasons which are of controlled or autonomous type

(CR or AR), and to what extent.

Among the available SRQ, I was inspired by the Learning Self-regulation Questionnaire (LSRQ) because it could be used with older students. The questionnaire asks three main questions about the reasons behind people's engagement in forms of learning-related behaviour. The questionnaire comprises two sub-scales: AR and CR. I noted two studies which had used this questionnaire in two slightly different versions (Williams & Deci, 1998; Black & Deci, 2000). This scale has been shown to have a strong internal consistency with a coefficient alpha of approximately 0.8 for AR and 0.70 for CR (Ryan & Connell, 1989; Williams & Deci, 1996; Black & Deci, 2000). Because of this, after evaluation, I was convinced that this questionnaire could be adopted and modified for this current study in order to explore the participants' related perceptions about their English language learning in both social and educational settings in the UK.

The LSRQ contains fourteen items which assesses students' intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation in their engagement in learning activity. Participants are asked to respond to each item on a seven-point scale (1 = 'does not apply' to 7 = 'applies very much'). It was originally targeted at undergraduate students. To serve the purpose of this current study, I considered nine of the fourteen items of a version of the LSRQ which was originally intended for medical students. The selected items under three categories of behaviour (as underlined) are set out in the following paragraphs:

I will participate actively in the organ systems classes: Item 1, 'Because I feel like it's a good way to improve my skills and my understanding of patients'; Item 2, 'Because others would think badly of me if I didn't'; and Item 3, 'Because learning to interview well is an important part of becoming a doctor'.

I am likely to follow my instructor's suggestions for interviewing: Item 6, 'Because I believe my instructor's suggestions will help me interview effectively'; Item 7, 'Because I want others to think that I am a good interviewer'; Item 9, 'Because it's important to me to do well at this'; and Item 10, 'Because I would probably feel guilty if

I didn't comply with my instructor's suggestions'.

The reason that I will continue to broaden my interviewing skills: Item 12, 'Because I would feel proud if I did continue to improve at interviewing'; and Item 13, 'Because it's a challenge to really understand what the patient is experiencing'.

I then modified the three categories of behaviour (as underlined above) and their nine items of reasons set out above to serve the purpose of this current study. Having discussed my intentions with and having had them validated by my supervisor, an educational psychologist, the modified categories of behaviour and corresponding items of reasons were adopted for the questionnaire in order to explore the participants' perceptions about SR in their English language learning in social and educational settings in the UK as set out in the following paragraphs:

I participate actively in the English language classes

Item 1: 'Because I feel like it's a good way to improve my understanding of the English language' (modified from LSRQ, Item 1).

Item 2: 'Because others would think badly of me if I didn't attend English language classes' (modified from LSRQ, Item 2).

Item 3: 'Because learning to communicate well with locals in the English language is important' (modified from LSRQ, Item 3).

I am likely to follow my instructor's suggestions in learning the English language

Item 4: 'Because I believe my instructor's suggestions will help me to learn the English language effectively' (modified from LSRQ, Item 6).

Item 5: 'Because I want others to think that I am good at the English language' (modified from LSRQ, Item 7).

Item 6: 'Because it's important to me to do well in the English language' (modified from LSRQ, Item 9).

Item 7: 'Because I would probably feel guilty if I didn't comply with my instructor's suggestions for learning the English language' (modified from LSRQ,

Item 10).

The reason that I will continue broadening my English language skills is

Item 8: 'Because I would feel proud if I do continue improving my English language' (modified from LSRQ, Item 12).

Item 9: 'Because it's a challenge to really understand what native speakers say in English' (modified from LSRQ, Item 13).

The MS Component of the Questionnaire. The part of the questionnaire looking into MS was based on Dweck *et al.*'s construct of MS (Dweck *et al.*, 1995; Chiu *et al.*, 1997; Hong *et al.*, 1999; Dweck, 2000, 2006; Dweck & Molden, 2007; Blackwell *et al.*, 2007).

At the time of the development of the questionnaire for this current study in 2012, in respect of MS in English language learning among Chinese university students in the UK, I noted that there was a paucity of literature that reported data-gathering instruments for MS or the MS-related domain in language learning. Enlightened by Mercer and Ryan's (2010) paper entitled 'A mindset for EFL: learners' beliefs about the role of natural talent', together with other related papers by Mercer (Mercer, 2011; 2012), I decided to create a new data-gathering instrument for assessing the MS of the participants to serve the purpose of this study. Given that the construct of MS was based on Dweck and her associates' works as highlighted in the first paragraph of this section, I then made essential reference to Mercer and Ryan's paper (2010) with a view to maximising the fit between the data-gathering instrument for this main study and the available conceptual literature. The questionnaire which resulted was then discussed with and validated by my supervisor.

I developed Items 1 to 4 of the MS component of the questionnaire for this study by drawing relevance from Dweck and her associates' works (Dweck *et al.*, 1995; Chiu *et al.*, 1997; Hong *et al.*, 1999; Dweck, 2000, 2006; Dweck & Molden, 2007; Blackwell *et al.*, 2007). I drafted Item 1 which represented a fixed MS belief, and Items 2 to 4 which

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represented a growth MS belief. After discussions with my supervisor, the following four items were validated and adopted for the questionnaire in order to explore the participants' perceptions about MS in their English language learning in both social and educational settings in the UK as set out in the following paragraphs:

Item 1: 'I prefer to avoid an activity which involves the English language when I know that I shall make mistakes when I speak' (holding the belief of a fixed MS in language learning: natural talent counts rather than making an effort).

Item 2: 'Irrespective of how bad a mistake is when I use the English language, I can always learn something from it' (holding the belief of a growth MS in language learning: always seeing the positive side of the learning experience).

Item 3: 'I can learn the English language from lessons or from daily life' (holding the belief of a growth MS in language learning: making an effort through hard work or practical experience in daily life).

Item 4: 'I can always have the chance to improve my English language through practice' (holding the belief of a growth MS in language learning: grasping every learning opportunity to practise English).

In addition to Dweck and her associates' works listed above, the construct of MS and the relevant qualitative results quoted in Mercer and Ryan's (2010) paper already mentioned were referenced and appropriately incorporated into the development of Item 5 to Item 9 as set out in the following paragraphs.

Item 5 was based on the paragraph "This data extract suggests that the learner believes that your pronunciation cannot be changed or improved through hard work and effort, as your ability for this skill is fixed already at an early age … " (Mercer & Ryan, 2010, p. 438). Item 5 was therefore developed as shown in the following paragraph.

Item 5: 'I cannot change or improve my pronunciation in English through hard work and effort, as my ability for this skill is fixed already at an early age' (representing a fixed MS).

Item 6 was based on the paragraph "If you, for example learn the vocabulary from the vocabulary book, you have to practise them, I always try to use them when I study them, … So, that you just try to keep them in mind and just repeat the vocabulary but it's also hard work" (Mercer & Ryan, 2010, p. 438). Item 6 was therefore developed as shown in the following paragraph.

Item 6: 'If I learn the vocabulary in English from the vocabulary book, I have to practise it before remembering it' (representing a growth MS).

Item 7 was based on the paragraph "In the data, many learners made statements that appeared to suggest a certain mindset. Some learners seemed to believe that natural talent plays the key role in successful language learning, which we took to be indicative of a fixed mindset" (Mercer & Ryan, 2010, p. 437). Item 7 was therefore developed as shown in the following paragraph.

Item 7: 'I think that natural ability is very important in learning English' (representing a fixed MS).

Item 8 was based on the paragraph "I think that natural ability is quite important, … but you have to be gifted if you really want to do interpreting and translation" (Mercer & Ryan, 2010, p. 440). Item 8 was therefore developed as shown in the following paragraph.

Item 8: 'I think everybody can achieve a specific level of English language standard if they want to, but people have to be gifted if they really want to do interpreting and translation' (representing a fixed MS).

Item 9 was based on the paragraph " … whereas other learners appeared to hold beliefs strongly suggestive of the value of hard work and the potential to influence their ability through practice and effort, which we took as indicative of a growth mindset" (Mercer & Ryan, 2010, p. 437). Item 9 was therefore developed as shown in the following paragraph.

Item 9: 'I agree that hard work is very important in learning English' (representing

a growth MS).

Having discussed these five items with and having had them validated by my supervisor in addition to the already validated Items 1 to 4, all nine items were adopted for the questionnaire in order to explore the participants' perceptions about MS in their English language learning in both social and educational settings in the UK.

The PWB Component of the Questionnaire. From the paper entitled 'Happiness is everything, or is it? Explorations on the meaning of psychological well-being' (Ryff, 1989), I recognised that the central purpose of Ryff's (1989) study was to develop a theory-based empirical approach to study the PWB of individuals. The writer highlighted that key social scientists' related studies and the key indicators involved (for example, life satisfaction, happiness and positive affect) were found to lack theoretical support, and also that those studies had neglected aspects of PP functioning within the perspective of life-span development (Bühler, 1935; Bühler & Massarik, 1968; Erikson, 1959; Neugarten, 1973). The writer then quoted other examples which were found to lack theoretical underpinnings such as maturity (Allport, 1961), self-actualisation (Maslow, 1968), individuation (Jung, 1933), the fully functioning person (Rogers, 1961) and positive mental health (Jahoda, 1958). Ryff (1989) therefore attempted to identify major points of convergence among the aforesaid domains. The common themes that emerged from that integration became the six dimensions for the scale development of PWB that were subsequently implemented in her study (Ryff, 1989). At the time, the six dimensions identified as scales of PWB were Autonomy, Environmental Mastery, Personal Growth, Positive Relations with Others, Purpose in Life and Self-acceptance. Initially, there were 80 items generated for each scale. After some stringent procedures and criteria performed by the item writers, 32 items remained for each scale and those six scales of PWB were then administered to a research sample of 321 participants for their self-rating. Based on the results, which included the internal consistency coefficients, the number of items for

each scale at that stage was reduced to twenty, divided approximately equally between positive and negative items (Ryff, 1989).

In an email in response to my request to be permitted to use the scales for this current study, Ryff very generously provided me with the six fourteen-item scales of PWB that had been used in her studies. I recognised that those fourteen items from each scale were selected from the twenty-item version according to item-to-total correlation and coherence. Correlations with the original twenty-item scales were reported ranged from 0.97 to 0.98 (Ryff *et al.*, 1994). Furthermore, I noted that in one of Van Dierendonck's (2004) studies, the internal consistencies of the fourteen-item scale indicated good reliabilities, with Cronbach alphas ranging from 0.77 to 0.90.

According to Ryff's (1989) definition of the Theory-Guided Dimensions of PWB, a high scorer on the Autonomy Scale (AS) is "self-determining and independent, able to resist social pressures to think and act in certain ways, regulates behaviour from within; evaluates self by personal standards", whereas a low scorer is "concerned about the expectations and evaluations of others; relies on judgments of others to make important decisions; conforms to social pressures to think and act in certain ways" (*ibid.* p. 1072). To serve the purpose of this study, I considered three of the fourteen items of the scale: Item 2, 'I am not afraid to voice my opinions, even when they are in opposition to the opinions of most people'; Item 4, 'I tend to worry about what other people think of me'; and Item 5, 'Being happy with myself is more important to me than having others approve of me'. Having discussed this choice with my supervisor and having had these three items validated, I modified the three items to become the following three items designed to explore the participants' perceptions about PWB in their English language learning in both social and educational settings in the UK.

Item 1: 'I am not afraid to voice my opinions in the English language, even when they are in opposition to the opinions of most people' (modified from AS, Item 2).

Item 2: 'I tend to worry about what other people think of me in English language

competence' (modified from AS, Item 4).

Item 3: 'Being happy with myself in English language competence is more important to me than having others approve of me' (modified from AS, Item 5).

For the Environmental Mastery Scale (EMS), Ryff (1989) defined a high scorer as someone who "has a sense of mastery and competence in managing the environment; controls complex array of external activities; makes effective use of surrounding opportunities; able to choose or create contexts suitable to personal needs and values" and a low scorer as someone who "has difficulty managing everyday affairs; feels unable to change or improve surrounding context; is unaware of surrounding opportunities; lacks sense of control over external world" (*ibid.* p. 1072). To serve the purpose of this study, I considered two of the fourteen items in this section: Item 3, 'I do not fit very well with the people and the community around me'; and Item 6, 'If I were unhappy with my living situation, I would take effective steps to change it'. After discussing these two items with my supervisor and having had them validated, I modified the two items to become the following two items designed to explore the participants' perceptions about PWB in their English language learning in both social and educational settings in the UK.

Item 4: 'I do not fit very well with the English-speaking people and the community around me' (modified from EMS, Item 3).

Item 5: 'If I were unhappy with my living situation which requires English language competence, I would take effective steps to change it' (modified from EMS, Item 6).

For the Personal Growth Scale (PGS), Ryff (1989) defined a high scorer as someone who "has a feeling of continued development; sees self as growing and expanding; is open to new experience; has sense of realising his or her potential; sees improvement in self and behaviour over time; is changing in ways that reflect more self knowledge and effectiveness", and a low scorer as someone who "has a sense of personal stagnation; lacks sense of improvement or expansion over time; feels bored and

uninterested with life; feels unable to develop new attitudes or behaviour" (*ibid.* p. 1072).

To serve the purpose of this study, I considered two of the fourteen items of this scale:

Item 1, 'I am not interested in activities that will expand my horizons'; and Item 6,

'When I think about it, I haven't really improved much as a person over the years'. After

discussing these two items with my supervisor and having had them validated, I modified

them to become the following two items designed to explore the participants' perceptions

about PWB in their English language learning in both social and educational settings in

the UK.

>Item 6: 'I am not interested in activities related to English language learning that
>will expand my horizons' (modified from PGS, Item 1).

>Item 7: 'When I think about it, I haven't really improved much in English
>language learning over the years' (modified from PGS, Item 6).

>For the Positive Relations with Others Scale (PROS), Ryff (1989) defined a high

scorer as someone who "has warm satisfying, trusting relationships with others; is

concerned about the welfare of others; capable of strong empathy, affection, and intimacy;

understands give and take of human relationships" and a low scorer as someone who "has

few close, trusting relationships with others; finds it difficult to be warm, open, and

concerned about others; is isolated and frustrated in interpersonal relationships; not

willing to make compromises to sustain important ties with others" (*ibid.* p. 1072). To

serve the purpose of this study, I considered one of the fourteen items of this scale: Item 2,

'Maintaining close relationships has been difficult and frustrating for me'. After

discussing this item with my supervisor and having had it validated, I modified it to

become the following item designed to explore the participants' perceptions about PWB

in their English language learning in both social and educational settings in the UK.

>Item 8: 'Maintaining close relationships by communicating in the English
>language has been difficult and frustrating for me' (modified from PROS, Item 2).

>For the Purpose in Life Scale (PILS), Ryff (1989) defined a high scorer as

someone who "has goals in life and a sense of directedness; feels there is meaning to present and past life; holds beliefs that give life purpose; has aims and objectives for living", whereas a low scorer "lacks a sense of meaning in life; has few goals or aims; lacks sense of direction; does not see purpose of past life; has no outlook or beliefs that give life meaning" (*ibid.* p. 1072). To serve the purpose of this study, I considered one of the fourteen items of this scale: Item 4, 'I have a sense of direction and purpose in life'. After discussing this item with my supervisor and having had it validated, I modified it to become the following item designed to explore the participants' perceptions about PWB in their English language learning in both social and educational settings in the UK.

Item 9: 'I have a sense of direction and purpose in life when learning the English language' (modified from PILS, Item 4)

For the Self-acceptance Scale (SAS), Ryff (1989) defined a high scorer as someone who "possesses a positive attitude toward the self; acknowledges and accepts multiple aspects of self, including good and bad qualities; feels positive about past life" whereas a low scorer "feels dissatisfied with self; is disappointed with what has occurred in past life; is troubled about certain personal qualities; wishes to be different than what he or she is" (*ibid.* p.1072). To serve the purpose of this study, I considered two of the fourteen items of this scale: Item 4, 'Given the opportunity, there are many things about myself that I would change'; and Item 6, 'I made some mistakes in the past, but I feel that all in all everything has worked out for the best'. After discussing these two items with my supervisor and having had them validated, I modified them to become the following two items designed to explore the participants' perceptions about PWB in their English language learning in both social and educational settings in the UK.

Item 10: 'Given the opportunity in learning English, there are many things about myself that I would change' (modified from SAS, Item 4).

Item 11: 'I made some mistakes in the past in using English, but I feel that all in all everything has worked out for the best' (modified from SAS, Item 6).

The PA Component of the Questionnaire. I identified the College Adaption Questionnaire (CAQ; Crombag, 1968) in Van Rooijen's (1986) study as having indicated evidence as to the reliability and validity of the CAQ for the assessment of students' adjustment to university life. From the literature, I found that since the emergence of Crombag's development of the CAQ in 1968, there have been a number of similar studies that have used it to investigate students' adaptation to university life (for example, Crombag, 1968; Hommes *et al*., 2012; Klip, 1970; Morton *et al*., 2014; van Rooijen, 1986). This scale has been shown to have a strong internal consistency with a coefficient alpha of 0.83 (van Rooijen, 1986) or even of 0.93 in a more recent study (Morton *et al*., 2014).

The CAQ contains eighteen items which assess students' perceived level of general adaptation to their university life. Participants are asked to respond to each item on a seven-point scale (1 = 'does not apply' to 7 = 'applies very much'). To serve the purpose of this study, I considered nine of the eighteen items of the CAQ: Item 1, 'I am very satisfied with the course of my studies'; Item 3, 'I often ask myself what I am doing here'; Item 4, 'I would prefer to study somewhere else'; Item 9, 'I find life as a student very pleasant'; Item 12, 'I find it hard to get used to life here'; Item 13, 'What I miss here is someone to talk to freely from time to time'; Item 15, 'If I feel blue, my friends will help me to get out of it'; Item 16, 'I find it very difficult to adjust to student life'; and Item 17, 'I am glad that I came to study here'. After discussing these nine items with my supervisor and having had them validated, I modified them to become the following nine items designed to explore the participants' perceptions about PA in their English language learning in both social and educational settings in the UK.

Item 1: 'I am very satisfied with my university studies with the English language as a medium of instruction' (modified from CAQ, Item 1).

Item 2: 'What I miss here is someone to talk to freely from time to time in my

home town dialect / Mandarin / Cantonese' (modified from CAQ, Item 13).

Item 3: 'I often ask myself what I am here to have the course of my studies in the English language' (modified from CAQ, Item 3).

Item 4: 'I would prefer studying somewhere else instead of studying in the UK' (modified from CAQ, Item 4).

Item 5: 'If I feel blue, my Chinese friends in the UK will help me to get out of it' (modified from CAQ, Item 15).

Item 6: 'I find life as a student in the UK very pleasant especially when I can practise English speaking all the time' (modified from CAQ, Item 9).

Item 7: 'I find it hard to get used to life here in this English-speaking country' (modified from CAQ, Item 12).

Item 8: 'I find it very difficult to adjust to student life due to the difference in education system between my home country and the UK' (modified from CAQ, Item 16).

Item 9: 'I am glad that I came to study here because I can know more about English language and culture' (modified from CAQ, Item 17).

It should be noted that Items 2, 3, 4, 7 and 8 contain reversed scores in the calculation of the total scores of PA.

The LLA Component of the Questionnaire. From the literature in the field of language learning strategies and related studies as highlighted in Section 1.4, I recognised that the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) (Oxford, 1990) has been widely used as a major instrument in many studies (for example, Bremner, 1998; Hong-Nam & Leavell, 2006; Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995; Park, 1997; Sheorey,1999; Wharton, 2000). More than 40 major studies involving a total of 8,000-8,500 language learners have shown that the reliability coefficients of the SILL are within the range from 0.85 to 0.98, rendering it a reliable data gathering instrument for predicting students' use of language

learning strategies (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995). In Hong-Nam and Leavell's (2006) study, the Cronbach's alpha for their study revealed an acceptable reliability (0.67) in their use of the SILL (version 7.0 for EFL / ESL learners, 50 items) as a key instrument in assessing student participants' language learning strategies used. In view of my evaluation of these available figures of reliability and validity, I adopted and modified nine strategy items of the SILL for EFL / ESL as presented in Hong-Nam and Leavell's (2006) study and translated them in terms of the ten LLA as part of the questionnaire for this study. The SILL for EFL / ESL (50 items) are grouped into six categories which can be illustrated by examples (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995) as presented in the following paragraph.

Memory strategies (Mem), for information storage and retrieval, "such as grouping, imagery, rhyming, and structured reviewing" (9 items); Cognitive strategies (Cog), for language production and understanding, "such as reasoning, analysing, summarising (all reflective of deep processing), as well as general practicing" (14 items); Compensation strategies (Com), for overcoming limited knowledge in language learning, "such as guessing meanings from the context in reading and listening and using synonyms and gestures to convey meaning when the precise expression is not known" (6 items); Metacognitive strategies (Met), for language learning monitoring and planning, "such as paying attention, consciously searching for practice opportunities, planning for language tasks, self-evaluating one's progress, and monitoring errors" (9 items); Affective (emotional, motivation-related) strategies (Aff), for emotion and motivation controlling, "such as anxiety reduction, self-encouragement, and self-reward" (6 items); and Social strategies (Soc), in cooperation with others for the sake of language learning, "such as asking questions, cooperating with native speakers of the language, and becoming culturally aware (6 items) for cooperating with others in language learning". Five Likert-scale responses for each strategy item, ranging from 1 to 5 (from 'never or almost never true of me' to 'always true of me'), were used to measure the use of each

language learning strategy (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995, p. 5).

To serve the purpose of this study, I considered the following eleven strategies: Strategy 4 (Mem): 'I use flashcards to remember new English words'; Strategy 15 (Cog): 'I watch TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English'; Strategy 30 (Met): 'I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English'; Strategy 33 (Met): 'I try to find out how to be a better learner of English'; Strategy 34 (Met): 'I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English'; Strategy 35 (Met): 'I look for people I can talk to in English'; Strategy 36 (Met): 'I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English'; Strategy 37 (Met): 'I have clear goals for improving my English skills'; Strategy 47 (Soc): 'I practise English with other students'; Strategy 49 (Soc): 'I ask questions in English'; and Strategy 50 (Soc): 'I try to learn about the culture of English speakers'.

After discussing these eleven strategies with my supervisor and having had them validated, I adopted them and translated them into the following ten LLA designed to explore the participants' perceptions about their English language learning in both social and educational settings in the UK.

LLA 1: 'I practise English with my Chinese friends' (based on the SILL: Strategy 33 (Met) and Strategy 47 (Soc)).

LLA 2: 'I join social activities where English is used' (based on the SILL: Strategy 33 (Met), Strategy 35 (Met), Strategy 49 (Soc) and Strategy 50 (Soc)).

LLA 3: 'I make use of English in everyday activities' (based on the SILL: Strategy 30 (Met), Strategy 33 (Met) and Strategy 49 (Soc)).

LLA 4: 'I attend CELT class at the university' (based on the SILL: Strategy 33 (Met), Strategy 34 (Met) and Strategy 37 (Met)).

LLA 5: 'I attend CELT class outside the university' (based on the SILL: Strategy 33 (Met), Strategy 34 (Met) and Strategy 37 (Met)).

LLA 6: 'I take part in English self-study activities' (based on the SILL: Strategy

33 (Met), Strategy 34 (Met) and Strategy 37 (Met)).

LLA 7: 'I watch English films / watch English TV programmes / listen to the English radio' (based on the SILL: Strategy 15 (Cog) and Strategy 33 (Met)).

LLA 8: 'I read English story books / English newspapers' (based on the SILL: Strategy 33 (Met), and Strategy 36 (Met)).

LLA 9: 'I keep a notebook of new vocabulary that I have learned' (based on the SILL: Strategy 4 (Mem) and Strategy 33 (Met)).

LLA 10: 'I visit English websites / English-speaking forums when I surf the internet' (based on the SILL: Strategy 15 (Cog), Strategy 33 (Met), and Strategy 36 (Met)).

The Perceived LP Component of the Questionnaire. From the literature in the field of LP and related studies as set out in Section 1.5, I adopted the notion of basic language cognition (BLC) and higher language cognition (HLC) in LP: BLC is "what all native (L1) speakers have in common" and HLC is "the domain where differences between native (L1) speakers can be observed" (Hulstijn, 2011, p. 230). As postulated by Hulstijn (2011), BLC refers to the language knowledge shared by all adult L1 speakers, whereas HLC demonstrates individual differences in language mastery that may be potentially affected by particular attributes such as literacy, age, level of education, profession or leisure-time activities.

Based on a number of studies involving international EFL / ESL students studying in US, Australian, Canadian, New Zealand and UK educational institutions, the most commonly cited language-related problems inside and outside the classroom are: English language proficiency or language standards; academic writing; oral comprehension; communication; lack of knowledge of local contextual references; and inadequate vocabulary (for example, Cownie & Addison, 1996; Daroesman *et al.*, 2005; Hellstén & Prescott, 2004; Lee, 1997; Lin & Yi, 1997; Pantelides, 1999; Robertson *et al.*, 2000;

Andrade, 2006; Sawir *et al*., 2012; Singh, 2005). In this context, the Chinese university students recruited for this current study were viewed as language learners, and the study was designed to contribute to our understanding of their language learning.

To assess the participants' perception of their LP in terms of BLC and HLC, the ten LLA discussed above were adopted as set out in the questionnaire for this study. Having discussed my intentions with my supervisor and having had them validated, I adopted the following areas of language skill for the assessment of the participants' perceptions of their LP. The rating scale devised was from 'not proficient' to 'native-like' bearing in mind that 'native-like' implies BLC in average L1 speakers in terms of literacy, age, level of education, profession or leisure-time activities (Hulstijn, 2011). With regard to Section 1.5 and the discussion above, the areas of language skill in relation to BLC and HLC were presented as follows:

Speaking, listening (BLC)

Writing, reading (HLC)

Everyday vocabulary (BLC or HLC)

Academic vocabulary (BLC or HLC)

Translation of the Questionnaire. Well before the conduct of this study, the questionnaire was forward translated from English into Chinese by me and was then proofread by an MA (Chinese Literature) graduate in Taiwan. The questionnaire was then translated back into English again by me. In addition, the wording of the questionnaire was grammatically and semantically adjusted into the Mainland Chinese context after receiving very useful feedbacks from my Mainland Chinese peers upon their completion of the questionnaire in the pilot study.

2.4.2 Face-to-face interviews

All the face-to-face interviews were conducted in one of the following spoken languages:

Cantonese, Mandarin or English, or a mixed code, according to the participants' own preferences. Immediately before the start of each face-to-face interview, I clearly explained to the participants that the points which they made in the interviews would be the main focus of the study rather than their use of language. Therefore, I suggested that the participants should choose a language which made them feel comfortable in expressing themselves to avoid undue inaccuracy of expression. In short, the main theme of the interviews was to seek an accurate and direct answer from the participants. They were reminded that some follow-up questions would be asked as and when necessary.

The participants were informed that the face-to-face interviews would be audio-recorded for subsequent data analyses, and their consent for this was sought accordingly. The expected length of each interview would be around 30 minutes. The interview questions were based on the constructs of the questionnaire (*see* Section 2.4.1), in which the PP variables were addressed, and they were SR (AR and CR), MS, PWB and PA. In addition, LLA were discussed in order to gather information about what and how frequently the participants engaged in those LLA in both social and educational settings.

SR. Based on the questions in the questionnaire, especially Item 2: 'Because others would think badly of me if I didn't attend English language classes'; Item 7: 'Because I would probably feel guilty if I didn't comply with my instructor's suggestions in learning English'; and Item 8: 'Because I would feel proud if I do continue improving my English language', I wished to use the face-to-face interview as a channel to explore the participants' perceptions about their English language learning in both social and educational settings in the UK. Furthermore, I wished to know the reasons behind their viewpoints. To be precise, I wished to know the kind of motivation they had in their English language learning, whether they had extrinsic motivation or intrinsic motivation, and the reasons why. I therefore composed the interview question as follows:

Interview Question 1: 'Would you describe yourself as the sort of person who is

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learning English because you want to or because you feel there are pressures on you to do so? Please explain your views and how these relate to your experiences so far at this university.'

MS. Based on the questions in the questionnaire, especially Item 1: 'I prefer to avoid an activity involves English when I know that I shall make mistakes when I speak'; Item 4: 'I can always have the chance to improve my English language through practices'; Item 5: 'I cannot change or improve my pronunciation in English through hard work and effort, as my ability for this skill is fixed already at an early age'; Item 7: 'I think that natural ability is very important in learning English'; and Item 8: 'I think everybody can achieve a specific level of English language standard if they want to, but people have to be gifted if they really want to do interpreting and translation', I wished to use the face-to-face interview as a channel to explore the participants' MS about their English language learning in both social and educational settings in the UK. Furthermore, I wished to know the reasons behind their viewpoints. Therefore, I composed the interview question as follows:

> *Interview Question 2*: 'In general, do you feel your English will improve if you work at it or do you feel your English is largely a matter of natural ability? Please explain your view and how it relates to your experiences so far at this university.'

PWB. Based on the questions in the questionnaire, especially Item 2: 'I tend to worry about what other people think of me in English language competence'; Item 3: 'Being happy with myself in English language competence is more important to me than having others approve of me'; Item 5: 'If I were unhappy with my living situation which requires English language competence, I would take effective steps to change it'; and Item 8: 'Maintaining close relationships by communicating in English has been difficult and frustrating for me', I wished to use the face-in-face interview as a channel to explore the

participants' perceptions about their English language learning in both social and educational settings in the UK. I also wished to know the reasons behind those feelings. I therefore composed the interview question as follows:

> *Interview Question 3*: 'How would you describe your feelings when you use English – do you feel confident and happy, or do you feel anxious and worried? Please explain your view and how it relates to your experiences so far at this university.'

PA. Based on the questions in the questionnaire, especially Item 1: 'I am very satisfied with my university studies with the English language as a medium of instruction'; Item 6: 'I find life as a student in the UK very pleasant especially when I can practise English speaking all the time'; Item 7: 'I find it hard to get used to life here in this English-speaking country'; Item 8: 'I find it very difficult to adjust to student life due to the difference in education system between my home country and the UK'; and Item 9: 'I am glad that I came to study here because I can know more about English language and culture'; I wished to use the face-to-face interview as a channel to explore the participants' degree of PA about their English language learning in both social and educational settings in the UK. I also wished to know the reasons behind their feelings. Therefore, I composed the interview question as follows:

> *Interview Question 4*: 'How well do you feel you have adjusted to life at a UK university – are you generally happy here in an English-speaking environment or does this have major drawbacks for you? Please explain your view and how it relates to your experiences so far at this university.'

LLA. Based on all the suggested LLA in the questionnaire, namely, Item 1: 'I practise English with my Chinese friends'; Item 2: 'I join social activities where English is used'; Item 3: 'I make use of English in everyday activities'; Item 4: 'I attend CELT class at the

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university'; Item 5: 'I attend CELT class outside the university'; Item 6: 'I take part in English self-study activities'; Item 7: 'I watch English films / watch English TV programmes / listen to the English radio'; Item 8: 'I read English story books / English newspapers'; Item 9: 'I keep a notebook of new vocabulary that I have learned'; and Item 10: 'I visit English websites / English-speaking forums when I surf the internet', I wished to use the face-to-face interview as a channel to explore the participants' degree of engagement in all of these LLA pertaining to English language learning in both social and educational settings in the UK. I also wished to know the reasons behind those learning experiences. Therefore, I composed the interview question as follows:

Interview Question 5: 'What personal and social activities have you undertaken in order to improve your English? Which activities have improved your English and which have not? Please explain your views and how they relate to your experiences so far at this university.'

2.4.3   Recruitment of Participants

To actualise the study, Chinese master's students at a university in the North of England (UNE) and at a university in the Midlands (UML) were recruited as two sources of convenience sample in the UK. A zero-start situation was created by limiting the inclusion criterion to participants with less than one year's stay in the UK or in another English-speaking country or countries. It should be noted that for both time-points (T1 and T2), recruitment of participants for the questionnaires and the interviews were carried out at UNE, whereas participants at UML were recruited to respond to the questionnaires only.

The cities in which UNE and UML [City(UNE) and City(UML)] are situated are two very different cities in terms of density of population, culture and job market. They therefore represented two different sources of exposure which could help to create two groups of participants who had been exposed to two kinds of environment, and might

represent many Chinese university students in the UK in general. Furthermore, the group of the Chinese students at UNE was at university level, whereas the group of the Chinese students at UML was under vocational training. In this regard, as an advantage, the academic backgrounds of the recruited Chinese students could be diversified after merging the two groups into one set of data in this study. The recruitment of participants was carried out at an on-campus postgraduate college and in postgraduate departments at UNE, and among Business master's degree students at UML, respectively, as the channels for collecting convenience samples.

2.4.4   Sampling of Participants

Questionnaires for Participants at UNE. The convenience sampling method was adopted for the recruitment of participants. UNE(College) is the accommodation area where only postgraduate students are allowed to live, and it contains post-graduate students from various departments at UNE. I could therefore randomly distribute the questionnaires to any Chinese students at UNE(College) whom I encountered as long as they claimed to have been resident in the UK for less than one year. Master's students were chosen based on the available UNE statistics showing that there are around 45% of international postgraduate students (excluding European students who are regarded as home students) studying at UNE, whereas international undergraduate students only form about 11% of the student population (*see* Section 1.3).

As already explained, I matched the academic backgrounds of the participants in the first cohort with that of those in the second cohort. In this way, the effect of the students' academic backgrounds across the entire longitudinal study could be consistent. In the study, the Business, TESOL and IT or Electronics departments at UNE were the major sources of participants for the questionnaires. I did not aim at having exactly the same group of students for the main study, but rather I aimed at two groups of students coming from similar academic backgrounds. This was due to the facts that I needed to

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maintain the anonymity of the participants as well as to minimise the possible dropout rate of the second data collection as they were busy with their preparations for mid-term examinations at the time. In addition, potential participants were not informed before the conduct of the study about the receipt of souvenirs in order to avoid potential bias in the course of quantitative data collection.

Questionnaires for Participants at UML. Using convenience sampling, Business master's degree students were recruited from UML to join the study by completing questionnaires. This decision was based on the unconditional offer of a member of the teaching staff of UML as well as some of his helpful colleagues to make the recruitment possible. Although all of the recruited UML students came from the same major study programme, their data were still applicable in this study because this group of participants mainly served the function of diluting and diversifying the academic backgrounds and the regional effects of the participants in City(UNE). Also, as already explained, the participants were not informed before the study about the receipt of souvenirs in order to avoid potential bias in the course of data collection.

Face-to-face Interviews for Participants at UNE. I purposely recruited participants from various departments at UNE in order to get a balanced picture of Chinese university students in the UK to enable me to explore their PP in English language learning in both social and educational settings in the UK. I also wanted to know the reasons behind those related experiences. Similar to the selection criterion for the participants for the questionnaires, the target participants for the face-to-face interviews were Mainland Chinese who had been resident in the UK or another English-speaking country or countries for less than one year. Master's students were chosen for the reasons stated earlier in the section 'Questionnaires for Participants at UNE'.

This study was designed to gather qualitative data from the same participants in

the first and second face-to-face interviews. To ensure that the qualitative data collection would be more promising in terms of their willingness to participate in the interviews and more likely to be available for the second interview, it was necessary for me to recruit prospective participants through my social network of peers at UNE. In particular because at T2, it would be a very busy time for the prospective participants as they would have to prepare for their mid-term examinations at the same time.

Reasons for the Recruitment of Mainland Chinese. Hong Kong Chinese and Taiwan Chinese students were not included in the main study because they have very different English learning curriculums and environments compared with Mainland Chinese students. Hong Kong students usually start English language learning at the age of two with approximately 25% of them having the opportunity to enter English-as-a-medium-of-instruction secondary schools later on. This is very different from Mainland Chinese who start English learning at around the age of ten, and they treat English as an individual academic subject rather than a medium of instruction. Although Taiwan Chinese children also begin to learn English when they reach the age of ten, they use other types of textbook and have a stronger English language learning culture compared with their Mainland Chinese counterparts as a consequence of Taiwan's political history and contexts.

Gender Differences. I recognised that gender differences might have effects in the main study, particularly in the field of the use of language learning strategies (Ehrman & Oxford, 1989; Green & Oxford, 1995; Oxford, 1993; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Tran, 1988), although this might not happen in all cases (Wharton, 2000). As a matter of fact, there are more female Chinese students taking courses than male at UNE and UML, so the profile of Chinese students there is overwhelmingly female. For this reason, the samples in this current study are also overwhelmingly female. In other words, many more female participants were recruited than males. As a consequence, the current study was

carried out by analysing a total group without a gender split in the data presentations and analyses.

2.4.5 Rating Scale

A scale contains items combined to form scores. The Likert scale is one such scale (Oppenheim, 1992) in which participants are asked to indicate whether they, for example, 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'neither agree nor disagree', 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' with a series of statements. Each response item is assigned a score and the overall scores indicate the depth and direction of, for example, pain, discomfort, depression or other experiences of interest. Items on these scales are not necessarily formulated in question form, but are more commonly provided as statements to which participants are asked to respond. However, the extent to which those scales are able to measure a particular experience or area could be questionable (Snaith, 1993). A researcher is free to devise a scale in accordance with his or her knowledge on an experience of interest but the scale's validity and reliability have to be subjected to stringent tests in research studies so that the scale concerned can be formally recognised and made reference to.

In the main study, the same set of questionnaires was delivered to the participants at UNE and UML. It consisted of a total of eight pages, mostly in the form of tables (Appendix III). A six-point Likert scale was employed for measuring the PP variables of SR, MS, PWB and PA (from 'Strongly disagree' to 'Strongly agree'), whereas a four-point Likert scale was used for measuring the frequency of engagement in the ten LLA (from 'Not at all' to 'Always') and the level of their LP (from 'Not proficient' to 'Native-like'). The reason for using a six-point scale and a four-point scale was that the participants could have no opportunities to exercise their potential central tendency by choosing the neutral point, such as point '3' as on a five-point Likert scale.

2.5   Ethical Issues

A consideration of the ethical issues in any research study involving human participants is always a matter of great importance. Issues of anonymity and confidentiality, prior consent, dignity, potential distress or harm, as well as data issue and management have to be well addressed (Christakis, 1992; Morse, 1991; Punch, 2005).

Anonymity and Confidentiality. Everyone has the right to protect their own privacy and many research participants understandably do not wish to have their information, including their backgrounds, views and attitudes, to be revealed and made known to the public. Brown (1993) stated that control of personal information signifies the importance of autonomy as well as people's personal right to protect their social vulnerabilities and identities. Therefore, all research data have to be collected, stored, used and presented in a way that can guarantee that nobody but the participants themselves knows the origin of the source. By ensuring this in the current study, even I was not able to identify the source after the data collection process. In order to safeguard the participants' privacy, I ensured anonymity by not naming the sources of the information acquired in this main study.

Even so, it was difficult to guarantee that all the designs and data collection methods used in the main study were kept anonymous in terms of the participants' identities. For instance, I met the participants face-to-face and briefed them about the important detail of the study. There are similar situations in which researchers must inevitably know the real identities of participants, and at the same time, the participants cannot hide their own identity completely. For instance, when the focus is on classroom observation, some related source of data would be unavoidably recognised during and after data collection. In this situation, confidentiality should be guaranteed wherever necessary before the research studies are carried out. This implies that all research data

collected from participants are only made known to researchers and the restricted number of helpers in any research studies. Nonetheless, there are some arguments against the dilemma of ensuring confidentiality and allowing researchers to have access to the whole picture of study including its participants in their research work.

Informed Consent. Informed consent should be sought from every participant before the conduct of study. Polit and Beck (2004) provided some ground rules for seeking participants' consent. Researchers have to provide true and sufficient information about the rationale of the research study before requesting prospective participants to join the study. Informed consent should be obtained by the use of a language suitable for the recruited participants' thorough understanding in a particular medium such as oral, written or video. In addition, participants must be able to reserve the right to give such voluntary help or withdraw from the project without any informed consent.

The Present Study. Informed consent was sought formally and individually before the administration of the questionnaires and the interviews. All the participants received a cover letter on top of the questionnaire (*see* Appendices I and II; and III) in which the purpose of the research was briefly explained and an appropriate use of data was formalised over my signature. Confidentiality and anonymity were emphasised in the cover letter, so the participants were not required to fill in their names on the questionnaires. For the face-to-face interviews, the participants were reassured that all the audio-recordings taken during the interviews with their names and personal information would be immediately destroyed after the main study. In both questionnaires and face-to-face interviews, the participants had the right to terminate their involvement at anytime if they wished to without any consequences.

2.6   Reliability and Validity

Reliability in Quantitative Research. Reliability should essentially be ensured in this study because the research tool used must give the same information when it is applied to different people (inter-rater reliability) or at a different period of time (test-retest reliability). To illustrate this, the results generated on a Saturday morning should be more or less the same as those of a Monday evening. Internal consistency in research means the existence of linkage among all the collected data that could be found from a single research test or questionnaire. In addition, the internal consistency of a questionnaire should be measurable by statistical methods with a related index, such as the 'split-half' test or Cronbach's alpha coefficient (Cronbach, 1951). In that circumstance, participants' responses to a particular question are randomly divided into two sets and the total scores and correlations of each set are separately calculated. Another more sophisticated method is to divide the data in half as many times as possible and then the average correlations among them are then generated.

There are some limitations to the reliability measurement methodology; for instance, test-retest reliability could be flawed when the experiences of participants in the first test affect their responses in the second (Carmines & Zeller, 1979). There are other unpredictable factors in a study, such as the effect of environmental influence and the psychological status of participants during the study, which might contribute some discrepancies in the conduct of questionnaires or interviews and eventually influence the results of the research study (Bryman & Cramer, 2005). These issues could be said to be the flaws hidden behind the external validity (Robinson, 2005).

Validity in Quantitative Research. Research is said to be valid when the concept which is claimed to be measured is actually the one that the research is measuring (Punch, 2005). There are two kinds of validity measurement, external and internal. External validity ensures that the findings could be reapplied to other situations and other people. In other

words, the results generated in a study containing representative items for a given situation and time could be generalised to predict the situation of other similar cases (Black, 1999). In short, the population recruited in a study should be representative of the entire appropriate population at that time. In addition, the participants should be recruited according to the relevant variables in the study, for example, gender and age. Internal validity, on the other hand, helps to explain the possible reasons behind the outcomes of the study while suppressing other undesirable reasons.

Reliability in Qualitative Research. Reliability means the trustworthiness of the procedures and the collected data (Stiles, 1993). Similar results could be expected to be obtained after repeating the same procedures again under different circumstances (Bryman, 2012). For instance, to make sure that there has been no bias created by a researcher, another independent researcher is asked to help to verify the compatibility of the findings and their corresponding analysis. This is called inter-rater reliability (Weber, 1990). Another way to enhance reliability in research could be the technique which I used in this current study. I documented detailed notes to record the procedures involved in the work in such a way that the steps could be easily traced and verified. Moreover, the use of computerised data analysis packages, such as NVivo (QSR), can enhance reliability (Roberts & Woods, 2001) by applying the built-in functions of the programme (Robson, 1994). These programmes can, however, cause the risk of separating the data collected from the context of a study as the programme might have somehow over-emphasised the importance of standardisation (Burton, 2000). In addition, reliability could be further enhanced by increasing the technical accuracy of the audio-recording and note taking implemented in this current study (*see* Sections 2.4.2 and 2.9 for related detail). Furthermore, to enhance the reliability of qualitative data, forward and backward translations of data could help me to gain a better understanding of the implied meaning during the interpretation process (*see* Section 2.9 for the detail).

Validity in Qualitative Research. Validity signifies how well a tool can measure the items under examination (Punch, 2005). The most difficult issue that needs to be tackled in qualitative research is the bias of researchers as they can tend to collect and record data selectively and then interpret the data according to their personal perspectives (Johnson, 1997). With the face-to-face interviews, one of the most common methods used in qualitative research, I have presumed that the participants' self-perceptions and self-reporting were accurately and honestly presented and that the data gathered should therefore be valid (Burns & Grove, 1993). However, it is possible that data could be distorted in the process of analysis and interpretation based on researcher's understanding of a participant's expression. Experienced researchers who have much knowledge in the related field might tend to overlook the 'noises' and ambiguities in data. They might preset a specific direction in their research due to their existing knowledge of the field (Burns & Grove, 1993).

2.7   The Pilot Study

All the participants in the pilot study came from UNE and they were recruited through my social network of peers at UNE. The subject group contained twenty-three Chinese master's students from various departments. They all managed to complete the questionnaires within a day. In addition, five Chinese master's students from various departments came for the pilot run of the face-to-face interviews.

The main purpose of the pilot study was to check whether the Chinese wording including Chinese grammar used in the questionnaire and the interview questions was understandable and appropriate. Trends of the data would not be observed in the pilot study. Since I come from Hong Kong, I needed to double-check the use of Chinese words with Mainland Chinese participants to make sure that the intended meanings were the same as those which the participants received. A great deal of feedback was received after the pilot

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study. To further refine the questionnaire and interview questions, I sought help from my Taiwanese peer, who is an MA (Chinese Language) graduate in Taiwan, to help me to proofread the translated Chinese questionnaire and interview questions. Many changes were made after the forward translation, done by my Taiwanese peer, and the backward translation, done by me.

Having discussed and verified the text once again with my Taiwanese peer and other Mainland Chinese peers, I outlined the changes made in the Chinese version (indicated by the underlined sections in the English version) in some of the questions in the questionnaire as set out as follows:

Ten LLA

Item 3:'I make use of English in everyday <u>activities</u>.'

In Item 4: 'I attend CELT <u>class</u> at the university.'

Item 9:'I keep a <u>notebook</u> of new vocabulary that I have learned.'

Item 10:'I visit English websites / English-speaking forums when I surf the <u>internet</u>.'

SR

Item 4: 'Because I believe my <u>instructor</u>'s suggestions will help me to learn English effectively.'

Item 8: 'Because I would feel <u>proud</u> if I do continue improving my English language.'

Item 9: 'Because it's <u>a</u> challenge to really understand what <u>native</u> speakers say in English.'

MS

Item 1: 'I prefer to avoid an <u>activity </u>which involves English when I know that I will make mistakes when I speak.'

Item 2: 'Irrespective of <u>how</u> bad a mistake is when I use English, I can <u>always</u> learn

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something from it.'

Item 5:'I cannot change or improve my pronunciation in English through hard work and effort, as my ability for this skill is <u>fixed</u> already at an early age.'

Item 7: 'I think that <u>natural</u> ability is very important in learning English.'

Item 8: 'I think everybody can achieve a <u>certain level</u> of English language standard if they want to, but people have to be gifted if they really want to do interpreting and translation.'

PWB

Item 1:'I am <u>not afraid</u> to voice my opinions in English, even when they are in opposition to the opinions of most people.'

Item 3: 'Being happy with myself in English language competence is <u>more important</u> to me than having others approve of me.'

Item 4: 'I do not fit very well with the English-speaking people and the <u>community</u> around me.'

Item 5:'If I were unhappy with my <u>living situation</u> which requires English language competence, I would take effective steps to change it.'

Item 6:'I am not interested in activities related to English language learning that will expand my <u>horizons</u>.'

Item 9: 'I have a <u>sense of direction</u> and purpose in life when learning the English language.'

PA

Item 2:'What I miss here is someone to talk to freely <u>from time to time</u> in my home town dialect / Mandarin / Cantonese.'

Item 4:'I would prefer <u>studying</u> somewhere else instead of <u>studying</u> in the UK.'

Item 5:'If I feel blue, my <u>Chinese friends</u> in the UK will help me to <u>get out of it</u>.'

Item 7:'I find it hard to get used to <u>life here in this English-speaking country</u>.'

Item 8:'I find it very difficult to <u>adjust</u> to student life due to the difference in

education system between my home country and the UK.'

Item 9:'I am <u>glad</u> that I came to study here because I can know more about English language and culture.'

In addition to the changes detailed above, checking the reliability and validity was performed after the pilot study. Cronbach's Alpha was generated by SPSS from the collected data in order to check the reliability of the questionnaire. As shown in Table 1, the Cronbach's Alpha of the PP variables, SR (AR and CR), MS, PWB and PA were 0.80, 0.60, 0.64, 0.65, 0.63 respectively, which could be considered modestly acceptable.

Table 1. Mean, Standard Deviation and Cronbach's Alpha of Five PP Variables in the Pilot Study (N = 23)

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Cronbach's Alpha
Autonomous Regulation	4.72	1.18	0.80
Controlled Regulation	3.06	1.04	0.60
Mindset	4.26	1.14	0.64
Psychological Well-being	4.23	1.09	0.65
Psychological Adjustment	4.38	1.24	0.63

To explain how the questionnaire materials were sourced from writers with evaluation and modifications made by me, and subsequently discussed with and validated by my supervisor, I have provided full detail in Section 2.4.1 in order to present a full picture.

Since both the interviewing and note taking work were carried out exclusively by me, there was no inter-rater discrepancy in the comprehension of the participants' expressions and the interactions between the participants and myself throughout the conduct of the face-to-face interviews. In this regard, consistency could be ensured in the note taking and note translating process. The pattern for questioning was maintained the same throughout the interviews, and corresponding follow-up questions were raised when necessary. Again, consistency could be highly guaranteed in this case and the translated

meaning of the notes would not deviate too much from the participants' intended meaning (*see* Section 2.9 for the detail). The pilot run of the face-to-face interviews confirmed the smooth running of the proposed process of interviewing and the original wordings of the five questions appeared to be suitable. Hence, no amendment was necessary.

2.8   Data Collection Process

Collection of Questionnaires. The questionnaires were distributed at the beginning of the first term and at the end of the second term in the same academic year, that is, in early October 2012 (T1) and in late February 2013 (T2) respectively. Two groups of students were recruited, one from UNE and the other from UML (*see* Sections 2.4.3 and 2.4.4 for other details).

The first data collection was carried out at UNE(College), an on-campus college of UNE, and around 100 questionnaire forms were successfully collected from Chinese master's degree students aged 22 to 24. I used a convenience sampling approach to deliver the questionnaires through the UNE(College) Formal Tutorial Meetings in the Welcoming Week. There were a total of nine tutorial meetings held by four tutors in two assigned rooms at UNE(College) over two consecutive days. Owing to the orientation nature of meetings at the beginning of the academic year, most students were interested in attending and in familiarising themselves with their tutors and fellow students at the assigned time slot on one of the two days.

As this was a golden opportunity for me to meet up with a large group of Chinese students at UNE, I took the initiative to contact the four tutors who were responsible for the meetings through emails and phone calls. In this way, I was able to obtain the four tutors' prior consent to enter the meeting rooms on those two days. As scheduled, I met the students in the meeting rooms, and briefed them about this main study together with my invitation to have them joined this main study.

On the two designated tutorial meeting days, my two helpers and I were waiting

at the entrance of the two assigned rooms in order to enter the venue and hand out the questionnaires immediately after the sequential tutorial meetings. Chairs and tables were provided in the meeting rooms so that the participants could be well served in a comfortable condition for staying behind and completing the questionnaires.

The questionnaires were distributed to the participants face-to-face. With the help of the four tutors and the two helpers in briefing the students about this main study in Mandarin, the first language of Chinese students, the majority of them voluntarily stayed behind in the meeting room to complete the self-completed questionnaires which took around twenty minutes to finish. The two helpers then collected the completed questionnaires. Without the participants' prior awareness, souvenirs were given to them immediately after the completion of the questionnaires as a token of my thanks to them. They were not informed about receiving these souvenirs before completing the questionnaires in order to avoid any bias in the data collection process.

It was expected that there would be some discrepancies in the response rate of the questionnaires and the accuracy of data delivered by the participants in the different meeting rooms. The response rate might vary from one group to another due to the timing of the distribution of the questionnaires. For instance, the participants might tend to be in a hurry to leave the meeting room if they were in the last tutorial group because the meeting time was close to a fire safety talk session scheduled to be held at UNE(College). They were therefore understandably not expected to offer help at that point. In addition, if the meetings looked likely to overrun, even to a slight extent, the tutors would not allow the participants to stay behind for the questionnaires as the next group of students was waiting to enter the room for their tutorial meeting. When they were asked to leave the room, it was reasonable that the number of participants would drop as they would not feel comfortable about completing the questionnaires in the corridor or going to another room to do it. Also, the rooms were not located near to each other, so the two helpers and I needed to rush from one place to another when two meetings unexpectedly ended at the

same time. To address these contingencies, some logistical arrangements were made, for instance, the students were asked to go to UNE(College) canteen, a spacious area with chairs and tables, to complete the questionnaires. By this means, it was hoped that the chance for the students to voluntarily stay behind after those tutorial meetings would greatly increase.

For the second data collection at UNE, I sought help through my social network of peers at the university in order to conduct the study systematically. As anticipated, around 100 questionnaires were successfully collected from the participants. The cohort of participants for the second data collection was based on the combination of participants for the first data collection. The participants in the first data collection were grouped according to which departments they came from, and were then matched with a similar ratio of participants by department for the second data collection. Since the data were collected anonymously, it would be likely that not the same participants completed questionnaires in the second data collection.

I successfully sought help from my peers who were studying in various departments such as Management, TESOL and Engineering programmes. Each of my peers was given ten to twenty questionnaires. All of them attempted to approach their corresponding departmental peers in their own ways so as to obtain completed questionnaires. Again, souvenirs were given to the respondents immediately after the completion of the questionnaires without their prior awareness to avoid undue bias in the completion of the questionnaires.

Similar to the first data collection, some discrepancies in the response rate and accuracy of the questionnaires were expected. The first group of data was collected from participants who had just arrived in City(UNE) for their master's studies for their first time. They were therefore just about to get used to their new living environment in the Western cultural context. It was predicted that they might not be psychologically stable or prepared, and therefore not be ready to offer help by participating in the study. Moreover,

those students did not actually know much about me and they were under no obligation to help me to carry out my research study. The second data collection was carried out through my social network of peers. It was understandable that the participants would tend to be willing to offer help as their fellow students or classmates would have known each other for more than a term. Also, they understood more about the rationale of research studies in general and the difficulties involved, so they would be more likely to offer help as they knew that they would encounter similar scenarios in their own future research-related activities.

The same questionnaires were distributed at UML for the sake of diversifying the academic backgrounds and regional effects of the participants in the research study. The teaching staff of the university concerned generously supported the study. Formal permission to carry out this study, including the distribution of the questionnaires in the classroom, was sought by email communication. After communicating with the relevant members of staff, I was allowed to enter the classroom after a lecture in order to distribute the questionnaires to the participants.

The first data collection at UML was carried out in early October 2012. I was taken to a class with many Chinese students who were majoring in business studies. After being introduced to the class with the help of the teaching staff, I briefly described the purpose of my research and then requested the Chinese students to stay behind in the classroom after the lecture in order to complete the questionnaire. Around 50 questionnaires were collected within the day.

In late February 2013, I went to UML again for the second data collection. I was informed that the class structure in the second term was very different from that in the first term because the class size was much smaller than before. In this case, I needed to collect data from more than one class. To solve this problem, the teaching staff asked me to leave behind blank questionnaires and a corresponding number of souvenirs. They would then help me by distributing them to Chinese students in various classes. The

completed questionnaires were sent back to me by post in the following two weeks. Eventually, 50 completed questionnaires were successfully collected.

Conduct of Face-to-face Interviews. Since this was a longitudinal research study, a group of Chinese master's students from various departments at UNE were invited twice for two separate face-to-face interviews which were scheduled for early October 2012 and late February 2013. I sought help from my peers to recruit suitable participants.

The face-to-face interviews were mostly conducted at the participants' flats or another convenient venue that could provide a quiet, stable and uninterrupted environment for the participants to think about and answer the questions without disturbance. In the event, most of the participants could fully concentrate on answering the questions or follow-up questions and gave reflective responses accordingly. Each interview lasted for approximately 30 minutes. As with the pilot interviews, the participants were free to choose Cantonese, Mandarin or English, or a mixed code, as their preferred language for the interview. The face-to-face interview started after I had introduced the main theme and the purpose of the study. Confidentiality was guaranteed to the participants before the interview began. At the same time, they were informed that the whole interview process would be audio-recorded, with their consent, for subsequent data analyses (*see* Section 2.4.2). The second interviews were held in late February 2013 with the same batch of participants.

Most of the participants were observed to be in a relaxed state. They talked insightfully and expressively throughout the interviews because the atmosphere of the interviews was pleasant and relaxed throughout. Their responses were made in a spontaneous way with no anxiety elicited. The rationale of the main study was explained to them and they were informed that they would not receive any feedback after the interviews.

2.9   Data Analysis Process

Quantitative research employing a questionnaire uses closed questions. This is not only to provide a structure for a subsequent interview in qualitative research mode, but also to provide choices for participants to make according to the preset response categories, such as a range from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree' with corresponding scores attached. Hence, the collected data are numerical in nature and can be conveniently collated for subsequent data analysis. On the other hand, qualitative research such as by interview allows the exploration of values, meanings, beliefs, thoughts, experiences and feelings that are characteristics of the phenomenon under investigation (Halcomb & Andrew, 2005). In this paradigm, data analysis relies very much on verbatim transcription of the interview data as the initial data management. However, in view of the costs incurred in verbatim transcription in respect of time, effort and money, as well as the potential for human errors of various kinds, there are arguments against such a practice. In this regard, the costs have to be weighed against the potential benefits of making a verbatim transcription as part of interview data management. To address these issues, Halcomb and Davidson's (2006) analysis of the case for and the case against verbatim transcription are worth studying by any researcher for the data management of their qualitative research. The two writers also suggested using an alternative process for managing interview data in addition to using a conventional verbatim transcription technique provided that the underlying philosophy of the methodology of a specific investigation has been adequately matched with this strategy.

Quantitative Analysis. After obtaining data from the questionnaires completed by the participants, I entered all the data into an electronic file to work with the specialised software SPSS (version 19) for data analysis. Given the nature of the data collected, the information obtained from the scores allowed running the appropriate tests for data processing. As this is a longitudinal study, data collected at UNE and UML would be

merged together to form two big groups at two time-points, T1 and T2. Descriptive statistics, such as frequency counts, means and standard deviations, were employed in the data analysis process and T-tests and correlations were used for subsequent data analysis. It may be argued that the use of a non-probability sample such as the convenience sampling in this study does not comply with the fundamental assumption of statistical tests (Cohen *et al.*, 2011; Bryman, 2012). Nonetheless, it has also been recognised that educational research can rarely allow costly randomisation (Mertens, 1998). In this regard, it is a common practice for researchers to employ statistical tests to deal with non-probability samples. Furthermore, in this study, key factors have been considered in sampling in the hope that fairly representative samples could provide data on major variables exhibiting near-normal distribution. A T-test is often preferred in practice as it is a more powerful technique given that equal differences between scores within each scale can be assumed. The level of significance for this study was set at $p<0.01$. Correlation tests were run to examine the relationships between all the PP variables, the relationships between participants' PP variables and their perceived engagements of LLA, and the relationships between participants' PP variables and their perceived LP. Cronbach's alpha is used for measuring internal consistency in order to see how a set of items is closely related as a group for each variable. In this current study, I made use of the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of each PP variable to verify that its questionnaire items were good enough to support the PP variables concerned.

Qualitative Analysis. Interviews have been regarded as a common method for a qualitative approach to data collection in a range of disciplines such as sociology and health care as participants and researchers can have the advantage of an interactive dialogue (Burnard, 1994; Fasick, 2001; Fielding, 1994; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003; Wellard & McKenna, 2001). Regarding the management of interview data, many researchers have reported that they transcribed audio-recorded interviews into written text

for subsequent analysis, but detail about the data management and the actual process of transcription are very often not sufficiently described (Poland, 1995; Wellard & McKenna, 2001). As well as reproducing spoken words from an audio-recorded interview into written text, various researchers have argued the need to incorporate non-verbal cues such as silences, body language and emotional signs into the transcribed text (MacLean *et al.*, 2004; Wellard & McKenna, 2001). Conventionally, the transcription of spoken words from an audio-recorded interview into written text refers to verbatim transcription in which the written text contains word-for-word replication of the audio-recorded words (Poland, 1995). That being the case, Poland (1995) posited that accuracy of transcription is at issue given the "inter-subjectivity of human communication, and transcription as an interpretative activity" (*ibid.* p. 292). A transcriber plays a pivotal role in the process of transcription (MacLean *et al.*, 2004). As transcription is part of the management of the data analysis process, it should be clearly described in the methodology of a project (Wellard & McKenna, 2001) so that the underlying philosophy of the methodology of a specific investigation can appear to have been well supported.

As stated above, verbatim transcription should be combined with recording of participants' non-verbal behaviour which has been regarded as a foundation for the reliability, validity and honesty of qualitative data collection (MacLean *et al.*, 2004; Seale & Silverman, 1997; Wengraf, 2001). Rarely do researchers choose the use of 'selective' transcription, and discussions about how this is done are limited (Gilbert, 2008). Nor have any researchers succeeded incredibly demonstrating that the creation of a verbatim transcription of an audio-recorded interview is superior to other methods of interview data management (Britten, 1995). Halcomb and Davidson (2006, p. 40) stated that "in research underpinned by theoretical frameworks such as phenomenology, grounded theory … closeness between researchers and the text is critical to the research design and philosophical tenets of the methodology". They therefore suggested that " … a verbatim record of the interview is clearly beneficial in facilitating data analysis by bringing

researchers closer to their data" (*ibid.* p. 40). In the circumstance of a generic type of mixed-method research, however, the 'relationships and closeness' between researchers and their data are not regarded as critical. Halcomb and Davidson (2006) argued that the case for verbatim transcription is that it could be used to provide an avenue for audit purposes by supervisors or independent assessors.

However, in view of the significant potential for errors in verbatim transcription (MacLean *et al.*, 2004; Poland, 1995), cross-checking should be applied to the original audio-recording rather than relying on a potentially error-filled verbatim transcript (Fasick, 2001; Poland, 1995). Even when transcription was carried out by professional transcribers, a study has reported that around 60% of the passages contained significant transcriber errors (Poland, 1995). It might be argued that researchers could carry out the task by themselves having regard to their first-hand knowledge of the interview and the process involved, such as verbal and non-verbal transactions with the participants. So the claimed benefits must be weighed against the need to possess the advanced clerical skills required for properly undertaking an accurate transcription (Halcomb & Davidson, 2006).

Clearly there are significant costs related to verbatim transcription in terms of time, physical resources and human resources. Britten (1995) reported that it requires six to seven hours of transcription for each hour of audio-recorded interview. Many researchers accept that technical dilemmas are associated with the time-consuming process of verbatim transcription (Fasick, 2001; Wellard & McKenna, 2001). Human errors of various kinds are not uncommon, such as the misinterpretation of contents, classes and cultural differences, not to mention language errors of various kinds (Easton *et al.*, 2000; Gilbert, 2008; MacLean *et al.*, 2004). Such additional factors would add substantive time and human costs to the research process (Wellard & McKenna, 2001). To address these issues, the use of written field notes has been reported to be superior to the exclusive use of verbatim transcription based on audio-recording (Fasick, 2001; Wengraf, 2001). Other researchers have suggested keeping a reflexive journal in order to

carry out a sound reflective process which could in turn enhance researchers' capacity to support their reflexive attitude (Tufford & Newman, 2012). Also, the challenges inherent in verbatim transcription and subsequent coding reduce the value of the practice of data collection (Fasick, 2001). Wengraf (2001) suggested the significance of memoing and on-site note taking to facilitate the reflection of researchers' perceptions and interpretations in the course of listening to the audio-recording of an interview.

Given that the interpretations and generation of meanings from interview data are the major aims of transcription, the genuine need for verbatim transcription in all qualitative research projects is definitely questionable (Halcomb & Davidson, 2006). In this context, there are definite merits in audio-recording interview data (Fasick, 2001):

- It could be used for a subsequent review of an interviewer's performance;
- It assists interviewers to fill in gaps in their field notes and check the connection between the notes and the actual exchanges;
- It allows interviewers to have self-reflection as to whether the meanings generated by participants are sufficiently represented and thus reduce interviewer bias;
- It acts as a piece of evidence to certify the actual conduct of interviews and that the interview data are truly and accurately represented by a researcher as reported;
- It avoids the likelihood of having to contact participants if there is a need to verify data authenticity;
- It could be referred to for clarification of intended meaning should there be any ambiguity of meanings or areas of inconsistencies arising;
- It allows researchers to look into fine detail of the conversation such as voice and tone of participants to assist in the finer analysis of interview data; and
- It provides researchers with illustrative examples for a report write-up or for publication.

Several researchers have supported an assertion that the use of analysis techniques such as thematic or content analysis which seek to identify common ideas from interview

data actually does not require verbatim transcripts. This is because verbatim transcription is only one of the methods for capturing interview data (Seale & Silverman, 1997; Silverman, 1993; Van Teijlingen & Ireland, 2003). Halcomb and Davidson (2006) proposed an alternative method of data management for those investigations which do not need a specific closeness between researchers and the interview data. They suggested that a reflexive, repetitive process of data management can be practised, as presented in the following steps:

Step 1. Audio-recording of an interview and concurrent note taking – this is to note down in broad terms the researcher's impression of interactions with participants, which will allow the researcher to go into greater detail afterwards.

Step 2. Reflective journaling immediately after interview – while the memory remains fresh, this is to allow researchers to review their field notes so as to enrich their initial impression of the interactions with participants including their major ideas or concepts raised.

Step 3. Listening to the audio-recording and amending field notes and observation notes, as necessary – this is to let researchers check against their field notes following step 2 and amend them accordingly.

Step 4. Preliminary content analysis – this process is intended to allow researchers to elicit common themes from the interview data. This could be done manually or through the use of various software packages such as NVivo.

Step 5. Secondary content analysis – this is to let a second researcher (for example, a researcher's supervisor) review what the researcher has done in terms of audio-recording review and field notes. Subsequently, the development of themes from the interview data could be validated.

Step 6. Thematic review – this final stage is to enable researchers to review what has been achieved in step 5 and to make changes where necessary to the

established themes. Relistening to the audio-recording serves the purpose of identifying good examples for better illustration of the meaning of themes from the participants' perceptions.

Clearly there are advantages in using this six-step data management technique for this current study. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), these advantages are that the process is much less time-consuming and much less labour-intensive, easy to learn and flexible to apply. It allows the summarisation of large amount of data, makes it convenient to highlight similarities and differences across data, and helps the researcher to identify consistencies and inconsistencies across data. There are, however, some disadvantages, as noted by Braun and Clarke (2006). These could be issues arising from the quality of the conduct of analyses or the formulation of research questions, the data being too broad leading to difficulties in focusing on the right aspects of the data; difficulties in retaining a sense of continuity, and contradiction between individual items of data, unlike the narrative approach.

In this current study, I had taken into consideration all of the rationales and arguments set out above regarding interview data management and the underlying philosophy of the methodology of this study. I decided that I would perform audio-recording of the interviews, and concurrent onsite note taking, reflexive journaling, observations and all the other steps of interview data management described in the six steps above. As Cantonese is my first language, I was confident that I would handle well those interviews which were conducted in Cantonese. Regarding those participants who spoke in Mandarin, I could seek help from my Mainland Chinese peer who comes from Guangdong and both his parents are Mandarin and Cantonese speaking. Hence, with the help of my Guangdong peer, I was able to obtain accurately translated expressions as given by those Mandarin-speaking participants following the audio-recording of the interviews. Based on the field notes which I had jotted down, all the essential Cantonese and Mandarin verbal exchanges were translated into English and then my Guangdong

peer offered help again in double-checking all of the points made by re-listening to the audio-recordings of the interviews together with me for a second time. In this way I was able to make all the amendments necessary. Clarifications of intended meanings were therefore achieved and areas of inconsistency were considerably minimised.

For step 4 in the six-step interview data management process, I used NVivo (Gibbs, 2002) to help me to carry out a preliminary contents analysis of the data with a view to generating themes and sub-themes from the interview data. Using NVivo helped me to examine possible relationships between themes and sub-themes and enabled me to index segments of text to particular themes, linking interview notes to coding and performing complex search-and-retrieve operations. It should be emphasised at this juncture that NVivo could not make any kind of judgement for me. Rather, this software enabled me to work efficiently and effectively with large amount of written text and the subsequent complex coding in the process of interview data analysis. With the help of NVivo and based on my understanding and interpretations in the interviews, various comments made by the participants were highlighted and put into the five major categories, with one question per category (*see* Appendix IV). In addition, after I had gone through the six-step data management process described above, the compiled interview data were further divided into nine sub-categories with their corresponding items identified in each sub-category. In this way, the results could be precisely and concisely presented.

2.10   Limitations

I have recognised the advantages of the chosen methodological elements in the implementation of this main study. Even so, some limitations still existed, and must be accounted for and carefully addressed in the course of the conduct of this study, particularly in the data presentation and subsequent analyses.

There were a total of 349 participants involved in data provision: 319 participants

for the questionnaires and 30 participants for the face-to-face interviews in this longitudinal study at two time-points. The number of Chinese master's students recruited might well represent an acceptable sample size in terms of understanding their perceptions and views in the study period. Improvement could always be made by recruiting an even larger group of participants for a research study. From the perspective of a mixed-method research strategy, the sample size for this current study was already good enough and manageable for me to be able to fulfil the main aim of this study.

Owing to the paucity of related literature, I experienced great difficulties in sourcing directly applicable instruments for data gathering in the assessment of the self-reported PP variables, LLA and LP of the participants recruited for this current study. I did, however, successfully seek out relevant published papers for the evaluation, modification and validation of question items for the questionnaire and face-to-face interview questions adopted for this main study (*see* Sections 2.4.1 and 2.4.2 for the details).

I have already stated my recognition that gender differences might have effects on the main study, particularly in areas of language learning strategies (Ehrman & Oxford, 1989; Green & Oxford, 1995; Oxford, 1993; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Tran, 1988) although this might not happen in all cases (Wharton, 2000). As a matter of fact, there are more female Chinese students taking courses than males at UNE and UML, so the students are overwhelmingly female, and correspondingly the samples in this study were also overwhelmingly female. In other words, many more female participants were recruited than males. The study was therefore carried out by analysing a total group without any gender split in the data presentations and analyses. This potential limitation could feasibly be addressed in future similar studies.

In the conduct of the face-to-face interviews, as well as being time-consuming for the participants, I experienced other challenges. For example, there were some participants who expressed negative emotions in the interviews, or some participants were unwilling to go into detail when answering particular follow-up questions. To

address this potential limitation, I had prepared some other follow-up questions in such a way that the participants could respond appropriately to them.

CHAPTER 3 QUESTIONNAIRES – RESULTS AND ANALYSES

Two sets of data were collected, in October 2012 (T1) and in late February 2013 (T2) respectively. The first data collection was carried out at the university accommodation area at UNE and on campus at UML, and the second data collection was carried out at UNE through my social network of peers as well as on campus at UML. The results and analyses of the qualitative data gathered in the face-to-face interviews will be presented in Chapter 4.

As pointed out in Section 2.10, I have taken notice that gender differences might have effects in the main study such as in areas of language learning strategies (Ehrman & Oxford, 1989; Green & Oxford, 1995; Oxford, 1993; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Tran, 1988) although that might not happen in some cases (Wharton, 2000). As a matter of fact, there are more female Chinese students taking courses than male at UNE and UML. In this regard, the profile of Chinese students is overwhelmingly female. For this reason, the samples in this current study were also overwhelmingly female. In other words, many more female participants were recruited than males. As a consequence, the study was carried out by analysing a total group without a gender split in the data presentations and analyses.

Questionnaires. In the first data collection at UNE, the questionnaires were delivered within an enclosed area where the participants were asked to stay behind after having an informal meeting with the college tutors. In the second data collection at UNE, questionnaires were distributed through my network of peers, and at the same time the participants' affiliated departments were matched with those of the first data set. Therefore, specific numbers of questionnaires were given to my peers according to the departments to which they belonged, and then they used their own channels to seek their friends' help to complete all the questionnaires (*see* Section 2.8 for further details). In the first data collection, 120 questionnaires were distributed of which 101 were completed,

and by departments, the numbers of questionnaires collected were: Business, 37 participants; English and Education, 28 participants; Engineering, 21 participants; others, 15 participants. Hence, the response rate at T1 was 84.2%. In the second data collection, 114 questionnaires were distributed and all of them were completed. By departments, the numbers of the questionnaires collected were: Business, 41 participants; English and Education, 33 participants; Engineering, 25 participants; others, 15 participants. Hence, the response rate at T2 was 100%.

Having sought prior approval from UML, I gained access to the UML classroom to distribute the questionnaires with the help of the UML teaching staff. In the first data collection, since the questionnaires were distributed within the classroom, the participants were asked to stay behind voluntarily to complete the questionnaires before they left the venue. Fifty-five questionnaires were distributed of which 51 were completed. Hence, the response rate at T1 was 92.7%. In the second data collection, the questionnaires were distributed with the help of the UML teaching staff in my absence. Fifty-three questionnaires were distributed and they were all completed. Hence, the response rate at T2 was 100% (*see* Section 2.8 for further details).

The first sets of data collected at UNE and UML were merged together in order to take advantage of the effect of participants' diverse backgrounds, including their academic backgrounds, socio-economic status and residential differences based on their regional origins. The results and interpretations obtained should therefore be the combined effects of the data collected at UNE and UML with the participants coming from these two universities. Souvenirs were given without their prior knowledge as a token of thanks to them for their participation, so no bias could occur because of this gesture. These two methods of questionnaire distribution and collection were believed to be the most efficient and effective ways to gain the highest response rate from the participants.

3.1 Five Positive Psychology (PP) Variables

The following sub-sections present the results and analyses in relation to the first research question:

'What were the students' positive psychology scores at the start and then mid-way through the academic year, and did those scores change between T1 and T2?'

3.1.1 T1 Data Set of PP Variables

At T1 there were 152 participants recruited in total of whom 101 were recruited at UNE and 51 at UML.

Table 2. The Percentage Frequency of the Responses on SR at T1 (N = 152)

		Strongly Disagree	*Somewhat Disagree*	*Slightly Disagree*	*Slightly Agree*	*Somewhat Agree*	*Strongly Agree*
A.	**I participate actively in the English language classes:**						
1.	Because I feel like it's a good way to improve my understanding of the English language.	1.3	1.3	2.0	27.5	31.4	35.9
2.	Because others would think badly of me if I didn't attend English language classes.	39.9	22.2	21.6	13.7	1.3	0.7
3.	Because learning to communicate well with locals in English is important.	2.6	3.3	5.2	19.6	23.5	45.1
B.	**I am likely to follow my instructor's suggestions in learning the English language:**						
4.	Because I believe my instructor's suggestions will help me to learn the English language effectively.	1.3	2.6	2.0	26.1	41.8	25.5
5.	Because I want others to think that I am good at the English language.	5.2	13.7	16.3	28.8	26.1	9.2
6.	Because it's important to me to do well in the English language.	0.7	0	2.6	9.8	27.5	58.8
7.	Because I would probably feel guilty if I didn't comply with my instructor's suggestions for learning the English language.	22.9	18.3	21.6	26.8	8.5	1.3

C.	The reason that I will continue broadening English language skills is:						
8.	Because I would feel proud if I do continue improving my English language.	0.7	5.9	3.9	25.5	28.8	34.6
9.	Because it's a challenge to really understand what native speakers say in English.	2.0	5.9	11.8	19.6	26.1	34.0

The response scale was a six-point continuum for items in each PP variable, ranging from *Strongly Disagree* (1) to *Strongly Agree* (6); Items 1, 3, 6, 8 and 9 were AR and Items 2, 4, 5 and 7 were CR.

AR (T1). The majority of the participants at T1 showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on all items of the AR of Items 1, 3, 6, 8 and 9.

Table 2 shows that there were 94.8% of the participants who showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 1, 'Because I feel like it's a good way to improve my understanding of the English language'; 88.2% of them showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 3, 'Because learning to communicate well with locals in English is important'; 96.1% of them showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 6, 'Because it's important to me to do well in the English language'; 88.9% of them showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 8, 'Because I would feel proud if I do continue improving my English language'; and 79.7% of them showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 9, 'Because it's a challenge to really understand what native speakers say in English'.

CR (T1). For the CR of Items 2, 4, 5 and 7 at T1, the pattern of the percentage frequency of responses from the participants was found to be not quite similar to the AR items.

Table 2 shows that there were only 15.7% of the participants who showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 2, 'Because others would think badly of me if I didn't attend English language classes'; and 36.6% of them showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 7, 'Because I would probably feel guilty if I didn't comply with my instructor's suggestions for learning the English

language'.

On the other hand, there were 93.4% of the participants who showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 4, 'Because I believe my instructor's suggestions will help me to learn the English language effectively'; and 64.1% of them showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 5, 'Because I want others to think that I am good at the English language'.

MS (T1). The majority of the participants at T1 showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on the growth MS of Items 2, 3, 4, 6 and 9.

Table 3 shows that there were 95.4% of the participants who showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 2, 'Irrespective of how bad a mistake is when I use English, I can always learn something from it'; 66.7% of them showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 3, 'I can learn the English Language from lessons or daily life'; 74.4% of them showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on item 4, 'I can always have the chance to improve my English Language through practice'; 83.4% of them showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 6, 'If I learn the vocabulary in English from the vocabulary book, I have to practise it before remembering it'; and 98.6% of them showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on item 9, 'I agree that hard work is very important in learning English'.

Table 3. The Percentage Frequency of the Responses on MS at T1 (N = 152)

		Strongly Disagree	*Somewhat Disagree*	*Slightly Disagree*	*Slightly Agree*	*Somewhat Agree*	*Strongly Agree*
1.	I prefer to avoid an activity which involves English when I know that I shall make mistakes when I speak.	23.5	26.8	26.1	15.7	6.5	1.3
2.	Irrespective of how bad a mistake is when I use English, I can always learn something from it.	0	1.3	3.3	34.6	33.3	27.5
3.	I can learn the English language from lessons or daily life.	0	0.7	2.0	20.9	11.8	34.0

4.	I can always have the chance to improve my English language through practice.	0.7	4.6	20.3	34.5	25.5	14.4
5.	I cannot change or improve my pronunciation in English through hard work and effort, as my ability for this skill is fixed already at an early age.	30.7	24.6	24.2	12.4	6.5	1.3
6.	If I learn the vocabulary in English from the vocabulary book, I have to practise it before remembering it.	2.0	5.2	9.2	24.6	33.3	25.5
7.	I think that natural ability is very important in learning English.	3.3	12.4	19.0	32.7	20.3	12.4
8.	I think everybody can achieve a specific level of English language standard if they want to, but people have to be gifted if they really want to do interpreting and translation.	5.9	11.1	17.6	29.4	20.3	15.7
9.	I agree that hard work is very important in learning English.	0	0	1.3	16.3	23.5	58.8

The response scale was a six-point continuum for items in each PP variable, ranging from *Strongly Disagree* (1) to *Strongly Agree* (6); Items 2, 3, 4, 6 and 9 represented growth MS; Items 1, 5, 7 and 8 represented fixed MS; and the fixed MS items contained reversed scores for the calculation of the total scores of MS.

The pattern of the percentage frequency of responses from the participants pertaining to items of fixed MS in Items 1, 5, 7 and 8 at T1 was found to be not quite similar when compared with the growth MS items. Table 3 shows that there were 76.4% of the participants who showed 'slightly disagree' to 'strongly disagree' responses on Item 1 (a reversed-score statement), 'I prefer to avoid an activity which involves English Language when I know that I shall make mistakes when I speak'; and 79.5% of them showed 'slightly disagree' to 'strongly disagree' responses on Item 5 (a reversed-score statement), 'I cannot change or improve my pronunciation in English through hard work and effort, as my ability for this skill is fixed already at an early age'. As the participants' percentage frequency of responses to these items were more on the non-affirmative side, the participants involved were hence deemed to have a growth MS when answering these

particular questions.

On the other hand, more than half of the participants' responses to the fixed MS in Items 7 and 8 were affirmative. Table 3 shows that there were 65.4% of the participants who showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 7, 'I think that natural ability is very important in learning English'; and 65.4% of them showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 8, 'I think everybody can achieve a specific level of English Language standard if they want to, but people have to be gifted if they really want to do interpreting and translation'. As the participants' percentage frequency of responses to these items was more on the affirmative side, the participants involved were deemed to have a fixed mindset when answering these particular questions.

PWB (T1). The majority of the participants at T1 showed affirmative responses to PWB in Items 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 11.

Table 4. The Percentage Frequency of the Responses on PWB at T1 (N = 152)

		Strongly Disagree	*Somewhat Disagree*	*Slightly Disagree*	*Slightly Agree*	*Somewhat Agree*	*Strongly Agree*
1.	I am not afraid to voice my opinions in the English language, even when they are in opposition to the opinions of most people.	0	9.8	17.0	33.3	24.8	15.0
2.	I tend to worry about what other people think of me in English language competence.	5.9	9.6	20.3	37.3	20.3	5.9
3.	Being happy with myself in English language competence is more important to me than having others approve of me.	2.6	6.5	11.1	31.4	24.2	23.5
4.	I do not fit very well withEnglish-speaking people and the community around me.	11.1	18.3	22.2	28.8	15.7	3.9
5.	If I were unhappy with my living situation which requires English language competence, I would take effective	0.7	0	4.6	26.8	35.3	32.7

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	steps to change it.						
6.	I am not interested in activities related to English language learning that will expand my horizons.	36.6	30.1	15.7	13.1	3.3	1.3
7.	When I think about it, I haven't really improved much in English language learning over the years.	9.8	19.6	17.0	28.1	18.3	7.2
8.	Maintaining close relationships by communicating in the English language has been difficult and frustrating for me.	16.3	26.1	19.6	18.3	13.7	3.9
9.	I have a sense of direction and purpose in life when learning the English language.	0.7	7.2	11.8	32.7	30.1	17.6
10.	Given the opportunity in learning English, there are many things about myself that I would change.	5.9	17.6	20.3	29.4	17.0	9.8
11.	I made some mistakes in the past in using English, but I feel that all in all everything has worked out for the best.	2.6	9.8	25.5	33.3	22.2	6.5

The response scale was a six-point continuum for items in each PP variable, ranging from *Strongly Disagree* (1) to *Strongly Agree* (6); Items 2, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 10 contained reversed scores for the calculation of the total scores of PWB.

Table 4 shows that there were 73.1% of the participants who showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 1, 'I am not afraid to voice my opinions in the English language, even when they are in opposition to the opinions of most people'; 79.1% of them showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 3, 'Being happy with myself in English language competence is more important to me than having others approve of me'; 51.6% of them showed 'strongly disagree' to 'slightly disagree' responses on Item 4 (a reversed-score statement), 'I do not fit very well with English-speaking people and the community around me'; 94.8% of them showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 5, 'If I were unhappy with my living situation which requires English language competence, I would take effective steps to change it'; 80.4% of them showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 9, 'I have a

sense of direction and purpose in life when learning the English language'; and 62% of them showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 11, 'I made some mistakes in the past in using English, but I feel that all in all everything has worked out for the best'.

At the same time, there were 82.4% of the participants who showed 'strongly disagree' to 'slightly disagree' responses on Item 6 (a reversed-score statement), 'I am not interested in activities related to English language learning that will expand my horizons'; and 62% of them showed 'strongly disagree' to 'slightly disagree' responses on Item 8 (a reversed-score statement), 'Maintaining close relationships by communicating in the English language has been difficult and frustrating for me'.

However, more than half of the participants at T1 gave affirmative responses to the negative side of the PWB of Items 2, 7 and 10. Table 4 shows that there were 63.5% of the participants who showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 2 (a reversed-score statement), 'I tend to worry about what other people think of me in English language competence'; 53.6% of them showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 7 (a reversed-score statement), 'When I think about it, I haven't really improved much in English language learning over the years'; and 56.2% of them showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 10 (a reversed-score statement), 'Given the opportunity in learning English, there are many things about myself that I would change'.

PA (T1). The majority of the participants at T1 gave affirmative responses to PA in Items 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8 and 9.

Table 5. The Percentage Frequency of the Responses on PA at T1 (N = 152)

		Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	I am very satisfied with my university studies	2.0	2.6	6.5	17.0	38.6	32.7

No.	Statement						
	with the English language as a medium of instruction.						
2.	What I miss here is someone to talk to freely from time to time in my home town dialect / Mandarin / Cantonese.	2.6	11.8	21.6	30.1	18.3	15.0
3.	I often ask myself what I am doing here to have the course of my studies in the English language.	16.3	29.4	22.2	20.3	7.8	3.3
4.	I would prefer studying somewhere else instead of studying in the UK.	39.2	34.0	13.1	7.8	4.6	0.7
5.	If I feel blue, my Chinese friends in the UK will help me to get out of it.	2.6	3.3	5.2	22.9	35.3	30.1
6.	I find life as a student in the UK very pleasant especially when I can practise English-speaking all the time.	1.3	4.6	11.1	34.6	32.0	15.7
7.	I find it hard to get used to life here in this English-speaking country.	11.1	14.4	13.1	19.0	26.1	15.7
8.	I find it very difficult to adjust to student life due to the difference in education system between my home country and the UK.	19.6	30.1	22.9	13.1	12.4	1.3
9.	I am glad that I came to study here because I can know more about English language and culture.	0	0.7	2.0	11.1	37.9	47.7

The response scale was a six-point continuum for items in each PP variable, ranging from *Strongly Disagree* (1) to *Strongly Agree* (6); Items 2, 3, 4, 7 and 8 contained reversed scores for the calculation of the total scores on PA.

Table 5 shows that there were 88.3% of the participants who gave 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 1, 'I am very satisfied with my university studies with the English language as a medium of instruction'; 67.9% of them showed 'slightly disagree' to 'strongly disagree' responses on Item 3 (a reversed-score statement), 'I often ask myself what I am doing here to have the course of my studies in the English language'; 86.3% of them showed 'slightly disagree' to 'strongly disagree' responses on Item 4 (a reversed-score statement), 'I would prefer studying somewhere else instead of studying in the UK'; 88.3% of them showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses

on Item 5, 'If I feel blue, my Chinese friends in the UK will help me to get out of it'; 82.3% of them showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 6, 'I find life as a student in the UK very pleasant especially when I can practise English speaking all the time'; 72.6% of them showed 'slightly disagree' to 'strongly disagree' responses on Item 8 (a reversed-score statement), 'I find it very difficult to adjust to student life due to the difference in education system between my home country and the UK'; and 96.7% of them showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 9, 'I am glad that I came to study here because I can know more about English language and culture'.

On the other hand, more than half of the participants at T1 gave affirmative responses to the negative side of the PA of Items 2 and 7. Table 5 shows that there were 63.4% of the participants who showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 2 (a reversed-score statement), 'What I miss here is someone to talk to freely from time to time in my home town dialect / Mandarin / Cantonese'; and 60.8% of them showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 7 (a reversed-score statement), 'I find it hard to get used to life here in this English-speaking country'.

3.1.2 T2 Data Set of PP Variables

At T2, there were 167 participants recruited in total, of whom 114 were recruited at UNE and 53 at UML.

AR (T2). The majority of the participants at T2 showed affirmative responses pertaining to the AR Items 1, 3, 6, 8 and 9.

Table 6 shows that there were 86.7% (a decrease; T1 = 94.8%) of the participants who showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 1, 'Because I feel like it's a good way to improve my understanding of the English language'; 90.3% (an increase; T1 = 88.2%) of them showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 3, 'Because learning to communicate well with locals in English is important';

92.1% (a decrease; T1 = 96.1%) of them showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 6, 'Because it's important to me to do well in the English language'; 75.9% (a decrease; T1 = 88.9%) of them showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 8, 'Because I would feel proud if I do continue improving my English language'; and 83.7% (an increase; T1 = 79.7%) of them showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 9, 'Because it's a challenge to really understand what native speakers say in English'.

Table 6. The Percentage Frequency of the Responses on SR at T2 (N = 167)

		Strongly Disagree	*Somewhat Disagree*	*Slightly Disagree*	*Slightly Agree*	*Somewhat Agree*	*Strongly Agree*
A.	**I participate actively in the English language classes:**						
1.	Because I feel like it's a good way to improve my understanding of the English language.	0.6	3.0	9.0	30.1	33.7	22.9
2.	Because others would think badly of me if I didn't attend English language classes.	42.2	24.7	19.9	9.6	1.8	1.2
3.	Because learning to communicate well with locals in English is important.	3.0	1.8	4.2	21.1	33.1	36.1
B.	**I am likely to follow my instructor's suggestions in learning the English language:**						
4.	Because I believe my instructor's suggestions will help me to learn the English language effectively.	1.2	2.4	6.0	34.9	42.2	12.7
5.	Because I want others to think that I am good at the English language.	6.6	6.0	15.1	33.7	28.9	9.0
6.	Because it's important to me to do well in the English language.	0	2.4	4.8	7.8	36.1	48.2
7.	Because I would probably feel guilty if I didn't comply with my instructor's suggestions for learning the English language.	19.3	16.9	32.5	19.9	7.8	3.0
C.	**The reason that I will continue broadening English language skills is:**						
8.	Because I would feel proud if I do continue improving my English language.	3.0	4.8	15.7	21.1	29.5	25.3
9.	Because it's a challenge to really	2.4	3.0	9.6	24.7	29.5	29.5

	understand what native speakers say in English.						

The response scale was a six-point continuum for items in each PP variable, ranging from *Strongly Disagree* (1) to *Strongly Agree* (6); Items 1, 3, 6, 8 and 9 were AR and Items 2, 4, 5 and 7 were CR.

In summary, comparison between the results at T1 and those at T2 shows that there was a decrease in the percentage of the participants showing 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Items 1, 6 and 8, whereas there was an increase in the percentage of participants showing 'slight agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Items 3 and 9.

CR (T2). As to the CR Items 2, 4, 5 and 7, the pattern of the percentage frequency of responses from the participants was found to be not quite similar compared with the AR items.

Table 6 shows that there were 89.8% (a decrease; T1 = 93.4%) of the participants who showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 4, 'Because I believe my instructor's suggestions will help me to learn the English language effectively'; 71.6% (an increase; T1 = 64.1%) of them showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 5, 'Because I want others to think that I am good at the English language'; and 30.7% (a decrease; T1 = 36.6%) of them showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 7, 'Because I would probably feel guilty if I didn't comply with my instructor's suggestions for learning the English language'. Notably, there were only 12.6% (a decrease; T1 = 15.7%) of the participants who showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 2, 'Because others would think badly of me if I didn't attend English language classes'.

To summarise, comparison of the results at T1 with those at T2 shows that there was a decrease in the percentage of the participants showing 'slight agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Items 2, 4 and 7, whereas there was an increase in the percentage of

the participants showing 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 5.

MS (T2). The majority of the participants at T2 showed affirmative responses to the growth MS Items 2, 3, 4, 6 and 9.

Tables 3 and 7 show that there were 92.2% (a decrease; T1 = 95.4%) of the participants who showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 2, 'Irrespective of how bad a mistake is when I use English, I can always learn something from it'; 92.7% (a clear increase; T1 = 66.7%) of them showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 3, 'I can learn the English language from lessons or daily life'; 71.1% (a decrease; T1 = 74.4%) of them showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 4, 'I can always have the chance to improve my English language through practice'; 72.2% (a decrease; T1 = 83.4%) of them showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 6, 'If I learn the vocabulary in English from the vocabulary book, I have to practise it before remembering it'; and 92.2% (a decrease; T1 = 98.6%) of them showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 9, 'I agree that hard work is very important in learning English'.

Table 7. The Percentage Frequency of the Responses on MS at T2 (N = 167)

		Strongly Disagree	*Somewhat Disagree*	*Slightly Disagree*	*Slightly Agree*	*Somewhat Agree*	*Strongly Agree*
1.	I prefer to avoid an activity which involves English language when I know that I shall make mistakes when I speak.	19.3	27.7	28.3	18.1	4.8	0
2.	Irrespective of how bad a mistake is when I use English, I can always learn something from it.	0.6	1.2	4.2	33.7	41.0	17.5
3.	I can learn the English language from lessons or daily life.	0	1.2	4.2	27.7	36.1	28.9

4.	I can always have the chance to improve my English language through practice.	0.6	4.8	20.5	38.6	24.7	7.8
5.	I cannot change or improve my pronunciation in English through hard work and effort, as my ability for this skill is fixed already at an early age.	24.1	21.1	22.9	16.9	9.6	3.0
6.	If I learn the vocabulary in English from the vocabulary book, I have to practise it before remembering it.	1.8	4.8	19.3	37.3	24.1	10.8
7.	I think that natural ability is very important in learning English.	4.8	11.4	23.5	34.9	16.9	6.6
8.	I think everybody can achieve a specific level of English language standard if they want to, but people have to be gifted if they really want to do interpreting and translation.	3.6	7.2	21.7	33.1	23.5	9.0
9.	I agree that hard work is very important in learning English.	0	0	6.0	27.1	21.7	43.4

The response scale was a six-point continuum for items in each PP variable, ranging from *Strongly Disagree* (1) to *Strongly Agree* (6); Items 2, 3, 4, 6 and 9 represented a growth MS; Items 1, 5, 7 and 8 represented a fixed MS; and the fixed MS items contained reversed scores for the calculation of the total scores of MS.

To summarise, comparison of the results at T1 with those at T2 shows that there was a decrease in the percentage of the participants showing 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses to Items 2, 4, 6 and 9, and at the same time, there was an obvious increase in the percentage of the participants showing 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses to Item 3.

As to the fixed MS Items 1 and 5 at T2, there were 75.3% (a decrease; T1 = 76.4%) of the participants who showed 'slightly disagree' to 'strongly disagree' responses on Item 1 (a reversed-score statement), 'I prefer to avoid an activity which involves English when I know that I shall make mistakes when I speak'; and 68.1% (a decrease;

T1 = 79.5%) of them showed 'slightly disagree' to 'strongly disagree' responses on Item 5 (a reversed-score statement), 'I cannot change or improve my pronunciation in English through hard work and effort, as my ability for this skill is fixed already at an early age'. As the participants' responses to these items were more on the non-affirmative side of the fixed mindset spectrum, the participants involved were deemed to have a growth MS when answering the two questions. To summarise, comparison between the results at T1 and those at T2 shows that there was a decrease in the percentage of participants who showed 'slightly disagree' to 'strongly disagree' responses on Items 1 and 5.

On the other hand, the participants' responses to the fixed MS Items 7 and 8 were affirmative. Tables 3 and 7 show that there were 58.4% (a decrease; T1 = 65.4%) of the participants who showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 7, 'I think that natural ability is very important in learning English'; 65.6% (a slight increase; T1 = 65.4%) of them showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 8, 'I think everybody can achieve a specific level of English language standard if they want to, but people have to be gifted if they really want to do interpreting and translation'. Hence, the participants involved were deemed to have a fixed MS when answering these questions.

To summarise, comparison between the results at T1 and those at T2 shows that there was a decrease in the percentage of the participants showing 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 7, whereas there was a slight increase in the percentage of the participants showing 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 8.

PWB (T2). The majority of the participants at T2 gave affirmative responses to the PWB Items 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 11.

Table 8. The Percentage Frequency of the Responses on PWB at T2 (N = 167)

		Strongly Disagree	*Somewhat Disagree*	*Slightly Disagree*	*Slightly Agree*	*Somewhat Agree*	*Strongly Agree*

1.	I am not afraid to voice my opinions in the English language, even when they are in opposition to the opinions of most people.	2.4	6.6	19.9	38.0	24.7	7.8
2.	I tend to worry about what other people think of me in English language competence.	6.0	10.2	25.9	38.0	17.5	1.8
3.	Being happy with myself in English language competence is more important to me than having others approve of me.	0.6	3.6	12.0	27.7	36.1	19.3
4.	I do not fit very well with the English-speaking people and the community around me.	8.4	25.3	26.5	28.9	7.2	3.0
5.	If I were unhappy with my living situation which requires English language competence, I would take effective steps to change it.	0.6	1.2	8.4	38.0	36.7	13.9
6.	I am not interested in activities related to English language learning that will expand my horizons.	23.5	34.9	20.5	13.3	6.0	0.6
7.	When I think about it, I haven't really improved much in English language learning over the years.	7.2	13.3	23.5	38.6	10.8	5.4
8.	Maintaining close relationships by communicating in the English language has been difficult and frustrating for me.	9.0	21.7	29.5	24.7	10.8	3.0
9.	I have a sense of direction and purpose in life when learning the English language.	1.8	10.2	12.0	38.6	26.5	8.4

10.	Given the opportunity in learning English, there are many things about myself that I would change.	6.0	12.0	24.7	33.7	15.7	6.0
11.	I made some mistakes in the past in using English, but I feel that all in all everything has worked out for the best.	2.4	10.2	26.5	40.4	15.1	4.2

The response scale was a six-point continuum for items in each PP variable, ranging from *Strongly Disagree* (1) to *Strongly Agree* (6); Items 2, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 10 contained reversed scores for the calculation of the total scores of PWB.

Tables 4 and 8 show that there were 70.5% (a decrease; T1 = 73.1%) of the participants who showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 1, 'I am not afraid to voice my opinions in the English language, even when they are in opposition to the opinions of most people'; 83.1% (an increase; T1 = 79.1%) of them showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 3, 'Being happy with myself in English language competence is more important to me than having others approve of me'; 60.2% (an increase; T1 = 51.6%) of them showed 'strongly disagree' to 'slightly disagree' responses on Item 4 (a reversed-score statement), 'I do not fit very well with English-speaking people and the community around me'; 88.6% (a decrease; T1 = 94.8%) of them showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 5, 'If I were unhappy with my living situation which requires English language competence, I would take effective steps to change it'; 73.5% (a decrease; T1 = 80.4%) of the participants showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 9, 'I have a sense of direction and purpose in life when learning the English language'; and 59.7% (a decrease; T1 = 62%) of them showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 11, 'I made some mistakes in the past in using English, but I feel that all in all everything has worked out for the best'.

Tables 4 and 8 also show that there were 78.9% (a decrease; T1 = 82.4%) of the

participants who showed 'strongly disagree' to 'slightly disagree' responses on Item 6 (a reversed-score statement), 'I am not interested in activities related to English language learning that will expand my horizons'; and 60.2% (a decrease; T1 = 62%) of them showed 'strongly disagree' to 'slightly disagree' responses on Item 8 (a reversed-score statement), 'Maintaining close relationships by communicating in the English language has been difficult and frustrating for me'.

To summarise, comparison between the results at T1 and those at T2 shows that there was a decrease in the percentage of participants showing 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Items 1, 5, 9 and 11, and 'slightly disagree' to 'strongly disagree' responses on Items 6 and 8 (reversed-score statements), whereas there was an increase in the percentage of participants showing 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 3, and 'slightly disagree' to 'strongly disagree' responses on Item 4 (a reversed-score statement).

On the other hand, more than half of the participants at T2 gave affirmative responses to the negative side of the PWB Items 2, 7 and 10. Tables 4 and 8 show that there were 57.3% (a decrease; T1 = 63.5%) of participants who showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 2 (a reversed-score statement), 'I tend to worry about what other people think of me in English language competence'; 54.8% (an increase; T1 = 53.6%) of them showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 7 (a reversed-score statement), 'When I think about it, I haven't really improved much in English language learning over the years'; and 55.4% (a decrease; T1 = 56.2%) of them showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 10 (a reversed-score statement), 'Given the opportunity in learning English, there are many things about myself that I would change'.

To summarise, comparison between the results at T1 and those at T2 shows that there was a decrease in the percentage of participants showing 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Items 2 and 10 (reversed-score statements), whereas there

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was an increase in the percentage frequency of participants who showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' on Item 7 (a reversed-score statement).

PA (T2). The majority of the participants at T2 showed affirmative responses to the PA Items 1, 5, 6 and 9 and to Items 2, 3, 4, 7 and 8 (which all contained reversed-score statements).

Table 9. The Percentage Frequency of the Responses on PA at T2 (N = 167)

		Strongly Disagree	*Somewhat Disagree*	*Slightly Disagree*	*Slightly Agree*	*Somewhat Agree*	*Strongly Agree*
1.	I am very satisfied with my university studies with the English language as a medium of instruction.	3.0	1.2	6.6	22.3	32.5	32.5
2.	What I miss here is someone to talk to freely from time to time in my home town dialect / Mandarin / Cantonese.	9.6	15.1	41.6	17.5	10.8	3.0
3.	I often ask myself what I am doing here to have the course of my studies in the English language.	18.1	21.1	27.1	18.7	8.4	4.8
4.	I would prefer studying somewhere else instead of studying in the UK.	34.3	28.9	18.1	10.8	5.4	0.6
5.	If I feel blue, my Chinese friends in the UK will help me to get out of it.	3.0	4.2	9.6	27.7	32.5	21.1
6.	I find life as a student in the UK very pleasant especially when I can practise English speaking all the time.	2.4	7.2	17.5	41.0	22.9	6.6
7.	I find it hard to get used to life here in this English-speaking country.	20.5	33.7	23.5	12.0	7.2	0.6
8.	I find it very difficult to adjust to student life due to the difference in education system between my home country and the UK.	19.9	28.9	22.9	18.7	6.0	1.8

9.	I am glad that I came to study here because I can know more about English language and culture.	1.2	0.6	6.0	21.7	30.1	38.6

The response scale was a six-point continuum for items in each PP variable, ranging from *Strongly Disagree* (1) to *Strongly Agree* (6); Items 2, 3, 4, 7 and 8 contained reversed scores for the calculation of the total scores on PA.

Tables 5 and 9 show that there were 87.3% (a decrease; T1 = 88.3%) of the participants who showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' on Item 1, 'I am very satisfied with my university studies with English language as a medium of instruction'; 81.3% (a decrease; T1 = 88.3%) of them showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' on Item 5, 'If I feel blue, my Chinese friends in the UK will help me to get out of it'; 70.5% (a decrease; T1 = 82.3%) of them showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' on Item 6, 'I find life as a student in the UK very pleasant especially when I can practise English speaking all the time'; and 90.4% (a decrease; T1 = 96.7%) of them showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' on Item 9, 'I am glad that I came to study here because I can know more about English language and culture'.

To summarise, comparison between the results at T1 and those at T2 shows that there was a decrease in the percentage frequency of responses from the participants showing 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' on Items 1, 5, 6 and 9.

For Items 2, 3, 4, 7 and 8 (which all contained reversed-score statements), 66.3% (an obvious increase; T1 = 36%) of the participants showed 'slightly disagree' to 'strongly disagree' on Item 2 (a reversed-score statement), 'What I miss here is someone to talk to freely from time to time in my home town dialect / Mandarin / Cantonese'; 66.3% (a decrease; T1 = 67.9%) of them showed 'slightly disagree' to 'strongly disagree' on Item 3 (a reversed-score statement), 'I often ask myself what I am doing here to have the course of my studies in the English language'; 81.3% (a decrease; T1 = 86.3%) of them showed 'slightly disagree' to 'strongly disagree' on Item 4 (a reversed-score statement), 'I would prefer studying somewhere else instead of studying in the UK';

77.7% (an obvious increase; T1 = 38.6%) of them showed 'slightly disagree' to 'strongly disagree' on Item 7 (a reversed-score statement), 'I find it hard to get used to life here in this English-speaking country'; and 71.7% (a decrease; T1 = 72.6%) of them showed 'slightly disagree' to 'strongly disagree' on Item 8 (a reversed-score statement), 'I find it very difficult to adjust to student life due to the difference in education system between my home country and the UK'.

To summarise, comparison between the results at T1 and those at T2 shows that there was a decrease in the percentage of the participants showing 'slightly disagree' to 'strongly disagree' responses to Items 3, 4 and 8, whereas there was an obvious increase in the percentage of the participants showing 'slightly disagree' to 'strongly disagree' responses to Items 2 and 7.

3.1.3   T1 vs T2 of Mean Scores of PP Variables

Table 10 shows that there were statistically significant differences ($p<0.01$) only in MS and PA between T1 and T2.

Table 10. Mean Scores of the Five PP Variables (T1 vs T2)

Variables	Mean for T1	Mean for T2	t-test
Autonomous Regulation (5 items)	24.61	23.86	N/S
Controlled Regulation (4 items)	13.58	13.50	N/S
Mindset (9 items)	36.95	35.32	2.78; $p<0.01$
Psychological Well-Being (11 items)	40.99	39.95	N/S
Psychological Adjustment (9 items)	34.50	31.28	5.71; $p<0.01$

The response scale was a six-point continuum for items in each PP variable, ranging from *Strongly Disagree* (1) to *Strongly Agree* (6). N/S denotes that the change was statistically non-significant.

Given that the response scale for MS assessment was a six-point continuum ranging from *Strongly Disagree* to *Strongly Agree* and that the fixed MS items contained reversed-score statements for the calculation of their total scores, the higher the mean scores might imply an increase in the participants' growth MS belief in English language learning, whereas the lower the mean scores might imply an increase in their fixed MS

belief in English language learning.

Bearing in mind that the response scale for PA assessment was also a six-point continuum ranging from *Strongly Disagree* to *Strongly Agree* and that five of the nine PA items contained reversed-score statements for the calculation of their total scores, the higher the mean scores might imply an increase in the participants' PA in English language learning, whereas the lower the mean scores might imply a decrease in their PA in English language learning.

3.1.4 Correlations between PP Variables at T1

Table 11 shows that the variable positive correlations of the five PP variables at T1 were found to have from very weak relationships (0.10 to 0.19) at the one end to modest relationships (0.25 to 0.50) and more-than-modest relationships at the other end, ranging from 0.10 (AR and MS, CR and MS, respectively) to 0.58 (AR and CR).

There were five of the ten correlations that had modest relationship, and they were AR and CR (0.58), AR and PWB (0.25), CR and PWB (0.25), PWB and MS (0.30), and PWB and PA (0.33). Only one of the ten correlations had a weak relationship: AR and PA (0.22). Four of the ten correlations had very weak relationships, and they were: AR and MS (0.10), CR and MS (0.10), MS and PA (0.18), and CR and PA (0.19).

Table 11. Correlations of the Five PP Variables at T1 (N = 152)

	AR	*CR*	*MS*	*PWB*	*PA*
Autonomous Regulation	--	0.58	0.10	0.25	0.22
Controlled Regulation	--	--	0.10	0.25	0.19
Mindset	--	--	--	--	0.18
Psychological Well-being	--	--	0.30	--	0.33
Psychological Adjustment	--	--	--	--	--

AR = Autonomous Regulation, CR = Controlled Regulation, MS = Mindset, PWB = Psychological Well-being and PA = Psychological Adjustment

Correlation coefficient: 0.25 – 0.50, denotes a modest relationship
Correlation coefficient: 0.20 – 0.24, denotes a weak relationship
Correlation coefficient: 0.10 – 0.19, denotes a very weak relationship

3.1.5 Correlations between PP Variables at T2

Table 12 shows that the variable correlations of the five PP variables at T2 were found to have from very weak relationships (0.10 to 0.19) at the one end to modest relationships (0.25 to 0.50) at the other end, ranging from 0.16 (AR and PA) to 0.47 (CR and PWB, PWB and MS).

There were six of the ten correlations that had modest relationships, and they were: AR and CR (0.43; T1 = 0.58), AR and PWB (0.36; T1 = 0.25), CR and PWB (0.47; T1 = 0.25), CR and PA (0.31; T1 = 0.19), PWB and MS (0.47; T1 = 0.30), and PWB and PA (0.28; T1 = 0.33). Two of the ten correlations had weak relationships, and they were: CR and MS (0.21; T1 = 0.10), and MS and PA (0.23; T1 = 0.18). Two of the ten correlations had very weak relationships, and they were: AR and MS (0.19; T1 = 0.10), and AR and PA (0.16; T1 = 0.22).

Table 12. Correlations of the Five PP Variables at T2 (N = 167)

	AR	CR	MS	PWB	PA
Autonomous Regulation	--	0.43	0.19	0.36	0.16
Controlled Regulation	--	--	0.21	0.47	0.31
Mindset	--	--	--	--	0.23
Psychological Well-being	--	--	0.47	--	0.28
Psychological Adjustment	--	--	--	--	--

AR = Autonomous Regulation, CR = Controlled Regulation, MS = Mindset, PWB = Psychological Well-being and PA = Psychological Adjustment

Correlation coefficient: 0.25 – 0.50, denotes a modest relationship
Correlation coefficient: 0.20 – 0.24, denotes a weak relationship
Correlation coefficient: 0.10 – 0.19, denotes a very weak relationship

3.1.6 Mean, Standard Deviation and Cronbach's Alpha of PP Variables at T1

Table 13 shows that estimates of internal consistency coefficients were found low to modestly acceptable at T1, ranging from 0.14 (PA) to 0.68 (AR). The estimates of internal consistency coefficients for CR (0.56), MS (0.45) and PWB (0.37) could be regarded as modestly acceptable. However, the estimate of the internal consistency coefficient for PA (0.14) could not be acceptable if it remained similar at T2.

Table 13. Mean, Standard Deviation and Cronbach's Alpha of Items of the Five PP Variables at T1 (N = 152)

	Mean	*Standard Deviation*	*Cronbach's Alpha*
Autonomous Regulation	4.95	1.13	0.68
Controlled Regulation	3.42	1.22	0.56
Mindset	4.11	1.12	0.45
Psychological Well-being	3.73	1.25	0.37
Psychological Adjustment	3.86	1.22	0.14

The response scale was a six-point continuum for items in each PP variable, ranging from *Strongly Disagree* (1) to *Strongly Agree* (6), and the scores were obtained after reversing negative sentences as necessary.

3.1.7 Mean, Standard Deviation and Cronbach's Alpha of PP Variables at T2

Table 14 shows that estimates of internal consistency coefficients were found to have progressed at T2, ranging from 0.55 (MS) to 0.66 (AR). Hence, estimates of internal consistency coefficients for AR (0.66; T1 = 0.68), CR (0.65; T1 = 0.56), MS (0.55; T1 = 0.45), PWB (0.56; T1 = 0.37) and PA (0.66; T1 = 0.14) could be deemed to be modestly acceptable. Notably, variations among the above estimates of internal consistency coefficients in all the PP variables at T2 were within a narrow range (0.55 to 0.66) and appeared to be inter-correlated, including the figure for PA (0.66), which was 0.14 at T1.

Table 14. Mean, Standard Deviation and Cronbach's Alpha of Items of the Five PP Variables at T2 (N = 167)

	Mean	*Standard Deviation*	*Cronbach's Alpha*
Autonomous Regulation	4.78	1.15	0.66
Controlled Regulation	3.37	1.18	0.65
Mindset	4.20	1.10	0.55
Psychological Well-being	3.95	1.15	0.56
Psychological Adjustment	4.32	1.20	0.66

The response scale was a six-point continuum for items in each PP variable, ranging from *Strongly Disagree* (1) to *Strongly Agree* (6), and the scores were obtained after reversing negative sentences as necessary.

3.2 Language Learning Activities (LLA)

The following sub-sections present the results and analyses in relation to the second research question:

'What activities did the students report using to improve their English at the start and then mid-way through the academic year, and did those activities change between T1 and T2?'

3.2.1 T1 Data Set of LLA

At T1, a total of 152 participants were recruited of whom 101 participants were recruited at UNE and 51 at UML.

Table 15. The Percentage Frequency of the Responses on Each Item of LLA at T1 (N = 152)

	Not at All	*Sometimes*	*Often*	*Always*
I practise English with my Chinese friends.	22.9	69.9	4.6	2.0
I join social activities where English is used.	11.8	63.4	21.6	2.0
I make use of English in everyday activities.	7.8	60.1	26.1	5.2
I attend CELT class at the university.	20.9	22.2	30.1	26.1
I attend CELT class outside the university.	33.3	42.5	14.4	9.2
I take part in English self-study activities.	21.6	45.1	23.5	9.2
I watch English films / watch English TV programmes / listen to the English radio.	0	23.5	39.9	35.9
I read English story books / English newspapers.	9.2	52.3	25.5	11.8
I keep a notebook of new vocabulary that I have learned.	5.9	60.1	28.1	5.2
I visit English websites / English-speaking forums when I surf the internet.	8.5	58.2	25.5	7.2

The response scale was a four-point continuum for each item of LLA, ranging from *Not at All* (1) to *Always* (4).

Table 15 shows that 22.9% and 69.9% of the participants respectively reported that they 'not at all' and 'sometimes' performed 'I practise English with my Chinese friends'. The results show that only 6.6% of the participants (4.6%, 'often' and 2.0%, 'always') appeared to have chosen this particular activity as one of their LLA.

Furthermore, 11.8% and 63.4% of the participants respectively reported that they 'not at all' to 'sometimes' practiced 'I join social activities where English is used', so

there were 23.6% of the participants (21.6%, 'often' and 2%, 'always') who practised this as one of their LLA.

Although 7.8% and 60.1% of the participants respectively reported they 'not at all' and 'sometimes' practised 'I make use of English in everyday activities', there was nearly one third of the participants (26.1%, 'often' and 5.2%, 'always') who practised this as one of their LLA.

Regarding 'I attend CELT class at the university', there was an almost evenly distributed percentage of the participants performing this as one of their LLA, with the percentage frequencies of 'not at all', 'sometimes', 'often' and 'always' being respectively 20.9%, 22.2%, 30.1% and 26.1%. Hence, more than half of the participants (56.2%, 'often' to 'always') indicated their interest in using this particular activity.

With regard to 'I attend CELT class outside the university', more than two thirds of the participants indicated that they 'not at all' (33.3%) or 'sometimes' (42.5%) performed this as one of their LLA. Less than one third of the participants (14.4%, 'often' and 9.2%, 'always') supported the activity.

Around two thirds of the participants 'not at all' (21.6%) or 'sometimes' (45.1%) practised 'I take part in English self-study activities' as one of their LLA compared with the 'often' (23.5%) and 'always' (9.2%) groups of participants.

Furthermore, 75.8% of the participants (39.9%, 'often' and 35.9%, 'always') performed the activity 'I watch English films / watch English TV programmes / listen to the English radio' as one of their LLA. However, compared with the activity 'I read English story books / English newspapers', which was also one of their LLA, a considerably smaller percentage of the participants performed this, as the results show (25.5%, 'often' and 11.8%, 'always'), compared with the activity 'I watch English films / watch English TV programmes / listen to the English radio'.

About one third of the participants (28.1%, 'often' and 5.2%, 'always') were found to use the activity 'I keep a notebook of new vocabulary that I have learned' as one

of their LLA, whereas nearly two thirds claimed 'not at all' (5.9%) or only 'sometimes' (60.1%) to use this particular activity.

Similar percentages of the participants were found in the practice of 'I visit English websites / English-speaking forums when I surf the internet'. Around one third of the participants (25.5%, 'often' and 7.2%, 'always') reported this practice as one of their LLA, whereas more than two thirds of them claimed to do it 'not at all' (8.5%) or only 'sometimes' (58.2%).

3.2.2 T2 Data Set of LLA

At T2, 167 participants were recruited of whom 114 were recruited at UNE and 53 at UML.

Table 16 shows that there were 29.5% of the participants who reported 'not at all' and 62.7% who reported 'sometimes' at T2 about having implemented the activity 'I practise English with my Chinese friends' as one of their LLA, and this percentage frequency of responses from the participants is quite similar to that at T1 (22.9% 'not at all'; 69.9%, 'sometimes'). Hence, there were also similar percentage frequencies of responses from the participants (6.6%, 'often' and 0.6%, 'always') about performing this activity compared with T1 (4.6%, 'often' and 2.0%, 'always').

Table 16. The Percentage Frequency of the Responses on Each Item of LLA at T2 (N = 167)

	Not at All	*Sometimes*	*Often*	*Always*
I practise English with my Chinese friends.	29.5	62.7	6.6	0.6
I join social activities where English is used.	6.6	53.0	29.5	10.2
I make use of English in everyday activities.	4.2	56.6	30.7	7.2
I attend CELT class at the university.	22.9	27.7	22.3	26.5
I attend CELT class outside the university.	41.2	42.8	9.6	6.0
I take part in English self-study activities.	22.9	51.2	21.1	4.2
I watch English films / watch English TV programmes / listen to the English radio.	1.2	24.1	43.4	30.7
I read English story books / English newspapers.	10.2	59.6	22.9	6.6
I keep a notebook of new vocabulary that I have learned.	15.7	60.2	19.3	4.2
I visit English websites / English-speaking forums when I surf the internet.	16.9	48.2	25.9	8.4

The response scale was a four-point continuum for each item of LLA, ranging from *Not at All* (1) to *Always* (4).

It can be seen that 6.6% and 53% of the participants at T2 respectively reported that they 'not at all' or 'sometimes' practised the activity 'I join social activities where English is used' as one of their LLA. These percentage frequencies of responses from the participants had decreased compared with T1 (11.8%, 'not at all' and 63.4%, 'sometimes'). Hence, a higher percentage of the participants 'often' or 'always' (29.5% and 10.2% respectively) practised this activity compared with T1 (21.6%, 'often' and 2%, 'always').

More than a third of the participants at T2 reported that they 'often' (30.7%) or 'always' (7.2%) practised the activity 'I make use of English in everyday activities' as one of their LLA compared with T1 (26.1%, 'often' and 5.2%, 'always'), leaving a smaller percentage of participants who 'not at all' (4.2%) or 'sometimes' (56.6%) practised it.

There was an almost evenly distributed percentage of the participants at T2 performing the activity 'I attend CELT class at the university' as one of their LLA, with the percentage frequencies of the responses 'not at all', 'sometimes', 'often', and 'always' being respectively 22.9%, 27.7%, 22.3% and 26.5%, compared with T1 (20.9%, 22.2%, 30.1% and 26.1%). Therefore, it appears that less than one half of the participants 'often' (22.3%) or 'always' (26.5%) implemented this particular activity.

A further increase in the percentage of the participants at T2 was found who 'not at all' (41.2%) or 'sometimes' (42.8%) implemented the activity 'I attend CELT class outside the university' as one of their LLA compared with T1 (33.3%, 'not at all' and 42.5%, 'sometimes'). As a result, there was a corresponding reduction in the percentage of the participants who 'often' or 'always' (9.6%, 'often'; 6.0%, 'always') joined this activity compared with T1 (14.4%, 'often'; 9.2%, 'always').

More than two thirds of the participants at T2 'not at all' (22.9%) or 'sometimes'

(51.2%) practised the activity 'I take part in English self-study activities' as one of their LLA compared with T1 (21.6%, 'not at all' and 45.1%, 'sometimes'). It follows that a smaller percentage of the participants 'often' (21.1%) or 'always' (4.2%) practised this activity compared with T1 (23.5%, 'often' and 9.2%, 'always').

More or less the same percentage of the participants at T2 'often' (43.4%) or 'always' (30.7%) performed the activity 'I watch English films / watch English TV programmes / listen to the English radio' as one of their LLA compared with T1 (39.9%, 'often' and 35.9%, 'always'). So compared with the activity 'I read English story books / English newspapers', which was also one of their LLA, a smaller percentage of the participants at T2 'often' (22.9%) or 'always' (6.6%) did this compared with T1 (25.5%, 'often' and 11.8%, 'always').

Much less than one third of the participants at T2 'often' (19.3%) or 'always' (4.2%) practised the activity 'I keep a notebook of new vocabulary that I have learned' as one of their LLA compared with T1 (28.1%, 'often' and 5.2%, 'always'). Notably, a higher percentage of the participants at T2 'not at all' (15.7%) or 'sometimes' (60.2%) practised this activity compared with T1 (5.9%, 'not at all' and 60.1%, 'sometimes').

For the activity 'I visit English websites / English-speaking forums when I surf the internet' as one of their LLA, a slightly higher percentage of the participants at T2 reported that they 'often' (25.9%) or 'always' (8.4%) implemented this practice compared with T1 (25.5%, 'often' and 7.2%, 'always'), whereas a smaller percentage of the participants obviously either 'not at all' (16.9%) or 'sometimes' (48.2%) performed the activity compared with T1 (8.5%, 'not at all' and 58.2%, 'sometimes').

3.2.3   T1 vs T2 of LLA

Table 17. Mean Item Scores of Ten LLA (T1 vs T2)

	Mean for T1	*Mean for T2*	*t-test*
I practise English with my Chinese friends.	1.86	1.78	N/S
I join social activities where English is used.	2.14	2.44	-3.77; p<0.01

I make use of English in everyday activities.	2.29	2.41	N/S
I attend CELT class at the university.	2.62	2.53	N/S
I attend CELT class outside the university.	1.99	1.81	N/S
I take part in English self-study activities.	2.20	2.07	N/S
I watch English films / watch English TV programmes / listen to the English radio.	3.13	3.04	N/S
I read English story books / English newspapers.	2.40	2.26	N/S
I keep a notebook of new vocabulary that I have learned.	2.33	2.12	2.67; p<0.01
I visit English websites / English-speaking forums when I surf the internet.	2.32	2.26	N/S

The response scale was a four-point continuum for each item of LLA, ranging from *Not at All* (1) to *Always* (4). N/S denotes that the change was statistically non-significant.

Table 17 shows that there were statistically significant differences (p<0.01) found in the mean item scores of two LLA between T1 and T2. They were 'I join social activities where English is used' and 'I keep a notebook of new vocabulary that I have learned'. Given that the response scale for the assessment of engagement in LLA was a four-point continuum for each item, ranging from *Not at All* to *Always*, an increase in mean item scores between T1 and T2 in the participants might imply an increase in their engagement level in the LLA concerned, whereas a decrease in mean item scores between T1 and T2 in the participants might imply a decrease in their engagement level in the LLA concerned.

3.3   Perceived Language Proficiency (LP)

The following sub-sections present the results and analyses in relation to the third research question:

'How did the students perceive their proficiency in English at the start and then mid-way through the academic year, and did those perceptions change between T1 and T2?'

3.3.1   T1 Data Set of Perceived LP

At T1, a total of 152 participants were recruited of whom 101 were recruited at UNE and 51 at UML.

Table 18 shows that a relatively higher percentage of the participants reported that they were respectively 'somewhat proficient' in speaking, listening, writing, reading, everyday vocabulary and academic vocabulary, whereas almost none of them reported that they were 'native-like' in these areas.

In detail, 24.8% and 29.9% of the participants respectively reported that they were 'not proficient' or 'somewhat proficient' in speaking English, whereas 4.6% of the participants reported that they were 'very proficient' in speaking English. Notably, there were 40.7% of the participants who did not give a response as to their LP in speaking English.

Table 18. The Percentage Frequency of the Responses on Each Item of Perceived English LP at T1 (N = 152)

	Not Proficient	*Somewhat Proficient*	*Very Proficient*	*Native-like*
Speaking	24.8	29.9	4.6	0
Listening	7.8	77.8	13.1	0.7
Writing	24.2	71.2	3.9	0
Reading	3.9	78.4	16.3	0.7
Everyday Vocabulary	11.1	78.4	9.2	0
Academic Vocabulary	27.5	66.0	5.9	0

The response scale was a four-point continuum for each item of perceived English LP, ranging from *Not Proficient* (1) to *Native-like* (4).

It can be seen that 7.8% and 77.8% of the participants respectively reported that they were 'not proficient' or 'somewhat proficient' in listening to English, whereas 13.1% of them reported they were 'very proficient' at English listening, and 0.7% of the participants reported that they were 'native-like' in this particular area.

Furthermore, 24.2% and 71.2% of the participants respectively reported that they were 'not proficient' or 'somewhat proficient' in writing English, whereas 3.9% of them reported that they were 'very proficient' in it.

Also, 3.9% and 78.4% of the participants respectively reported that they were 'not proficient' or 'somewhat proficient' in reading English, whereas 16.3% and 0.7% of them reported they were 'very proficient' or 'native-like' in it.

It can also be seen that 11.1% and 78.4% of the participants respectively reported that they were 'not proficient' or 'somewhat proficient' in everyday vocabulary, whereas 9.2% of them reported that they were 'very proficient' in it.

Also, 27.5% and 66% of the participants respectively reported that they were 'not proficient' or 'somewhat proficient' in academic vocabulary, whereas 5.9% of the participants reported that they were 'very proficient' in it.

3.3.2 T2 Data Set of Perceived LP

At T2, a total of 167 participants were recruited of whom 114 were recruited at UNE and 53 at UML.

Table 19 shows that, the same as at T1, a relatively higher percentage of the participants at T2 reported that they were respectively 'somewhat proficient' in speaking, listening, writing, reading, everyday vocabulary and academic vocabulary, whereas almost none of the participants reported they were 'native-like' in these areas.

Table 19. The Percentage Frequency of the Responses on Each Item of Perceived English LP at T2 (N = 167)

	Not Proficient	*Somewhat Proficient*	*Very Proficient*	*Native-like*
Speaking	22.9	71.7	4.8	0
Listening	10.8	66.9	21.1	0
Writing	27.1	68.7	3.6	0
Reading	10.2	69.9	19.3	0
Everyday Vocabulary	15.7	69.9	13.9	0
Academic Vocabulary	30.1	62.0	6.6	0.6

The response scale was a four-point continuum for each item of perceived English LP, ranging from *Not Proficient* (1) to *Native-like* (4).

There were 22.9% and 71.9% of the participants at T2 who reported respectively that they were 'not proficient' or 'somewhat proficient' in speaking English. Compared with T1, the percentage of the 'not proficient' participants decreased slightly (T1 = 24.8%), the percentage of the 'somewhat' participants increased remarkably (T1 = 29.9%), and the percentage of the 'very proficient' participants increased slightly (T1 =

4.6%; T2 = 4.8%). Unlike at T1, there was a minimal percentage of the participants who did not show any response in regard to their proficiency in speaking English.

There were 10.8% and 66.9% of the participants at T2 who reported respectively that they were 'not proficient' or 'somewhat proficient' in listening to English. Compared with T1, the percentage of the 'not proficient' participants increased slightly (T1 = 7.8%), the percentage of the 'somewhat' participants decreased to some extent (T1 = 77.8%) and the percentage of the 'very proficient' participants increased considerably (T1 = 13.1%; T2 = 21.1%).

There were 27.1% and 68.7% of the participants at T2 who reported respectively that they were 'not proficient' or 'somewhat proficient' in writing English. Compared with T1, the percentage of the 'not proficient' participants increased slightly (T1 = 24.2%), the percentage of the 'somewhat' participants decreased slightly (T1 = 71.2%) and the percentage of the 'very proficient' participants also decreased slightly (T1 = 3.9%; T2 = 3.6%).

There were 10.2% and 69.9% of the participants at T2 who reported respectively that they were 'not proficient' or 'somewhat proficient' in reading English. Compared with T1, the percentage of the 'not proficient' participants increased considerably (T1 = 3.9%), the percentage of the 'somewhat' participants decreased considerably (T1 = 78.4%), and the percentage of the 'very proficient' participants increased modestly (T1 = 16.3%; T2 = 19.3%).

There were 15.7% and 69.9% of the participants at T2 who reported respectively that they were 'not proficient' or 'somewhat proficient' in everyday vocabulary. Compared with T1, the percentage of the 'not proficient' participants increased to some extent (T1 = 11.1%), the percentage of the 'somewhat' participants decreased considerably (T1 = 78.4%), and the percentage of the 'very proficient' participants increased to some extent (T1 = 9.2%; T2 = 13.9%).

There were 30.1% and 62% of the participants at T2 who reported respectively

that they were 'not proficient' or 'somewhat proficient' in academic vocabulary. Compared with T1, the percentage of the 'not proficient' participants increased to some extent (T1 = 27.5%), the percentage of the 'somewhat' participants decreased to some extent (T1 = 66%), and the percentage of the 'very proficient' participants increased slightly (T1 = 5.9%; T2 = 6.6%).

3.3.3   T1 vs T2 of Perceived LP

Table 20. Mean Item Scores of Perceived LP (T1 vs T2)

Variables	Mean for T1	Mean for T2	t-test, p <0.01
Speaking	1.80	1.82	N/S
Listening	2.07	2.10	N/S
Writing	1.80	1.76	N/S
Reading	2.14	2.09	N/S
Daily Vocabulary	1.98	1.98	N/S
Academic Vocabulary	1.78	1.78	N/S

The response scale was a four-point continuum for each item of perceived LP, ranging from *Not Proficient* (1) to *Native-like* (4). N/S denotes that the change was statistically non-significant.

Given that the response scale for perceived LP assessment was a four-point continuum for each item ranging from *Not Proficient* to *Native-like*, an increase in mean item scores between T1 and T2 in the participants might imply an increase in perceived LP in respect of the item concerned, whereas a decrease in mean item scores between T1 and T2 might imply a decrease in perceived LP in respect of the item concerned. However, as Table 20 shows, there were no statistically significant differences ($p < 0.01$) found in the mean item scores of any of the items of perceived LP between T1 and T2.

3.4   LLA and PP Variables

The following sub-sections present the results and analyses in relation to the fourth and fifth research questions:

'What is the relationship between their positive psychology and the activities they reported using to improve their English at the start and then mid-way through the academic year, and did those scores change between T1 and T2?' and

'What is the relationship between how their positive psychology scores changed between T1 and T2 and how did the activities which they reported using to improve their English change between T1 and T2?'

3.4.1 Correlations between LLA and PP Variables at T1

At T1, a total of 152 participants were recruited of whom 101 were recruited at UNE and 51 at UML.

Table 21 shows that variable positive correlations were found between the ten LLA and the five PP variables, with very weak relationships (0.10 to 0.19) appearing at the one end, and modest relationships (0.25 to 0.50) at the other, ranging from 0.11 ('I attend CELT class at the university' and CR) to 0.26 ('I join social activities where English is used' and AR).

Only one of the fifty possible correlations had a modest relationship and it was between 'I join social activities where English is used' and AR (0.26).

Table 21. Correlations between the Ten LLA and the Five PP Variables at T1 (N = 152)

	AR	*CR*	*MS*	*PWB*	*PA*
I practise English with my Chinese friends.	0.05	0.00	0.21	0.04	0.01
I join social activities where English is used.	0.26	0.04	0.09	0.02	0.02
I make use of English in everyday activities.	0.21	0.04	0.05	-0.05	0.04
I attend CELT class at the university.	0.13	0.11	0.08	-0.03	-0.05
I attend CELT class outside the university.	0.21	0.15	0.07	-0.01	0.08
I take part in English self-study activities.	0.24	0.17	0.15	0.16	0.04
I watch English films / watch English TV programmes / listen to the English radio.	0.03	-0.04	0.09	-0.09	-0.04
I read English story books / English newspapers.	-0.07	-0.03	0.13	0	0.06
I keep a notebook of new vocabulary that I have learned.	0.04	0.05	0.16	0.09	0.14
I visit English websites / English-speaking	-0.03	-0.01	0.15	0.06	0.03

forums when I surf the internet.					

AR = Autonomous Regulation, CR = Controlled Regulation, MS = Mindset, PWB = Psychological Well-being and PA = Psychological Adjustment.

Correlation coefficient: 0.25 – 0.50, denotes a modest relationship
Correlation coefficient: 0.20 – 0.24, denotes a weak relationship
Correlation coefficient: 0.10 – 0.19, denotes a very weak relationship

There were four of the fifty correlations which had weak relationships and they were: 'I make use of English in everyday activities' and AR (0.21), 'I attend CELT class outside the university' and AR (0.21), 'I take part in English self-study activities' with AR (0.24) and 'I practise English with my Chinese friends' and MS (0.21).

Ten of the fifty correlations had very weak relationships and they were: 'I attend CELT class at the university' and AR (0.13) and CR (0.11), respectively; 'I attend CELT class outside the university' and CR (0.15); 'I take part in English self-study activities' and CR (0.17), MS (0.15) and PWB (0.16), respectively; 'I read English story books / English newspapers' and MS (0.13); 'I keep a notebook of new vocabulary that I have learned' and MS (0.16) and PA (0.14), respectively; and 'I visit English websites / English-speaking forums when I surf the internet' and MS (0.15).

3.4.2 Correlations between LLA and PP Variables at T2

At T2, a total of 167 participants were recruited, 114 at UNE and 53 at UML.

Table 22 shows that at T2 variable positive correlations were found between the ten LLA and the five PP variables, with very weak relationships (0.10 to 0.19) appearing at the one end and modest relationships (0.25 to 0.50) at the other, ranging from 0.10 ('I join social activities where English is used' and CR) to 0.31 ('I watch English films / watch English TV programmes / listen to the English radio' and PWB).

Table 22. Correlations between the Ten LLA and the Five PP Variables at T2 (N = 167)

	AR	*CR*	*MS*	*PWB*	*PA*
I practise English with my Chinese friends.	0.23	0.29	0.16	0.12	0.09
I join social activities where English is used.	0.11	0.10	0.14	0.16	0.13
I make use of English in everyday	0.20	0.06	0.15	0.24	0.15

	AR	CR	MS	PWB	PA
activities.					
I attend CELT class at the university.	0.18	0.14	0.08	0.13	-0.02
I attend CELT class outside the university.	0.15	0.14	-0.02	-0.03	-0.10
I take part in English self-study activities.	0.14	0.11	0.09	0.06	0.03
I watch English films / watch English TV programmes / listen to the English radio.	0.19	0.06	0.22	0.31	0.22
I read English story books / English newspapers.	0.16	-0.02	0.23	0.22	0.17
I keep a notebook of new vocabulary that I have learned.	0.13	0.04	0.15	0.21	0.05
I visit English websites / English-speaking forums when I surf the internet.	0.22	0.12	0.09	0.16	0.07

AR = Autonomous Regulation, CR = Controlled Regulation, MS = Mindset, PWB = Psychological Well-being and PA = Psychological Adjustment.

Correlation coefficient: 0.25 – 0.50, denotes a modest relationship
Correlation coefficient: 0.20 – 0.24, denotes a weak relationship
Correlation coefficient: 0.10 – 0.19, denotes a very weak relationship

Two of the fifty correlations had modest relationships (one correlation at T1) and they were between 'I practise English with my Chinese friends' and CR (0.29; T1 = 0.00), and 'I watch English films / watch English TV programmes / listen to the English radio' and PWB (0.31; T1 = -0.09).

There were nine of the fifty correlations which had weak relationships (four correlations at T1) and they were: 'I practise English with my Chinese friends' and AR (0.23; T1 = 0.05); 'I make use of English in everyday activities' and AR (0.20; T1 = 0.21), and PWB (0.24; T1 = -0.05) respectively; 'I watch English films / watch English TV programmes / listen to the English radio' and MS (0.22; T1 = 0.09), and PA (0.22; T1 = -0.04), respectively; 'I read English story books / English newspapers' and MS (0.23; T1 = 0.13), and PWB (0.22; T1 = 0), respectively; 'I keep a notebook of new vocabulary that I have learned' and PWB (0.21; T1 = 0.09); and 'I visit English websites / English-speaking forums when I surf the internet' and AR (0.22; T1 = -0.03).

Twenty-three of the fifty correlations had very weak relationships (ten correlations at T1) and they were: 'I practise English with my Chinese friends' and MS (0.16; T1 = 0.21), and PWB (0.12; T1 = 0.04), respectively; 'I join social activities where English is used' and AR (0.11; T1 = 0.26), CR (0.10; T1 = 0.04), MS (0.14; T1 = 0.09), PWB (0.16; T1 = 0.02) and PA (0.13; T1 = 0.02), respectively; 'I make use of English in everyday activities' and MS (0.15; T1 = 0.05), and PA (0.15; T1 = 0.04), respectively; 'I

attend CELT class at the university' and AR (0.18; T1 = 0.13), CR (0.14; T1 = 0.11), and

PWB (0.13; T1 = -0.03), respectively; 'I attend CELT class outside the university' and

AR (0.15; T1 = 0.21), and CR (0.14; T1 = 0.15), respectively; 'I take part in English self-

study activities' and AR (0.14; T1 = 0.24), and CR (0.11; T1 = 0.17), respectively; 'I

watch English films / watch English TV programmes / listen to the English radio' and AR

(0.19; T1 = 0.03); 'I read English story books / English newspapers' and AR (0.16; T1 = -

0.07), and PA (0.17; T1 = 0.06), respectively; 'I keep a notebook of new vocabulary that I

have learned' and AR (0.13; T1 = 0.04), and MS (0.15; T1 = 0.16), respectively; and 'I

visit English websites / English-speaking forums when I surf the internet' and CR (0.12;

T1 = -0.01), and PWB (0.16; T1 = 0.06), respectively.

3.4.3   Comparison of PP Variables and LLA Scores between T1 and T2

Table 10 (*see* Section 3.1.3) and Table 17 (*see* Section 3.2.3) were compared in order to

explore the differences in the mean scores of PP variables detected between T1 and T2

and, at the same time, the differences in the mean item scores of LLA detected between

T1 and T2. The two tables are repeated here for convenience.

Table 10. Mean Scores of the Five PP Variables (T1 vs. T2)

Variables	*Mean for T1*	*Mean for T2*	*t-test*
Autonomous Regulation	24.61	23.86	N/S
Controlled Regulation	13.58	13.50	N/S
Mindset	36.95	35.32	2.78; p < 0.01
Psychological Well-being	40.99	39.95	N/S
Psychological Adjustment	34.50	31.28	5.71; p < 0.01

The response scale was a six-point continuum for items in each PP variable, ranging from *Strongly Disagree*
(1) to *Strongly Agree* (6). N/S denotes that the change was statistically non-significant.

As described in Section 3.1.3, Table 10 shows that there were statistically

significant differences (p<0.01) found in the mean item scores in MS (T1 = 36.95; T2 =

35.32; full score = 54) and PA (T1 = 34.50; T2 = 31.28; full score = 54) between T1 and

T2. Bearing in mind that the response scale for MS assessment was a six-point continuum,

ranging from *Strongly Disagree* to *Strongly Agree* and that the fixed MS items contained

reversed-score statements for the calculation of their total scores, the higher the mean scores of the participants might imply an increase in their growth MS belief in English language learning, whereas the lower the mean scores might imply an increase in their fixed MS belief in English language learning. Also, bearing in mind that the response scale for PA assessment was also a six-point continuum ranging from *Strongly Disagree* to *Strongly Agree* and that five of the nine PA items contained reversed-score statements for the calculation of their total scores, the higher the mean scores of the participants might imply an increase in their PA in English language learning, whereas the lower their mean scores were might imply a decrease in their PA in English language learning.

Table 17. Mean Item Scores of the Ten LLA (T1 vs. T2)

	Mean for T1	*Mean for T2*	*t-test*
I practise English with my Chinese friends.	1.86	1.78	N/S
I join social activities where English is used.	2.14	2.44	-3.77; p <0.01
I make use of English in everyday activities.	2.29	2.41	N/S
I attend CELT class at the university.	2.62	2.53	N/S
I attend CELT class outside the university.	1.99	1.81	N/S
I take part in English self-study activities.	2.20	2.07	N/S
I watch English films / watch English TV programmes / listen to the English radio.	3.13	3.04	N/S
I read English story books / English newspapers.	2.40	2.26	N/S
I keep a notebook of new vocabulary that I have learned.	2.33	2.12	2.67; p < 0.01
I visit English websites / English-speaking forums when I surf the internet.	2.32	2.26	N/S

The response scale was a four-point continuum for each item of LLA, ranging from *Not at All* (1) to *Always* (4). N/S denotes that the change was statistically non-significant.

At the same time, Table 17 in Section 3.2.3 shows that there were statistically significant differences (p<0.01) found in the mean item scores of two LLA between T1 and T2. They were 'I join social activities where English is used' (T1 = 2.14; T2 = 2.44; full score = 4) and 'I keep a notebook of new vocabulary that I have learned' (T1 = 2.33; T2 = 2.12; full score = 4). Bearing in mind that the response scale for the assessment of engagement in LLA was a four-point continuum for each item ranging from *Not at All* to *Always*, an increase in mean item scores between T1 and T2 of the participants might

imply an increase in their engagement level in the LLA concerned, whereas a decrease in mean item scores might imply a decrease in their engagement level in the LLA concerned.

3.5   Perceived LP and PP Variables

The following sub-sections present the results and analyses in relation to the sixth and seventh research questions:

'What is the relationship between their positive psychology and their perceived proficiency in English at the start and then mid-way through the academic year, and did those scores change between T1 and T2?' and

'What is the relationship between how their positive psychology scores changed between T1 and T2 and how their perceived proficiency in English changed between T1 and T2?

3.5.1   Correlations between Perceived LP and PP Variables at T1

At T1, 152 participants were recruited, 101 at UNE and 51 at UML.

Table 23. Correlations between the Six Items of Perceived LP and the Five PP Variables at T1 (N = 152)

	AR	*CR*	*MS*	*PWB*	*PA*
Speaking	-0.01	0.14	0.11	0.29	0.06
Listening	-0.02	-0.07	0.16	0.34	0.05
Writing	0.05	0.17	0.13	0.01	0.07
Reading	-0.06	0.01	0.29	0.15	0.15
Daily Vocabulary	0.06	0.12	0.07	0.11	0.01
Academic Vocabulary	0.02	0.11	-0.01	0.05	-0.11

AR = Autonomous Regulation, CR = Controlled Regulation, MS = Mindset, PWB = Psychological Well-being and PA = Psychological Adjustment.

Correlation coefficient: 0.25 – 0.50, denotes a modest relationship
Correlation coefficient: 0.20 – 0.24, denotes a weak relationship
Correlation coefficient: 0.10 – 0.19, denotes a very weak relationship

Table 23 shows that at T1, variable positive correlations were found between the

six items of perceived LP and the five PP variables, with very weak relationships (0.10 to 0.19) appearing at the one end and modest relationships (0.25 to 0.50) at the other, ranging from 0.11 (speaking and MS, daily vocabulary and PWB, and academic vocabulary and CR, respectively) to 0.34 (listening and PWB).

Three of the thirty possible correlations had modest relationships and they were: speaking and PWB (0.29), listening and PWB (0.34), and reading and MS (0.29).

There was no correlation with a weak relationship, but there were ten of the thirty correlations that had very weak relationships, and they were: speaking and CR (0.14), and MS (0.11), respectively; listening and MS (0.16); writing and CR (0.17), and MS (0.13), respectively; reading and PWB (0.15), and PA (0.15), respectively; daily vocabulary and CR (0.12), and PWB (0.11), respectively; and academic vocabulary and CR (0.11).

3.5.2 Correlations between Perceived LP and PP Variables at T2

At T2, 167 participants were recruited, 114 at UNE and 53 at UML.

Table 24. Correlations between the Six Items of Perceived LP and the Five PP Variables at T2 (N = 167)

	AR	*CR*	*MS*	*PWB*	*PA*
Speaking	-0.10	0.16	0.26	0.23	0.09
Listening	0.03	0.19	0.19	0.20	0.20
Writing	-0.07	0.16	0.07	0.20	0.05
Reading	0.02	0.16	-0.03	0.05	0.15
Daily Vocabulary	-0.04	0.16	0.13	0.06	0.04
Academic Vocabulary	-0.04	0.14	0.13	0.09	0.14

AR = Autonomous Regulation, CR = Controlled Regulation, MS = Mindset, PWB = Psychological Well-being and PA = Psychological Adjustment.

Correlation coefficient: 0.25 – 0.50, denotes a modest relationship
Correlation coefficient: 0.20 – 0.24, denotes a weak relationship
Correlation coefficient: 0.10 – 0.19, denotes a very weak relationship

Table 24 shows that at T2 variable positive correlations were found between the six items of perceived LP and the five PP variables, with very weak relationships (0.10 to 0.19) appearing at the one end, and modest relationships (0.25 to 0.50) at the other, ranging from 0.13 (daily vocabulary and MS, academic vocabulary and MS, respectively)

to 0.26 (speaking and MS).

Only one of the thirty possible correlations had a modest relationship (three correlations at T1): speaking and MS (0.26; T1 = 0.11).

Four of the thirty correlations had weak relationships (no correlation at T1) and they were: speaking and PWB (0.23; T1 = 0.29), listening and PWB (0.20; T1 = 0.34), and writing and PWB (0.20; T1 = 0.01); and listening and PA (0.20; T1 = 0.05).

Eleven of the thirty correlations had very weak relationships (ten correlations at T1): speaking and CR (0.16; T1 = 0.14), listening and CR (0.19; T1 = -0.07), writing and CR (0.16; T1 = 0.17), reading and CR (0.16; T1 = 0.01), daily vocabulary and CR (0.16; T1 = 0.12), and academic vocabulary and CR (0.14; T1 = 0.11); listening and MS (0.19; T1 = 0.16), daily vocabulary and MS (0.13; T1 = 0.07), and academic vocabulary and MS (0.13; T1 = -0.01); reading and PA (0.15; T1 = 0.15), and academic vocabulary and PA (0.14; T1 = -0.11).

3.5.3 Comparison of PP Variables and Perceived LP Scores between T1 and T2

Table 10 (*see* Section 3.1.3) and Table 20 (*see* Section 3.3.3) were compared in order to explore the differences in the mean scores of the PP variables found between T1 and T2 and, at the same time, the differences in the mean item scores for the perceived LLA engagements found between T1 and T2.

As described in Section 3.1.3, Table 10 shows that there were statistically significant differences ($p<0.01$) found in MS and PA between T1 and T2. The tables are repeated here for convenience.

Table 10. Mean Scores of the Five PP Variables (T1 vs. T2)

Variables	*Mean for T1*	*Mean for T2*	*t-test*
Autonomous Regulation	24.61	23.86	N/S
Controlled Regulation	13.58	13.50	N/S
Mindset	36.95	35.32	2.78; p < 0.01
Psychological Well-being	40.99	39.95	N/S
Psychological Adjustment	34.50	31.28	5.71; p < 0.01

The response scale was a six-point continuum for items in each PP variable, ranging from *Strongly Disagree* (1) to *Strongly Agree* (6). N/S denotes that the change was statistically non-significant.

Bearing in mind that the response scale for MS assessment was a six-point continuum ranging from *Strongly Disagree* to *Strongly Agree* and that the fixed MS items contained reversed-score statements for the calculation of their total scores, the higher the mean scores of the participants might imply an increase in their growth MS belief in English language learning, whereas the lower their mean scores might imply an increase in their fixed MS belief in English language learning. Bearing in mind that the response scale for PA assessment was also a six-point continuum ranging from *Strongly Disagree* to *Strongly Agree* and that five of the nine PA items contained reversed-score statements for the calculation of their total scores, the higher the mean scores of the participants might imply an increase in their PA in English language learning, whereas the lower their mean scores might imply a decrease in their PA in English language learning.

Table 20. Mean Item Scores of the Perceived LP (T1 vs. T2)

Variables	Mean for T1	Mean for T2	t-test, p <0.01
Speaking	1.80	1.82	N/S
Listening	2.07	2.10	N/S
Writing	1.80	1.76	N/S
Reading	2.14	2.09	N/S
Daily Vocabulary	1.98	1.98	N/S
Academic Vocabulary	1.78	1.78	N/S

The response scale was a four-point continuum for each item of perceived LP, ranging from *Not Proficient* (1) to *Native-like* (4). N/S denotes that the change was statistically non-significant.

Understanding that the response scale for perceived LP assessment was a four-point continuum for each item of perceived LP ranging from *Not Proficient* to *Native-like*, an increase in mean item scores between T1 and T2 of the participants might imply an increase in their perceived LP in terms of the item concerned, whereas a decrease in mean item scores between T1 and T2 might imply a decrease in their perceived LP in terms of the item concerned. The figures presented in Table 20 (*see* Section 3.3.3) therefore show that there were no statistically significant differences (p<0.01) found in the mean item

scores of all the items of perceived LP between T1 and T2.

CHAPTER 4 FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEWS – RESULTS AND ANALYSES

Sixteen Chinese master's students were invited from various departments at UNE for the first and second face-to-face interviews, which took place in October 2012 (T1) and in late February 2013 (T2) respectively. As mentioned in Section 2.4.4 (Gender Differences), the samples in this study were predominantly female. Hence, this current study was carried out by analysing a total group without a gender split in the data presentations and analyses.

All of the participants turned up for the first face-to-face interviews, and so the response rate was 100%. However, only 14 participants attended the second face-to-face interviews at T2, which resulted in a response rate of 88%. On average, each interview session took about half an hour. All of the participants were very willing to express their answers in a combination of languages: Mandarin supplemented by English, purely Mandarin, or purely Cantonese. The participants were free to choose the time and venue for the interviews, which meant that the atmosphere for the interviews was generally acceptable and relaxing.

In view of the analysis as to the merits (Halcomb & Davidson, 2006) and demerits (Britten, 1995; Easton *et al.*, 2000; Fasick, 2001; Gilbert, 2008; MacLean *et al.*, 2004; Poland, 1995; Seale & Silverman, 1997; Silverman, 1993; van Teijlingen & Ireland, 2003; Wellard & McKenna, 2001; Wengraf, 2001) of adopting verbatim transcription as the first step towards qualitative data management (*see* Section 2.9 for further details), I chose to use an alternative method of data management suggested by Halcomb and Davidson (2006). I recognised that this current study did not call for a specific closeness between researchers and the interview data, and this justified adopting a reflexive and repetitive type of qualitative data management, which has been described in detail in Section 2.9 as a six-step process of data management. The six steps were: audiorecording of interview and concurrent note-taking (step 1); reflective journaling immediately after interview (step 2); listening to the audiorecording and amending field notes and

observations as necessary (step 3); preliminary content analysis with the help of NVivo (step 4); secondary content analysis (step 5); and thematic review (step 6). In this way, I implemented the six steps for qualitative data analyses of this current study.

Based on my understanding and interpretations in the interviews, various comments made by the participants were highlighted with the help of NVivo, and those comments were put into five major categories, with one question per category (*see* Appendix IV). Each category was then further divided into different sub-categories with corresponding items in such a way that the results could be precisely and concisely presented for later data analyses. The categories and sub-categories with corresponding items were rechecked by me by going through the audiorecording, field notes and interview reports of all of the participants. Following that, my supervisor came into play by reviewing all of the qualitative data together with me. He validated and then confirmed the five categories and their nine sub-categories and corresponding items as described in the following paragraph.

The five categories were SR, MS, PWB and PA; and 'English LLA'. The nine sub-categories and their corresponding items (in brackets) were 'Intrinsic Motivation' (Interest in Learning the English Language, and Satisfaction in Learning the English Language); 'Extrinsic Motivation' (Usefulness of the English Language and Pressure of Learning the English Language); 'Fixed Mindset', 'Growth Mindset' (Hard Work Counts, Exposure Counts and Strategy Counts); 'Anxieties and Worries' (Afraid of Making Grammatical Mistakes, Introvert Character, Not Enough Practice, Afraid of Not being Understood and Can't Handle the Study Well); 'Confident and Happy'; 'Happily Adjusted to the Environment' (Always Speaks in Mandarin, Grasps Chances to Speak in English and Curious to Know More about this Country); 'Having Drawbacks in the Environment' (Seeing the Cultural Differences between the East and the West and Can't Get Used to the Language); and 'English Language Learning Activities' (Classroom Setting, Daily Conversations, No Activities, Internet as a Channel, Reading Newspapers

and Magazines, Travelling and Social Gatherings). Appendix V can be referred to for full details.

4.1   Intrinsic Motivation

Qualitative data was collected based on the following face-to-face interview question pertaining to SR of the participants in their English language learning:

'Would you describe yourself as the sort of person who is learning English because you want to, or because you feel there are pressures on you to do so? Please explain your views and how these relate to your experiences so far at this university.'

4.1.1   Interest in Learning the English Language

From the results of the face-to-face interviews at T1, it can be seen that five of the sixteen participants (31%) answered that they had an 'interest in learning the English language'. Some participants explained that their interest in English learning has been naturally and gradually developed thanks to their feeling of fun and enjoyment in English lessons and, at the same time, finding out more about Western culture. Another participant opined that her interest in translation arose from her perception that the subject is easy for her. One participant told how she enjoyed watching American movies and interacting with English-speaking friends.

The following interview quotes exemplify the above (*see* Appendix V):

"I naturally and gradually developed my interest in the subject."

"Since I was in secondary school, I have strong interest in the English language due to the extra-curriculum activities created by the expatriate teachers. They had a great sense of humour in their teaching and I started to really enjoy the English language lessons. I have great motivation to improve my standard of English. I liked those interactive teaching methods introduced by those foreign teachers,

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who emphasised the general use of English and daily English, rather than using an examination-oriented style of learning. Also I got to know more about Western culture besides the language itself."

"I have been learning this language for many years and I gradually came to like the language through the learning process."

"I enjoy learning the English language. I like watching American English programmes, and I enjoy interacting with English-speaking friends very much. … "

However, of the participants who took part in the face-to-face interviews at T2, four of the fourteen participants (29%) stated that they had an 'interest in learning the English language'. In addition to the answers given at T1, such as an interest in learning English, what was also mentioned at T2 was that this interest could be due to learning English at a very young age, learning about Western culture, and being motivated by English teachers.

Some of the quotes which demonstrate this are as follows (*see* Appendix V):

"I like learning English in general. When I was small, my parents sent me to an interest group where English was used as the medium of instruction. Through this I had the opportunity to come into contact with the English language, and this cultivated my interest from a very young age."

"I have an interest in learning this language."

"I like English language, and I enjoy interacting with people in English and learning more about Western culture in general. … "

"I learn English because of my interest in the language. I had an early start in learning the language, which I started to do at the age of ten. My English teachers were mostly inspiring which motivated me very much towards learning the language."

4.1.2   Satisfaction of Learning the English Language

During the face-to-face interviews at T1, only three of the sixteen participants (19%) commented that they had 'satisfaction in learning the English language'. Satisfaction

arose from their understanding of direct information in English from different parts of the world, feelings of encouragement and fascination empowered by comprehension of English when watching TV series, listening to English songs and reading English books, a feeling of success in communicating with others, a feeling of fun and enjoyment when meeting English-speaking people or international students, a sense of achievement in English language related competition and examination, or a feeling of usefulness when speaking with English-speaking tourists in China.

Here are some of the statements which support these comments (*see* Appendix V):

" … I do have a sense of achievement in having improved my standard of English. I can now understand English articles by myself, instead of having to read through versions translated into English from Chinese. … "

" … My level of comprehension gives me much encouragement when I am watching English TV series, listening to songs in English, or reading English novels or literature."

"I get great enjoyment from English language learning and I get a sense of achievement when communicating with others effectively. … "

" … I enjoy meeting English-speaking people and it is fun to get along with them. I spend most of the time with the international students rather than the Chinese students, and I meet them more often than I do with the Chinese students."

"I get a sense of achievement in winning an English language related competition, or getting good results in an English examination. I feel that I can be helpful when I speak in English with tourists in China, or help to translate for people in the supermarket."

Participants who felt that they enjoyed 'satisfaction in learning the English language' were even fewer in the face-to-face interviews at T2, with only two of the fourteen participants (14%) saying that this was the case. On top of what was said during T1, two of the fourteen participants at T2 opined that their satisfaction was sourced from their attitude towards self-adjustment in the UK, and an understanding of the lives and cultures

of the locals.

This can be seen through the following interview quotes (*see* Appendix V):

"After coming to the UK, I have become more interested in learning the English language after getting to know about British cultures. I have changed my attitude as part of my adjustment in the UK. I have read a lot of books which are written in English, and my majoring subject is being done in English."

"I enjoy understanding the lives and cultures of the locals. The Brits are much more relaxed in their lives when compared to the Chinese."

4.2 Extrinsic Motivation

The same question was used to assess the SR of the candidates. To recapitulate, the question was as follows:

'Would you describe yourself as the sort of person who is learning English because you want to, or because you feel there are pressures on you to do so? Please explain your views and how these relate to your experiences so far at this university.'

4.2.1 Usefulness of the English Language

In the face-to-face interviews at T1, fifteen of the sixteen participants (94%) expressed an opinion that they agreed with the 'usefulness of the English language' as an important international language. They explained that English has been useful for communication with English-speaking people from all over the world. This communication applies to a variety of settings, such as: in classrooms or during seminars; in collaborative projects; for the advancement of knowledge; when using modern technology via mass media such as internet, journals, or magazines; learning about the culture of the host country; obtaining satisfaction in one's daily life; and leisure activities such as shopping, socialising, travelling, and so on. In addition, one participant said fluency in spoken

English could bring advantages in the workplace and would facilitate job promotion in China.

> Supporting quotes are as follows (*see* Appendix V):
>
> "English is widely used for the purpose of transmitting messages. I am in touch with English through internet / magazines / mass media / TV. The descriptions of many modern technologies are mainly in English. I have to understand the general ideas of the articles which I read. … "
>
> " … I don't actually have a strong interest in English language learning but just enjoy the usefulness and practicality it brings."
>
> " … I know that English is a widely used language so I feel the need to attain a higher level of language proficiency in English. I understand that commercial sectors in China have always emphasised on employees' English language ability so much that fluency in spoken English can definitely help me to get promoted easily in my future career. … "

This positive response was significantly reduced in the face-to-face interviews at T2, with only eight of the fourteen participants (57%) saying that they acknowledged the 'usefulness of the English language' as an important international language. Further to what was said at T1, there were diverse opinions over the need to learn about local cultures when learning better English. Some participants thought that they learned better English in an English-speaking country such as the UK in order to help them to communicate better with the locals and other international peers. Learning about local cultures could also help to make some local friends. On the other hand, one participant told how he was initially interested in communicating with the locals, but after a few months' stay he became unwilling to practise this due to the recognition of the existence of cultural differences. However, another participant told of how he was interested in learning English and about local cultures so as to communicate better with the locals and other international peers. Furthermore, one participant pointed out that the driving force behind learning better English was that first-hand information in its English form was

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important when learning a subject matter directly and accurately rather than relying on Chinese-translated books. Finally, one other participant explained that learning better English could allow for a better understanding of the locals' way of life as they appeared to enjoy their lives and work.

This can be seen through the following quotes (*see* Appendix V):

"English is all about reading papers and attending classes. My major focus is on how I can handle the language in my studies. … "

"English is just a tool for me to understand the context of the programme. Almost all of my teachers and classmates speak in English. My aim is to learn the English language and to facilitate my studying in this country. … Understanding British culture is not that relevant to my studies in the UK, but for the sake of communication use. Learning English is far more important than knowing about the local culture. … "

" … And I don't think I will have a chance to discuss my academic studies with the local peers. Only written examinations are required in my study programme. Hence, I don't need to get involved in any presentation sessions. In addition, my major studies are mainly consisted of Mathematics and Statistics concepts in which the English language is not the key factor in the process of learning."

4.2.2   Pressure of Learning the English Language

During the interviews at T1, eight of the sixteen participants (50%) said that they felt the 'pressure of learning the English language' and 'speaking in front of peers'. One participant voiced a concern that the pressure came from her taking an English major at home. Had she not been able to speak in good English, she would have been perceived as not diligent enough on her English major studies. In this way, she felt under pressure to learn better English rather than having a strong will to achieve this. Lagging behind fellow classmates was also a driving force in learning better English.

The following interview quotes are identified to illustrate the above (*see* Appendix V):

"It is due to the pressure created by the education system in China that I was

forced to study the English language. … I needed to get a pass in the English language examination before I could get promoted to a higher level."

"I feel pressurised by the English exams I need to take. … "

"I have experienced a lot of peer pressure when learning the English language. Many people are much better than me at language learning. I am anxious, rather than happy, when I speak in English in the UK. … "

" … The peer pressure to be better in English may decrease my interest in learning the language."

When the same topic was raised in the face-to-face interviews at T2, twelve of the fourteen participants (86%) believed that they felt the 'pressure of learning the English language'. Similarly, one participant explained that the source of pressure stemmed from her majoring in English and TESOL, as her peers might have rated her highly in terms of the English proficiency, however this was not actually the case even after a few months. Another participant stated that her interest in learning English has decreased. One other participant told how the pressure felt in learning English could be attributed to the Chinese education system, where the English proficiency of students has been categorised into various levels for university entrance requirements. She did not regard the culture in the UK as having made learning English enjoyable. At the same time, some other participants felt that their motivation to learn better English was sourced from the need to grasp knowledge when studying for their majors. One participant said learning better English could fulfil her wish to work for a brighter future. However, she felt under pressure to engage in verbal communication with the locals due to her poor spoken English. Some participants encountered the pressure of learning English throughout their primary, secondary and university studies, including studies which took place overseas. One participant told how she found it difficult to speak to the locals as they are usually fast speakers.

The following statements demonstrate this (*see* Appendix V):

"I learn English mostly because of the examination pressure I encountered in the Chinese education system. I am the only Chinese student in the class. I am forced to use the English language all the time here. I don't feel that the culture in this country makes me enjoy the process of learning English, and my attitude towards this is exactly the same compared to when I arrived in the UK."

"I was required to learn the English language as part of the secondary school curriculum in China. I was urged to learn better English."

"I was highly pressurised to learn the English language from a young age. In China, the standard examination system aims to differentiate people according to their academic performance."

"Both environment and atmosphere contribute to the pressure experienced in my English language learning. I wish to work for a brighter future but I find that my starting point for learning the English language is a bit late when compared to students from other countries. My spoken English is quite poor, as I find it very difficult to express myself well in front of the locals in the UK."

4.3 Fixed Mindset

The next question asked during the face-to-face interviews related to the MS of the participants, and was as follows:

'In general, do you feel your English will improve if you work at it or do you feel your English is largely a matter of natural ability? Please explain your view and how these relate to your experiences so far at this university.'

In the first round of interviews at T1, there were eleven of the sixteen participants (69%) who believed that 'some people are quick learners' in the course of English language learning. Those participants believed that only talented people were quick language learners, although they did concede that hard work could play a contributory role in the learning process.

Some of the quotes which illustrate this are as follows: (*see* Appendix V):

"Some people are actually more talented than others. They can learn the English language quickly with great improvement from time to time. Others who are not so talented also show improvement through hard work and by practicing their English listening and writing."

"Some people are simply talented in their English language learning, and they avoid using Mandarin accent which is advantageous in English language learning. I need to memorise plenty of vocabulary by heart, and I watch many American series and read a lot of British books. And so my English is acquired from through years of hard work."

"Some people are more talented in language learning than others. When I studied the English language as major subject in Mainland China. … Learning through lessons was not enough. Words, grammar and cultures can't be thoroughly taught in the classroom, and students need to possess talent to strive for improvement. I believe hard work can often help, although the speed of attaining a good standard of English depends on each individual's own talent."

"Some people are actually talented in language learning, and are more efficient in acquiring good language skills."

This figure was reduced at the second round of interviews at T2, when only seven of the fourteen participants (50%) stated that they believed that 'some people are quick learners' in the course of English language learning. They shared a similar belief as opined by the participants at T1, which is that talent is a determining factor in language learning, and is more important than the factor of hard work.

Quotes supporting this are as follows (*see* Appendix V):

"Whether talent or hard work is more important in English language learning depends on situations. In professional jobs, people with strong ability should naturally be more capable."

"Talent is much more important than hard work. I am less talented when compared to some of my classmates, and I have some Chinese friends who have attained a high proficiency in English even though they don't work so hard. I take part in various English-speaking related competitions, and some people are

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actually more talented than others, but solely having talent is not enough. You have to practise what has been learnt, and this is a determining factor in the language learning process."

"A talented person may attain a native-like standard, but people can reach a general level if they are hard-working enough. Many people could get a good grade in piano exam if they have practised hard, but not many people could get to concert performance level."

"Some people are more successful than others because they are more talented in language. Hard work may also be a determining factor in acquiring higher language ability, but talent should always count."

4.4   Growth Mindset

As before, the growth MS of the participants was addressed through the same question as in Section 4.3:

'In general, do you feel your English will improve if you work at it or do you feel your English is largely a matter of natural ability? Please explain your view and how these relate to your experiences so far at this university.'

4.4.1   Hard Work Counts

The results of the face-to-face interviews at T1 show that nine of the sixteen participants (56%) were of the opinion that 'hard work counts' in the course of English language learning.

This is backed up by the following quotes (*see* Appendix V):

"I believe hard work means you will have better progress in your English language learning."

"Hard work can work in language learning though, although some people should be more talented and learn much faster and easier."

"Hard work and practice are the key factors for language learning. Talent can help

one to learn faster, but language learning is a process full of practice, and 'trial and error'."

"Hard work is more important than talent when it comes to English language learning. A lot of Chinese students having a persistent and strong will to learn English, and they wake up early to practise English language."

Similar results were seen in the face-to-face interviews at T2, with nine of the fourteen participants (64%) expressing a belief that 'hard work counts' in the course of English language learning.

This is demonstrated through comments such as (*see* Appendix V):

"Hard work comes first and then talent. A person needs to work hard so as to improve English language standard."

"Talent shouldn't be a main factor in language learning; exposure and hard work should be involved in the process of learning. As for academic English, hard work is necessary to be successful in learning the language. Achieving a reasonable level of daily English or spoken English would be easier as long as there is an adequate practice in an English-speaking environment. I have changed my opinion about 'the talent in language learning' from that which I expressed in my previous interview. I now believe that 'practice makes perfect'."

"In terms of applying English to daily life, anyone can learn good English if they work hard enough. For academic studies, though, to fully understand the English words in textbooks in order to successfully obtain the knowledge, hard work can always solve the problem."

"Many people are generally of a similar level of intelligence. Hard work should be a determining factor for success in learning English."

4.4.2   Exposure Counts

During the interviews at T1, two of the sixteen participants (13%) said that they believed that 'exposure counts' in the course of English language learning.

The following interview quotes illustrate this well (*see* Appendix V):

"Working hard has improved my English language. A lack of opportunities to

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speak with native speakers has meant that I have failed to attain fluency in my verbal communication with them. However, I do feel an improvement after practising English speaking with my Chinese friends."

"Chinese people from the countryside can't afford to pay expensive tuition fee for learning English language, and so it is very common that their English proficiency is not that high, and is spoken with a strong Mandarin accent. It is better for anyone to learn by being immersed in an English-speaking environment as early as possible. This should start from kindergarten. Both hard work and an English-speaking environment are very important factors in having a high English language proficiency."

In the interviews at T2, there were four of the fourteen participants (29%) who stated that they believed that 'exposure counts' in the course of English language learning.

The following interview quotes are used to exemplify the above (*see* Appendix V):

"I have spent more time on learning the language. When exposed to an English-speaking environment means that my language ability can be improved well."

"Immersing yourself into the language learning environment is very important. More exposure to the local areas, such as pubs and restaurants provides more chances to interact with the locals and learn English."

"The environment is also very important in language learning, and you should take the initiative and interact with the locals."

"Environmental factors do play a main role in learning English. The more chances you have to be exposed to the English language the better. With good teachers' help, and through hard work and having a strongly motivated personality, surely high standard of English can be achieved."

4.4.3   Strategy Counts

During the interviews at both T1 and T2, only one of the sixteen participants (6%) and one of the fourteen participants (7%) respectively believed that 'strategy counts' in the course of English language learning.

The participant in question provided the following quotes to support this view (*see*

Appendix V):

> "Success in language learning is due to good language learning strategies." (from the first interview)

> "Motivation counts, and you can increase your chance of learning the language through various language learning strategies." (from the second interview)

4.5   Anxieties and Worries

To assess the PWB of the participants, the following question was asked:

> 'How would you describe your feelings when you used English – do you feel confident and happy, or do you feel anxious and worried? Please explain your view and how these relate to your experiences so far at this university.'

4.5.1   Afraid of Making Grammatical Mistakes

It can be seen from the results of the face-to-face interviews at T1 that only six of the sixteen participants (38%) said that they were 'afraid of making grammatical mistakes' in the course of English language learning.

> This can be seen through the following comments (*see* Appendix V):
> "My spoken English is not good enough and I have made some mistakes at times. … "

> "I feel anxious when I need to speak with strangers, new friends or a large group of people. I am not getting used to talking in English, and I worry about making grammatical mistakes. I tend to have some 'stopping points' in my spoken English, such as a lack of vocabulary and uncertainties about the appropriate use of English grammar. If I am really familiar with a particular English-speaking person or international student, I can feel the happiness in my use of English, even though I make many grammatical mistakes or use words incorrectly, and am not too confident at times."

> "At the beginning, I worried about my use of English very much because of my poor foundation in the language, and I always think that I have made some

grammatical mistakes in my spoken English."

At the face-to-face interviews at T2, only one of the fourteen participants (7%) admitted that she was 'afraid of making grammatical mistakes' in the course of English language learning.

> She elaborated on this by saying (*see* Appendix V):
>
> "I do not have a problem communicating with my classmates and teachers in the UK. I speak with British people outside university, and I wish to have no obvious grammatical mistakes in my conversation."

4.5.2   Introvert Character

The results of the face-to-face interviews at T1 show that only two of sixteen participants (13%) attributed negative feelings towards their 'introverted character' in English language learning. However, no response was reported at T2.

The following interview quotes can be identified as an illustration of the above (*see* Appendix V):

> "I neither feel very confident nor very anxious when I speak in English in the UK. My lack of confidence in speaking is due to my introvert character. I am very anxious with my English language learning."
>
> "Whether I feel nervous or happy very much depends on different situations. I experience nervousness most of the time when I speak English in the UK."

4.5.3   Not Enough Practice

During the face-to-face interviews at T1, only two of the sixteen participants (13%) opined that they attributed 'not enough practice' to their not-so-good English language learning.

> This can be seen through the following interview quotes (*see* Appendix V):
>
> "I believe my spoken English is not as good as my reading and listening skills."
>
> "I always have Chinese peers around, so I don't have much chance to speak in

English. I am sad to say that the only chance to use the English language is in the classroom."

When asked the same question in the face-to-face interviews at T2, six of the fourteen participants (43%) said they attributed 'not enough practice' to their not-so-good English language learning.

These comments are supported by the following interview quotes (*see* Appendix V):

"I always feel very nervous when I perform presentations in the classroom. I focus a lot on practice, and this usually helps me to complete the task successfully. I do believe that I have made some improvements to my spoken English, but I can't deny that I have to practice more. … "

"I am very anxious when I speak in English. I don't have enough English-speaking practice, and my study occupies most of my time in the UK. … "

"There are many Chinese students in my class, so I don't always need to speak in English during discussions with my teammates."

" … I am not confident enough when I speak in English. There aren't many chances for me to speak in English, as most projects just involve one or two British students within a big group of Chinese students. I mostly speak in Mandarin with my teammates. … "

4.5.4 Afraid of Not Being Understood

By analysing the results of the face-to-face interviews at T1, it can be seen that six of the sixteen participants (38%) stated that they were 'afraid of not being understood' in the course of English language learning.

Some of the quotes which back up these comments are as follows (*see* Appendix V):

"I am always very nervous and lack confidence in my English speaking, and I often questions myself over whether people understand my use of words or not. … "

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"I am very nervous and worried about the actual wordings I used when I am trying to communicate in English. I can't prevent myself from deviating too much from the intended meaning, and so I sometimes mislead English speakers. I am afraid of making mistakes and being misunderstood by others. Whether or not I can bring out my exact message in English, I try not to cause them to think I meant something else and get the wrong message."

"I feel very anxious in my spoken English. I can't always understand the meaning of others in the conversation. I wish to express myself better in front of the locals, but I don't really know how. I don't think I have real communication with the locals. I have got some friends from Germany, Italy, and other countries, instead of just from this country."

Similar answers were given at T2, when five of the fourteen participants (36%) commented that they were 'afraid of not being understood' in the process of English verbal communications.

This can be demonstrated through the following interview quotes (*see* Appendix V):

"It's easy for me to understand what the native speakers said in this country, but I always encounter barriers when I speak and write. I should know a lot of general terms in communication, but I often fail to find the correct terms when I speak. As a result I can't always speak properly and appropriately, and there have been occasions when I gave wrong messages to the locals. I can't communicate with the locals well in this country."

"When I go shopping, travelling or try speaking with some British students, I find it very difficult to communicate effectively. I feel under a lot of pressure when I speak with the locals outside of campus, and I am afraid of failing to understand what they really meant."

"I wasn't that anxious when I arrived in the UK, but later on I become quite anxious. People from different parts of the world have spoken English which is different from the British or Americans. It can be very confusing when communicating with them, and when the teaching staff are not native speakers, I can't actually understand their English and what they mean. Sometimes there are presentations and interactions in which English is used in the programme but it is just confined to the learning context. I am quite sure that I can build up confidence

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in communication after immersing in this English-speaking environment."

"The British speak too fast, which means that I can't grasp the meaning of a conversation, but I manage to make them understand what I want to express at times."

4.5.5 Can't Handle the Study Well

In the interviews at T1, only one of the sixteen participants (6%) admitted that he was afraid of not being able to 'handle the study well' in the course of English language learning.

One participant's quote which endorsed this is as follows (*see* Appendix V):

"The main reason I am studying is to learn something related to the field of psychology, however, I feel doubtful as to my ability to truly understand the subject contents under English-as-a-medium-of-instruction. I face many English-related problems when I'm in my department, and my academic English standard is not strong enough. In order to learn psychology more easily, I need to expand my vocabulary by whatever means necessary."

This increased during the interviews at T2, when two of the fourteen participants (14%) answered that they were afraid of not being able to 'handle the study well' in the course of English language learning.

Quotes which support this are as follows (*see* Appendix V):

"I still feel the tension when I'm reading academic books these days. I would feel pressurised to read a text quickly upon request, because English is not my first language. … but when it comes to spontaneous speech, I experience a great tension. I have found that it's extremely difficult for me to understand and express my thoughts on British politics and national or European news in English. I feel that I am speaking out of context all the time when discussing these topics. I usually have the habit of reading Chinese media to understand what's happening in Europe, … . I have no motivation to read the English ones, and I feel it is difficult to express the meanings and concepts behind those European issues at times. As the news and my knowledge of my major subject need to be updated every day, … I wouldn't actually be able to catch up the progress of the class, due to my being slow to read in English. I need … a dictionary in hand if I read in

English."

"I can successfully answer some of the teachers' questions in class, and I understand the meaning out of all those questions. But I can't fully answer them, as my textbook knowledge is not enough for understanding the context in depth."

4.5.6   Fear of the New Environment

It can be seen from the results of the face-to-face interviews at T1 that two of the sixteen participants (13%) voiced the opinion that they experienced 'fear of the new environment' in the course of English language learning.

The following interview quotes can be taken as confirmation of the above (*see* Appendix V):

"I mostly meet Chinese students in my accommodation area, and I simply speak in Mandarin in my daily life."

"I felt anxious when I firstly arrived in the UK. A new environment makes me feel nervous, when I saw people communicating in English. I felt that joining in the conversation would be very difficult for me. I hope that this situation can improve."

Again, during the face-to-face interviews at T2, two of the fourteen participants (14%) stated that they experienced 'fear of the new environment' in the course of English language learning.

These comments are supported by the following interview quotes (*see* Appendix V):

"I feel anxious when I speak in English, especially when I need to express myself in front of the class as well as native speakers. There are a lot of presentation and team work opportunities in my programme, and there are chances to speak in English with a lot of preparations made beforehand. I have gained confidence in my spoken English because of the chances I have had to use the language through my increased daily interactions with others. I sometimes feel anxious when I try to express myself."

"I believe that the living habits of Europeans and British are very different from the Chinese. I can't manage to wake up at 7 am, and go for a group discussion at 8 am. There are some cultural and personal differences between some of us who are in the same living environment. I think that my English standard will improve through preparing all those 4-minute presentations."

4.6   Confident and Happy

The question outlined in section 4.5 was also used to assess how PWB the participants were in relation to their English language learning. This question was as follows:

'How would you describe your feelings when you used English – do you feel confident and happy, or do you feel anxious and worried? Please explain your view and how these relate to your experiences so far at this university.'

Of the participants who took part in the face-to-face interviews at T1, six of sixteen of them (38%) believed that they felt 'confident and happy' in the course of English language learning.

Some of the interview quotes which endorse this view are as follows (also *see* Appendix V):

"I felt very anxious when I was required to speak in English in my junior high school years. But now, I am very confident. I find that it's easy for me to start a conversation with the locals, and I encounter no difficulties making friends with them. I always communicate with them very well."

"I am happy in the English-speaking environment, and I can always speak naturally. I never feel that my English speaking is incompetent anyway, and I am very keen on communicating with others. There are no obvious worries in my daily living, nor in my academic studies. There is much room for improvement, in my use of pronoun in particular, when I speak or write. I understand lectures as they are all about Mathematical concepts, and there are not many difficult English words as it is all Mathematics related. Sometimes I fail to understand what the lecturer has said. It is better when the lecturers write on the board, as that way I have more time to understand the teaching context."

"I feel happy when I interact with the locals, as I can learn a lot about British cultures from them. I was anxious when I arrived in the UK, but now I'm happier. I feel a sense of achievement after having practiced my spoken English from time to time and having shown improvement."

"I was very anxious before I came to this English-speaking country, as I was afraid that I couldn't speak the English language well. I can sense that learning better English is a kind of commitment. By improveing my spoken English, I have become very happy and satisfied with the standard of my English language at this point."

During the second round of interviews, there were also six of the fourteen participants (43%) who discussed at length how they felt 'confident and happy' in the course of English language learning.

This can be seen through the following interview quotes (*see* Appendix V):

"I feel confident in speaking in English. I can now speak naturally that I always feel comfortable in using the language when I work with others or during presentation. I usually have a prepared script in hand to read and rely on; however, I sometimes present in my own way. I can't deny that language does affect my studies to a certain extent."

"I have had a lot of presentation opportunities. I was very nervous about it at the beginning of the term as I wasn't confident enough to speak in front of the class. However, I do have the opportunity to prepare well beforehand. Most of my groupmates and classmates are English speaking, and I got used to speaking in English very quickly. Confidence can be built throughout one's learning, and I can always get my classmates' great help. I am free to ask them questions concerning the presentation, and we have a lot of interactions during the preparation process. They are trying their best to understand my spoken English, and so I feel more confident and happy with my presentations, and I have got used to the presentation skills."

"The longer my stay in the UK, the more confident I have become when using the English language. At the beginning, I was always afraid that my meaning couldn't be received properly. I worried at times that I couldn't understand what others were saying. Now that I have stayed in the UK for a long time. I have had more chances to interact with the locals and I have improved my language fluently."

"I am confident in using English. I don't have an obvious language barrier and there are a lot of presentation opportunities in my programme of study. I believe that I can always handle these well and I often need to use English to communicate with my group members. Some of them are non-Chinese students, and I practise my spoken English while interacting with them, especially in the presentation preparation process. I have great confidence in my presentations and positive feedback is often received."

4.7 Happily Adjusted to the Environment

In order to assess the PA of the participants, the following question was asked:

'How well do you feel you have adjusted to life at a UK university – are you generally happy here in an English-speaking environment or does this have major drawbacks for you? Please explain your view and how these relate to your experiences so far at this university.'

4.7.1 Always Speaks in Mandarin

In the first round of interviews (October 2012), there were three of the sixteen participants (19%) who felt that they were in the category of 'always speaks in Mandarin' in the course of English language learning.

This can be seen through the following interview quotes (*see* Appendix V):

"I'm not too contented, as I don't have enough chance to expose myself to the English-speaking environment. Most of my TESOL programme classmates are Chinese students, and they obviously prefer speaking in Mandarin with me. I am hoping to make the acquaintance of some locals and non-Chinese international students. In short, I don't have any special difficulties in living in the UK."

"I feel happy with my life in the UK. Another factor supporting my adjustment in this country is that UNE(College) has numerous Chinese students. It's easier for me to get along with the Chinese students at UNE(College) but I don't have any chances to speak with my British classmates, as I don't usually stay for a long time after class."

"There aren't many British students in my learning environment. I hope to interact more with my flatmates, who are from countries other than China. Having more chances to speak and listen in English in real life situation is the most effective way to boost my standard of English."

This increased in the interviews at T2, when there were six of the fourteen participants (43%) who agreed that they were in the category of 'always speaks in Mandarin' in the course of English language learning.

Some of the participants' comments which support this view are as follows (*see* Appendix V):

"I can happily adjust to the environment. I can usually understand what others have said, although I don't think my spoken English has shown any improvement at all when compared to nearly half a year ago, because I don't have enough chances to speak in English here. British students tend to sit with the other British students, whereas the Chinese students would all sit together in the class because people tend to sit with those they know well. Once I notice that the person sitting next to me is actually speaking in Chinese, I can join in and easily understand the context if it is in Chinese. I have no tendency to speak with my British classmates, and due to my limited knowledge and understanding of British culture, it is very normal for me to start by making a few points in front of the British, but then I have nothing much to say afterwards. Dead air follows straight after I have spoken. I don't think that the Chinese are generally quieter, it is just that the language barrier hinders them. In contrast, my friend, who is the only Chinese student in her class, barely has any chances to speak in Chinese, and she has seen a great improvement in her spoken English."

"I can easily adjust to new environments. I usually spend most of my time in the UK studying, and I don't have much opportunity to speak in English. I only use the English language during shopping and dealing with basic services. For the rest of the time, I mostly use Chinese, and I have no time to watch TV or read magazines. I don't think that it's very difficult to live in an English-speaking environment. Even with just one word or two, I have enough to let others understand what I have said. I read Chinese websites rather than the British ones, as I wish to relax, having already completed my daily English language related interactions."

"I often use English alongside Chinese during group discussions with my Chinese groupmates, but I actually speak in Chinese during discussion when I'm preparing

my presentation. On some other occasions, such as seminars, I practice my spoken English. When people in the discussion group are from China, they usually speak in Chinese among themselves and then shift to English when the instructor comes."

4.7.2   Grasps Chances to Speak in English

From the results of the face-to-face interviews at T1, it can be seen that there were nine of the sixteen participants (56%) who claimed that they had a habit of 'grasping chances to speak in English' in the course of English language learning.

Quotes which exemplify the above are as follows (*see* Appendix V):

"The greatest chance for me to speak in English is when I need to deal with the UNE(College) porters regarding some daily issues such as the maintenance of certain items of furniture in my room."

"I feel happy in the English-speaking environment. Since I'm majoring in the English language, I am very interested in this area, and I treasure any chances to speak in English with my classmates and staff at the university. I can't obtain the same type of experience through speaking with people from other countries. I'm happy to speak with the locals when I have to deal with everyday issues such as reporting household problems to the porters, or buying food at supermarkets."

"I always feel happy in the UK, and I can always use English as I hope I won't have barriers in using English here, but I'm fine in my daily living circumstances. This environment can help me to improve my English language, and I do believe that interacting with the target language can surely make a person more fluent in that particular language."

The results of the face-to-face interviews at T2, however, show that there were seven of the fourteen participants (50%) who said that they had a habit of 'grasping chances to speak in English' in the course of English language learning.

The following interview quotes support the above comments (*see* Appendix V):

"I feel happy to study in the UK, although my speaking contains a lot of grammatical mistakes. It's fine to make those mistakes, as a person's English can only be improved after having gone through the learning experience. This is a natural language learning process. I have more chances to interact with my friends

and classmates in English when compared to my Chinese friends; they spend most of their time with other Chinese people, and speak only in Mandarin. I usually hang out with my British and European friends, whilst I interact with my Chinese friends while cooking in my kitchen. My situation is very different from most of the Chinese students around me."

"I have grasped some chances to speak in English, but the British and Europeans I know don't really care about my English language proficiency. I have the confidence to take part in some of the university activities in which English is used, and all of the activities that I have taken part in can help me to boost my language ability greatly."

"I'm always happy in my studies in the UK. I communicate with the porters, drivers, salesmen. Sometimes just with simple vocabulary or single word that counts. The locals manage to understand me. I recognise the importance of being proactive in using English so as to grasp more chances to practice the language. There are not many British students in my class, and although there are other Western people in the group, I'm not too sure if their English is proficient, but I can at least understand them."

"I feel happy in my studies in this country as I can adjust to the environment. I have grasped some chances to speak in English, such as joining some societies, as the society members are usually native speakers. I have a lot of chances to interact with them in English, and I have joined caving society, through which I have met a few British friends."

4.7.3 Curious to Know More about this Country

During the face-to-face interviews at T1, only two of the sixteen participants (13%) stated that they were 'curious to know more about this country' in the course of English language learning.

This can be seen through the following interview quotes (*see* Appendix V):

"I can adapt to the UK life very well. It's too early for me to make comments about my use of academic English in my studies, but I have no difficulties in handling daily English. I feel very comfortable in this English-speaking environment."

"I can meet people from different countries and learn about various cultures

during fresher's week. I can communicate with people from different backgrounds. American shows and dramas can help young people to get together and develop friendships with people from different parts of the world. I can also learn slang so as to give some colour to my English language learning."

Looking at the results of the face-to-face interviews at T2, none of the participants (0%) expressed any opinion on being 'curious to know more about this country' in the course of English language learning. On the whole, very few participants were found to be 'curious to know more about this country'.

4.8 Having Drawbacks in the Environment

Again, the question detailed in section 4.7 was used to analyse the thoughts of the participants on whether or not their environment had an impact on their PA:

'How well do you feel you have adjusted to life at a UK university – are you generally happy here in an English-speaking environment or does this have major drawbacks for you? Please explain your view and how these relate to your experiences so far at this university.'

From the qualitative data gathered, it can be seen that there were two drawbacks identified among the participants in the course of English language learning, which were: 'seeing the cultural differences between the East and the West', and 'can't get used to the language'.

4.8.1 Seeing the Cultural Differences between the East and the West

By analysing the results of the face-to-face interviews at T1, it can be seen that there were three of the sixteen participants (19%) who felt that they experienced 'seeing the cultural differences between the East and the West' in the course of English language learning.

This is demonstrated through the following interview quotes (*see* Appendix V):

"I'm generally happy with my university life in the UK. I don't often hang around with my international friends. There is a big difference between Eastern and Western cultures, and great dissimilarity does exist in every part of our lives. Sometimes I feel relaxed after avoiding intensive activities such as gathering at the pub. I prefer my own Chinese style of living at my on-campus flat. I haven't got used to the local life style very much. For example, the locals have a habit of enjoying high tea, and which I worry that I will gain a lot of weight if I take part."

"There is a great difference in cultures between the Western and the Chinese students. I need to get involved in different society activities to help further my studies and career development. I still need some more time to adjust myself psychologically to the English-speaking environment. I have been in the UK for around two weeks, so it is too early to generalise my impression towards UK life and the Birtish at this stage, as I don't often go to my department to communicate with people. The major difference between the Chinese and the Westerners is the lack of time spent on household work, such as cooking and washing clothes, by going to the university canteens and laundry room. This saves them a lot of time for their studies and entertainment. Also, they appear to be used to the weather in the UK and enjoy the typical rainy days. This would be my first impression."

"When facing the English-speaking environment and Western culture the Chinese can't adapt to this environment easily. There are cultural barriers and we need to change our lifestyle to suit our daily lives here. It is quite normal for the Chinese to form social groups with our own cultural practices. European and British classmates are simply my acquaintances. Cultural differences should be more vital than language factors when it comes to making friends. The locals have their own habits, for example pubbing and partying, but I won't get involved. Such activities would affect my studies, and I get an impression that the British do not need to study so hard, and can have much fun with their learning. I need to spend more time on my studies, and so I can't have much leisure time."

In the interviews at T2, there was only one of the fourteen participants (7%) who commented that she experienced 'seeing the cultural differences between the East and the West' in the course of English language learning.

An interview quote which can be identified as an illustration of the above is (*see* Appendix V):

"I feel a bit bored by and tired of the British or Western cultures such as partying. There are some cultural differences too, for instance, religious activities in church."

4.8.2 Can't Get Used to the Language

It can be seen from the results of the face-to-face interviews at T1 that there were three of the sixteen participants (19%) who admitted that they 'can't get used to the language' in the course of English language learning.

The following interview quotes appear to illustrate the above (*see* Appendix V):

"I have some anxiety about my spoken English can't be fully understood by others because of my grammatical mistakes. I cannot optimistically predict that I would demonstrate some improvement after staying in the UK for some time. I don't have enough chances to interact with native speakers, as my MA TESOL programme is mostly participated by the Chinese students."

"There are a lot of barriers when I communicate with others in English. For example, the locals speak too fast, and at the same time. I can't express myself well enough. This may be due not to my general language talent but due to my limited chances to use the English language when I was in China. I find it very difficult to cope with the kind of daily English used in the UK such as informal terms or slang."

"It has been very difficult for me to adapt to this new English-speaking environment. It's very different from that of China. And I feel great difficulty in coping with my academic studies. The style of learning and the problem solving based seminars here in the UK have created a lot of worries for me, as I often fail to understand the context in a lecture. I can't get used to the English expressions and presentations in the UK."

Similarly, during the face-to-face interviews at T2, two of the fourteen participants (14%) answered that they 'can't get used to the language' in the course of English language learning.

These comments are supported by the following interview quotes (*see* Appendix V):

"I am not happy to say that it is a bit difficult for me to adapt to the English-

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speaking environment, especially in daily communications. I know it's not a must for me to use a complete sentence in order for people to understand what I have said, but barrier does exist when I'm speaking English, and I am not as comfortable as when I am speaking Mandarin. I don't have a lot of chances to do presentation in class. Actually I had no presentation opportunities in the first term. In the second term, there were just some five to ten minutes long informal presentations in class, with no instructions given before each presentation, and without any assessment afterwards. We are not required to do any preparations. There is around one seminar per week. The English language is of course used during the seminars, but the group members are mostly Chinese. The focus is aimed at the topic assigned by the tutor rather than English language learning. My group is made up entirely of Chinese students."

"It's challenging for me to think in English during verbal communications, and it's even more tedious to write essays in English. I need to write firstly in Chinese, and then translate all of the Chinese words into English ones."

4.9   English language Learning Activities

During the interviews, the participants were given the opportunity to share their views on LLA which could be used to improve their English language learning, and the following question was asked:

'What personal and social activities have you undertaken in order to improve your English? Which activities have improved your English and which have not? Please explain your view and how these relate to your experiences so far at this university.'

By analysing the qualitative data, it can be seen that various activities or avenues were identified by the participants in the course of their language learning, as set out in the following subsections: 'classroom setting', 'daily conversations', 'no activities', 'internet as a channel', 'reading newspapers and magazines', 'travelling', and 'social gatherings'.

4.9.1 Classroom Setting

Of the participants who took part in the face-to-face interviews at T1, seven of the sixteen participants (44%) said that they learned the English language in a classroom setting.

This is demonstrated through the following interview quotes (*see* Appendix V):

"If I wish to attain a higher English standard, I have to attend formal lessons in the classroom."

"Classroom learning can help to enhance my academic English."

"I prefer learning through a classroom setting. I feel that it's more professional doing so and the input can be very intensive."

"But I think formal classroom setting can always help me to learn better English when compared to partying activities. I can concentrate in the classroom, take notes and then review any key points right after the lessons. In contrast, people just chat and use slang in the conversation, which can't help me much in that sense. It's not academic at all, and not related to my studies. Improvement in my English language ability can only be possible via continuous practicing."

Again, in the interviews at T2, there were also seven of the fourteen participants (50%) who stated that they learned the English language in a classroom setting.

These comments are supported by the following interview quotes (*see* Appendix V):

"An English language learning centre can help me to improve my English language skills, especially when regard to academic writing. I feel I have learned a lot in those lessons. I think a classroom setting is much better for me to attain higher English language ability than society activities."

"The CELT pre-sessional programme obviously helped to improve my English language ability when compared to that of other activities in the UK. There were only four Chinese students, along with some other international students, and this allowed me to speak mostly in English during lessons. General English was taught in a highly motivated learning atmosphere, where I could have interactions with classmates and teachers. I was very satisfied, although there were too many reading materials assigned, which kept me busy all the time."

"I have joined a CELT programme, and the British teacher has taught us very well. During seminars, my mistakes could be corrected immiediately by the teacher when I spoke. Speaking was greatly focused in class, with many chances to prepare for the daily presentation. My major requires me to write six essays of 3,000 words each throughout the four courses. This is a great chance for me to practise my Engish. I have no plan to take part in any social activities in this sense."

4.9.2 Daily Conversations

From the results of the face-to-face interviews at T1, it can be seen that there were six of the sixteen participants (38%) who opined that they learned English language in daily conversations.

Some of the quotes which back up these comments are as follows (*see* Appendix V):

"I have good opportunities to engage in verbal communication with British people. It is very different from my university environment, where the teachers in general speak slowly and simplify their words during their conversation with Chinese students. British people on the streets do not slow down their speed in their verbal communication with me, and because of this I have chances to expose myself to real life situations and the use of daily English, and this helps me to enhance my listening and speaking skills."

"Communication between classmates can also help to improve my spoken English in a way which is closely related to my studies. It can also help me to enhance my written English in the field of psychology. A class for learning daily English is not necessary for me, because people here are not testing my English ability. They just want to communicate with me. Sometimes only using one or two words can be sufficient for people to understand what I wanted to express. The most important thing for me is to improve my academic English comprehension skills in the classroom."

"UK can always provide real and effective interactions for me to learn English from native speakers."

However, in the interviews at T2, there was only one of the fourteen participants (7%)

who believed that she learned the English language in daily conversations.

This quote appears to endorse the comments above (*see* Appendix V):

"My suggestion for learning better English is to talk more with the locals."

4.9.3 No Activities

The results of the face-to-face interviews at T1 show that there were four of the sixteen participants (25%) who claimed that they learned the English language despite taking part in 'no activities'.

Some quotes from participants which support this view are (*see* Appendix V):

"My main focus in the UK is to study. I can't really spend any extra time taking part in any social activities."

"I haven't joined any social groups so far. I take part in musical concerts without much interaction in English. If I just confine myself to the English spoken by the teaching staff in the UK, I can only have chances to listen but not to speak. I wish I could have more interactions with the locals, but I'm always staying with my Chinese friends all the time, and they often help me to speak and communicate with the British. Therefore, I have very limited chance to speak with the locals. Reading newspapers and magazines can of course help me to improve my English language, but I find it's very difficult for me to be persevere in doing so. I usually feel better about my English skills after an exam. … "

"I don't join too many groups; there are a lot of British students in those groups, but this doesn't mean I can learn from them. It all depends on my own motivation."

"Due to the huge workload in my study programme, I shouldn't really spend too much time communicating with the locals. I have to spend my time wisely in order to serve the purpose of my study requirements. It's easier for me to make friends with Chinese students or other international students than it is with the British students."

During the face-to-face interviews at T2, only one of the fourteen participants (7%) answered that he learned English language whilst doing 'no activities'.

This is demonstrated via the following quote (*see* Appendix V):

"I rarely join in with social activities at the university. I am getting involved in Linguistics Society, but won't be taking part in any activities after paying the society membership fees. The locals enjoy drinking and go to pub as a kind of social gathering, but the Chinese mostly don't have this drinking culture. The university curriculum is very difficult and complicated for me, so I find it very difficult to have any spare time to go to pub for leisure purpose. I prefer travelling if I have time, but I feel very busy all the time, reading textbooks and papers."

4.9.4 Internet as a Channel

By assessing the results of the face-to-face interviews at T1, it can be seen that there was only one of the sixteen participants (6%) who voiced the opinion that she learned English language using the 'internet as a channel'.

This can be seen through the following interview quote (*see* Appendix V):
"Facebook is a very good tool for learning English language. I can leave messages and chat in informal English. This useful to me because I'm not required using formal English all the time. I hear informal English on American TV series, and in daily conversations in the UK, and Facebook provides a very useful social medium for people to improve their oral English. I am joining different student activity groups on Facebook, and having more chances to get involved in their social gatherings. Also many new topics coming out for discussion, which will surely improve my English language skills."

When asked the same question in the interviews at T2, no participants (0%) said that they learned the English language using the 'internet as a channel'.

4.9.5 Reading Newspapers and Magazines

In the face-to-face interviews at T1, there were four of the sixteen participants (25%) who stated that they learned English language by 'reading newspapers and magazines and so on'.

This is supported by the following interview quotes (*see* Appendix V):
" … I read more English articles."

"I have a habit of reading the Financial Times";

"Reading more is far more important than participating in social activities. Learning English language is a personal activity, and it may not be necessary to speak with native speakers. Self-learning is more important. Watching magazines, films, TV programmes and so on can help, and I have found that it's better for me to turn off the subtitles so as to facilitate the language learning process."

"Reading magazines, newspapers or other freebies can create an English environment for me to immerse myself in the English learning process. Chinese people have a habit of using Chinese to help to learn the English language in China. … "

However, during the interviews at T2, no participants (0%) answered that they learned the English language by 'reading newspapers and magazines and so on'.

4.9.6   Travelling

It can be seen from the results of the face-to-face interviews at T1 that two of the sixteen participants (13%) commented that they learned English language via 'travelling'.

Some of the interview quotes which endorse this view are as follows (*see* Appendix V):

"If I have extra time, I will choose to travel in Europe or in the UK to learn better English."

"I am very interested in travelling, and I visited many cities in the UK in my first three months here. I booked B & B myself, and chatted with the locals about their culture and attractions."

Similarly, in the interviews at T2, two of the fourteen participants (14%) felt that they learned the English language via 'travelling'.

The following interview quotes are identified to illustrate the above (*see* Appendix V):

" … I have a lot of chances to interact in English with others when travelling. I won't read newspapers or watch TV, but travelling can help to know more about the local culture as well as the language of the country."

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"I haven't joined any social groups so far. I'm currently thinking of going on some university trips to different cities. I know the participants are usually Chinese students, but I met some European acquaintances on my last trip. It's very difficult to be friends with them due to cultural differences, but at least I can practise my spoken English when I have lunch with them."

4.9.7   Social Gatherings

Of the participants who took part in the interviews at T1, seven of the sixteen participants (44%) claimed that they learned the English language via 'social gatherings'.

The following interview quotes can be taken as an illustration of the above (*see* Appendix V):

"Going to the pub, or related social activities, can help me to integrate into British society. I can learn the common topics in the local people's conversations, and also the appropriate use of words and vocabulary."

" … I will join some societies, for example the Travelling Society."

"I joined the CSSA (Chinese Students and Scholars Association). Some of the teaching staff would come and join us for some of the activities. There are non-Chinese Asian members, and I have plenty of chances to use English to communicate with them. I can't manage to understand British jokes, but I can easily grasp the meaning of the international students during my conversations with them. They usually speak slower than the locals, and I prefer speaking with international students to speaking with the locals."

"Pubbing or clubbing is a better method to improve English compared to a classroom setting."

The same number of participants gave similar answers during the interviews at T2, when seven of the fourteen participants (50%) believed that they learned the English language via 'social gatherings'.

This is demonstrated by the following interview quotes (*see* Appendix V):
"At the beginning I joined the History of Art Society. I can't see any improvement in my spoken English, because due to cultural differences. I'm always with the

Chinese students, whereas the British students are with other British students most of the time. The students are mostly British, and whilst I can talk with them, in reality I have nothing to talk to them about at all. Trips, lectures and visits are the activities I usually take part in, and I should have plenty of chances to interact with those British students, but I really can't find anything to talk about."

"Besides the Caving Society, I have also joined the Outdoor Society. This can help to create an environment for English speaking, as in that situation English just plays the role of communication between members. I don't think I can actually improve my English on such occasions."

"I have joined the Baking Society, and I have opportunities to interact with the locals and non-Chinese speakers in English. I have got involved in some party gatherings, which have also provided me with opportunities to use English for communication."

"I have joined a table-tennis team. English speaking is involved, but I feel very embarrassed, as most of the locals speak very fast whereas the Chinese can't always understand. After a while, it sometimes turns out that they are no longer interested in further communicating further with me or their other Chinese peers."

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

As stated in Section 2.1, the main aim of this current study is to use a mixed-method research design to investigate the relationship between the positive psychology (PP) variables, namely self-regulation (autonomous and controlled regulations), mindset (MS), psychological well-being (PWB) and psychological adjustment (PA), in a sample of Chinese master's students studying in the UK on the one hand, and the English language learning activities (LLA) in social and educational settings that they reported using to improve their English language proficiency (LP) on the other hand, and how the scores on the variables and the relationships between the variables changed between T1 and T2.

As highlighted in the Introduction, based on a number of studies involving international EFL (English as a foreign language) or ESL (English as a second language) students studying in US, Australian, Canadian, New Zealand and UK educational institutions, the most commonly cited language-related problems inside and outside the classroom are: English language proficiency or language standards, academic writing, oral comprehension, communication, lack of knowledge of local contextual references and inadequate vocabulary (for example, Cownie & Addison, 1996; Daroesman *et al.*, 2005; Hellstén & Prescott, 2004; Lee, 1997; Lin & Yi,1997; Pantelides, 1999; Robertson *et al.*, 2000; Sawir *et al.*, 2012; Singh, 2005). The Chinese university students recruited for this study were therefore viewed as language learners, and this current study was designed to contribute to our understanding of their language learning.

As noted in the Introduction and based on the information and discussions set out in the Literature Review, it is clear that gaps have been identified in the literature and these are highlighted in Section 1.6. In particular, there are gaps in the literature in respect of the complex relationships between the PP variables and the English LLA reported by Chinese university students in the UK, as well as between the PP variables in relation to their perceived LP. The following paragraphs are a summary of these gaps.

First, there is a paucity of literature that has reported about how the PP variables

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of self-regulation (SR), MS, PWB and PA affect the language learning and LP of international students. In addition, there is a paucity of literature that could provide an understanding as to how these particular PP variables might *simultaneously* affect the language learning of those students in terms of perceived LLA engagements and LP. MacIntyre and Mercer (2014, p. 156) affirmed that the fact that "second language acquisition rarely deals with these (PP-related) topics at present … is immediately apparent when one considers the practical, human, and social dimension of language learning". Furthermore, the writers recognised Lake (2013) as "one of the first to explicitly adapt and apply PP concepts in his study of Japanese learners' positive self, self-efficacy … " and that such topics have become increasingly popular in the research community (MacIntyre & Mercer, 2014, p. 158).

Second, due to a very limited literature that could provide direct data-gathering instruments for assessing these variables, I attempted to develop all the components of the questionnaire for rating the scores on the variables at T1 and T2. The essential components of the questionnaire were sourced from various writers' papers in relation to the constructs of the PP variables, LLA and LP as guided by the main aim of this current study. In brief, the SR component of the questionnaire was inspired by the Learning Self-regulation Questionnaire (LSRQ; Ryan & Connell, 1989); the MS component of the questionnaire was based on Dweck and her associates' works (Dweck *et al.*, 1995; Chiu *et al.*, 1997; Hong *et al.*, 1999; Dweck, 2000, 2006; Dweck & Molden, 2007; Blackwell *et al.*, 2007) and enlightened by Mercer and Ryan's (2010) paper entitled 'A mindset for EFL: learners' beliefs about the role of natural talent', together with some other related papers by Mercer (Mercer, 2011; 2012); the PWB component of the questionnaire was based on the paper entitled 'Happiness is everything, or is it? Explorations on the meaning of psychological well-being' (Ryff, 1989); and the PA component of the questionnaire was based on the College Adaption Questionnaire (CAQ; Crombag, 1968) as identified by me in Van Rooijen's (1986) paper. The details have been reported in

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Section 2.4.1. With evaluation and modifications made by me and with the processes which were followed approved by discussion with and validation by my supervisor, all the question items for the questionnaires and the face-to-face interviews were finalised as detailed in Sections 2.4.1 and 2.4.2, and as presented in Appendices II-IV. Because of this, the development of all the components of the questionnaire to rate the scores on the above variables for this current study have filled gaps or have extended our present knowledge as described in the Literature Review.

Third, from Sections 1.1.1 to 1.1.4, the literature has recognised that language learning in international EFL / ESL students has a respective relationship with each of the PP variables. However, a literature gap might need to be addressed as a complex relationship could exist in or among those PP variables in relation to language learning in a sample of Chinese master's students studying in the UK, and that has been explored as guided by the main aim of this current study.

Fourth, in Section 1.4, the literature has recognised the value of the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) for research studies at the time which involved 8,000 to 8,500 language learners with reliability coefficients ranging from 0.85 to 0.98 (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995). To address the main aim of this current study, I considered and modified some of the SILL items and translated them into ten LLA for assessing the participants' engagements in those LLA in their social and educational settings in the UK in relation to the PP variables, and how their scores in these activities changed between T1 and T2. In addition, I was convinced by the remark made by Kormos *et al.* (2014, p. 152) that " … while a lot of research has focused on American students in study-abroad programmes (for example, Dewey *et al.*, 2012; Cohen *et al.*, 2005; Kinginger, 2008; Aveni, 2005), no previous studies have been carried out that investigated how students' contact experiences, language learning attitudes and motivation change in a UK international study context using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods". This comment highlights the paucity of literature reporting on

the above issues concerning international students studying in the UK. Hence, this current study has filled gaps or has extended our present knowledge as described in the Literature Review.

Fifth, as stated in Section 1.5, it is within this current study's main aim to assess the participants' perceptions about their LP in terms of listening, speaking (basic language cognition, BLC), reading, writing (higher language cognition, HLC), daily vocabulary (BLC or HLC) and academic vocabulary (BLC or HLC) in relation to changes in the scores of the PP variables, and how their LP scores changed between T1 and T2. However, there is a paucity of literature reporting on the above issues in the context of international students studying in the UK.

Based on the main aim of this current study, the gaps in the research literature described above have to be addressed by answering seven research questions. As stated in Section 2.1, the seven research questions are repeated here for convenience:

1. What were the students' positive psychology scores at the start and then mid-way through the academic year, and did those scores change between T1 and T2?

2. What activities did the students report using to improve their English at the start and then mid-way through the academic year, and did those activities change between T1 and T2?

3. How did the students perceive their proficiency in English at the start and then mid-way through the academic year, and did those perceptions change between T1 and T2?

4. What is the relationship between their positive psychology and the activities they reported using to improve their English at the start and then mid-way through the academic year, and did those scores change between T1 and T2?

5.   What is the relationship between how their positive psychology scores changed between T1 and T2 and how did the activities which they reported using to improve their English change between T1 and T2?

6.   What is the relationship between their positive psychology and their perceived proficiency in English at the start and then mid-way through the academic year, and did those scores change between T1 and T2?

7.   What is the relationship between how their positive psychology scores changed between T1 and T2 and how their perceived proficiency in English changed between T1 and T2?

In this chapter, I shall attempt to address these seven research questions by (i) considering the quantitative and qualitative data analyses as presented in Chapters 3 and 4 and the links between these two sets of data analysis, and (ii) providing possible explanations by drawing on links between the data analyses and the Literature Review, especially highlighting some of the findings that have filled gaps in the literature summarised in the preceding paragraphs or that have extended our present knowledge as described in the Literature Review.

5.1   Five Positive Psychological (PP) Variables

The results and analyses presented in Chapters 3 and 4 in relation to the five PP variables are intended to address the research question 'What were the students' positive psychology scores at the start and then mid-way through the academic year, and did those scores change between T1 and T2' as set out in following paragraphs in Sections 5.1.1 to 5.1.5.

5.1.1   Self-regulation (Autonomous and Controlled Regulations)

As discussed in Section 1.1.1, SR behaviour might vary on a continuum ranging from

autonomous to controlled forms. Autonomous SR (or autonomous regulation, AR) by learners occurs in those who are self-initiating and persistent as they can perceive the learning tasks as interesting or personally significant to them. In contrast, controlled SR (or controlled regulation, CR) occurs in learners who would not engage in those tasks that are not interesting or not personally significant to them, or worse, are imposed on them (Reeve *et al.*, 2008). AR arises out of interest and personal importance and shows an 'internally perceived locus of causality' (deCharms, 1968) in that it 'flows out' from one's integrated sense of self (Deci & Ryan, 1991). AR in learners is manifested by intrinsically motivated behaviour. On the other hand, CR has an 'externally perceived locus of causality', and it exhibits as being pressurised interpersonally or it involves intrapsychic contingencies or demands (Ryan, 1982). In short, CR in learners is manifested by extrinsically motivated behaviour.

AR. The results and analyses of the quantitative data at both T1 and T2 show that the majority of the participants gave affirmative ('slightly agree' to 'strongly agree') responses on all five AR items in a similar pattern when T1 and T2 were compared (*see* Tables 2 and 6).

At T2, there was a slight decrease in the percentage of the participants who gave 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 1, 'Because I feel like it's a good way to improve my understanding of the English language' (T1 = 94.8%; T2 = 86.7%), Item 6, 'Because it's important to me to do well in the English language' (T1 = 96.1%; T2 = 92.1%) and Item 8, 'Because I would feel proud if I do continue improving my English language' (T1 = 88.9%; T2 = 75.9%). On the other hand, at T2, there was a slight increase in the percentage of the participants who gave 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 3, 'Because learning to communicate well with locals in English language is important' (T1 = 88.2%; T2 = 90.3%) and Item 9, 'Because it's a challenge to really understand what native speakers say in English' (T1 = 79.7%; T2 = 83.7%).

However, in terms of mean scores of AR, there was no statistically significant difference ($p<0.01$) between T1 and T2 (*see* Table 10).

CR. As with AR, the participants showed a similar pattern of percentage frequency of their responses to the four items of the controlled regulation (Items 2, 4, 5 and 7) when T1 and T2 were compared.

Tables 2 and 6 show that there was a decrease in the percentage of the participants who 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' with Item 2, 'Because others would think badly of me if I didn't attend English language classes' (T1 = 15.7%; T2 = 12.6%), Item 4, 'Because I believe my instructor's suggestions will help me to learn the English language effectively' (T1 = 93.4%; T2 = 89.8%) and Item 7, 'Because I would probably feel guilty if I didn't comply with my instructor's suggestions for learning the English language' (T1 = 36.6%; T2 = 30.7%). On the other hand, there was an increase in the percentage of the participants who 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' with Item 5, 'Because I want others to think that I am good in the English language' (T1 = 64.1%; T2 = 71.6%). However, in terms of mean scores of CR, there was no statistically significant difference ($p<0.01$) between T1 and T2 (*see* Table 10).

Owing to the very limited literature that could provide a direct data gathering instrument for assessing the SR in English language learning in international EFL / ESL students, I developed the SR component of the questionnaire to record the score changes between T1 and T2 by reference to the Self-regulation Questionnaire (LSRQ; Ryan & Connell, 1989; *see* Section 2.4.1 for details). For this reason, I cannot provide any direct comparison between the related literature and this current study in this respect. In spite of this, the fact that no significant changes in scores were found in this current study might be explained by the SDT framework (Deci & Ryan, 1985a; Ryan & Deci, 2000a; Ryan *et al.*, 1997) in which basic needs (deCharms, 1968; Deci, 1975 (the need for autonomy);

Blanck *et al.*, 1984; Harackiewicz & Larson, 1986; Harter, 1978; Vallerand, 1983; White, 1963 (the need for competence); Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Deci & Ryan, 1985a; Reis, 1994; Ryan *et al.*, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000b (the need for relatedness), human motivations (Csikszentmihalyi & Rathunde, 1993; Deci, 1971; Deci *et al.*, 1999; Dörnyei, 2001; Harackiewicz, 1979; Harter, 1978; Ryan, 1995; Ryan & Deci, 2000a; White, 1959) and SR (Atkinson, 1964; Bandura, 1997; Bandura & McClelland, 1977; Carver & Scheier, 1981, 1988, 1998) are operating (*see* Section 1.1.1 for further details).

Within the framework of SDT, Ryan and Deci (2000a) suggested that differentiation of SR in terms of autonomous regulation (AR) or controlled regulation (CR) could be explained as the product of the three basic psychological needs and the spectrum of motivation. The writers explained that when people are intrinsically motivated, they become highly autonomous, but when they are extrinsically motivated, they self-regulate in a range of behaviour. It follows that all SR behaviour depends on their perceived locus of causality resulting in various values and SR behaviour such that 'internalisation', 'integration', 'identification' or 'introjection' may result. In addition, associated rewards or penalties in the circumstances could help people to identify their goal-related SR behaviour (Andersen & Chen, 2002; Cantor *et al.*, 1982; Chun *et al.*, 2002; Liberman & Trope, 1998; Moretti & Higgins, 1999; Trope & Alfieri, 1997; Vallacher & Kaufman, 1996). Some writers (for example, Jin, 2014; Kormos *et al*., 2014) have suggested that the motivation for English language learning for some Chinese students is a desire for upward social and economic mobility, and that their interest is based on certificate motivation rather than integrative reasons. For this reason, the fact that no score changes were found in the participants might be due to the possibility that they maintained more or less the same range of the SR behaviour between T1 and T2. Time could be a limiting factor for score changes to occur in this current study as it has only covered a period of less than six months. Nonetheless, in addition to the literature referred to above, some of the interview comments (*see* Appendix V for details) given in

answer to the question 'Would you describe yourself as the sort of person who is learning English because you want to or because you feel there are pressures on you to do so? Please explain your views and how these relate to your experiences so far at this university' might help to explain some of the reasons behind the participants' SR of English language learning, as the following extracts show.

<u>Intrinsic motivation (Interest in learning the English language)</u>

"Since I was in secondary school, I have strong interest in the English language … and I started to really enjoy the English language lessons. I have great motivation to improve my standard of English. I liked those interactive teaching methods introduced by those foreign teachers, who emphasised the general use of English and daily English, rather than using an examination-oriented style of learning. … "

<u>Intrinsic motivation (Satisfaction of learning English language)</u>

" … I do have a sense of achievement in having improved my standard of English. I can now understand English articles by myself, instead of having to read through versions translated into English from Chinese. … "

<u>Extrinsic motivation (Usefulness of English language)</u>

"English is … transmitting messages. I am in touch with English through internet / magazines / mass media / TV. The descriptions of many modern technologies are mainly in English. I have to understand the general ideas of the articles which I read. … "

" … I feel the need to attain a higher level of language proficiency in English. … commercial sectors in China have always emphasised on employees' English language ability so much that fluency in spoken English can definitely help me to get promoted easily in my future career. … "

<u>Extrinsic motivation (Pressure of learning English language)</u>

"Both environment and atmosphere contribute to the pressure experienced in my English language learning. I wish to work for a brighter future … My spoken English is quite poor, … very difficult to express myself well in front of the locals in the UK."

5.1.2 Mindset

As highlighted in Section 1.1.2, a language learning mindset (MS) can be a fixed MS belief that LLA is connected with a fixed and inborn talent or a growth MS belief that it is due to controllable factors such as hard work and continuous training (Barcelos, 2003; Benson & Lor, 1999; Blackwell *et al.*, 2007; Cotterall, 1995, 1999; Hong *et al.*, 1999; Horwitz, 1987, 1998, 1999; Nussbaum & Dweck, 2008; Robins & Pals, 2001; White, 2008). However, people tend to have a fixed MS in language learning (Mercer & Ryan, 2010) and believe that a 'gift' for languages is crucial in learning a language. It would therefore be fruitless for 'ungifted' language learners to become linguists no matter how hard they work (Mercer, 2012). Also, fixed MS people do not believe in language learning through training or hard work, including aspects of learning such as pronunciation (Mercer& Ryan, 2010). Those with a growth mindset, however, believe in the role of natural talent in language learning, but they also believe that learners have to work hard in order to become successful (Mercer, 2011, 2012).

The results and analyses of the quantitative data at both T1 and T2 show that the majority of the participants gave affirmative responses to the growth MS Items 2, 3, 4, 6 and 9 (*see* Tables 3 and 7). In spite of this, there was a slight decrease in the percentage of the participants who gave 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 2, 'Irrespective of how bad a mistake is when I use English, I can always learn something from it' (T1 = 95.4%; T2 = 92.2%), Item 4, 'I can always have the chance to improve my English language through practice' (T1 = 74.4%; T2 = 71.1%), Item 6, 'If I learn the vocabulary in English from the vocabulary book, I have to practise it before remembering it' (T1 = 83.4%; T2 = 72.2%) and Item 9, 'I agree that hard work is very important in learning English' (T1 = 98.6%; T2 = 92.2%). Nonetheless, there was a clear increase in the percentage of the participants who gave 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses to Item 3, 'I can learn the English language from lessons or daily life' (T1 = 66.7%; T2 = 92.7%).

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For fixed MS items, although there was a slight decrease in the percentage frequency of responses; the majority of the participants at T2 gave 'slightly disagree' to 'strongly disagree' responses to the fixed mindset Item 1, 'I prefer to avoid an activity which involves English when I know that I shall make mistakes when I speak' (T1 = 76.4%; T2 = 75.3%) and Item 5, 'I cannot change or improve my pronunciation in English through hard work and effort, as my ability for this skill is fixed already at an early age' (T1 = 79.5%; T2 = 68.1%). As both items are reversed-score statements, the participants involved were deemed to have a growth MS when answering the two questions. However, Tables 3 and 7 show that the participants' responses were affirmative for the fixed MS Item 7, 'I think that natural ability is very important in learning English' (T1 = 65.4%; T2 = 58.4%) and Item 8, 'I think everybody can achieve a specific level of English language standard if they want to, but people have to be gifted if they really want to do interpreting and translation' (T1 = 65.4%; T2 = 65.6%). Hence, the participants involved were deemed to have a fixed MS when answering these questions.

In terms of the mean scores on MS, Table 10 shows that there was a statistically significant difference (p<0.01) between T1 (mean scores = 36.95) and T2 (mean scores = 35.32). It should be noted that the higher the mean scores might imply an increase in the participants' growth MS belief in English language learning, whereas the lower the mean scores might imply an increase in their fixed MS belief in English language learning. Hence, this current study shows that there was a significant decrease in the participants' growth MS belief in their English language learning at T2 compared with T1.

Owing to the very limited literature that could provide a direct data-gathering instrument for assessing MS in English language learning in international EFL / ESL students, I developed the MS component of the questionnaire to record the changes in scores between T1 and T2, making reference to Carol Dweck's and her associates' works (Blackwell *et al.*, 2007; Chiu *et al.*, 1997; Dweck, 2000, 2006; Dweck & Molden, 2007;

Dweck *et al.*, 1995; Hong *et al.*, 1999), and inspired by Mercer and Ryan's (2010) paper entitled 'A mindset for EFL: learners' beliefs about the role of natural talent', together with other related papers by Mercer (2011; 2012). *See* Section 2.4.1 for further details. I therefore cannot provide any direct comparison between the related literature and the findings of this current study. Nonetheless, the changes in the participants' scores could be explained by some of the comments made during the interviews (*see* Appendix V for details) in answer to the question 'In general, do you feel your English will improve if you work at it or do you feel your English is largely a matter of natural ability? Please explain your view and how it relates to your experiences so far at this university', as in the following extracts show.

Fixed mindset

"Some people are actually more talented than others. They can learn the English language quickly with great improvement from time to time. Others who are not so talented also show improvement through hard work … "

"Some people are more talented in language learning than others. When I studied the English language … in Mainland China. … Learning through lessons was not enough. … [there was a] need to possess talent to strive for improvement … although the speed of attaining a good standard of English depends on each individual's own talent."

Growth mindset (it is hard work, exposure and strategy that count)
"Hard work and practice are the key factors for language learning. Talent can help one to learn faster, but language learning is a process full of practice … "

"Chinese people from the countryside can't afford to pay expensive tuition fee for learning English language, and so … their English proficiency is not that high … . It is better … immersed in an English-speaking environment as early as possible. … Both hard work and an English-speaking environment are very important … "

"Environmental factors do play a main role in learning English. The more chances you have to be exposed to the English language the better. … surely high standard

of English can be achieved."

"Motivation counts, and you can increase your chance of learning the language through various language learning strategies."

The participants who made the statements above seem to suggest a specific MS. Some participants appeared to believe that natural talent is the gateway to success in language learning which we believe to be indicative of a fixed MS, whereas other participants seemed to hold a belief strongly suggestive of the value of hard work and the potential influence of enduring practice, exposure and strategies, which we believe to be indicative of a growth MS. The significant decrease in scores between T1 and T2 might suggest an increase in the fixed MS belief in their language learning.

5.1.3   Psychological Well-being

In the Literature Review (*see* Section 1.1.3), a number of writers who have described psychological well-being (PWB) in various perspectives or circumstances were discussed. To summarise, they are physical, mental and social well-beings (Dunn, 1977; Egbert, 1980; Larson, 1999); positive, realistic and inspirational feelings in conflict resolution or relationships with people (Adams *et al.*, 1997); positive perceptions of self, the world and relationships (Hettler, 1980); the measure of a person's degree of depression, anxiety, self-control and optimism towards life, such as satisfaction, curiosity and enjoyment (Foster & Keller, 2008); a state of mental health in which people can realise their own potential in order to cope with their normal stresses, to work productively, and to make a contribution to their community (WHO, 2011); differentiation of positive and negative affects using the definition of 'happiness' to strike the balance between the two (Bradburn, 1969); judgement about people's mood states (Schwarz & Clore, 1983); frequency or intensity of positive mood states (Andrews & McKennell 1980; Andrews & Withey, 1976; Bryant & Veroff, 1982; Campbell *et al.*, 1976; Diener & Larsen, 1993; Diener *et al.*, 1985,

1991) and some other perspectives for defining PP functioning (for example, Allport, 1961; Jung, 1933; Maslow, 1968; Rogers, 1961; Von Franz, 1964). However, the majority of the perspectives on PWB mentioned above can be categorised into six scales, namely, 'Self-acceptance', 'Positive Relations with Others', 'Autonomy', 'Environmental Mastery', 'Purpose in Life' and 'Personal Growth', which could all be age group or gender based, or multi-dimensional (Ryff, 1989, 1995). In this connection, I have adopted Ryff's study results and developed the PWB component of the questionnaire for this current study (*see* Section 2.4.1). In addition, as highlighted in Section 1.1.1, people's basic psychological needs should be adequately satisfied so that their PWB can be attained (Ryan & Frederick, 1997; Ryan *et al.*, 1995; Waterman, 1993), and it is the 'what' and 'why' of the pursuit of goals that affects PWB due to its strong relationship with needs satisfaction (Ryan & Deci, 2000b) and regardless of differences in cultural values (Chirkov *et al.*, 2003; Reis *et al.*, 2000; Ryan *et al.*, 1999, 2005; Sheldon *et al.*, 2004).

Tables 4 and 8 (*see* Sections 3.1.1 and 3.1.2) show the results and analyses of the quantitative data at both T1 and T2 and indicate that the majority of the participants gave affirmative responses to the PWB Items 1, 3, 5, 9 and 11, and to Items 4, 6 and 8 (which all contained reversed-score statements). Comparison between Tables 4 and 8 indicates that there was a decrease in the percentage frequency of responses from the participants showing 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' on Items 1, 5, 9 and 11 between T1 and T2. They are: Item 1,'I am not afraid to voice my opinions in the English language, even when they are in opposition to the opinions of most people' (T1 = 73.1%; T2 = 70.5%), Item 5, 'If I were unhappy with my living situation which requires English language competence, I would take effective steps to change it' (T1 = 94.8%; T2 = 88.6%), Item 9, 'I have a sense of direction and purpose in life when learning the English language' (T1 = 80.4%; T2 = 73.5%) and Item 11, 'I made some mistakes in the past in using English, but I feel that all in all everything has worked out for the best' (T1 = 62%; T2 = 59.7%). However, there was an increase in the percentage frequency of responses to Item 3,

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'Being happy with myself in English language competence is more important to me than having others approve of me' (T1 = 79.1%; T2 = 83.1%) and Item 4 (a reversed-score statement), 'I do not fit very well with English-speaking people and the community around me' (showing 'strongly disagree' to 'slightly disagree' at T1 = 51.6% and T2 = 60.2%). On the other hand, there was a slight decrease in the percentage frequency of responses showing 'strongly disagree' to 'slightly disagree' to Item 6 (a reversed-score statement), 'I am not interested in activities related to English language learning that will expand my horizons' (T1 = 82.4%; T2 = 78.9%) and Item 8 (a reversed-score statement), 'Maintaining close relationships by communicating in the English language has been difficult and frustrating for me' (T1 = 62%; T2 = 60.2%).

Notably, there were more than half of the participants at T1 and T2 who gave affirmative responses to the negative side of the psychological well-being Items 2, 7 and 10 (all are reversed-score statements). They are: Item 2, 'I tend to worry about what other people think of me in English language competence (a decrease; T1 = 63.5%; T2 = 57.3%), Item 7, 'When I think about it, I haven't really improved much in English language learning over the years' (a slight increase; T1 = 53.6%; T2 = 54.8%) and Item 10, 'Given the opportunity in learning English, there are many things about myself that I would change' (a slight decrease; T1 = 56.2%; T2 = 55.4%).

As stated in the first paragraph of this Section concerning the Literature Review, people's PWB can be attained if their basic psychological needs are satisfied (Ryan & Frederick, 1997; Ryan et al., 1995; Waterman, 1993), and their PWB is affected by the 'what' and 'why' aspects of the goals pursued (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). In addition, in the discussion of the notion that PWB that can be categorised into the six scales, the writer reported that age group, gender differences and multi-dimensional perspectives are important factors affecting any studies of PWB (Ryff, 1989, 1995). For this current study, more than half of the participants who at T1 and T2 gave affirmative responses to the negative side of the PWB Items 2, 7 and 10 (all are reversed-score statements) might

have been affected by the above factors as the participants were mostly Chinese university students studying for a master's degree (*see* Section 2.4.4) and they were overwhelmingly female (*see* Section 2.4.4), not to mention some language-related PA factors which might have in turn affected the PWB in their language learning (*see* Sections 1.1.3, 1.1.4, 5.1.4 and 5.1.5).

However, in terms of the mean scores for PWB, there was no statistically significant difference ($p < 0.01$) between T1 and T2 (*see* Table 10). This might be due to a possibility that the participants maintained more or less the same range of SR behaviour in their language learning between T1 and T2 (*see* Section 5.1.1) which might have adversely affected the PWB of their English language learning. Time could be a limiting factor for score changes to occur in this current study as it only covered a period of less than six months. Owing to the very limited literature that could provide a direct data-gathering instrument for assessing PWB in English language learning in international EFL / ESL students, I therefore developed the PWB component of the questionnaire to record the score changes between T1 and T2 using Ryff's (1989) study as a reference (*see* Section 2.4.1). This might help to extend the knowledge of the assessment of PWB of the participants in terms of language learning during their residence in the UK. In view of this, I cannot provide any direct comparison between the related literature and this current study in respect of the above analysis.

Nonetheless, in addition to the literature referred to above, some of the comments made in the interviews (*see* Appendix V for details) in answer to the question 'How would you describe your feelings when you use English – do you feel confident and happy, or do you feel anxious and worried? Please explain your view and how these relate to your experiences so far at this university' might help to explain some of the reasons behind the participants' PWB in the course of English language learning, as the following extracts show.

Afraid of making grammatical mistakes

"I feel anxious when I need to speak with strangers, new friends or a large group of people. I am not getting used to talking in English, and I worry about making grammatical mistakes. I tend to have some 'stopping points' in my spoken English, such as a lack of vocabulary and uncertainties about the appropriate use of English grammar. … and am not too confident at times."

Introvert character

" … My lack of confidence in speaking is due to my introvert character. I am very anxious with my English language learning."

Not enough practice

"I always have Chinese peers around, so I don't have much chance to speak in English. … "

"I am very anxious when I speak in English. I don't have enough English-speaking practice, and my study occupies most of my time in the UK. … "

Afraid of not being understood

"I am very nervous and worried about the actual wordings I used when I am trying to communicate in English. … I sometimes mislead English speakers. I am afraid of making mistakes and being misunderstood by others. … I try not to cause them to think I meant something else and get the wrong message."

" … but I always encounter barriers when I speak and write. I should know a lot of general terms in communication, but I often fail to find the correct terms when I speak. … there have been occasions when I gave wrong messages to the locals. I can't communicate with the locals well in this country."

Can't handle the study well

" … I feel doubtful as to my ability to truly understand the subject contents under English-as-a-medium-of-instruction. I face many English-related problems when I'm in my department, and my academic English standard is not strong enough. … "

"I still feel the tension when I'm reading academic books these days. … I have found that it's extremely difficult for me to understand and express my thoughts on British politics and national or European news in English. I feel that I am speaking out of context all the time when discussing these topics. … As the news and my knowledge of my major subject need to be updated every day, I often fail

to do so in English, and if I merely use English to read all the information, I would not actually be able to catch up with the progress of the class, due to my being slow to read in English. … ”

Fear of the new environment
“I felt anxious when I firstly arrived in the UK. A new environment makes me feel nervous, when I saw people communicating in English. I felt that joining in the conversation would be very difficult for me. … ”

It is recognised that anxiety is an obstacle to language learning. It undermines learners' PWB. In addition, social and cultural factors inside and outside the classroom can affect their emotions, for example, being 'afraid of making grammatical mistakes' in the conversation, and so feeling that it is difficult to communicate (Dewaele, 2014).

5.1.4 Psychological Adjustment

As stated in Section 1.1.4, the psychological adjustment (PA) of people in host countries can be affected by a variety of factors, such as self-esteem (Barratt & Huba, 1994; Bektaş *et al.*, 2009; Castro, 2003; Phinney, 1990; Verkuyten, 1998), psychological distress (Carver *et al.*, 1989; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Pearlin, 1999; Taylor *et al.*, 2002), depression (Abouguendia & Noels, 2001; Futa *et al.*, 2001; Hanassab & Tidwell, 2002; Hsu *et al.*, 1987; Ying & Liese, 1991) and stress (Clément *et al.*, 2001; Mallinckrodt & Leong, 1992). International EFL / ESL students might encounter LP and cross-cultural challenges in their social and educational settings (Agar, 1996; Andrade, 2006; Essandoh, 1995; Hechanova-Alampay *et al.*, 2002; Kormos *et al.*, 2014; Mori, 2000; Rajapaksa & Dundes, 2002; Ramburuth, 2001; Ramsay *et al.*, 1999; Smalley, 1963). There are several other perspectives from which international EFL / ESL students might experience PA challenges during their stay in a host country (Lacina, 2002), for example, 'culture shock' (Adler, 1975; Oberg, 1960; Ward *et al.*, 2001), 'learning shock' (Gu, 2005) or 'education shock' (Hoff, 1979; Yamazaki, 2005), 'language shock' (Agar, 1996; Smalley, 1963) and

'role shock' (Byrnes, 1966; Minkler & Biller, 1979), and language-related issues (Agar, 1996; Andrade, 2006; Hechanova-Alampay *et al.*, 2002; Kormos *et al.*, 2014; Rajapaksa & Dundes, 2002; Ramburuth, 2001; Ramsay *et al.*, 1999; Smalley, 1963).

The results and analyses of the quantitative data at both T1 and T2 indicate that the majority of the participants gave affirmative responses to the PA Items 1, 5, 6 and 9 and to Items 2, 3, 4, 7 and 8 (which all contained reversed-score statements). Comparison between the results at T1 and those at T2 shows that there was a decrease in the percentage frequency of responses from the participants showing 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' on Items 1, 5, 6 and 9 (*see* Tables 5 and 9). To summarise, there was a slight decrease in the percentage of the participants who showed 'slightly agree' to 'strongly agree' responses on Item 1, 'I am very satisfied with my university studies with English language as a medium of instruction' (T1 = 88.3%; T2 = 87.3%), Item 5, 'If I feel blue, my Chinese friends in the UK will help me to get out of it' (T1 = 88.3%; T2 = 81.3%), Item 6, 'I find life as a student in the UK very pleasant especially when I can practise English speaking all the time' (T1 = 82.3%; T2 = 70.5%) and Item 9, 'I am glad that I came to study here because I can know more about English language and culture' (T1 = 96.7%; T2 = 90.4%). Regarding Items 2, 3, 4, 7 and 8 (which all contained reversed-score statements), comparison between the results at T1 and those at T2 shows similar affirmative responses. There was a slight decrease in the percentage frequency of responses from the participants giving 'slightly disagree' to 'strongly disagree' responses to Item 3, 'I often ask myself what I am doing here to have the course of my studies in the English language' (a decrease; T1 = 67.9%; T2 = 66.3%), Item 4, 'I would prefer studying somewhere else instead of studying in the UK' (T1 = 86.3%; T2 = 81.3%) and Item 8, 'I find it very difficult to adjust to student life due to the difference in education system between my home country and the UK' (T1 = 72.6%; T2 = 71.7%). On the other hand, there was an obvious increase in the percentage frequency of responses from the participants showing 'slightly disagree' to 'strongly disagree' on Item 2, 'What I miss

here is someone to talk to freely from time to time in my home town dialect / Mandarin / Cantonese' (T1 = 36%; T2 = 66.3%) and Item 7, 'I find it hard to get used to life here in this English-speaking country' (T1 = 38.6%; T2 = 77.7%).

In terms of the mean scores on PA, Table 10 shows that there was a statistically significant difference (p<0.01) between T1 (mean scores = 34.50) and T2 (mean scores = 31.28). It should be noted that the higher the mean scores might imply an increase in the participants' PA in English language learning, whereas the lower the mean scores might imply a decrease in their PA in English language learning. Hence, this current study shows that there was a significant decrease in the participants' PA in their English language learning between T1 and T2.

Owing to the very limited literature that could provide a direct data-gathering instrument for assessing PA in English language learning in international EFL / ESL students, I developed the PA component of the questionnaire to record the score changes between T1 and T2 using the College Adaption Questionnaire (CAQ; Crombag, 1968) in Van Rooijen's (1986) study as reference (*see* Section 2.4.1). In view of this, I cannot provide any direct comparison between the related literature and the results of this current study in respect of the above. Nonetheless, the possible reasons behind the participants' score changes could be explained by some of the comments made during the interviews (*see* Appendix V for details) in response to the question 'How well do you feel you have adjusted to life at a UK university – are you generally happy here in an English-speaking environment or does this have major drawbacks for you? Please explain your view and how it relates to your experiences so far at this university' as the following extracts show.

> Happily adjusted to the environment (Always speaking in Mandarin)
> "I can happily adjust to the environment. I can usually understand what others have said, although I don't think my spoken English has shown any improvement at all when compared to nearly half a year ago, because I don't have enough

chances to speak in English here. … I have no tendency to speak with my British classmates, and due to my limited knowledge and understanding of British culture … . I don't think that the Chinese are generally quieter, it is just that the language barrier hinders them. … "

"I can easily adjust to new environments. I usually spend most of my time in the UK studying, and I don't have much opportunity to speak in English. I only use the English language during shopping and dealing with basic services. … Even with just one word or two, I have enough to let others understand what I have said. I read Chinese websites rather than the British ones … "

Happily adjusted to the environment (Grasping chances to speak in English)
"I feel happy in the English-speaking environment. I treasure any chances to speak in English with my classmates and staff at the university. I'm happy to speak with the locals when I have to deal with everyday issues such as reporting household problems to the porters, or buying food at supermarkets."

" … I recognise the importance of being proactive in using English so as to grasp more chances to practice the language. There are not many British students in my class, and although there are other Western people in the group, I'm not too sure if their English is proficient, but I can at least understand them."

Happily adjusted to the environment (Curious to know more about this country)
"I can meet people from different countries and learn about various cultures during fresher's week. I can communicate with people from different backgrounds. … I can also learn slang so as to give some colour to my English language learning."

Having drawbacks in the environment (Seeing the cultural differences between the East and the West)
"I'm generally happy with my university life in the UK. I don't often hang around with my international friends. There is a big difference between Eastern and Western cultures, and great dissimilarity does exist in every part of our lives. … I prefer my own Chinese style of living at my on-campus flat. I haven't got used to the local life style very much. … "

"There is a great difference in cultures between the Western and the Chinese students. … I still need some more time to adjust myself psychologically to the English-speaking environment. … The major difference between the Chinese and the Westerners is the lack of time spent on household work, such as cooking and

washing clothes … "

<u>Having drawbacks in the environment (Cannot get used to the language)</u>
" … I feel great difficulty in coping with my academic studies. The style of learning and the problem solving based seminars … have created a lot of worries for me, as I often fail to understand the context in a lecture. I can't get used to the English expressions and presentations … "

" … a bit difficult for me to adapt to the English-speaking environment, especially in daily communications. … barrier does exist when I'm speaking English, and I am not as comfortable as when I am speaking Mandarin. … We are not required to do any preparations. There is around one seminar per week. The English language is of course used during the seminars, but the group members are mostly Chinese. … "

"It's challenging for me to think in English during verbal communications, and it's even more tedious to write essays in English. I need to write firstly in Chinese … "

The participants' statements quoted above appear to suggest reasons for a decrease in PA between T1 and T2. In this regard, they felt that there were obvious cultural differences between the East and the West, engagements in different society activities for various reasons, a lack of English-speaking opportunities (also *see* Section 5.4 'Mandarin speaking opportunities'), a lack of time for dealing with housework, much more time or great difficulty in addressing academic requirements, anxiety about speaking English due to the issue of LP, and worries due to the difference in teaching style in the UK. It might therefore be due to the factors listed above that there was a significant decrease in the scores on PA of the participants between T1 and T2.

5.1.5   Correlations between PP Variables

In the Literature Review, there are a number of papers mentioned which report various kinds of relationship between respective PP variables and language learning in international EFL / ESL students (*see* Sections 1.1.1 to 1.1.4). In addition, some writers

(for example, Ryan & Frederick, 1997; Ryan *et al.*, 1995; Waterman, 1993) have reported on the link between satisfaction of basic needs and the attainment of one's PWB, whereas others have reported that PWB-related factors such as psychological distress (Carver *et al.*, 1989; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Pearlin, 1999; Taylor *et al.*, 2002), depression (Abouguendia & Noels, 2001; Futa *et al.*, 2001; Hanassab & Tidwell, 2002; Hsu *et al.*, 1987; Ying & Liese, 1991) and stress (Clément *et al.*, 2001; Mallinckrodt & Leong, 1992) have some links with PA. So a relationship could also exist between all other combinations of PP variables that might have influenced the language learning of the participants in this current study.

Tables 11 and 12 in Sections 3.1.4 and 3.1.5 show that there were six of the ten correlations that had a modest relationship at T2 compared with five at T1, and they were AR and CR (T1 = 0.58; T2 = 0.43), AR and PWB (T1 = 0.25; T2 = 0.36), CR and PWB (T1 = 0.25; T2 = 0.47), CR and PA (T1 = 0.19; T2 = 0.31), PWB and MS (T1 = 0.30; T2 = 0.47) and PWB and PA (T1 = 0.33; T2 = 0.28). Given the relatively short interval between T1 and T2, the strength of the correlations for all combinations of PP variables in this current study might have rendered a bigger picture with an addition of another time-point measurement such as half a year beyond T2. Of these six correlations, four showed an increase in correlation at T2 that might deserve further discussion as elaborated in the following paragraph.

For AR and PWB (T1 = 0.25; T2 = 0.36) and CR and PWB (T1 = 0.25; T2 = 0.47), the increase could be due to a better dynamic balance between the range of AR and CR behaviour of the participants in learning English language having stayed in the UK for more than five months. The possible reasons for an increase in correlation could be related to the fact that some of the interview comments made concerned interest, satisfaction, usefulness and pressure in their learning of the English language (*see* Section 5.1.1). At the same time, as highlighted in Section 5.1.3, there could be a positive dynamic balance that might affect the PWB of the participants in terms of being

'confident and happy' (*see* Section 4.6) and having 'anxieties and worries' (*see* Section 4.5 and its subsections). For CR and PA (T1 = 0.19; T2 = 0.31), the possible reason for the increase in correlation could be a complex balance involving various PA-related factors in the Literature Review, as summarised in Sections 1.6 and 5.1.4, whereas other reasons for that complex balance could be illustrated by some of the interview comments as highlighted in Sections 4.7 and 4.8 and their subsections. They are 'happily adjusted to the environment' and 'having drawbacks in the environment' (*see* all subsections of Sections 4.7 and 4.8). For PWB and MS (T1 = 0.30; T2 = 0.47), a positive dynamic balance in the PWB of the participants in terms of being 'confident and happy' and having 'anxieties and worries' might have adequately offset the effect of the change to a fixed MS by the participants in language learning as reflected by the significant decrease in the scores of their MS between T1 and T2 (*see* Sections 3.1.3 and 5.1.2).

In view of the presence of a modest relationship established in six of the ten correlations among the five PP variables within a study period of less than six months, it could be suggested that a stronger relationship might have been established in *all* the combinations of PP variables if this current study had been extended for a longer period of time such as one year. In addition, the score changes of one PP variable between T1 and T2 could be *simultaneously* affected by all other PP variables to some extent which could be reflected by the strength of the correlations concerned. At least, it appears that the findings discussed above could help to expand the knowledge in the related literature to the extent that a further study with an even more meticulous methodology is warranted.

5.2   Language Learning Activities

The results and analyses presented in Chapters 3 and 4 in relation to the ten Language Learning Activities (LLA) were intended to address the research question 'What activities did the students report using to improve their English at the start and then mid-way through the academic year, and did those activities change between T1 and T2?'

In the Literature Review (*see* Section 1.4), a number of writers were referred to as having reported that both frequency and language learning strategies are contributory components to success in language learning (for example, Bremner, 1998; Green & Oxford, 1995; Holec, 1981; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; O'Malley *et al.*, 1985; Oxford, 1990; Politzer, 1983). Furthermore, the use of language learning strategies can be influenced by gender and culture differences (Bedell & Oxford, 1996; Ehrman & Oxford, 1989; Grainger, 1997; Green & Oxford, 1995; Oxford, 1993; Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995; Politzer, 1983; Reid, 1987; Wharton, 2000), social practice (Politzer, 1983; Ehrman & Oxford, 1989; Hong-nam & Leavell, 2006), formal rule-based practice, conversational or input practice (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989) and contextual factors (Cheong & Garcia, 2006; Tran, 1988; Wharton, 2000). The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL; Oxford, 1986; Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995; Oxford & Ehrman, 1995) with reliability coefficients ranging from 0.85 to 0.98 was first selected as the basis for consideration. Action items in the SILL in terms of 'Memory strategies', 'Cognitive strategies', 'Compensation strategies', 'Metacognitive strategies', 'Affective strategies' and 'Social strategies' were considered. Some of the SILL items were then adopted and translated into the ten LLA for assessing the participants' frequency of engagement in these activities (*see* Section 2.4.1) in relation to the five PP variables in the course of language learning. As already stated in Section 1.4, Kormos *et al.*'s remark (2014, p. 152) repeated below provided much inspiration for me, and the results of this current study are expected to help to extend our present knowledge or fill in the gaps in the literature:

> " … while a lot of research has focused on American students in study-abroad programmes (for example, Dewey *et al.*, 2012; Cohen *et al.*, 2005; Kinginger, 2008; Aveni, 2005), no previous studies have been carried out that investigated how students' contact experiences, language learning attitudes and motivation change in a UK international study context using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods."

Tables 15 and 16 show the percentage frequency of the responses of the participants pertaining to the degree of their engagement in the use of the ten LLA to improve their English between T1 and T2. The following paragraphs are intended to provide a picture of their engagement pattern in these activities on a scale of 'Not at all', 'Sometimes', 'Often' and 'Always' behaviour.

The activity 'I practise English with my Chinese friends' was developed from Strategy 33, 'I try to find out how to be a better learner of English', and Strategy 47, 'I practise English with other students'. The former strategy was intended for the planning and monitoring of English learning through some SR behaviour, whereas the latter strategy is an action to serve the purpose (*see* Section 2.4.1).

The figures in Tables 15 and 16 show that the majority of the participants 'not at all' (T1 = 22.9%; T2 = 29.5%) or 'sometimes' (T1 = 69.9%; T2 = 62.7) involved themselves in the activity for their learning of English. It was found that more participants who 'not at all' carried out the activity at T2 might have been counterbalanced by a similar percentage of fewer participants who 'sometimes' had such a practice. Some of the interview comments quoted in Sections 4.5.3 and 4.8.2 could help to explain the reasons why the participants 'not at all' or 'sometimes' carried out this activity. In essence, the participants always have Chinese peers around, inside and out of the classroom including their accommodation areas, so they have many opportunities to speak Mandarin most of the time rather than English. According to the Literature Review, the participants might have problems in understanding local accents and idioms even though they can speak the language of the host country (Ng, 2006; Poyrazli *et al.*, 2001). Because of this, they might find it less possible to learn local accents and idioms by practising English with their Chinese friends. They might feel more comfortable socialising with their friends in Mandarin rather than English. In this regard, they might have created further obstacles to their English learning (Wang, 2003).

The activity 'I join social activities where English is used' was based on four strategies in the SILL: Strategy 33, 'I try to find out how to be a better learner of English', Strategy 35, 'I look for people I can talk to in English', Strategy 49, 'I ask questions in English', and Strategy 50, 'I try to learn about the culture of English speakers'. The first two strategies were meant for planning and monitoring their language learning, and the other two were aimed at language learning through social activities.

The figures in Tables 15 and 16 show that the majority of the participants 'sometimes' (T1 = 63.4%; T2 = 53%) or 'often' (T1 = 21.6%; T2 = 29.5%) engaged in the activity for their language learning. In particular, there were more participants who 'often' joined social activities for the sake of improving their English language at T2. Some of the interview comments quoted in Sections 4.9.2, 4.9.6 and 4.9.7 might help to illustrate the various kinds of activity that the participants engaged in for language learning:

Daily conversations (*see* Section 4.9.2)
"I have good opportunities to engage in verbal communication with British people. … British people … do not slow down their speed in their verbal communication … I have chances to expose myself to real life situations and the use of daily English, and this helps me to enhance my listening and speaking skills."

"Communication between classmates can also help to improve my spoken English … It can also help me to enhance my written English in the field of psychology. … "

Travelling (*see* Section 4.9.6)
"I am very interested in travelling, … I booked B & B myself, and chatted with the locals about their culture and attractions."

" … I have a lot of chances to interact in English with others when travelling. … travelling can help me to know more about the local culture as well as the

language of the country."

" … I'm currently thinking of going on some university trips to different cities. … It's very difficult to be friends with them due to cultural differences, but at least I can practise my spoken English when I have lunch with them."

Social gatherings (*see* Section 4.9.7)
"Going to the pub, or related social activities, … I can learn the common topics in the local people's conversations, and also the appropriate use of words and vocabulary."

"I joined the CSSA (Chinese Students and Scholars Association). Some of the teaching staff would come and join us for some of the activities. … and I have plenty of chances to use English to communicate with them. … "

"Besides the Caving Society, I have also joined the Outdoor Society. This can help to create an environment for English speaking, … "

"I have joined the Baking Society, and I have opportunities to interact with the locals and non-Chinese speakers in English. … in some party gatherings, … [this] provided me with opportunities to use English for communication."

"I have joined a table-tennis team. English speaking is involved, … ."

The strategy 'I make use of English in everyday activities' was based on three strategies in the SILL for action: Strategy 30, 'I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English', Strategy 33, 'I try to find out how to be a better learner of English', and Strategy 49, 'I ask questions in English' (*see* Section 2.4.1).

The figures in Tables 15 and 16 show that the majority of the participants who 'sometimes' (T1 = 60.1%; T2 = 56.6%) or 'often' (T1 = 26.1%; T2 = 30.7%) engaged in this activity for their language learning. The first two strategies suggest that the participants might have been motivated to become better English learners whereas the third strategy suggested some kind of SR behaviour. In this regard, some of the interview comments quoted in Sections 4.1 and 4.2 could help to explain the possible kind of

motivation for such SR behaviour in this activity. Their motivation could be 'interest in learning the English language' (*see* Section 4.1.1), 'satisfaction of learning the English language' (*see* Section 4.1.2), 'usefulness of the English language' (*see* Section 4.2.1) or 'pressure of learning the language' (*see* Section 4.2.2).

The activity 'I attend CELT class at the university' was based on three strategies in the SILL: Strategy 33, 'I try to find out how to be a better learner of English', Strategy 34, 'I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English', and Strategy 37, 'I have clear goals for improving my English skills'. These strategies could influence their planning and monitoring of language learning and their type of SR behaviour in joining the activity.

It appears that a balanced view was taken by the participants who 'not at all', 'sometimes', 'often' or 'always' engaged in this activity for their language learning at both time-points (T1 = 20.9%, 22.2%, 30.1% and 26.1%, respectively; T2 = 22.9%, 27.7%, 22.3% and 26.5%, respectively) for their language learning. However, there were relatively fewer participants who 'often' practised this activity at T2 compared with T1. Some of the interview comments quoted in Section 4.9.1 (also *see* Appendix V) might help to explain their SR behaviour and their expectations of the activity:

> " … the CELT … usually focuses on English academic writing and critical thinking which I am quite familiar with but not the kind of English that I have to use in my daily living."

> "I need to take CELT lessons as required by my major programme − TESOL. However, I feel that it's not too useful for boosting my English language ability. … The techniques of writing papers and the required vocabulary used in academic field are discussed mostly. … "

> " … I plan to take the CELT course because I believe I can improve my English language through such a course."

"The CELT pre-sessional programme obviously helped to improve my English language ability when compared with other activities in the UK. General English was taught in a highly motivated learning atmosphere, where I could have interactions with classmates and teachers. … "

"I have joined a CELT programme, and the British teacher has taught us very well. During seminars, my mistakes could be corrected immediately by the teacher when I spoke. Speaking was greatly focused in class, with many chances to prepare for the daily presentation. … This is a great chance for me to practise my English. … "

The development of the activity 'I attend CELT class outside the university' was based on three strategies in the SILL for learning better English: Strategy 33, 'I try to find out how to be a better learner of English', Strategy 34, 'I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English', and Strategy 37, 'I have clear goals for improving my English skills'. As well as supporting the planning and monitoring of their language learning, these strategies could also influence the type of SR behaviour of the participants who were going for this activity.

The figures in Tables 15 and 16 show that the majority of the participants reported that they 'not at all' or 'sometimes' carried out this activity for their language learning. Compared with T1, there was at T2 an increase in the percentage of participants 'not at all' (T1 = 33.3%; T2 = 41.2%) or 'sometimes' (T1 = 42.5%; T2 = 42.8%) joining in this activity. To explain the reasons behind this, I do not have any related interview quotes or literature that could help to provide the explanation. However, I can draw inferences from some of the interview comments quoted above pertaining to 'I attend CELT class at the university'. Some of the participants might have not joined the CELT class organised by the university in the first term for various reasons. It is possible that after hearing the merits of joining the class, such as very supportive teaching staff, a highly motivated learning atmosphere, enhancement of academic writing and vocabulary, and not least, the

fact that the classes were free of charge, they were persuaded to join the class in the second term. This could help to explain the reason behind the increase in the percentage of 'not at all' or 'sometimes' joining CELT class organised in the private sector at T2 compared with T1.

The activity 'I take part in English self-study activities' was developed according to three strategies in the SILL: Strategy 33, 'I try to find out how to be a better learner of English', Strategy 34, 'I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English', and Strategy 37, 'I have clear goals for improving my English skills'. These were aimed at influencing their planning and monitoring of language learning; and showing what kind of SR behaviour they used when they carried out this activity.

The figures in Tables 15 and 16 indicate that the majority of the participants were 'not at all' (T1 = 21.6%; T2 = 45.1%) or 'sometimes' (T1 = 22.9%; T2 = 51.2%) involved in this activity for their learning of English. To explain the increase in the 'not at all' and 'sometimes' percentages at T2, there are no available interview quotes or related literature that could help to provide the explanation. However, the possible explanation might be based on the nature of the activity as it is non-interactive and possibly monotonous to some of the participants. At the same time, their PWB and PA (*see* Sections 5.1.3, 5.1.4 and 5.1.5) improved after a few months of staying in the UK, and so they might have preferred to learn better English through an interactive method rather than relying on a self-study activity.

'I watch English films / watch English TV programmes / listen to the English radio' is another non-contact type of activity that was based on Strategy 15 in the SILL, 'I watch TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English', and Strategy 33, 'I try to find out how to be a better learner of English'. The participants involved might have learned better English from this activity, such as from the availability of subtitles when

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watching English TV programmes and the frequency or intensity of undertaking this activity.

Tables 15 and 16 show that the majority of the participants 'often' (T1 = 39.9%; T2 = 43.4%) or 'always' (T1 = 35.7%; T2 = 30.7%) engaged in this activity for their language learning. I have, however, found very little related literature that could offer an explanation for this. Perhaps the participants might regard this as an effective leisure activity to ease the tension in their daily living and academic studies, but at the same time they could learn more English in the process. One interview comment is used to illustrate this:

> "Self-learning is more important. Watching magazines, films, TV programmes and so on can help, and I have found that it's better for me to turn off the subtitles so as to facilitate the language learning process."

The activity 'I read English story books / English newspapers' was based on two strategies in the SILL: Strategy 33, 'I try to find out how to be a better learner of English', and Strategy 36, 'I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English'. The participants involved might want to establish their planning and monitoring of English learning with some SR behaviour.

The figures in Tables 15 and 16 suggest that more than half of the participants 'not at all' (T1 = 9.2%; T2 = 10.2%) or 'sometimes' (T1 = 52.3%; T2 = 59.6%) engaged in this activity for their language learning. There is no available related literature that could help to explain the slight increase in the percentage at T2. However, some of the interview comments quoted in Section 4.5.5 might provide some insight. There was a relatively high percentage of the participants who 'sometimes' engaged in the activity. This could be due to their intention to give their first priority to their academic studies and to try to choose some less time-consuming language learning activities in case they have some extra time.

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'I keep a notebook of new vocabulary that I have learned' was an activity based on two strategies in the SILL: Strategy 4, 'I use flashcards to remember new English words', and Strategy 33, 'I try to find out how to be a better learner of English'. The participants were thought to have used memory work for new vocabulary that had been learned through the practice of using a notebook.

The figures in Tables 15 and 16 indicate that around two-thirds of the participants 'not at all' (T1 = 5.9%; T2 = 15.7%) or 'sometimes' (T1 = 60.1%; T2 = 60.2%) used a notebook for their language learning; in particular, there was an obvious increase in the 'not at all' percentage at T2 compared with T1. From the Literature Review (*see* Section 1.2), it seems that the characteristics of Asian students, including Chinese, to be rote learners and their strong preference for group learning has been overstated (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996a; Oxford & Ehrman, 1995). However, the figures in Tables 15 and 16 confirmed the view that in addition to identity, motivation, power relationships with their teachers and culture-related factors, Chinese learners might exhibit some other forms of behaviour based on personal needs and situational demands when living abroad (Gu & Schweisfurth, 2006; Watkins & Biggs, 1996; 2001). Using a note-book to help to memorise newly learned vocabulary might imply a kind of rote learning. The participants might have shifted to some other activities for their language learning.

Finally, the activity 'I visit English websites / English-speaking forums when I surf the internet' for language learning was based on three strategies in the SILL aimed at the planning and monitoring of language learning of the participants: Strategy 15, 'I watch TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English', Strategy 33, 'I try to find out how to be a better learner of English', and Strategy 36, 'I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English'.

The figures in Tables 15 and 16 suggest that around one-third of the participants

'often' (T1 = 25.5%; T2 = 25.9%) or 'always' (T1 = 7.2%; T2 = 8.4%) adopted this activity for their language learning. Although I did not find any previous study in the literature that could offer a reason for this, one interview comment (*see* Section 4.9.4) might help to explain it:

> "Facebook is a very good tool for learning English language. I can leave messages and chat in informal English. … I hear informal English on American TV series, and in daily conversations in the UK, and Facebook provides a very useful social medium for people to improve their oral English. … joining different student activity groups on Facebook, … involved in their social gatherings. … which will surely improve my English language skills."

In terms of the mean item scores of the ten LLA, Table 17 shows that there was a statistically significant difference ($p<0.01$) in only two of the ten activities: 'I join social activities where English is used' and 'I keep a notebook of new vocabulary that I have learned'. Time constraint might be one of the factors affecting this as this current study only covered a period of less than six months. A bigger picture involving all other activities could have been formed with an addition of another time-point measurement such as a number of months beyond T2. The response scale for the assessment of engagement in LLA was a four-point continuum for each item, ranging from 'Not at All' to 'Always'. An increase in mean item scores between T1 and T2 in the participants might imply an increase in their engagement level in the concerned LLA. On the other hand, it might imply a decrease in their engagement level in the LLA. A significant increase in the mean item scores of the activity 'I join social activities where English is used' (T1 = 2.14; T2 = 2.44) and a significant decrease in the mean item scores of the activity 'I keep a notebook of new vocabulary that I have learned' could share similar explanations pertaining to the percentage frequency of the responses in these two activities.

5.3 Perceived Language Proficiency

The results and analyses presented in Chapter 3 in relation to Language Proficiency (LP) are intended to address the research question 'How did the students perceive their proficiency in English at the start and then mid-way through the academic year, and did those perceptions change between T1 and T2?'

Much inspired by Hulstijn's (2011, 2012) work on the constructs of LP in the literature, I recognised her belief (Hulstijn, 2011, p. 230) that "basic language cognition (BLC) is what *all* native (L1) speakers have in common; HLC (higher language cognition) is the domain where differences between native (L1) speakers can be observed". For HLC, it is " … the complement or extension of BLC where HLC utterances are lexically and grammatically more complex (and often longer) than BLC utterances and they need not be spoken". From the Literature Review (*see* Section 1.5), BLC refers to the language knowledge shared by all adult L1 speakers in terms of listening and speaking, whereas HLC demonstrates individual differences in language mastery in terms of reading and writing. BLC and HLC could be potentially affected by specific attributes such as literacy, age, level of education, profession or leisure-time activities (Hulstijn, 2011). As I found a paucity of previous studies in the literature reporting on the assessment of LP in international EFL / ESL students in the UK, such as the Chinese participants in this current study, the results generated could contribute to the international literature or extend the existing knowledge. For this current study, the assessment areas of LP were listening, speaking (BLC); reading, writing (HLC); daily vocabulary (BLC or HLC) and academic vocabulary (BLC or HLC). Also, according to the Literature Review, the most commonly cited language-related problems in international EFL / ESL students are English LP or language standards, academic writing, oral comprehension, communication, lack of knowledge of local contextual references and inadequate vocabulary (for example, Cownie & Addison, 1996; Daroesman *et al.*, 2005; Hellstén & Prescott, 2004; Lee, 1997; Lin & Yi, 1997; Pantelides, 1999; Robertson *et al.*, 2000; Andrade, 2006; Sawir *et al.*,

2012; Singh, 2005). In this regard, the participants recruited for this current study were viewed as language learners. As well as exploring the PP of language learning through various LLA in social and educational settings, this current study was also designed to contribute to our understanding of learners' perception of LP between T1 and T2.

The figures in Tables 18 and 19 show the percentage frequency of the responses given by the participants reflecting their perception of the six areas of LP between T1 and T2 in language learning. The following paragraphs are intended to provide the picture of their perceived LP in terms of 'Not proficient', 'Somewhat proficient', 'Very proficient' and 'Native-like' levels.

Tables 18 and 19 show that the majority of the participants at T2 were either 'not proficient' (T1 = 24.8%; T2 = 22.9%) or 'somewhat proficient' (T1 = 29.9%; T2 = 71.1%) in speaking. Notably, there was an obvious increase in the percentage of 'somewhat proficient' in speaking at T2. This could be related to the increase in their activity 'I join social activities where English is used' between T1 and T2 as indicated by the significant increase in their scores in this activity (*see* Section 3.2.3).

In regard to listening, the majority of the participants were either 'not proficient' (T1 = 7.8%; T2 = 10.8%) or 'somewhat proficient' (T1 = 77.8%; T2 = 66.9%) in listening at both time-points, and there was a clear increase in the percentage of the participants who reported being 'very proficient' in listening at T2 (T1 = 13.1%; T2 = 21.1%). This increase might be related to the less demanding type of language cognition, which is lexically and grammatically less complex for listening compared with HLC (Hulstijn, 2011). In addition, some of the participants might have improved in listening comprehension because of their increasing contact hours in various language learning activities (Taguchi, 2008; Wang, 2010).

The largest proportions of the participants reported that they were either 'not proficient' (T1 = 24.2%; T2 = 27.1%) or 'somewhat proficient' (T1 = 13.1%; T2 = 21.1%)

in writing. It appears that the increase in the 'not proficient' percentage was nearly equal to the decrease in the 'somewhat proficient' percentage. This could be due to higher requirements in academic writing between T1 and T2, which is much more cognitively demanding (HLC) than speaking and listening (BLC) (Hulstijn, 2011).

Similarly, the majority of the participants stated that they were either 'not proficient' (T1 = 3.9%; T2 = 10.2%) or 'somewhat proficient' (T1 = 78.4%; T2 = 69.9%) in reading. Although there was an increase in the 'not proficient' percentage, there was a decrease in the 'somewhat proficient' percentage. This could be due to a higher demand for language cognition for some of the participants in reading proficiency (HLC) (Hulstijn, 2011). Some of the interview comments quoted in Sections 4.5.5 and 4.9.1 can help to illustrate this. However, the modest increase in the 'very proficient' percentage (T1 = 16.3%; T2 = 19.3%) might reflect the fact that some of the participants had made good enough effort in their language learning.

Levels of LP in daily vocabulary showed a diverse pattern in the participants between T1 and T2. There were modest increases in the 'not proficient' percentage (T1 = 11.1%; T2 = 15.7%) and the 'very proficient' percentage (T1 = 9.2%; T2 = 13.9%), whereas there was a clear decrease in the 'somewhat proficient' percentage (T1 = 78.4%; T2 = 69.9%). Interestingly, LP in academic vocabulary also showed a similar diverse pattern compared with LP in daily vocabulary. There were modest increases in the 'not proficient' percentage (T1 = 27.5%; T2 = 30.1%) and the 'very proficient' percentage (T1 = 5.9%; T2 = 6.6%), whilst there was a clear decrease in the 'somewhat proficient' percentage (T1 = 66%; T2 =62%). LP in daily vocabulary and academic vocabulary might require BLC or HLC (Hulstijn, 2011), and in their learning, everything depends on the subject matter involved.

Overall, as far as this current study is concerned, LP in the six areas is the learning outcomes of the PP of the participants who had engaged in various language learning activities between T1 and T2. Levels of their perceived LP could be explained by but not

limited to those reasons as stated in this section. Those explanations should not be understated, as explained in the discussions in Section 5.1.1 and Section 5.4. At least, I found that the relationship between the five PP variables appears to be a complex one. In other words, each PP variable could affect the others in a compound manner and that could justify some even more meticulous studies for further exploration. In terms of the mean item scores, there were no statistically significant differences ($p<0.01$) found in the mean item scores of any of the items of perceived LP between T1 and T2. Nonetheless, a longer period of study time might have revealed some differences.

5.4 Language Learning Activities and PP Variables

The following paragraphs are intended to address the research question 'What is the relationship between their positive psychology and the activities they reported using to improve their English at the start and then mid-way through the academic year, and did those scores change between T1 and T2?'

As is clear from the Literature Review, there is very limited literature that has reported the relationship between LLA and the PP variables in international EFL / ESL students as in this current study. Because of this, I cannot provide any comparison between the related literature and the findings of this current study in respect of the above. Table 21 shows that at T1 variable positive correlations were found between the ten LLA and the five PP variables, with very weak relationships (0.10 to 0.19) appearing at one end, and modest relationships (0.25 to 0.50) at the other, ranging from 0.11 ('I attend CELT class at the university' and CR) to 0.26 ('I join social activities where English is used' and AR). Table 22 shows that the positive correlations at T2 ranged from 0.10 ('I join social activities where English is used' and CR) to 0.31 ('I watch English films / watch English TV programmes / listen to the English radio' and PWB).

In terms of the strength of the correlations at T1 and T2, the figures in Tables 21 and 22 show that the relationships between the ten LLA and the five PP variables appear

not to be strong because the data were overwhelmingly less than modest. Hence, the related score changes between T1 and T2 might be regarded as not obvious. In view of this, the above relationship indicates that there is something complex going on. That being the case, the extracts from the interview comments presented below suggest that some other factors might have existed and might have weakened various correlations between the ten LLA and the five PP variables. The factors could be 'Mandarin speaking opportunities' (*see* Sections 4.5.3 and 4.8.2), 'Challenges in language learning' (*see* Section 4.8.2), 'Focus on academic requirements' (*see* Section 4.5.5), 'Anxieties and worries' (*see* Sections 4.5.1 & 4.5.4) and 'Other language learning activity – Travelling' (*see* Section 4.9.6).

Mandarin speaking opportunities (*see* Section 4.5.3 and 4.8.2)
"I always have Chinese peers around, so I don't have much chance to speak in English. … the only chance to use the English language is in the classroom."

" … There aren't many chances for me to speak in English, as most projects just involve one or two British students within a big group of Chinese students. I mostly speak in Mandarin with my teammates. … "

" … I don't have enough chances to interact with native speakers, as my MA TESOL programme is mostly participated by Chinese students."

Challenges in language learning (*see* Section 4.8.2)
"There are a lot of barriers when I communicate with others in English. For example, the locals speak too fast, and at the same time. I can't express myself well enough. … I find it very difficult to cope with the kind of daily English used in the UK such as informal terms or slang."

"It's challenging for me to think in English … , and it's even more tedious to write essays in English. I need to write first in Chinese, and then translate all of the Chinese words into English ones."

Focus on academic requirements (*see* Section 4.5.5)
" … to learn something related to the field of psychology, however, I feel doubtful

as to my ability to truly understand the subject contents under English-as-a-medium-of-instruction. … my academic English standard is not strong enough. … I need to expand my vocabulary by whatever means necessary."

" … I have found that it's extremely difficult for me to understand and express my thoughts on British politics and national or European news in English. I feel that I am speaking out of context all the time when discussing these topics. … As the news and my knowledge of my major subject need to be updated every day, I often fail to do so in English, … I wouldn't actually be able to catch up the progress of the class, due to my being slow to read in English. … "

Anxieties and worries (*see* Sections 4.5.1 & 4.5.4)
"I feel anxious when I need to speak with strangers, new friends or a large group of people. … and I worry about making grammatical mistakes. I tend to have … a lack of vocabulary and uncertainties about the appropriate use of English grammar. … "

"I am very nervous and worried about the actual wordings I use when I am trying to communicate in English. … I sometimes mislead English speakers. I am afraid of making mistakes and being misunderstood by others. … I try not to cause them to think I meant something else and get the wrong message."

" … I can't always understand the meaning of others in the conversation. I wish to express myself better in front of the locals, but I don't really know how. I don't think I have real communication with the locals. … "

Other language learning activity – Travelling (*see* Section 4.9.6)
" … choose to travel in Europe or in the UK to learn better English."

"I am very interested in travelling, … I booked B & B myself, and chatted with the locals about their culture and attractions."

" … I have a lot of chances to interact in English with others when travelling. … travelling can help me to know more about the local culture as well as the language of the country."

"I haven't joined any social groups so far. I'm currently thinking of going on some university trips to different cities. … It's very difficult to be friends with them due to cultural differences, but at least I can practise my spoken English when I have lunch with them."

It appears that the relationships between the ten LLA and the five PP variables appear not to be strong because the data were overwhelmingly less than modest. Hence, the related score changes between T1 and T2 might be regarded as not obvious. Nonetheless, based on the discussion in Section 5.1.5, it can be argued that the score changes of one PP variable between T1 and T2 could be *simultaneously* being affected by all the other PP variables to some extent that could have been reflected by the strength of the correlations concerned. I therefore propose that something complex might have happened. Also, time could be a limiting factor for various correlations between the ten LLA and the five PP variables to occur sufficiently enough in this current study as it only covered a period of less than six months. Hence, the above factors might have negatively influenced their relationships.

As stated in Section 5.1.1 based on the Literature Review in Section 1.1.1, interest in language learning can be explained by the SDT framework in which the three basic psychological needs, human motivations and SR are interplaying. According to the interview comments quoted in Section 4.5.3, the range of SR behaviour of the participants might have been affected by their own peers (for example, mostly Chinese classmates and fellow students) and language learning opportunities (for example, discussions and their language preference). In this sense, they might tend to speak much more in Mandarin rather than in English even though they have already immersed themselves in an English-speaking environment. This is an echo of Kormos *et al.*'s (2014) finding that " … The interview data also reveal that … is also related to students' infrequent contact with native and international speakers of English and to the high levels of anxiety experienced when interacting with speakers from outside the student's own L1 group" (*ibid.* p. 159). In addition, evidence shows that Mandarin speaking opportunities can be conveniently or easily available in UK educational institutions (*see* Section 1.3 The Number of International Chinese Students at UK Universities), and it was noted by

Spencer-Oatey and Xiong (2006) that "For all interviewees, their most developed social network was with Chinese co-nationals. … how effective it was in providing them with emotional support; … Chinese friends were much better at providing practical help" (*ibid.* p. 49).

The interview comments quoted in Section 4.8.2 might suggest that there are practical challenges in language learning, for example, practical English for handling everyday issues, genuine communication with locals, and academic writing. At the same time, the participants in this current study might have been more focused on academic requirements (*see* Section 4.5.5) rather than English language learning *per se* as they have to spend much more time than their local peers in addressing the academic requirements under English-as-a-medium-of-instruction. Hence, these factors might have demotivated their learning of English. In Sections 4.5.1 and 4.5.4, the interview extracts suggest that the anxieties and worries of the participants about speaking English existed for a variety of reasons, and these might have demotivated them in their learning of English through communication with the locals or in the classroom. Regarding LLA carried out by the participants, the interview extracts have revealed that 'travelling' (*see* Section 4.9.6) could be one of these, but this has not been included in this current study.

It can therefore be envisaged that the development of the related questionnaire of the five PP variables should have been even more meticulous for this current study. In addition, 'travelling' should have been included as one of the LLA so that an even more comprehensive picture could be seen. All these factors might have weakened the correlations between the ten LLA and the five PP variables in this current study.

In addressing the research question 'What is the relationship between how their positive psychology scores changed between T1 and T2 and how did the activities which they reported using to improve their English change between T1 and T2', the figures in Table 10 (*see* Section 3.1.3) and Table 17 (*see* Section 3.2.3) are called upon for comparison in

order to explore the differences in the mean scores of the PP variables detected between T1 and T2 and at the same time the differences in the mean item scores of LLA detected between T1 and T2. Table 10 in Section 3.1.3 shows that there were statistically significant differences (p<0.01) found in the mean item scores for MS (T1 = 36.95; T2 = 35.32; full score = 54) and PA (T1 = 34.50; T2 = 31.28; full score = 54) between T1 and T2. Table 17 in Section 3.2.3 shows that there were statistically significant differences (p<0.01) found in the mean item scores of two LLA between T1 and T2: 'I join social activities where English is used' (T1 = 2.14; T2 = 2.44; full score = 4) and 'I keep a notebook of new vocabulary that I have learned' (T1 = 2.33; T2 = 2.12; full score = 4).

In Section 5.1.2, the higher the mean scores in MS might imply an increase in the participants' growth in MS belief in English language learning, whereas the lower the mean scores might imply an increase in their fixed MS belief in English language learning. Hence, a significant decrease in the mean scores between T1 and T2 indicates that the MS of the participants might have shifted to a fixed type in their English language learning. In other words, they believed in talent rather than in training or hard work for better language learning. In view of this, a significant increase in the mean item scores of the language learning activity 'I join social activities where English is used' might be due to some factors other than MS in language learning, and that will be elaborated in the following paragraph concerning PA and 'I join social activities where English is used'. However, it can be argued that the MS in language learning could have a relationship with 'I keep a notebook of new vocabulary that I have learned' as both are directly connected to language learning as presented in this current study. In addition, the function of a notebook in this statement is to keep a list of vocabulary that has been learned by the participants, and they have a fixed MS belief that training or hard work would not help them to learn better English. In this sense, the use of a notebook might have become less important to them. They might have used some other language learning

methods which have been considered more effective for their language learning, such as for the area of academic writing.

In Section 5.1.4, the higher the mean scores might imply an increase in the participants' PA in English language learning, whereas the lower the mean scores might imply a decrease in their PA in English language learning. A significant decrease in the mean scores of PA in their English language learning between T1 and T2 could be explained by some of the interview extracts presented in Section 5.1.4. At the same time, a significant increase in the mean scores of 'I join social activities where English is used' can be seen as an increased source of emotional support for the participants so that their language-related issues such as English-speaking opportunities or LP could be duly addressed by joining more social activities such as going to the pub, going on outings, hiking, having dinner gatherings and so on (also *see* Section 5.1.4). Through this, the participants might have some positive consequences such as making more friends or building more relationships with the locals or with international peers, learning more culture from them, speaking more English with them, or feeling happier afterwards. Hence, it can be said that a decrease in PA in language learning could be well balanced by an increase in 'I join social activities where English is used'. In this connection, there might be a relationship existing between score changes in PA and score changes in 'I join social activities where English is used'. On the other hand, unlike social activities, 'I keep a notebook of new vocabulary that I have learned' is a non-interactive LLA which cannot address the above issues in relation to PA as this is simply undertaken for the sake of vocabulary learning. The participants might have chosen some other LLA which could solve their language-related PA problems, such as academic writing or communication with the locals or with international peers. In this sense, it can be argued that there might not be any relationship existing between score changes in PA and score changes in 'I keep a notebook of new vocabulary that I have learned'.

5.5   Perceived Language Proficiency and PP Variables

The following paragraphs are intended to address the research question 'What is the relationship between their positive psychology and their perceived proficiency in English at the start and then mid-way through the academic year, and did those scores change between T1 and T2?'

It is clear from the Literature Review that there is a paucity of literature that has reported the relationship between the PP variables in language learning based on some LLA and the resulting LP in international EFL / ESL students, as in this current study. Because of this, I cannot provide any comparison between the related literature and the findings of this current study in regard to the above. Table 23 shows that at T1 variable positive correlations were found between the six areas of LP and the five PP variables, with very weak relationships (0.10 to 0.19) appearing at the one end, and modest relationships (0.25 to 0.50) at the other, ranging from 0.11 (speaking and MS, daily vocabulary and PWB, and academic vocabulary and CR) to 0.34 (listening and PWB). Table 24 shows that the range of positive correlations at T2 ranged from 0.13 (daily vocabulary and MS; academic vocabulary and MS) to 0.26 (speaking and MS).

In terms of the strength of correlations at T1 and T2, Tables 23 and 24 show that the relationships between the six areas of LP and the five PP variables appear not to be strong because the data were overwhelmingly less than modest. This is similar to the case concerning the relationship between the ten LLA and the five PP variables (*see* Section 5.4). In this current study, LP is the outcome governed by the PP variables of the participants in language learning based on various LLA. It follows that the possible explanations for the relationship between the ten LLA and the five PP variables (*see* Section 5.4) could also be applied to the relationship between the six areas of LP and the five PP variables. Hence, the interview quotes presented and the literature highlighted in Section 5.4 could also be applicable to this. It appears that multiple factors might have existed that could have weakened various correlations between the six areas of LP and

the five PP variables. Furthermore, as discussed in Section 5.1.5, the score changes of one PP variable between T1 and T2 could be *simultaneously* being affected by all other PP variables to some extent, and that could have been reflected in the strength of the correlations concerned. It could be argued that something complex has happened unnoticeably. Moreover, time could be a limiting factor for the establishment of various correlations between the six areas of LP and the five PP variables to occur substantially enough in this current study as it only covered a period of less than six months. All of these factors might have undermined the correlations in this current study.

In addressing the final research question 'What is the relationship between how their positive psychology scores changed between T1 and T2 and how their perceived proficiency in English changed between T1 and T2', Table 10 (*see* Section 3.1.3) and Table 20 (*see* Section 3.3.3) are called upon for comparison in order to explore the differences in the mean scores of the PP variables observed between T1 and T2 and at the same time the differences in the mean item scores on LP detected between T1 and T2.

Table 10 (*see* Section 3.1.3) shows that there were statistically significant differences (p<0.01) found in the mean item scores in MS (T1 = 36.95; T2 = 35.32; full score = 54) and PA (T1 = 34.50; T2 = 31.28; full score = 54) between T1 and T2. At the same time, however, Table 20 (*see* Section 3.3.3) shows that there were no statistically significant differences (p<0.01) found in the mean item scores of any areas of LP between T1 and T2. The meaning of the mean scores on MS and PA has already been discussed in Sections 5.1.2 and 5.1.4. As discussed earlier, LP is the outcome governed by the PP variables of the participants in language learning based on various LLA. It follows that the significant change in scores for MS and PA (*see* Section 3.1.3), namely, 'I join social activities where English is used' and 'I keep a notebook of new vocabulary that I have learned' (*see* Section 3.2.3) could indicate that a total effect might have happened, let alone the complex relationships in the five PP variables as discussed in

Section 5.1.5. All of these factors could have a compound effect on the resulting LP as presented in Tables 20, 23 and 24. As there were no significant differences in the score changes in all the areas of LP, it might be too early to say that there is a relationship between how the PP scores changed and how their perceived LP changed between T1 and T2.

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

Introduction

Following the results and analyses of the quantitative and qualitative data set out in Chapters 3 and 4 and the discussion of these findings in Chapter 5, this chapter will offer a final conclusion drawn on the discussed findings and their identified significance.

Before making a final summary of this thesis, the main aim of this study should be restated. By using a mixed-method research design, the aim of this study was to investigate the relationships between five PP variables, SR (AR and CR), MS, PWB and PA, for a sample of Chinese master's students studying in the UK on the one hand, and the English language learning activities (LLA) in social and educational settings that they reported using to improve their English language proficiency (LP) on the other hand; and how their scores on the variables and the relationships between the variables changed over time between T1 and T2.

In this study, three research elements have been addressed: the issue of the overwhelming proportion of female participants in the convenience samples used, the issue of gender differences that might have an effect on this study particularly in areas of LLA, and the issue of the participants being regarded as language learners.

Based on the findings, I have highlighted in Sections 6.1.1 to 6.1.5 areas of gaps in the literature which have been filled or the related knowledge that has been expanded through this current study. Implications of new knowledge in the field of educational psychology in Section 6.2 have been highlighted as part of my study which might be valuable: new data-gathering instruments for the assessment of all of the variables, complex relationships identified between the PP variables and LLA, and complex relationships identified between the PP variables and LP.

The contribution, limitations and strengths of this current study are discussed in Sections 6.3, 6.4 and 6.5. Finally, further research work is suggested making reference to all sections of this chapter.

6.1   Significance of Research Findings

The following subsections draw the significance of the findings pertaining to each research question (*see* Section 2.1) and attempt to conclude the extent to which the literature gaps (highlighted in Section 1.6 and Chapter 5) have been filled or the related knowledge has been expanded through this main study.

6.1.1   Positive Psychology (PP) Variables

The findings of SR in language learning indicate that the majority of the participants showed a similar pattern of the percentage frequency of affirmative responses ('slightly agree' to 'strongly agree') to all the items at T1 and T2. Alongside the Literature Review in Section 1.1.1, these could be explained by some qualitative data such as interest, satisfaction, usefulness or pressure of learning English (*see* Sections 4.1 and 4.2).

For MS in language learning, the findings illustrate that the majority of the participants showed a similar pattern of the percentage frequency of affirmative responses to all the growth MS items at T1 and T2. However, more than half of the participants indicated a similar pattern of the percentage frequency of affirmative responses to two of the four fixed MS items at T1 and T2. In addition, there was a significant decrease in growth MS scores ($p<0.01$) between T1 and T2 suggesting an increase in fixed MS belief in their English language learning. Alongside the Literature Review in Section 1.1.2, these could be explained by some interview data such as fixed MS belief or growth MS beliefs, for example hard work, exposure and strategy in language learning (*see* Sections 4.3 and 4.4).

Regarding PWB in language learning, the findings show that the majority of the participants demonstrated a similar pattern of the percentage frequency of affirmative responses to eight out of eleven items at T1 and T2. At the same time, more than half of the participants gave affirmative responses to the negative side of three of the eleven

items. In relation to the Literature Review in Section 1.1.3, these could be explained by some qualitative data such as anxieties, worries, happiness or confidence in language learning (*see* Sections 4.5 and 4.6).

The findings for PA in language learning confirm that more than half of the participants showed similar pattern of the percentage frequency of affirmative responses to all items at T1 and T2. In addition, there was a significant decrease in PA scores (p<0.01) between T1 and T2 suggesting a decrease in their PA in English language learning. In relation to the Literature Review in Section 1.1.4, these can be attributed to some forms of SR behaviour such as speaking in Mandarin more often than speaking in English, being curious to know more about this country, seeing the cultural differences between the East and the West or being unable to get used to the English language (*see* Sections 4.7 and 4.8).

As pointed out in the Literature Review, there is a limited literature reporting on the data-gathering instruments for assessing the score changes of the five PP variables in language learning in international EFL / ESL students (*see* Section 1.6). Hence, the newly developed and validated data-gathering instruments with modestly acceptable Cronbach's Alpha (*see* Table 14) for the questionnaire of this current study might serve as a base for future studies (*see* Section 2.4.1).

In view of the presence of modest relationships established in six of the ten correlations among the five PP variables at T2 compared with five of the ten correlations at T1 (*see* Section 5.1.5), stronger relationships might have been established in *all* the combinations of the PP variables if the current study could be extended for a longer period of time. That said, the score changes of one PP variable in language learning might *simultaneously* be influenced by all other PP variables that would be reflected by their strength of correlations. However, as the Literature Review (*see* Sections 1.1.1 to 1.1.4) showed, very little literature has reported about the above relationships in language learning such as those in this current study. Hence, these findings contribute a new

understanding of possible complex relationships among various PP variables in language learning in international EFL / ESL students.

6.1.2   Language Learning Activities (LLA)

The findings show that the majority of the participants exhibited a similar pattern of the percentage frequency of 'not at all' or 'sometimes' responses to four of the ten items at T1 and T2, and they were 'I take part in English self-study activities', 'I read English story books / English newspapers', 'I keep a notebook of new vocabulary that I have learned', and 'I visit English websites / English-speaking forums when I surf the internet'. All of these are the non-interactive type of language learning activities (also *see* Section 5.2). Among them, there was a significant decrease in scores ($p < 0.01$) of 'I keep a notebook of new vocabulary that I have learned' between T1 and T2.

For language learning in social settings, the findings suggest that the majority of the participants showed a similar pattern of the percentage frequency of 'not at all' or 'sometimes' responses to 'I practice English with my Chinese friends' at T1 and T2. Some qualitative data in Sections 4.5.3 and 4.8.2 could help to explain the reasons for this. Regarding 'I join social activities where English is used' and 'I make use of English in everyday activities', the findings confirm that the majority of the participants showed a similar pattern of the percentage frequency of 'sometimes' or 'often' responses at T1 and T2. Some interview data in Sections 4.9.2, 4.9.6 and 4.9.7 and in Sections 4.1 and 4.2, together with the discussion in Chapter 5 could respectively help explain the reasons behind this. Among these three LLA in social settings, there was a significant increase in scores ($p < 0.01$) on 'I join social activities where English is used' between T1 and T2. It should be noted that the qualitative data acquired in this study showed that some participants regarded 'travelling' as one of their LLA. So it might be even more comprehensive to include this as one of the LLA in future studies.

The Literature Review in Sections 1.2 and 1.6 showed that there is very limited

literature that could help to explain the reasons behind the above responses to the ten LLA. In this regard, some interview data in this current study have modestly served that purpose (*see* Section 5.2). In addition, there is very limited related literature available for comparing the score changes of the ten LLA between time-points as the data-gathering instrument for assessing them was newly developed from the SILL (*see* Section 2.4.1). Hence, this study has contributed to some extent to the existing knowledge of LLA in international EFL / ESL students within the context of PP in language learning.

6.1.3 Language Proficiency (LP)

The findings show that there was a marked increase in the percentage frequency of 'somewhat proficient' in speaking at T2. This could be related to their increase of the activity 'I join social activities where English is used' between T1 and T2 as reflected by the significant increase of scores in this activity (*see* Sections 3.2.3 and 5.3).

For listening, the findings show that the majority of the participants were either 'not proficient' or 'somewhat proficient' at both time-points on the one hand, and there was a clear increase in the percentage frequency of 'very proficient' at T2 on the other hand. This increase might be related to the less demanding type of BLC, and some of the participants might have improved in listening with increasing contact hours in various LLA.

The findings indicate that the majority of the participants exhibited a similar pattern of the percentage frequency of 'not proficient' or 'somewhat proficient' at both time-points in both writing and reading. This could be due to higher requirements for some of the participants, which are much more cognitively demanding (HLC) in writing and reading than in speaking and listening (BLC).

The findings on daily vocabulary show a diverse pattern in the participants between T1 and T2. More than half of the participants reported that they were 'somewhat proficient' in their daily vocabulary, whereas some of them claimed that they were either

'not proficient' or 'very proficient' in their daily vocabulary. However, the findings on academic vocabulary present a different picture. The majority of the participants indicated a similar pattern of the percentage frequency of 'not proficient' or 'somewhat proficient' at both time-points. Nonetheless, LP in daily vocabulary and academic vocabulary might require BLC or HLC in their learning depending entirely on the subject matter involved (*see* Section 5.3).

It should be reiterated that LP in terms of these six areas in this current study is the learning outcomes of the PP of the participants having engaged in various LLA between T1 and T2. These have been discussed in Sections 5.1, 5.3 and 5.4 bearing in mind that the relationships between the five PP variables appears to be a complex one (*see* Section 6.1.1). In terms of the score changes, there were no statistically significant differences (p<0.01) found in the mean item scores of any of the items of perceived LP between T1 and T2. Nonetheless, a longer period of study time might have revealed differences.

6.1.4 LLA and PP Variables

The findings show that the relationships between the ten LLA and the five PP variables appear not strong because the strength of their correlations at T1 and T2 were overwhelmingly less than modest. Hence, their score changes between the two time-points might be deemed as not obvious and the above relationships indicate that there is something complex going on (*see* Sections 5.1, 5.3, 5.4 and 6.1.1). Owing to the paucity of literature reporting this, some interview data have suggested that some other factors might have existed and have weakened various correlations between the ten LLA and the five PP variables. These factors could be 'Mandarin speaking opportunities' (*see* Sections 4.5.3 and 4.8.2), 'Challenges in language learning' (*see* Section 4.8.2), 'Focus on academic requirements' (*see* Section 4.5.5), 'Anxieties and worries' (*see* Sections 4.5.1 and 4.5.4), and 'Other language learning activity – Travelling' (*see* Section 4.9.6). In this

regard, in terms of the relationships between scores of PP variables and LLA, more correlations ($\geqq 0.2$) were found at T2 than at T1 (*see* Section 3.4). This warrants a longer period of study time that might reveal their differences.

6.1.5 LP and PP Variables

There is a paucity of literature that has reported the relationships between the PP variables in language learning based on some LLA and the resulting LP in international EFL / ESL students such as in this current study.

The findings show that the relationships between the six areas of LP and the five PP variables at T1 and T2 appear not strong because the data were overwhelmingly less than modest. This is similar to the case concerning the relationships between the ten LLA and the five PP variables (*see* Sections 5.4 and 6.1.4). It should be recognised that LP is the outcome governed by the PP variables of the participants in language learning based on some LLA. It follows that those possible explanations for the relationships between the ten LLA and the five PP variables (*see* Sections 5.4 and 6.1.4) could also be applied to the relationships between the six areas of LP and the five PP variables. Similarly, some multiple factors might have influenced various correlations between the six areas of LP and the five PP variables. In addition, as discussed in Section 5.1.5 and highlighted in Section 6.1.4, the score changes of one PP variable between T1 and T2 might be *simultaneously* being affected by all other PP variables to some extent that could have been reflected by their strength of correlations concerned. From this, it could be argued that something complex has happened unnoticeably.

More correlations ($\geqq 0.2$) were found between scores of the PP variables and perceived LP at T2 than at T1. Hence, it can be argued that the relationships could have occurred substantially enough if more time had been allowed in this current study.

In conclusion, this current study contributes to our understanding of the complex relationships between those PP variables and the ten LLA.

6.2   Implications for Data-Gathering in this Field of Knowledge

Through the Literature Review, literature gaps were identified (*see* Section 1.6 and Chapter 5) in respect of data-gathering instruments for assessing the score changes of various PP, engagements of LLA and levels of LP, complex relationships between the PP variables and LLA, and complex relationships between the PP variables and LP.

The new data-gathering instruments devised for assessing all the variables in this current study might be further developed through some other even more meticulous studies. The complex relationships that appear between the PP variables and the ten LLA as well as their perceived LP have provided an insight into the need to conduct similar research for a longer period of time. If this were done, stronger relationships might be seen for comparison in the literature.

As identified in the qualitative data, 'travelling' might also be included as one of the LLA for the study.

6.3   Contributions of the Current Study

The findings from this study make some contributions to the current literature. First, as explained in Sections 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5 and 1.6 in the Literature Review, there is very limited literature that could provide data-gathering instruments for assessing the score changes of the five PP variables, engagement of the ten LLA and the resulting perceived LP as guided by the main aim of this current study.

A number of papers published by many writers were sourced in order to understand the constructs involved and explore relevant information necessary for the development of the question items for all the variables of the questionnaires and the questions to be scheduled for face-to-face interviews for this current study. After I had evaluated and modified them and discussed them with and had them validated by my supervisor, an expert in the field of educational psychology, all of the question items for

the questionnaires and face-to-face interviews were then finalised (*see* Sections 2.4.1 and 2.4.2). Hence, these newly developed data-gathering instruments might warrant some stringent scientific study in order to be internationally recognised and subsequently referred to by researchers. Nonetheless, this current study has established various quantitative research components for assessing the score changes in relation to the SR (AR and CR), MS, PWB and PA in the English language learning of international EFL / ESL university students including their perceived LP.

Second, the findings of this current study contribute to the area of research on language learning by focusing on a group of Chinese master's degree students in the UK to extend our understanding of how their PP variables are associated with their use of LLA and English LP in their first year of study in the UK. The findings illustrate complex relationships (*see* Sections 6.1.4 and 6.1.5).

Third, this kind of research could provide a useful basis to enable students and language-learning educators to better understand how their own second-language learning behaviour may be shaped by these PP variables, and may also be of use to second-langauge learning educators and university teaching staff. It also serves to inform the development of a theoretical framework of second language learning in considering the role of PP. This may shed a contemporary light on the contentious issues of language learning through the lens of the PP in international EFL / ESL in future research work.

6.4   Limitations of the Current Study

Although I have recognised the merits of the mixed-method research design, some limitations still existed and must be accounted for and carefully addressed in the course of the conduct of this study, particularly in the data presentation and subsequent analyses.

A total of 349 participants recruited for the questionnaires and the face-to-face interviews in this longitudinal study at two time-points might well represent an acceptable sample size in terms of understanding their perceptions and views within the study period.

Nonetheless, improvement could always be made by recruiting an even larger group of participants for a research study. In terms of a mixed-method research design, I had to make sure that the sample size for this current study was already sufficient enough and was within my management capacity to fulfil the main aim of this study.

I experienced great challenges in sourcing directly applicable data-gathering instruments for assessing the self-reported PP variables, LLA engagements and LP of the participants recruited for this current study due to the paucity of the related literature. I did, however, successfully seek out relevant published papers for the evaluation, modification and validation of all the necessary question items for the questionnaire and face-to-face interview questions adopted for this main study (*see* Section 2.4.1 and Section 2.4.2 for the details).

I have already stated my recognition that gender differences might have had effects on the main study, particularly in areas of language learning strategies (*see* Section 2.4.4). As there are more female Chinese students taking courses than male counterparts at UNE and UML, correspondingly, the samples in this study were also overwhelmingly female. Because of this, this current study was carried out by analysing a total group without any gender split in the data presentations and analyses. This potential limitation could be appropriately addressed in future similar studies (*see* Section 2.4.4 Gender Differences).

In the conduct of the face-to-face interviews, I experienced challenges of great time consumption and of negative emotions in some participants. There were some participants who expressed negative emotions in the interviews and some participants who were unwilling to go into great details when answering particular follow-up questions. To address these challenges, I used some other follow-up questions in such a way that the participants could respond comfortably to them.

Time constraint is another limitation in this current study as it only covered a period of less than half a year. There are findings discussed in Section 6.1 that support

this viewpoint. First, the presence of modest relationships established in six of the ten correlations among the five PP variables at T2 compared with five of the ten correlations at T1 (*see* Section 5.1.5), stronger relationships might have been established in *all* the combinations of the PP variables if the current study had been extended for a longer period of time. Second, in terms of the score changes, there were no statistically significant differences ($p<0.01$) found in the mean item scores of any of the items of perceived LP between T1 and T2. However, a longer period of study time might have shown differences. Third, in terms of the relationships between scores of the PP variables and the ten LLA, more correlations ($\geqq0.2$) were found at T2 than at T1 (see Section 3.4). This justifies the suggestion that a longer period of study time that might have revealed differences. Fourth, more correlations ($\geqq0.2$) were found between scores of the PP variables and perceived LP at T2 than that at T1. This also suggests that a longer period of time might have allowed the relationships to occur substantially enough in this current study.

6.5   Strengths of the Current Study

This current study represents a comprehensive examination of a few PP variables *simultaneously* in the language learning of a well-defined cohort of Chinese master's students in the UK. Kormos *et al.*'s (2014, p. 152) remark is quoted once again in that " … while a lot of research has focused on American students in study-abroad programmes … , no previous studies have been carried out that investigated how students' contact experiences, language learning attitudes and motivation change in a UK international study context using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods." The findings of this current study using a mixed-method study design might have filled gaps or extended our present knowledge as described above.

The mixed-method research design adopted in this current study has demonstrated all the merits arising from the combination of respective quantitative and qualitative

research techniques, methods, approaches or concepts into one single study through mixing the quantitative and qualitative paradigms. In this regard, inclusive, pluralistic and complementary effects are possible (*see* Section 2.2). Potential problems arising from the quantitative approach can thus be minimised. Furthermore, the findings can be confirmed through the mixed-method approach, and thus greater confidence can be gained for drawing the conclusions (*see* Chapter 5 for further details).

New data-gathering instruments for assessing various PP variables, engagements of LLA and their perceived LP in the participants were tailor-made for the questionnaires and their constructs were referenced for the scheduled interview questions as guided by the main aim of this study (*see* Sections 2.4.1 and 2.4.2).

Sizeable convenience samples were collected in respect of 319 questionnaires and 30 face-to-face interviews for T1 and T2 involving more than three hundred participants from UNE and UML in order to diversify their academic backgrounds to the greatest extent possible. A very high response rate was achieved throughout the study period ranging from 84.2% to 100% (*see* Chapters 3 and 4).

The Literature Review in Sections 1.1.4 and 1.6 highlighted the fact that very few studies have reported on international EFL / ESL students in language-related PA in the UK. They were studies mostly conducted in US, Canadian, Australian and New Zealand educational institutions (Andrade, 2006). Moreover, MacIntyre and Mercer (2014, p. 156) emphasised that " … SLA rarely deals with these (PP-related) topics at present; however, their relevance in the field is immediately apparent when one considers the practical, human, and social dimension of language learning." Taken altogether, this current study can be regarded as *sui generis* in that it has reported on the PP of a specific group of Chinese master's students learning English in the UK. In this regard, the findings of this current study have expanded the related field of knowledge.

Based on the Literature Review, the participants were viewed as language learners, and this has been agreed by the findings and discussions as presented in Sections 3.3 and

5.3.

6.6   Further Research Work

There is always room for improvement. According to the limitations of the current study stated in Section 6.4, a few issues have to be further addressed. First, the newly developed and validated data-gathering instruments for assessing various PP variables, LLA engagements and the resulting LP in the language learning of international EFL / ESL students can be further studied through an even more meticulously designed study so that the data-gathering instruments might be made highly reliable and well validated and could be referred to by future researchers internationally. Second, the issue of gender differences has to be well addressed for subsequent gender split in the data presentations and analyses through a relevant sampling method so that an overwhelming preponderance of female participants might not happen such as in this study. Third, given the evidence of an increase in the number of correlations ($\geqq 0.2$) at T2 and complex relationships observed among the variables, it is reasonable to provide more time for similar studies so as to allow for the establishment of stronger relationships in *all* combinations of the PP variables, between the PP variables and the ten LLA as well as between the PP variables and the six LP areas. Fourth, 'travelling' should be considered as one of the LLA as evidenced in the qualitative data of this study so that a more comprehensive list of LLA could be provided for future studies. Finally, other relevant PP variables within the context of language learning could be explored and included.

The findings of this current study have a number of important implications for future practice (*see* Section 6.2). A number of possible future studies using the same mixed-method research design are worth considering. Making use of the same set of questionnaires and scheduled questions for face-to-face interviews, and having duly addressed the issues stated in this Section, we could study the PP of English language learning in international EFL / ESL university students *across countries or within a*

country.

Across-country Approach. We could study the PP of English language learning by comparing a group of Chinese university students recruited in China with a similar group of Chinese university students recruited in the UK. Through this means, we might compare the score changes and correlations of all the variables among them such that new knowledge in the related literature could be generated. However, it should be noted that some considerations have to be taken in the conduct of such research as there are possible complex reasons regarding their choice to study in an English-speaking country such as the UK or staying in their home country for further studies including English language learning. Hence, methodological issues in the recruitment of subjects for the study would have to be adequately addressed so that quantitative and qualitative data of both study groups can be used for analytical comparisons such as demographic data or city-based English language learning systems. By this means, we might know more about how their psychological adaptations or culture-related issues might affect their PP in English language learning upon their arrival and after a number of months of residence in the UK. In particular, the same questionnaires and face-to-face interviews could be used to compare the score changes in their LP from the standpoint of learners being educated in first-line and non-first-line cities of China.

Similar studies could be applied to subjects recruited from Hong Kong or Singapore and the UK based on the fact that they are having similar but slightly different cultures and educational backgrounds at home. By this means, subjects from Hong Kong and Singapore could be compared in terms of their PP in English language learning across countries, that is at home and in the UK.

Similar studies could be conducted for international EFL / ESL university students from European countries in which their languages are of alphabetical type such as Greece, France or Spain. Their PP in English language learning could thus be explored

by comparing two cohorts of university students as in the case of the study for Chinese university students presented in the preceding paragraph.

Notably, we can go one step further by comparing the groups of international EFL / ESL university students from alphabetic language speaking countries and the students from non-alphabetic language speaking countries such as China. Furthermore, we could also make use of the available data for comparing the PP in the English language learning of international EFL / ESL university students across European countries as mentioned above. Of course, these kinds of large-scale study would necessarily involve much time, money and, not least, human resources.

Within-country Approach. The location of the university in the UK may also have an influence on the PP of the English language learning of the Chinese students in the current study. For example, the English learning experiences of Chinese students based in a large cosmopolitan city (such as London or Glasgow) may be quite different from those located in a small, predominantly rural setting (such as Bangor or St Andrews). The size of the Chinese student community within the university may also have an influence. Therefore, within-country studies could be carried out by expanding the area of subject recruitment to universities located further north and further south in the UK.

In this much bigger project, we could expect that the chance of Chinese students behaving collectivistically in the north of the UK may be less than that in the south due to the much less availability of Asian supermarkets and the absence of a Chinatown as such in the north. This might imply that they would be more focused on integrating into the local food culture and more likely to speak in English with the locals or international peers rather than speak Mandarin or Cantonese with their peers. Against these backgrounds, we could apply the same mixed-method study design to explore their PP in English language learning and compare the 'northern' group with the 'southern' group in terms of all the study variables. Accordingly, this could contribute new knowledge to the

related literature which might benefit university students, language-learning educators and university teaching staff to some extent.

APPENDIX I

<center>Questionnaire Cover Letter and Consent</center>

From:
MAK, Winfred Wing Fung (Miss)
PhD candidate, Department of Education
University of York
The United Kingdom
+44 (0)7557 405919
wwfm500@york.ac.uk

To: All research study participants

Dear Participating Friends,

<center>Invitation for Participating in the Research Study Titled
<u>'The Positive Psychology of Chinese Students Learning English at UK Universities'</u></center>

You are cordially invited to participate in this study, which is a part and parcel of the above captioned research study that will be held within the period from October 2012 to end of February 2013.

Being the Principal Investigator, I shall be the responsible person for this research study and will provide you with all available information, as and when necessary; and be ready to answer all of your questions. Please read the information below and ask any questions you may have before deciding whether or not to participate in this questionnaire filling.

Your participation is entirely voluntary.

You can refuse to participate at any time in accordance with your own will without penalty or loss of benefit to which you are otherwise entitled. Your refusal will not cause any adverse impact upon current or future relationships with the Department or Faculty you come from or with your University at large.

The Purpose of this Study
Through this study, the relationships among the interested factors of positive psychology, namely, self-regulation, mindsets, psychological well-being and psychological adjustment, will be identified according to the available research data. In this connection, Chinese students at the UK universities may better understand their positive psychology in

relation to their reported English learning engagements and language proficiency.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to:
1. Provide demographic information (Appendix II); and
2. Complete the questionnaire (Appendix III) by rating the items as per the instructions.

Estimated time for filling in the questionnaire is around 20 minutes.

Risk of Joining the Study
Your participation should not carry any risk as your identification will only be known to the Principal Investigator. However, if you wish to seek clarification in relation to the information as abovementioned or any risk you may think of, you are welcome to address the concerns to me before the joining.

Benefits of Joining the Study
Striving for better English proficiency is a lifelong goal for most Chinese students. I hope that the results of this study could provide a useful basis to enable Chinese university students to better understand how their own second-language learning behaviour may be shaped by positive psychology, and may also be of use to ESL educators and university teaching staff. Moreover, I hope the results of this study could also serve to inform the development of a theoretical framework of second language learning in considering the role of positive psychology.

Compensation - not applicable.

Confidentiality and Privacy Protections
Your identity will only be known to the Principal Investigator, not to your teacher. All data in relation to or association with your identification will be excluded from the thesis writing though the data resulting from your participation might be made available to other researchers in the future for research purposes.

The records of this study will be stored securely and kept confidential. Authorised persons from the participating university and members of the Institutional Review Board have the legal right to review the research records, and will protect the confidentiality of those records to the extent as permitted by law. All publications will exclude any information that will make it possible to identify you as a subject.

Throughout the study, I will notify you of any new information that may become available and that may affect your decision to remain in the study. In the case of sensitive question, you have every right to omit it if you prefer not to answer.

Contacts and Questions

I should be most grateful you if you could raise any questions as early as possible prior to your participation. If you have questions later on, want additional information, or wish to withdraw your participation, you may consider calling me via phone or sending me an email as indicated in this cover letter.

Needless to say, the return of this questionnaire serves as consent to participate in the study.

Last but not least, I should be most appreciative if you would participate and thank you very much in advance!

Yours faithfully,

Winfred MAK

APPENDIX II

Demographics Questionnaire

Please fill in the information as in the
following:

1. Programme: _____   2. Year at the University: _____

3. Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female   4. Age: _____

5. How long (in years) have you studied the English language (including at school and
   after school)? _____

6. Have you travelled or lived in an English-speaking country before starting your
   current programme?

☐ Yes   A. Which country / countries

       _____

       B. Duration of stay (please list the duration of stay for each country, if more
       than one)

       _____
       _____
       _____

       C. Does this experience help you learn the English language? If yes, please
       briefly explain the reason.

       _____
       _____

☐ No.

7. Other than in your English class, do you have opportunities to use the English
   language to interact with others?

☐ Yes.   If yes, please describe the situation:

       _____
       _____

☐ No

8. Have you attended English language classes provided by the Centre for the English
   language teaching at your University?

☐ Yes.   If yes, please explain why:

       _____

☐ No   If no, please explain why not:

       _____

9. How would you rate your English language proficiency in the following areas?
    (Please tick (✓) the appropriate boxes accordingly)

	Not Proficient	Somewhat Proficient	Very Proficient	Native-like
Speaking				
Listening				
Writing				
Reading				
Everyday Vocabulary				
Academic Vocabulary				

10. To what extent do you engage in the following activities in order to improve your English? (Please tick (✓) the appropriate boxes accordingly)

	Not at All	Sometimes	Often	Always
1) I practise English with my Chinese friends.				
2) I join social activities where English is used.				
3) I make use of English in everyday activities.				
4) I attend CELT class at the university.				
5) I attend CELT class outside the university.				
6) I take part in English self-study activities.				
7) I watch English films / watch English TV programmes / listen to the English radio.				
8) I read English story books / English newspapers.				
9) I keep a notebook of new vocabulary that I have learned.				
10) I visit English websites / English-speaking forums when I surf the internet.				

Questionnaire

The following set of questions relates to your reasons for participating actively in English language classes (either now or in the past). Please use the following scale to indicate your perceptions.

		Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
A.	**I participate actively in English language classes:**						
1.	Because I feel like it's a good way to improve my understanding of the English language.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	Because others would think badly of me if I didn't attend English language classes.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	Because learning to communicate well with locals in English is important.	1	2	3	4	5	6
B.	**I am likely to follow my instructor's suggestions in learning the English language:**						
4.	Because I believe my instructor's suggestions will help me to learn the English language effectively.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5.	Because I want others to think that I am good at the English language.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6.	Because it's important to me to do well in the English language.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7.	Because I would probably feel guilty if I didn't comply with my instructor's suggestions for learning the English language.	1	2	3	4	5	6
C.	**The reason that I will continue broadening my English language skills is:**						
8.	Because I would feel proud if I do continue improving my English language.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9.	Because it's a challenge to really understand what native speakers say in English.	1	2	3	4	5	6

The following set of questions deals with how you feel about your learning of the English language. Please use the following scale to indicate your perceptions.

		Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	I prefer to avoid an activity which involves English when I know that I shall make mistakes when I speak.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	Irrespective of how bad a mistake is when I use English, I can always learn something from it.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	I can learn the English language from lessons or daily life.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4.	I can always have the chance to improve my English language through practice.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5.	I cannot change or improve my pronunciation in English through hard work and effort, as my ability for this skill is fixed already at an early age.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6.	If I learn the vocabulary in English from the vocabulary book, I have to practise it before remembering it.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7.	I think that natural ability is very important in learning English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8.	I think everybody can achieve a specific level of English language standard if they want to, but people have to be gifted if they really want to do interpreting and translation.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9.	I agree that hard work is very important in learning English.	1	2	3	4	5	6

The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your living in relation to English language competence. Please use the following scale to indicate your perceptions.

		Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	I am not afraid to voice my opinions in the English language, even when they are in opposition to the opinions of most people.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	I tend to worry about what other people think of me in English language competence.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	Being happy with myself in English language competence is more important to me than having others approve of me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4.	I do not fit very well with English-speaking people and the community around me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5.	If I were unhappy with my living situation which requires English language competence, I would take effective steps to change it.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6.	I am not interested in activities related to English language learning that will expand my horizons.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7.	When I think about it, I haven't really improved much in English language learning over the years.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8.	Maintaining close relationships by communicating in the English language has been difficult and frustrating for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9.	I have a sense of direction and purpose in life when learning the English language.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10.	Given the opportunity in learning English, there are many things about myself that I would change.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11.	I made some mistakes in the past in using English, but I feel that all in all everything has worked out for the best.	1	2	3	4	5	6

The following set of questions deals with how you feel about your studies in the UK.
Please use the following scale to indicate your perceptions.

		Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	I am very satisfied with my university studies with the English language as a medium of instruction.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	What I miss here is someone to talk to freely from time to time in my home town dialect / Mandarin / Cantonese.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	I often ask myself what I am here to have the course of my studies in the English language.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4.	I would prefer studying somewhere else instead of studying in the UK.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5.	If I feel blue, my Chinese friends in the UK will help me to get out of it.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6.	I find life as a student in the UK very pleasant especially when I can practise English speaking all the time.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7.	I find it hard to get used to life here in this English-speaking country.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8.	I find it very difficult to adjust to student life due to the difference in education system between my home country and the UK.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9.	I am glad that I came to study here because I can know more about English language and culture.	1	2	3	4	5	6

-End-

Questionnaire Cover Letter and Questionnaire in Simplified Chinese
(问卷调查表及同意书)

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致各有关这项研究的参与者

敬启者：

邀请参与以 "中国学生在英国大学以英语作为第二语言时的
正向心理学和自决能力的研究"为题目的问卷调查

诚挚邀请您参与上述的部分研究，此问卷调查将从2012年10月中旬期间到2013年6月期末举行。

作为项目的首席研究员，我将是这项研究的负责人，并在需要或必要时提供所有数据，与及愿意回答您的所有问题。请阅读以下的数据，如有任何问题，您可以询问，然后才决定是否参与此问卷调查。

您的参与完全是自愿的。

您有权力在任何时间或按照自己的意愿拒绝参加此问卷调查，亦不会受处罚或蒙上利益的损失。您的拒绝不会造成任何与您目前或未来所属部门、学系或与约克大学的整体关系有任何不利影响。

本研究的目的
透过这项研究，有关正向心理学重要元素（即是心态、心理幸福感和心理调适）和自我监控能力之间的关系，根据研究所得的资料，从而找出最有影响力的因素。因此，在英国大学就读的中国学生能以这项研究的结果，更有效地了解他们的英语学习状况，令他们采纳相应的学习策略，有利于他们以英语作为第二语言习得。

如果您同意参加这项研究，您会被要求做到以下几点：
* 您会被要求提供人口统计资料（请参阅附录一）。
* 以您在英国里英语学习的各种经验，完成以六个等级尺度的问卷调查（请参阅附录二）。

*   填写这份问卷的时间大约需要20分钟。

参与研究的风险

您的参与不会有任何风险，因为只有首席研究员才得知您的身分。如果您想澄清上述有关的信息或您考虑到的任何风险，欢迎您在加入之前向我提出意见。

参加这项研究的好处

对大多数中国留学生来说，争取更好的英语能力是他们一项终身追求的目标。因此，你将收到有关研究报告可能是有用的，或者至少是对你有意义的。此外，我希望这一系列的研究，将能够向教师提出有关外语课程中涉及的正向心理学和自决能力的意见。

补偿 - 不适用。

保密和保障隐私

*   只有首席研究员才得知你的身分，而不是您的老师。
*   除了您身分的数据，其他所有由您参与所产生的资料，将会作为其他研究人员将来研究的用途。

这项研究的记录将被安全地储存和保密。英国约克大学的授权人和机构审查委员会的成员拥有合法权利审查关于您的研究记录，并在法律允许的范围内将这些记录加以保密。所有出版刊物将删除任何有关个人的资料。

在整个研究中，研究人员将通知您一些新的信息，可能会影响您留在这项研究的决定。
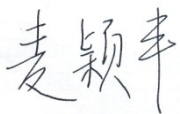
在问及敏感问题的情况下，如果您不喜欢回答，您有权力省略它。

联系人及提问

如果您能尽早在参与之前提出任何问题，我会感到非常感激。如果您有提问后，希望得到更多的信息，或撤回您的参与，您可考虑通过电话或电子邮件通知我。

不用多说，提交这份问卷即表示您同意参与这项研究。最重要的，是我非常欣赏及感谢您将会参与这项研究！

敬祝学业进步，并颂健康！

麦颖丰敬上

附录一

人口统计问卷

请填写以下数据

1. 课程: _____　　　　2. 大学年级: _____

3. 性别: □ 男　□ 女　　　　　　　4. 年龄: _____
5. 您学了多少年英语（包含课堂上及课后）? _____

6. 您去过或曾经住过一个讲英语的国家吗（在您还未攻读现时的课程时）？

□ 有　　　　　　　A. 哪一个国家?

　　　　　　　　　　_____

　　　　　　　　　　_____

　　　　　　　　　　_____

　　　　　　　　　　_____

　　　　　　　　　　_____

　　　　　　　　　B. 停留了多久（如果多于一个国家，请列出每个国家的停留时间）

　　　　　　　　　　_____

　　　　　　　　　　_____

　　　　　　　　　　_____

　　　　　　　　　　_____

　　　　　　　　　C. 这方面的经验能帮助您学习英语吗？如果是，请简扼说明理由。

　　　　　　　　　　_____

　　　　　　　　　　_____

　　　　　　　　　　_____

□ 没有
7. 除了您的英语课程，您有机会与他人沟通时使用英语吗？

□ 有　　　　　　　如果有，请描述情况

　　　　　　　　　　_____

　　　　　　　　　　_____

　　　　　　　　　　_____

□ 没有
8. 您有没有参与约克大学英语教学中心开办的英语学习课程？

□ 有　　　　　　　如果有，请说明原因

　　　　　　　　　　_____

　　　　　　　　　　_____

□ 没有　　　　　　如果没有，请说明原因

　　　　　　　　　　_____

　　　　　　　　　　_____

9. 您如何评析自己在以下几个方面的英语能力呢？（请选择适当的方块填上✓号）

	不精通	一般精通	很精通	接近母语般精通
口语				
听力				
写作				
阅读				
生活词汇				
学术词汇				

10. 在何种程度上您从事下列活动，以提高您的英语能力？（请选择适当的方块填上✓号）				
	从来没有	偶尔	时常	经常
1) 我与我的中国朋友练习英语。				
2) 我参加社交活动时使用英语。				
3) 我在日常生活中使用英语。				
4) 我在大学参加英语为第二语言课程。				
5) 我参加在大学以外的英语为第二语言课程。				
6) 我参加英语自学活动。				
7) 我看英语电影、看英语电视节目或收听英语广播。				
8) 我阅读英语故事书或英语报纸。				
9) 我不断学习新的词汇，并记录在我的笔记本内。				
10) 我在网络上浏览英语网站或英语的讨论区。				

附录二
问卷调查

以下的一组句子是您积极参与英语学习课程的原因 (现在参与或过去参与)，请使用以下的尺度以表明您的看法。

		极不同意	有些 不同意	有点 不同意	有点同意	有些同意	非常同意
A.	**我积极参加英语学习课程：**						
1.	因为我觉得这是一个很好的方式来提高自己的英语理解能力。	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	如果我没有参加英语学习课程，别人会认为我不是一位好学生。	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	因为学习怎样以英语去好好地和本国人沟通是重要的。	1	2	3	4	5	6
B.	**我很可能跟随我老师的建议去学习英语：**						
4.	因为我相信我老师的建议将有效地帮助我学习英语。	1	2	3	4	5	6
5.	因为我希望别人认为我的英语能力良好。	1	2	3	4	5	6
6.	因为良好的英语能力对于我是重要的。	1	2	3	4	5	6
7.	如果我不遵守我老师给我的建议去学习英语，我可能就会感到内疚。	1	2	3	4	5	6
C.	**我将会继续增进自己英语技能的原因是：**						
8.	如果我能继续提高英语能力，我必定会感到骄傲的。	1	2	3	4	5	6
9.	因为要真正理解一位本国人所说的英语是一项极大的挑战。	1	2	3	4	5	6

以下的一组句子是有关您对英语学习的心态，请使用以下的尺度以表明您的看法。

		极不 同意	有些 不同意	有点 不同意	有点 同意	有些 同意	非常 同意
1.	当我知道我将会在英语会话上犯错时，我会尽量避免参与有关英语的任何活动。	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	不论我在使用英语上所犯的错误如何的严重，我总是可以从中学到一些东西。	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	我能在课堂上或日常生活中学到英语。	1	2	3	4	5	6
4.	我总是可以找到机会，透过实践从而提高我的英语能力。	1	2	3	4	5	6
5.	通过勤奋和努力，我也不能改变或改善我在英语上的发音，因为我认为这个能力已在小时候定型了。	1	2	3	4	5	6
6.	如果我要从英语词典书中学习词汇，我必须先实践学习才能牢记所学的词汇。	1	2	3	4	5	6
7.	我认为先天的能力在学习英语中是非常重要的。	1	2	3	4	5	6
8.	我认为如果人人想达到某种程度的英语能力，他们是可以做到的。但如果他们想做到诠释和翻译工作，他们必须要拥有天赋的才能。	1	2	3	4	5	6
9.	我同意勤奋在学习英语上是非常重要的。	1	2	3	4	5	6

以下的一组句子是您觉得自己怎样看待和如何在生活中应用你的英语能力，请使用以下的尺度以表明您的看法。

		极不同意	有些不同意	有点不同意	有点同意	有些同意	非常同意
1.	即使面对持反对意见的大多数人，我并不害怕以英语表达自己。	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	我倾向担心其他人怎样的认为我的英语能力。	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	满足于自己的英语能力比要求别人认同自己更为重要。	1	2	3	4	5	6
4.	我不胜任与英语为母语的人交往和有关的社交生活。	1	2	3	4	5	6
5.	如果我不满意这种要求英语胜任能力的生活状态，我将会采取有效措施来改变它。	1	2	3	4	5	6
6.	就算是将会能够扩展我的视野，我仍然对有关英语学习的活动不感兴趣。	1	2	3	4	5	6
7.	当我回想起来，我觉得我多年来还没有真正改善过英语上的学习。	1	2	3	4	5	6
8.	对于以英语沟通来保持与别人密切的联系，我是一直感到困难和沮丧的。	1	2	3	4	5	6
9.	我在学习英语时感到有成就感和生活上有个目标。	1	2	3	4	5	6
10.	为了得到学习英语的机会，我会改变许多关于自己的东西。	1	2	3	4	5	6
11.	我过去在使用英语上曾出现一些错误，但总体来说，我觉得所有的一切都已经算是最好的。	1	2	3	4	5	6

以下的一组句子是有关您在英国求学过程中的感受，请使用以下的尺度以表明您的看法。

		极不同意	有些不同意	有点不同意	有点同意	有些同意	非常同意
1.	我很满意我的大学课程以英语作为授课语言。	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	在此地，我每刻都想念着一些人，他们可以能经常与我自由自在地以家乡方言、普通话或粤语交谈。	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	我常常问自己为甚么在此地以英语学习课程。	1	2	3	4	5	6
4.	我宁愿到别的地方学习，而不是在英国求学。	1	2	3	4	5	6
5.	如果我感到不开心，在英国的中国朋友会开导我。	1	2	3	4	5	6
6.	我觉得我在英国的学生生活非常愉快，尤其是当我可以将所有的时间用来练习英语。	1	2	3	4	5	6
7.	我觉得很难习惯于生活在这个讲英语的国家。	1	2	3	4	5	6
8.	我觉得很难适应于这里的学生生活，因为我们国家的教育系统与英国的教育系统之间存在着明显差异。	1	2	3	4	5	6
9.	我很庆幸我来到这里学习，因为我可以了解更多英语和英国文化。	1	2	3	4	5	6

-完-

APPENDIX IV

Schedule of Face-to-face Interview Questions

Self-Regulation. 'Would you describe yourself as the sort of person who is learning English because you want to or because you feel there are pressures on you to do so? Please explain your views and how these relate to your experiences so far at this university.'

Mindset. 'In general, do you feel your English will improve if you work at it or do you feel your English is largely a matter of natural ability? Please explain your view and how it relates to your experiences so far at this university.'

Psychological Well-being. 'How would you describe your feelings when you use English – do you feel confident and happy, or do you feel anxious and worried? Please explain your view and how it relates to your experiences so far at this university.'

Psychological Adjustment. 'How well do you feel you have adjusted to life at a UK university – are you generally happy here in an English-speaking environment or does this have major drawbacks for you? Please explain your view and how it relates to your experiences so far at this university.'

Activities to Improve your English. 'What personal and social activities have you undertaken in order to improve your English? Which activities have improved your English and which have not? Please explain your views and how they relate to your experiences so far at this university.'

APPENDIX V

Interview Data after Six-step Data Management

P = Participants (in numbers)

	First Interview (Time 1)	Second Interview (Time 2)
Intrinsic Motivation		
P	*1) Interest of learning English language*	
1	"I naturally and gradually developed my interest in the subject."	
3	"I have great interest in my translation degree programme and decided to enter the field because I think that translation is an easy subject for me."	
5	"Since I was in secondary school, I have strong interest in the English language due to the extra-curriculum activities created by the expatriate teachers. They had a great sense of humour in their teaching and I started to really enjoy the English language lessons. I have great motivation to improve my standard of English. I liked those interactive teaching methods introduced by those foreign teachers, who emphasised the general use of English and daily English, rather than using an examination-oriented style of learning. Also I got to know more about Western culture besides the language itself."	"I like learning English in general. When I was small, my parents sent me to an interest group where English was used as the medium of instruction. Through this I had the opportunity to come into contact with the English language, and this cultivated my interest from a very young age."
10		"I have an interest in learning this language."
12	"I have been learning this language for many years and I gradually came to like the language through the learning process."	
14		"I like English language, and I enjoy interacting with people in English and learning more about Western culture in general." "In this process, I found that I like the language more."
15	"I enjoy learning the English language. I like watching American English programmes, and I enjoy interacting with English-speaking friends very much. Therefore, learning English can help me to do so."	
16		"I learn English because of my interest in the language. I had an early start in learning the language, which I started to do at the age of ten. My English teachers were mostly inspiring which motivated me very much towards learning the language."

Intrinsic Motivation		
P	*2) Satisfaction of learning English language*	
1	"I have gained much satisfaction from learning English and received much information about different parts of the world. I do have a sense of achievement in having improved my standard of English. I can now understand English articles by myself, instead of having to read through versions translated into English from Chinese." "My level of comprehension gives me much encouragement when I am watching English TV	

	series, listening to songs in English, or reading English novels or literature."	
3	"I get great enjoyment from English language learning and I get a sense of achievement when communicating with others effectively." "I enjoy meeting English-speaking people and it is fun to get along with them. I spend most of the time with the international students rather than the Chinese students, and I meet them more often than I do with the Chinese students."	
8		"After coming to the UK, I have become more interested in learning the English language after getting to know about British cultures. I have changed my attitude as part of my adjustment in the UK. I have read a lot of books which are written in English, and my majoring subject is being done in English."
10		"I enjoy understanding the lives and cultures of the locals. The Brits are much more relaxed in their lives when compared to the Chinese."
14	"I get a sense of achievement in winning an English language related competition, or getting good results in an English examination. I feel that I can be helpful when I speak in English with tourists in China, or help to translate for people in the supermarket."	

Extrinsic Motivation		
P	*1) Usefulness of English language*	
1	"My motivation in English language learning should be from the fact that learning English is a must for me as an English major student." "I can sense the practical use of English language in Mainland China."	
2	"English is widely used for the purpose of transmitting messages. I am in touch with English through internet / magazines / mass media / TV. The descriptions of many modern technologies are mainly in English. I have to understand the general ideas of the articles which I read. Also, I understand that the English language is a kind of global language which helps me to communicate with people from all parts of the world. This also helps me to get to know more about their cultures when having social interactions with them."	"English is all about reading papers and attending classes. My major focus is on how I can handle the language in my studies. I don't feel that I have much influence by the locals in this country mainly because I have never read local magazines and newspapers. My main concern is always about effective communication with my classmates in the study programme." "I'm alright with my use of daily English in this country as I can communicate with the people here without much difficulty. However, I need to improve my English language ability to some extent because I have some difficulty in reading English papers and textbooks."
3	"I feel that English language learning is a mandatory task for me to work on, as I am a Bachelor in English Translation degree holder in China." "Also, I regard English language as a daily communicative tool which is very useful in my life." "I find that people in China generally do not focus too much on the English language; therefore, it is to my advantage if I can study English language well enough. At the same time, I have the habit of watching English TV series that are provided by Hong Kong channels. This can help me to widen my exposure to English.	

	From the mass media of Hong Kong, I have got the message that English is very useful and can be learned better by some effective means."	
4	"Increasing the understanding power among people is the major reason why I try my best to learn the English language. In other words, English is very useful for me in terms of communication. I don't actually have a strong interest in English language learning but I enjoy its usefulness and practicality. Therefore, basic standard of English is already good enough for me as I only aim at an effective communication with the locals and international peers in the UK."	"English is just a tool for me to understand the context of the programme. Almost all of my teachers and classmates speak in English. My aim is to learn the English language and to facilitate my studying in this country. At the same time, I regard the English language as a tool to communicate with the locals." "Understanding British culture is not that relevant to my studies in the UK, but for the sake of communication use. Learning English is far more important than knowing about the local culture. The same applies to those expats in China who try to learn the Chinese Language in order to communicate with the Chinese. In this sense, I don't think they are really interested in Chinese culture after all."
6	"I agree that my motivation in English language learning should come from my interest to learn the language as well as having a pressure to do so. I always wish to know more about the world. On top of that, I enjoy travelling very much. I like to explore the world to a great extent. At the same time, I know that English is a widely used language so I feel the need to attain a higher level of English proficiency. The companies in China emphasise on English language ability to a great extent that fluency in spoken English can definitely help me to get promoted easily in my future career. Therefore, I have a strong will to improve my English language all the time."	"I don't feel I have a pressure to learn the English language well, though I wish to improve my language standard just for communication purpose. I feel that learning a language doesn't mean that I need to understand Western culture thoroughly. I think that culture and language are not actually related to one another. As long as I can communicate with others, it's just fine."
7	"I have no interest in learning English as and I have no pressure to do so. I think that I'm alright in handling all those assignments, examinations and so on. I know that I need to improve my speaking and writing skills to a great extent to meet the needs of my study programme. I can always communicate with others in English in a relaxed way and feel contented in the conversation. I don't feel much anxiety in speaking English, and I don't fine much problem in any communication process."	"The English-speaking environment can motivate me to the use the language often enough, especially when I have to interact with the locals. However, after a period of time, I found that cultural differences have made me feel difficult in the communication process with the locals. I discovered that there are many differences between British style of living and that of the Chinese, not to mention their use of words in making a joke that makes the difference. I'm not too interested to understand other countries' culture because people from different countries have their own habits; and it's not necessary for me to understand most of them. I have never thought of understanding the locals of this country and their culture even before I came here. As there are many Chinese students in the UK, it's not necessary for me to express well in English in practical situations. In case I need to interact with the English-speaking people, body languages are actually good enough to solve most of the problems. And I don't think I will have a chance to discuss my academic studies with the locals. Moreover, only written examinations are required in my study programme so I don't need to get involved in any presentation session. In addition, my major study is mainly consisted of Mathematics and Statistics concepts in which English language is not the

		key factor in the process of learning."
8	"Yet, I know that I will be at an advantage at workplace if I can handle the English language well." "Through communication in English, I can cooperate with my group members well in a project. However, I always think that the English language is just a tool for communication purpose."	
9	"I feel the pressure in English learning especially after coming to this country. I know that it's a must for me to learn the English language well so as to participate fully in seminars or write essays smoothly in my studies. English language learning is not really related to my interest. I have got the message that learning one more language is like possessing one more tool in understanding a particular country's culture. For instance, learning Cantonese can help me to understand more about Hong Kong movies and the related culture."	"I just treat the English language as a communication tool but with no special feeling about it. After staying in the UK for nearly half a year, I enjoy much about the communication with the local people here and their culture, though I still don't feel interested in English language learning. I just see it as a tool to communicate with the locals and other international students."
10	"I have both the interest and practical reasons to learn the English language, such as for the sake of achieving better results in English examinations and getting a better score in the IELTS exam. I experienced pressure when I knew that I needed to go overseas for studies. However, I think that there are some driving force for me to learn the English language, for instance, I can understand more about UK / US newspapers / magazines and drama and so on provided that I have attained a high level of English language proficiency. All these are the main factors for me to learn better English."	"I believe that it's always better for me to read the English information rather than the Chinese translated one so as to get the best meaning of the theories and concepts of that subject." "Another point is that I like travelling very much. Everybody knows that English is a very useful tool for communication purpose while travelling to different parts of the world. This is another motive for me to learn better English." "I think that the English language is useful for me to know more about the local people here. In my point of view, the British can always enjoy their lives and works, whereas the Chinese have to fulfil their related commitments under a great pressure. In general, I reckon that it's been very difficult for the Chinese to stand out on the competitive job market in China and become successful. Therefore, the Chinese always aim at being the best student in the class. There's definitely no enjoyment in our learning and working processes. Jobs are mostly related to money making so nobody will mention enjoyment in our everyday work. My communication with the British here helps me to know more about their different attitudes towards life."
12	"I know that English is a world language which can be greatly applied to work, study or travel. Therefore, I believe that it's a must for me to learn English well by all means."	"I often treat the English language as a tool to communicate with English-speaking people. I have no interest in Western culture. Yet, I have confidence in learning English well and I'm anticipating in speaking more in English in this country, though my main focus should be on the language itself rather than British culture. I feel that cultural differences play a main role in my making friends as well as my understanding of the people around. For instance, I have very different conversation topics with some German acquaintances when compared to my Chinese friends."
13	"I can feel the pressure in learning English rather than interest when it comes to English language	

	learning. I can sense the urge to improve my standard of English because all the textbooks I am studying are written in English. Therefore, English should be an important tool in my academic requirements."	
15	"I know that a person with a high level of English language proficiency can have more promotion opportunities in their career."	
16	"I always want to learn English because it's a useful tool for me to communicate with people from different parts of the world and understand their culture. Moreover, I feel that English is a good tool for me to understand English books and information around the world."	"I think that the English language is useful for the communication with people from different parts of the world. Therefore, better in English means increasing my chance to understand more people from various countries."

Extrinsic Motivation		
P	*2) Pressure of learning English language*	
1	"It is due to the pressure created by the education system in China that I was forced to study the English language. I believe that if I can't speak in better English, my Chinese peers will question if I was diligent on my major studies. Also, I have to emphasise that the English language programme I studied at that time was actually not my first choice at the time of my university application but it's just an alterative choice. Since I failed to achieve good results in my public examinations in Mainland China, I needed to give up my dream subjects and enrolled into the English language programme. I needed to get a pass in the English language examination before I could get promoted to a higher level."	"I like English to some extent but I feel much pressurised in learning the language at the same time because I am majoring in English and TESOL. Therefore, I believe that others may expect me to be very good in English. After nearly half a year, I feel almost the same in terms of my English language ability as well as my understanding about this country's culture. It's because the mass media in China can always provides the information about the UK. Therefore, I knew this country quite well before coming to this country to study. Though I have met some British people here, my closer friends are mostly Chinese because there are many Chinese students studying in the UK. In short, I feel the pressure of using and learning the English language in general."
2	"I can sense much pressure in learning English, and I feel being forced to learn English well by all means rather than having my strong will to learn it better."	"I experienced great pressure which compels me to learn English well. I was quite interested in learning English when I was small but I don't feel the same now."
3	"In this past, I was forced to work hard in English learning because most of my undergraduate classmates did very well in the English translation class as my standard of English was lagging behind them."	"I learn English mostly because of the examination pressure I encountered in the Chinese education system. I am the only Chinese student in the class. I am forced to use the English language all the time here. I don't feel that the culture in this country makes me enjoy the process of learning English, and my attitude towards this is exactly the same compared to when I arrived in the UK."
4		"I feel that both my pressure and motivation drive me to learn better English. But my most important task in the UK should be learning the knowledge well in my major."
5	"I have two main reasons for learning English in the past. First, it was due to the pressure in the eduation system in China that forced me to study the English language as a subject. Second, it was one of the subjects that I had to go over it in primary school in China before I was able to be promoted to a higher level."	"I was required to learn the English language as part of the secondary school curriculum in China. I was urged to learn better English."
7		"I feel pressurised to learn English and there are no special reasons for me to learn it. I was forced to do something that I don't really like. I don't have a chance to get in touch with the locals. As

		a matter of fact, all of my classmates are non-British, I don't have any motivation to learn better English. I never read any English magazines or books other than textbooks. If I have extra time, I would choose to travel instead."
8	"I feel pressurised by the English exams I need to take." "At the same time, I am motivated by my classmates in this country, who are mostly from Western countries, to learn better English."	"I was highly pressurised to learn the English language from a young age. In China, the standard examination system aims to differentiate people according to their academic performance."
9		"I feel pressurised when I learn the English language."
10		"I believe that I'm interested in learning English; but at the same time, I am pressurised to do so. As I am majoring in Finance and Economics, in which the textbooks are mostly written in English, I need to spend some time on learning the language first before getting to know the context of those subjects." "I have great intention to learn the language well and I feel the pressure all the way in doing this."
11	"I have experienced a lot of peer pressure when learning the English language. Many people are much better than me at language learning. I am anxious, rather than happy, when I speak in English in the UK. When I see my friends having very strong communication skills in terms of speaking and listening, I am much pressurised because of this. Naturally, I am always comparing myself with my friends when we speak in English."	"Both environment and atmosphere contribute to the pressure experienced in my English language learning. I wish to work for a brighter future but I find that my starting point for learning the English language is a bit late when compared to students from other countries. My spoken English is quite poor, as I find it very difficult to express myself well in front of the locals in the UK."
12		"I have been experiencing the pressure of learning English since my primary school life. Till now, I still feel it after coming to the UK for my study."
14	"At the beginning, I was motivated to learn better English because of the reward given by my teacher. But later on, I didn't actually like the language very much because of the stressful examination system. I have regarded English as a tool that will help me greatly in pursuing my future career. In that case, I feel even more pressurized. However, I really enjoy the process of learning English sometimes, and feel more confident in learning it. I know the reason for not speaking well in English but somehow I can manage to communicate in English. I am now trying to convert the pressure to motivation to learn better English."	"I find that the lecturers speaking English slowly in front of us, whereas the locals usually talking in high speed. That's why, I can't directly apply what I learnt from English lessons in China to real life situations in the UK. Though, I don't feel any pressure during lessons here but somehow I am encountering some difficulties in daily life. I have had a habit of watching American shows and got used to American accent since I was small, therefore, I sometimes can't adjust myself to the British accent when I am interacting with the people here. I have started watching BBC classics recently which may help me to know more about the British, their culture and history."
15	"It is the pressure that drives me to learn English rather than being motivated to do so." "The peer pressure to be better in English may decrease my interest in learning the language."	

Fixed Mindset	
P	*1) Some people are quick learners*
2	"Some people are actually more talented than others. They can learn the English language quickly with great improvement from time to time. Others who are not so talented also show	

	improvement through hard work and by practicing their English listening and writing."	
3	"Some people are simply talented in their English language learning, and they avoid using Mandarin accent which is advantageous in English language learning. I need to memorise plenty of vocabulary by heart, and I watch many American series and read a lot of British books. And so my English is acquired from through years of hard work."	
4	"I believe that most people need to work hard when they study the English language, whereas some gifted people can attain a higher level of English proficiency easily. I do think psychology courses and English lessons here can help me a lot in learning better English."	"Whether talent or hard work is more important in English language learning depends on situations. In professional jobs, people with strong ability should naturally be more capable."
5	"Some people are more talented in language learning than others. When I studied the English language as major subject in Mainland China, I noticed that the number of girls in the class was far more than the boys. I guessed it might be due to the fact that girls were more capable in language learning than boys. Learning through lessons was not enough. Words, grammar and cultures can't be thoroughly taught in the classroom, and students need to possess talent to strive for improvement. I believe hard work can often help, although the speed of attaining a good standard of English depends on each individual's own talent."	"Talent is much more important than hard work. I am less talented when compared to some of my classmates, and I have some Chinese friends who have attained a high proficiency in English, even though they don't work so hard. I take part in various English-speaking related competitions, and some people are actually more talented than others, but solely having talent is not enough. You have to practise what has been learnt, and this is a determining factor in the language learning process."
6	"I can't deny that some people are fast learners."	"I don't think talent is the main determining factor for language learning. Hard work can also help a person to attain certain language level but talented people can reach the standard of English proficiency similar to native speakers."
8	"I believe talent can make a person learn a language easier."	
9		"I agree that talented people may learn faster than others."
11		"I understand some people are more talented in language learning than others.'
12	"Some people are really talented in learning language and such talent helps them very much in the process of learning."	
13	"I always believe hard work counts in language learning though talent should also be very important in it. But I think talent can help a person to have a tremendous improvement in language learning."	
14	"However, learning a language really well is similar to the way to become a football star. Only talented people can do."	"A talented person may attain a native-like standard, but people can reach a general level if they are hard-working enough. Many people could get a good grade in piano exam if they have practised hard, but not many people could get to concert performance level."
15	"Some people are actually talented in language learning, and are more efficient in acquiring good language skills."	
16	"I think talent is very important in language learning comparing to relying on hard work in learning. Talented people can always learn fast though hard work should sometimes count."	"Some people are more successful than others because they are more talented in language. Hard work may also be a determining factor in acquiring higher language ability, but talent

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		should always count."

Growth Mindset		
P	*1) Hard work counts*	
1		"I feel hard work in learning language is far more important than talent." "Of course, there are many talented people in this world that can learn languages very fast, but the majority usually need to learn the language skills through hard work."
2		"Hard work comes first and then talent. A person needs to work hard so as to improve English language standard."
3		"Talent shouldn't be a main factor in language learning; exposure and hard work should be involved in the process of learning. As for academic English, hard work is necessary to be successful in learning the language. Achieving a reasonable level of English or spoken English for daily use should be easier as long as there are adequate chances of practice in this country. I have changed my opinion about 'the talent in language learning' from that which I expressed in my previous interview. I now believe that 'practice makes perfect'."
4		"In terms of applying English to daily life, anyone can learn good English if they work hard enough. For academic studies, though, to fully understand the English words in textbooks in order to successfully obtain the knowledge, hard work can always solve the problem."
6	"I believe hard work means you will have better progress in your English language learning."	
7	"Hard work can work in language learning though, although some people should be more talented and learn much faster and easier."	
8	"People in general need hard work if they wish to handle the language well."	"Many people are generally of a similar level of intelligence. Hard work should be a determining factor for success in learning English."
9	"Hard work and practice are the key factors for language learning. Talent can help one to learn faster, but language learning is a process full of practice, and 'trial and error'."	"But I think hard work should mostly count for being successful in English language learning. And there are a lot of vocabularies and rules in language learning that hard working people can win in this case."
10	"Hard work is playing a more important role in language learning than that of talent. Hard work can always help a person to develop language skills in a better way."	"I believe hard work should be the key factor rather than talent if a person wishes to learn a language well. Even though we are told that girls are better in language than boys, I still think that only hard work in language learning can help a person to improve language standard."
11	"Hard work is more important than talent when it comes to English language learning. A lot of Chinese students having a persistent and strong will to learn English, and they wake up early to practise English language."	
12	"However, others can also attain a very high level of English language because of their hard work. Therefore, I think many people are actually putting a lot of efforts before having a high proficiency in the language."	"I think hard work is very important in language learning. Once the language is used with adequate practice, it's not difficult to get familiar with the language. Of course, there are some people who are really talented in language learning but it shouldn't be a large group of people."

| 14 | "I think hard work should be more important than talent in language learning. I can use football players as an example. All people can manage to learn how to play football. They know all the basic skills if they concentrate in the learning and be hardworking enough."
"And it's obvious that the more a person reads the more vocabulary can be absorbed. There is more than one meaning in some words that one needs to read more so as to understand various meaning out of those words. In short, hardworking is a process to attain the level of better language." | "Many people are generally of a similar level of intelligence. Hard work should be a determining factor for success in learning English." |
| 15 | "I believe hard work is the key factor of attaining higher level of English proficiency. A person needs hard work in order to gain a certain skill or ability persistently over time." | |

Growth Mindset		
P	*2) Exposure counts*	
1	"Working hard has improved my English language. A lack of opportunities to speak with native speakers has meant that I have failed to attain fluency in my verbal communication with them. However, I do feel an improvement after practising English speaking with my Chinese friends."	"I have spent more time on learning the language. When exposed to an English-speaking environment means that my language ability can be improved well."
3		"Immersing yourself into the language learning environment is very important. More exposure to the local areas, such as pubs and restaurants provides more chances to interact with the locals and learn English."
10		"The environment is also very important in language learning, and you should take the initiative and interact with the locals."
11	"Chinese people from the countryside can't afford to pay expensive tuition fee for learning English language, and so it is very common that their English proficiency is not that high, and is spoken with a strong Mandarin accent. It is better for anyone to learn by being immersed in an English-speaking environment as early as possible. This should start from kindergarten. Both hard work and an English-speaking environment are very important factors in having a high English language proficiency."	"Environmental factors do play a main role in learning English. The more chances you have to be exposed to English language the better. With good teachers' help, and through hard work and having a strongly motivated personality, surely high standard of English can be achieved."

Growth Mindset		
P	*3) Strategy counts*	
10		"Motivation counts, and you can increase your chance of learning the language through various language learning strategies."
12	"Success in language learning is due to good language learning strategies."	

Anxieties and Worries		
P	*1) Afraid of making grammatical mistakes*	
1	"My spoken English is not good enough and I have made some mistakes at times." "I don't think making grammatical mistakes is a big deal in daily conversation in the UK. And I conceive the main purpose of communication is	

	to let the receiver get the message. However, I would try my best to avoid all kinds of possible mistakes in my spoken English in all cases."	
2	"I feel anxious when I need to speak with strangers, new friends or a large group of people. I am not getting used to talking in English, and I worry about making grammatical mistakes." "I tend to have some 'stopping points' in my spoken English, such as a lack of vocabulary and uncertainties about the appropriate use of English grammar. If I am really familiar with a particular English-speaking person or international student, I can feel the happiness in my use of English, even though I make many grammatical mistakes or use words incorrectly, and am not too confident at times."	
3	"I don't feel pressurised while talking with non-native people in the UK such as Asians, Mexicans, and Europeans. However, if I meet some very talkative Americans or British, I would feel very stressful. This is because of my confusion with the correct use of grammar, for example, tenses and phrases, and I often fail to use them correctly. I don't really want to make those grammatical mistakes. Even though those mistakes don't affect my communication with native speakers, I believe it is better for me to avoid them. I think native speakers sometimes laugh at non-native speakers' fundamental grammatical mistakes, for instance, some British students simply make fun of my Mainland Chinese friends when they are confused with the use of 'he' and 'she' in their spoken English. I believe that Chinese students need to strictly follow the rule of English language in order to avoid making certain mistakes again and again, and create unnecessary jokes in front of those British students."	
5	"I always want to speak well but my anxiety appears when I start speaking in English. I feel that grammatical mistakes making is one of my communication problems."	
14		"I do not have a problem communicating with my classmates and teachers in the UK. I speak with British people outside university, and I wish to have no obvious grammatical mistakes in my conversation."
15	"I am confident enough to interact with the Chinese peers and international students in English. But when it comes to speaking with native speakers, I worry about the possible grammatical mistakes that I would make in the conversation. However, I know that I need to accept my way of speaking because I can't always avoid making those mistakes."	
16	"At the beginning, I worried about my use of English very much because of my poor foundation in the language, and I always think that I have made some grammatical mistakes in my spoken English."	

Anxious and Worried

P	2) Introvert Character	
1	"I neither feel very confident nor very anxious when I speak in English in the UK. My lack of confidence in speaking is due to my introvert character." "I am very anxious with my English languae learning."	
4	"Whether I feel nervous or happy very much depends on different situations. I experience nervousness most of the time when I speak English in the UK."	

Anxious and Worried		
P	3) Not enough practice	
2		"I always feel very nervous when I perform presentations in the classroom. I focus a lot on practice, and this usually helps me to complete the task successfully. I do believe that I have made some improvements to my spoken English, but I can't deny that I have to practice more." "In addition, I think that I don't have enough chances to speak in English during my preparation for presentation. I mostly communicate in Mandarin with peers because half of the class is Chinese. Moreover, there are not many discussion opportunities in the course as there is just one seminar for every two weeks, in which most topics are Maths related. I think that I am not good at language in general, no matter English or Chinese; therefore, I can't write my report well."
4	"I believe my spoken English is not as good as my reading and listening skills."	"I am very anxious when I speak in English. I don't have enough English-speaking practice, and my study occupies most of my time in the UK." "I know that I need more time to learn my major and understand the theories behind comparing to my classmates."
5		"After half a year, I feel English is much more important than what I previously expected. It is strongly culture-related. There are many things that I don't know how to say in English, especially in this English-speaking country. I find that my standard of English language is not up to a level that is good enough for handling everyday issues, honestly speaking." "However, the locals in general do not modify their English so as to make sure I can understand what they meant. They mostly speak in their usual style just like talking to other locals here. Hence, I find much confusion in the conversation. I think that I didn't have enough exposure towards daily English when I was in China; therefore, I feel so difficult to understand what the British meant in whatever conversation I am engaging in."
8		"There are many Chinese students in my class, so I don't always need to speak in English during discussions with my teammates."
9		"I have a lot of worries when I arrived in the UK. I need to be more focused on the conversation so as to understand what the locals are saying. I

		need to translate all the wordings into Chinese immediately in order to grasp the meaning of the conversation. I do the same when having the lecture." "I am not confident enough when I speak in English. There aren't many chances for me to speak in English, as most projects just involve one or two British students within a big group of Chinese students. I mostly speak in Mandarin with my teammates. Though there are many presentations throughout the programme, I use much time to employ Chinese thinking in the process of preparation. The professors may not always understand my translated English meaning. I know that most Chinese students in my class use their Chinese thinking when they are working on their essays or projects. They firstly write in Chinese and then translate the words into English when they need to present via PowerPoint. I know that Chinese students are getting used to do note-taking in Chinese and then translate into English afterwards."
14	"I always have Chinese peers around, so I don't have much chance to speak in English. I am sad to say that the only chance to use the English language is in the classroom."	"There are a lot of 5-min presentations so there are a lot of chances for me to speak in English. Though I've got many English-speaking opportunities for my presentation, I don't think my English has improved. It's because there are not many chances for me to communicate in English with my classmates who are mostly Chinese. They use Mandarin in most of the discussions."

Anxious and Worried		
P	*4) Afraid of not being understood*	
2		"It's easy for me to understand what the native speakers said in this country, but I always encounter barriers when I speak and write. I should know a lot of general terms in communication, but I often fail to find the correct terms when I speak. As a result I can't always speak properly and appropriately, and there have been occasions when I gave wrong messages to the locals. I can't communicate with the locals well in this country."
4	"I am always very nervous and lack confidence in my English speaking, and I often questions myself over whether people understand my use of words or not." "I was very happy when I saw people could understand what I said in the conversation."	
5	"I am very nervous and worried about the actual wordings I used when I am trying to communicate in English. I can't prevent myself from deviating too much from the intended meaning, and so I sometimes mislead English speakers. I am afraid of making mistakes and being misunderstood by others." "Whether or not I can bring out my exact message in English, I try not to cause them to think I meant something else and get the wrong message."	"When I go shopping, travelling or try speaking with some British students, I find it very difficult to communicate effectively. I feel under a lot of pressure when I speak with the locals outside of campus, and I am afraid of failing to understand what they really meant."
6		"I always think that it's easier for me to speak in

		English with the Chinese. I feel more confident in doing so. I think that the locals and the European students somehow speak too fast in that I sometimes can't grasp the meaning of the conversation. Hence I sometimes fail to respond to them accordingly. I sometimes feel stressful when speaking in English with them; and I encounter difficulties when getting into the British or European student groups in the classroom."
8	"I don't feel anxious as I can always communicate well with others in the UK. But I can see my communication barrier with the native speakers. I know that I can't be comparable with them as they always understand what the lecturers mean in class."	
9	"I feel very anxious in my spoken English. I can't always understand the meaning of others in the conversation. I wish to express myself better in front of the locals, but I don't really know how. I don't think I have real communication with the locals. I have got some friends from Germany, Italy, and other countries, instead of just from this country."	
11	"I somehow feel anxious about how others think of my spoken English, especially when they ask me to say it again. I'm always afraid that my receivers, including teaching staff and my classmates, can't get the meaning of my words. I often need to repeat or modify what I have just said in order to express myself fully. This may be due to my soft voice when I speak. I'm now aiming at improving my spoken English in a clear and louder voice so as to reduce the chance of being asked to repeat the same thing again and again."	"I wasn't that anxious when I arrived in the UK, but later on I become quite anxious. People from different parts of the world have spoken English which is different from the British / Americans. It can be very confusing when communicating with them, and when the teaching staff are not native speakers, I can't actually understand their English and what they mean. Sometimes there are presentations and interactions in which English is used in the programme but it is just confined to the learning context. I am quite sure that I can build up confidence in communication after immersing in this English-speaking environment."
14	"I remember that I was happy and comfortable when I firstly arrived in the UK. But now I'm a bit anxious as the locals can't always understand what I said. I find that there are not many people speaking like the presenters on BBC news. And I'm a bit nervous when I can't express well in the conversation and sometimes mess up in my spoken English."	"The British speak too fast, which means that I can't grasp the meaning of a conversation, but I manage to make them understand what I want to express at times."

Anxious and Worried		
P	*5) Can't handle the study well*	
4	"The main reason I am studying is to learn something related to the field of psychology, however, I feel doubtful as to my ability to truly understand the subject contents under English-as-a-medium-of-instruction. I face many English-related problems when I'm in my department, and my academic English standard is not strong enough. In order to learn psychology more easily, I need to expand my vocabulary by whatever means necessary."	
10		"I still feel the tension when I'm reading academic books these days. I would feel pressurised to read a text quickly upon request,

P		because English is not my first language. Daily English is easier for me to handle." "I have a lot of chances to use English during seminar / presentation. If I have a chance to prepare my presentation well, I wouldn't feel that much pressure, but when it comes to spontaneous speech, I experience a great tension. I have found that it's extremely difficult for me to understand and express my thoughts on British politics and national or European news in English. I feel that I am speaking out of context all the time when discussing these topics." "I usually have the habit of reading Chinese media to understand what's happening in Europe, as it is quite easy to find the Chinese version for the news on the internet. I have no motivation to read the English ones, and I feel it is difficult to express the meanings and concepts behind those European issues at times. As the news and my knowledge of my major subject need to be updated every day, I often fail to do so in English, and if I merely use English to read all the information, I wouldn't actually be able to catch up the progress of the class, due to my being slow to read in English. I need to find a suitably quiet place with a dictionary in hand if I read in English."
12		"I can successfully answer some of the teachers' questions in class, and I understand the meaning out of all those questions. But I can't fully answer them, as my textbook knowledge is not enough for understanding the context in depth."

Anxious and Worried		
P	*6) Fear of the new environment*	
4	"I mostly meet Chinese students in my accommodation area, and I simply speak in Mandarin in my daily life."	
12		"I feel anxious when I speak in English, especially when I need to express myself in front of the class as well as native speakers. There are a lot of presentation and team work opportunities in my programme, and there are chances to speak in English with a lot of preparations made beforehand." "I have gained confidence in my spoken English because of the chances I have had to use the language through my increased daily interactions with others. I sometimes feel anxious when I try to express myself."
	"I felt anxious when I firstly arrived in the UK. A new environment makes me feel nervous, when I saw people communicating in English. I felt that joining in the conversation would be very difficult for me. I hope that this situation can improve."	"I believe that the living habits of Europeans and British are very different from the Chinese. I can't manage to wake up at 7 am, and go for a group discussion at 8 am. There are some cultural and personal differences between some of us who are in the same living environment. I think that my English standard will improve through preparing all those 4-minutes presentations."

Confident and Happy		
P		
1		"I was anxious about the standard of my spoken

		English when I firstly arrived in the UK. But now, I am quite confident in speaking in English though I sometimes make some grammatical mistakes in the conversation. I'm quite sure that I can manage to use my spoken English properly. There are some chances for me to use English in the presentation sessions as well as group discussions. I do feel that I have made some progress in my English language learning since I have come to this country. I remember that I faced a lot of difficulties half a year ago. I often felt hesitated to speak in front of others in English. Now, I can always utter naturally in daily conversation."
3		"I feel confident in speaking in English. I can now speak naturally, I always feel comfortable in using the language when I work with others or during presentation. I usually have a prepared script in hand to read and rely on; however, I sometimes present in my own way. I can't deny that language does affect my studies to a certain extent."
4		"I have had a lot of presentation opportunities. I was very nervous about it at the beginning of the term as I wasn't confident enough to speak in front of the class. However, I do have the opportunity to prepare well beforehand. Most of my groupmates and classmates are English speaking, and I got used to speaking in English very quickly. Confidence can be built throughout one's learning, and I can always get my classmates' great help. I am free to ask them questions concerning the presentation, and we have a lot of interactions during the preparation process. They are trying their best to understand my spoken English, and so I feel more confident and happy with my presentations, and I have got used to the presentation skills."
5		"It depends on the situation when it comes to my adaptation progress in this English-speaking country. I can manage to understand academic English used by the teaching staff in class. I can successfully commuicate with the lecturers most of the time." "Learning in the classroom is very different from acquiring the langauge outside the university campus. When I try to speak with the lecturers, there always contains some expected answers in my mind which help me to understand their words. So far, most of the vocabulary that I came across in the classroom were the ones I had learned in my bachelor degree in English Education in China."
6	"I felt very anxious when I was required to speak in English in my junior high school years. But now, I am very confident. I find that it's easy for me to start a conversation with the locals, and I encounter no difficulties making friends with them. I always communicate with them very well."	"I usually join the events organised by the Caving Society like many British students here. Therefore, I always have a chance to speak with them in those events. I know I don't need to speak in good English. Simple sentences or even simple words can somehow help me to communicate with my team members during the caving events though I can't always understand what they said."

		"However, the language barrier doesn't put me into dangerous situation because we are being guided by some senior caving society members all the time. They are experience enough to give warning to me whenever it comes to dangerous situation. In addition, I don't think a lot of jargons are used during caving and I'm quite sure that I can usually understand what my team members' meaning. I have encountered emergency situation before in which I needed to call the police for help. I'm quite sure that the staff understood what I actually expressed over the phone." "There are many Chinese at our university; therefore, I have less chance to use English in my studies. My caving activities are just confined to once per two weeks in which it takes around two to three days for every trip. Therefore, I would tend to speak more when I'm with my caving teammates."
7	"I am happy in the English-speaking environment, and I can always speak naturally. I never feel that my English speaking is incompetent anyway, and I am very keen on communicating with others. There are no obvious worries in my daily living, nor in my academic studies. There is much room for improvement, in my use of pronoun in particular, when I speak or write. I understand lectures as they are all about Mathematical concepts, and there are not many difficult English words as it is all Mathemati cs related. Sometimes I fail to understand what the lecturer has said. It is better when the lecturers write on the board, as that way I have more time to understand the teaching context."	
8	"I feel happy when I interact with the locals, as I can learn a lot about British cultures from them. I was anxious when I arrived in the UK, but now I'm happier. I feel a sense of achievement after having practiced my spoken English from time to time and having shown improvement."	
10	"I got used to American English in China as taught under the English education system. Because of this, I always feel very difficult to understand the locals who speak with various British accents that I haven't come across before. All those daily living issues such as handling the bank statements or reading train schedules always make me feel very frustrated and anxious. However, I can get used to it after some time and feel happy and confident again in solving everyday issues of various kinds."	"The longer my stay in the UK, the more confident I have become when using the English language. At the beginning, I was always afraid that my meaning couldn't be received properly. I worried at times that I couldn't understand what others were saying. Now that I have stayed in the UK for a long time. I have had more chances to interact with the locals and I have improved my language fluently."
13	"I was very anxious before I came to this English-speaking country, as I was afraid that I couldn't speak the English language well. I can sense that learning better English is a kind of commitment. By improving my spoken English, I have become very happy and satisfied with the standard of my English language at this point."	
16	"After immersing in this English-speaking environment for some weeks and applying what I have learned here, I feel that it's not really too	"I am confident in using English. I don't have an obvious language barrier and there are a lot of presentation opportunities in my programme of

	difficult for me to handle the English language. Whenever I see some improvement in my English language learning, I feel very happy and tend to use the language more often."	study. I believe that I can always handle these well and I often need to use English to communicate with my group members. Some of them are non-Chinese students, and I practise my spoken English while interacting with them, especially in the presentation preparation process. I have great confidence in my presentations and positive feedback is often received."

Happily Adjusted to the Environment		
P	*1) Always speaks in Mandarin*	
1	"I'm not too contented, as I don't have enough chance to expose myself to the English-speaking environment. Most of my TESOL programme classmates are Chinese students, and they obviously prefer speaking in Mandarin with me. I am hoping to make the acquaintance of some locals and non-Chinese international students. In short, I don't have any special difficulties in living in the UK."	
2	"I feel happy with my life in the UK. Another factor supporting my adjustment in this country is that UNE(College) has numerous Chinese students." "It's easier for me to get along with the Chinese students at UNE(College) but I don't have any chances to speak with my British classmates, as I don't usually stay for a long time after class."	"I can happily adjust to the environment. I can usually understand what others have said, although I don't think my spoken English has shown any improvement at all when compared to nearly half a year ago, because I don't have enough chances to speak in English here. British students tend to sit with the other British students, whereas the Chinese students would all sit together in the class because people tend to sit with those they know well. Once I notice that the person sitting next to me is actually speaking in Chinese, I can join in and easily understand the context if it is in Chinese. I have no tendency to speak with my British classmates, and due to my limited knowledge and understanding of British culture, it is very normal for me to start by making a few points in front of the British, but then I have nothing much to say afterwards. Dead air follows straight after I have spoken. I don't think that the Chinese are generally quieter, it is just that the language barrier hinders them. In contrast, my friend, who is the only Chinese student in her class, barely has any chances to speak in Chinese, and she has seen a great improvement in her spoken English."
4		"I can easily adjust to new environments. I usually spend most of my time in the UK studying, and I don't have much opportunity to speak in English. I only use the English language during shopping and dealing with basic services. For the rest of the time, I mostly use Chinese, and I have no time to watch TV or read magazines." "I don't think that it's very difficult to live in an English-speaking environment. Even with just one word or two, I have enough to let others understand what I have said. I read Chinese websites rather than the British ones, as I wish to relax, having already completed my daily English language related interactions."
6		"I often use English alongside Chinese during

		group discussions with my Chinese groupmates, but I actually speak in Chinese during discussion when I'm preparing my presentation. On some other occasions, such as seminars, I practice my spoken English. When people in the discussion group are from China, they usually speak in Chinese among themselves and then shift to English when the instructor comes."
8		"I feel happy in studying here. There are many Chinese around in the University, and there are more than 80% of students in my class are Chinese. So I don't have much chance to speak in English. We just talk in Mandarin with each other."
9		"I found that I have a great improvement in my English language ability comparing to day one I came to the UK. I came across some barriers at the beginning of the academic year. After getting used to the English-speaking environment, I mostly feel happy in my stay in this country. I have got one to two local friends but most of my friends are not native speakers. Therefore, I don't have much chance to interact with the British in the UK. The locals with whom I mostly interact are my supervisor, porters, supermarket staff and bus drivers."
11		"Although I generally feel happy and find a great improvement in my standard of English language after coming to the UK, it is actually difficult for me to practise my English inside the campus. It is because there are too many Chinese around in my accommodation area that I have little chance to speak in English in my daily living."
14	"There aren't many British students in my learning environment. I hope to interact more with my flatmates, who are from countries other than China. Having more chances to speak and listen in English in real life situation is the most effective way to boost my standard of English."	

Happily Adjusted to the Environment		
P	*1) Grasps chances to speak in English*	
1		"I don't have much chance to speak with the locals or non-Chinese international students. But I do think my English is getting better after coming to the UK for about half a year. There are some difficulties experienced at times when I'm communicating with the native speakers. They usually speak too fast and they are too outspoken. My friends and I noted that there are cultural differences in the conversation style comparing between the native speakers and us. The British and Europeans are usually too outspoken that we have nothing to respond to what they said soon afterwards. I'm always happy to study in the UK but I wish I could have more chances to interact with the native speakers here."
2	"I can adjust myself well at the University here because problems of my daily living can be easily solved and I can always manage to communicate with the UNE(College) porters	

	smoothly in English." "Even if half of my classmates in my Chemistry class are British, there are no serious language barriers or misunderstanding during my communication with them. A good learning atmosphere can always be found in the classroom." "The greatest chance for me to speak in English is when I need to deal with the UNE(College) porters regarding some daily issues such as the maintenance of certain items of furniture in my room."	
		"I feel happy to study in the UK, although my speaking contains a lot of grammatical mistakes. It's fine to make those mistakes, as a person's English can only be improved after having gone through the learning experience. This is a natural language learning process. I have more chances to interact with my friends and classmates in English when compared to my Chinese friends; they spend most of their time with other Chinese people, and speak only in Mandarin. I usually hang out with my British and European friends, whilst I interact with my Chinese friends while cooking in my kitchen. My situation is very different from most of the Chinese students around me."
5	"I feel happy in the English-speaking environment. Since I'm majoring in the English language, I am very interested in this area, and I treasure any chances to speak in English with my classmates and staff at the university. I can't obtain the same type of experience through speaking with people from other countries." "I'm happy to speak with the locals when I have to deal with everyday issues such as reporting household problems to the porters, or buying food at supermarkets."	
6	"Though I spend much time with my Chinese friends at this point, I always feel happy to make friends with the locals. It is not just because it's necessary for me to improve my English language proficiency but because I need to meet some basic requirements of living in the UK. For instance, I have to use English in shopping at supermarkets as their staff are English speaking."	"I'm mostly happy in my studying in this country and I don't think there are problems with my communication with others in English. Performing presentation in the class has given me chances to use my spoken English to a great extent."
7	"I'm happy in this English-speaking environment. It's very good for me to learn the language in general sense. I know that even if I can't express in grammatically correct conversation, the locals can still guess out my meaning and respond to what I have talked about. Yet, I still think that there are very few chances for me to get in touch with the British here."	
8	"I can adapt to the environment easily. I feel very happy in my studying in this country with Western culture and friends from different parts of the world."	"I feel that I am having a good adjustment since my stay in the UK. In spite of some occasional misunderstanding, there are no special barriers for me to communicate with the local people here."
9	"I think I can adapt to the new environment comparatively better than my Chinese peers. And	

	I can see my progress in my English language learning."	
10		"Previously, I experienced a lot of barriers in my use of English in the UK. Now, I feel happy that I can somehow handle the language." "I have grasped some chances to speak in English, but the British and Europeans I know don't really care about my English language proficiency. I have the confidence to take part in some of the university activities in which English is used, and all of the activities that I have taken part in can help me to boost my language ability greatly."
11	"I always feel happy in the UK, and I can always use English as I hope I won't have barriers in using English here, but I'm fine in my daily living circumstances. This environment can help me to improve my English language, and I do believe that interacting with the target language can surely make a person more fluent in that particular language."	
12		"I'm always happy in my studies in the UK. I communicate with the porters, drivers, salesmen. Sometimes just with simple vocabulary or single word that counts. The locals manage to understand me. I recognise the importance of being proactive in using English so as to grasp more chances to practice the language. There are not many British students in my class, and although there are other Western people in the group, I'm not too sure if their English is proficient, but I can at least understand them."
13	"I'm generally happy in my studying here. In case of communication barrier, I found that simple sentences with body language can mostly help to let the locals understand my spoken English. Once I can successfully communicate with the native speakers, I have a great sense of achievement through such experience. If those people are speaking slowly enough with nearly no accents, I can manage to understand their meaning. Otherwise, it's very difficult for me to make the sense out of their words."	
16	"I do feel happy to study in this country. I feel curious and fresh ever since my arrival to this country a few days ago. However, I recognised that I have some difficulties when I am communicating with the locals as they tend to speak very fast."	"I feel happy in my studies in this country as I can adjust to the environment. I have grasped some chances to speak in English, such as joining some societies, as the society members are usually native speakers. I have a lot of chances to interact with them in English, and I have joined caving society, through which I have met a few British friends."

	Happily Adjusted to the Environment	
P	*3) Curious to know more about this country*	
6	"I can adapt to the UK life very well. It's too early for me to make comments about my use of academic English in my studies, but I have no difficulties in handling daily English. I feel very comfortable in this English-speaking environment."	
8	"I can meet people from different countries and learn about various cultures during fresher's	

week. I can communicate with people from different backgrounds. American shows and dramas can help young people to get together and develop friendships with people from different parts of the world. I can also learn slang so as to give some colour to my English language learning."	

Having Drawbacks in the Environment	
P	*1) Seeing the cultural differences between the East and the West*
3	"I'm generally happy with my university life in the UK. I don't often hang around with my international friends. There is a big difference between Eastern and Western cultures, and great dissimilarity does exist in every part of our lives. Sometimes I feel relaxed after avoiding intensive activities such as gathering at the pub. I prefer my own Chinese style of living at my on-campus flat. I haven't got used to the local life style very much. For example, the locals have a habit of enjoying high tea, and which I worry that I will gain a lot of weight if I take part."	
4	"There is a great difference in cultures between the Western and the Chinese students. I need to get involved in different society activities to help further my studies and career development. I still need some more time to adjust myself psychologically to the English-speaking environment. I have been in the UK for around two weeks, so it is too early to generalise my impression towards UK life and the Birtish at this stage, as I don't often go to my department to communicate with people." "The major difference between the Chinese and the Westerners is the lack of time spent on household work, such as cooking and washing clothes, by going to the university canteens and laundry room. This saves them a lot of time for their studies and entertainment. Also, they appear to be used to the weather in the UK and enjoy the typical rainy days. This would be my first impression."	
10	"When facing the English-speaking environment and Western culture the Chinese can't adapt to this environment easily. There are cultural barriers and we need to change our lifestyle to suit our daily lives here. It is quite normal for the Chinese to form social groups with our own cultural practices. European and British classmates are simply my acquaintances. Cultural differences should be more vital than language factors when it comes to making friends. The locals have their own habits, for example pubbing and partying, but I won't get involved. Such activities would affect my studies, and I get an impression that the British do not need to study so hard, and can have much fun with their learning. I need to spend more time on my studies, and so I can't have much leisure time."	
14		"I feel a bit bored by and tired of the British or Western cultures such as partying. There are

		some cultural differences too, for instance, religious activities in church."

Having Drawback in the Environment		
P	*2) Can't get used to the language*	
5	"I have some anxiety about my spoken English can't be fully understood by others because of my grammatical mistakes." "I cannot optimistically predict that I would demonstrate some improvement after staying in the UK for some time. I don't have enough chances to interact with native speakers, as my MA TESOL programme is mostly participated by the Chinese students."	"I am not happy to say that it is a bit difficult for me to adapt to the English-speaking environment, especially in daily communications. I know it's not a must for me to use a complete sentence in order for people to understand what I have said, but barrier does exist when I'm speaking English, and I am not as comfortable as when I am speaking Mandarin." "I don't have a lot of chances to do presentation in class. Actually I had no presentation opportunities in the first term. In the second term, there were just some five to ten minutes long informal presentations in class, with no instructions given before each presentation, and without any assessment afterwards. We are not required to do any preparations." "There is around one seminar per week. The English language is of course used during the seminars, but the group members are mostly Chinese. The focus is aimed at the topic assigned by the tutor rather than English language learning. My group is made up entirely of Chinese students."
12	"There are a lot of barriers when I communicate with others in English. For example, the locals speak too fast, and at the same time. I can't express myself well enough. This may be due not to my general language talent but due to my limited chances to use the English language when I was in China. I find it very difficult to cope with the kind of daily English used in the UK such as informal terms or slang."	
14		"It's challenging for me to think in English during verbal communications, and it's even more tedious to write essays in English. I need to write firstly in Chinese, and then translate all of the Chinese words into English ones."
15	"It has been very difficult for me to adapt to this new English-speaking environment. It's very different from that of China. And I feel great difficulty in coping with my academic studies. The style of learning and the problem solving based seminars here in the UK have created a lot of worries for me, as I often fail to understand the context in a lecture. I can't get used to the English expressions and presentations in the UK."	

English Language Learning Activities		
P	*1)Classroom setting*	
1		"I have attended some lessons provided by the CELT. But it usually focuses on English academic writing and critical thinking which I am quite familiar with but not the kind of English that I have to use in my daily living."
4	"My department suggests that overseas students	

	including myself have to take the CELT in order to improve written English."	
5	"If I wish to attain a higher English standard, I have to attend formal lessons in the classroom."	"I need to take CELT lessons as required by my major programme – TESOL. However, I feel that it's not too useful for boosting my English language ability. Academic related issues are usually my focus instead of daily living topics. The techniques of writing papers and the required vocabulary used in academic field are discussed mostly. For instance, I have taken a course on presentation. The content was just confined to the gesture and manner of the presenter on top of those writing skills needed in academic writing."
6	"Classroom learning can help to enhance my academic English."	"An English language learning centre can help me to improve my English language skills, especially when regard to academic writing. I feel I have learned a lot in those lessons." "I think a classroom setting is much better for me to attain higher English language ability than society activities."
7	"I don't join any social activities. I plan to take the CELT course because I believe I can improve my English language through such a course." "I wish to learn how to write better English after taking the CELT course. Partying is another way to learn English in daily living situations."	
8	"I prefer learning through a classroom setting. I feel that it's more professional doing so and the input can be very intensive."	
9		"The CELT pre-sessional programme obviously helped to improve my English language ability when compared to that of other activities in the UK. There were only four Chinese students, along with some other international students, and this allowed me to speak mostly in English during lessons. General English was taught in a highly motivated learning atmosphere, where I could have interactions with classmates and teachers. I was very satisfied, although there were too many reading materials assigned, which kept me busy all the time."
10	"When compared CELT lessons to pubbing / clubbing, I think that the classroom environment can help me to learn English better."	
12	"I have joined CELT classes only so as to improve my level of English language. I haven't joined any social activities so far. I feel that if I wish to improve my verbal communication, I can attend more partying activities. But in case I want to learn more academic English, I need to go for the CELT."	"I have joined the CELT programme, and the British teacher has taught us very well. During seminars, my mistakes could be corrected immediately by the teacher when I spoke. Speaking was greatly focused in class, with many chances to prepare for the daily presentation. My major requires me to write six essays of 3,000 words each throughout the four courses. This is a great chance for me to practise my English. I have no plan to take part in any social activities in this sense."
13	"I believe that the CELT programme can help me to learn English effectively. Teachers usually focus on communication skills. That way, I can easily learn the English language from those lessons. I feel that organising study groups is a good way to improve English language ability."	

14	"Another point is that if it comes to the classroom context, all of the classes are in formal teaching of English; therefore, it's easy to understand. But when it comes to CELT practice such as presentation or discussion, it's more difficult because we need to speak spontaneously in English. There are no definite answers for the assessment and so I cannot know my level of English standard."	"I have joined the CELT programme. As there were not many seats in those courses, we needed to queue up for quite some time so as to obtain the seats. I know there were 50 people wishing to join a particular course but there were just around 20 seats. At the same time, I couldn't find other suitable ones like this for me to join. I found that most of the students were Chinese. In addition, there were not many assignments in the course for me to practise English reading and writing."
15	"Some small group projects, say, in groups of two or three, were often used as part of the assessment. There were a lot of Chinese students in the class and so I couldn't actually have chances to use English in the discussion. I think those British students are not that friendly as I imagined. I know some British flatmates but they never join the Chinese group when it comes to flat activities. Yet, I believe that studying in the UK is already a very good environment to learn the English language."	
16	"But I think formal classroom setting can always help me to learn better English when compared to partying activities. I can concentrate in the classroom, take notes and then review any key points right after the lessons. In contrast, people just chat and use slang in the conversation, which can't help me much in that sense. It's not academic at all, and not related to my studies. Improvement in my English language ability can only be possible via continuous practising."	"I have also attended some CELT classes. Although the class name suggests that academic English would be taught, the teacher has conducted some general discussion and emphasised greatly on English communication skills. I found that classroom setting is a good way to learn English in a proper manner."
2)Daily conversations		
2	"I have good opportunities to engage in verbal communication with British people. It is very different from my university environment, where the teachers in general speak slowly and simplify their words during their conversation with Chinese students. British people on the streets do not slow down their speed in their verbal communication with me, and because of this I have chances to expose myself to real life situations and the use of daily English, and this helps me to enhance my listening and speaking skills." "I had an experience of filling in the questionnaire which was about the popularity of certain restaurants. I was asked to provide simple answers based on a few questions and then give some scores to a list of items. I have learned a lot from this practice as I can use English throughout the process. However, in formal classroom learning, inaccurate use of words and grammatical mistakes often happen during discussion. People on the street would respond to me if they can really understand my words but they won't point out my misuse of words in the conversation. I don't think I can realise my grammatical mistake made in the communication process; therefore, it's not a good language practice at all. However, more confidence can be gained after interacting with the locals. I do think	

	it's not too good to leave all those grammatical mistakes behind. It's because I'm afraid that my grammatical mistakes will be deeprooted and my writing skills will be affected too. Spoken English could be effectively learned through speaking with the native speakers. I know that native speakers won't make immediate correction upon what I've spoken as it's perceived as inappropriate. I hope that the receivers of the conversation could allow me to speak slowly such that grammatical mistakes will be avoided greatly. That way, I can learn the language properly. I believe that I can even gain more from the locals through this language learning activity."	
3	"I'd like to say that the activities introduced by Language Learning Centre can't help me to learn English language effectively. Also, speaking with the Chinese students in English can't help to improve my English either. I believe that I can have some chances to speak with some native speakers such that my English can be better. Moreover, I feel weird to chat with the Chinese students in English as I have tried this out with my friends before."	"My suggestion for learning better English is to talk more with the locals."
4	"Communication between classmates can also help to improve my spoken English in a way which is closely related to my studies. It can also help me to enhance my written English in the field of psychology." "A class for learning daily English is not necessary for me, because people here are not testing my English ability. They just want to communicate with me. Sometimes only using one or two words can be sufficient for people to understand what I wanted to express. The most important thing for me is to improve my academic English comprehension skills in the classroom."	
10	"It's really difficult to understand the words of native speakers and so I always can't respond to what they said."	
14	"In Britian, everything is in English. I'm always encouraged to use English in this country; and at the same time, my chance of speaking in Mandarin decreases. However, it's very difficult for me to get to know some British students in the class as I'm always surrounded by Mandarin speakers."	
15	"UK can always provide real and effective interactions for me to learn English from native speakers."	
3)No activities		
4	"My main focus in the UK is to study. I can't really spend any extra time taking part in any social activities."	
11	"I haven't joined any social groups so far. I take part in musical concerts without much interaction in English. If I just confine myself to the English spoken by the teaching staff in the UK, I can only have chances to listen but not to speak. I wish I could have more interactions with the	"I rarely join in with social activities at the university. I am getting involved in Linguistics Society, but won't be taking part in any activities after paying the society membership fees. The locals enjoy drinking and go to pub as a kind of social gathering, but the Chinese mostly don't

	locals, but I'm always staying with my Chinese friends all the time, and they often help me to speak and communicate with the British. Therefore, I have very limited chance to speak with the locals. Reading newspapers and magazines can of course help me to improve my English language, but I find it's very difficult for me to be persevere in doing so. I usually feel better about my English skills after an exam." "I know it's useful for me to hang around with native speakers in order to improve my English. If I just confine myself to those university teaching staff's spoken English, I can't widen my horizon in language learning. Also, I'd like to speak in English in real life situations rather than just listening to English in the classroom. I wish I could have a chance to expose to the English-speaking environment. But as a matter of fact, I can't do so because I'm staying with the Chinese students all the time. My Chinese friends can often help me to communicate with the British. Therefore, my chance of speaking with the locals is very limited. I know I should have read more newspapers and magazines so as to improve my English but I found that it's very difficult for me to maintain this reading habit. I think My language ability has greatly improved in the process of preparing for IELTS exam in China. I usually felt that I could use English in a better way after the examinations."	have this drinking culture. The university curriculum is very difficult and complicated for me, so I find it very difficult to have any spare time to go to pub for leisure purpose. I prefer travelling if I have time, but I feel very busy all the time, reading textbooks and papers."
13	"I don't join too many groups; there are a lot of British students in those groups, but this doesn't mean I can learn from them. It all depends on my own motivation."	
15	"Due to the huge workload in my study programme, I shouldn't really spend too much time communicating with the locals. I have to spend my time wisely in order to serve the purpose of my study requirements. It's easier for me to make friends with Chinese students or other international students than it is with the British students."	
4)Internet as a channel		
3	"Facebook is a very good tool for learning English language. I can leave messages and chat in informal English. This useful to me because I'm not required to use formal English all the time. I hear informal English on American TV series, and in daily conversations in the UK, and Facebook provides a very useful social medium for people to improve their oral English. I am joining different student activity groups on Facebook, and having more chances to get involved in their social gatherings. Also many new topics coming out for discussion, which will surely improve my English language skills."	
5)Reading newspaper and magazines and so on		
2	" … I read more English articles."	
10	"I have a habit of reading the Financial Times."	
13	"Reading more is far more important than participating in social activities. Learning English language is a personal activity, and it	

	may not be necessary to speak with native speakers. Self-learning is more important. Watching magazines, films, TV programmes and so on can help, and I have found that it's better for me to turn off the subtitles so as to facilitate the language learning process."	
14	"Reading magazines, newspapers or other freebies can create an English environment for me to immerse myself in the English learning process. Chinese people have a habit of using Chinese to help to learn the English language in China." "It's difficult for me to understand BBC English without the use of 'subtitles on'."	
6)Travelling		
4		"Although I don't have any lessons in the third term, I won't go for traveling in Europe until the end of the term. I have a lot of chances to interact in English with others when travelling. I won't read newspapers or watch TV, but travelling can help to know more about the local culture as well as the language of the country."
5		"I haven't joined any social groups so far. I'm currently thinking of going on some university trips to different cities. I know the participants are usually Chinese students, but I met some European acquaintances on my last trip. It's very difficult to be friends with them due to cultural differences, but at least I can practise my spoken English when I have lunch with them."
14	"If I have extra time, I will choose to travel in Europe or in the UK to learn better English."	
16	"I am very interested in travelling, and I visited many cities in the UK in my first three months here. I booked B & B myself, and chatted with the locals about their culture and attractions."	
7)Social gatherings		
1	"I have joined those social activities organised by the Graduate Student Association (GSA), including the trips in City(UNE) and other cities in Britian. Through this, I can make some new friends though I don't think my spoken Engish have improved after all those activities. It's mainly because not many interactions are involved when I meet those participants. However, I still plan to meet more people through various trips and voluntary services in near future."	"At the beginning I joined the History of Art Society. I can't see any improvement in my spoken English, because due to cultural differences. I'm always with the Chinese students, whereas the British students are with other British students most of the time. The students are mostly British, and whilst I can talk with them, in reality I have nothing to talk to them about at all. Trips, lectures and visits are the activities I usually take part in, and I should have plenty of chances to interact with those British students, but I really can't find anything to talk about."
3		"I've joined many social activities organised by my classmates, which involve partying, dinner gathering, pubbing, and so on. I don't know what CELT is and I no idea where I can have all those free English language courses."
5	"I don't have plans to join any social activities at the moment. But I'm quite sure that I won't take part in too many society activities. I just focus on my hobbies and interests instead. I would join some short-term activities such as those 'talks and pizza' parties organised by the Graduate Student Association. I won't join any long-term	

	activities as they may affect my study. I need to make sure that those social activities won't occupy too much of my time before I commit to them" "Going to the pub, or related social activities, can help me to integrate into British society. I can learn the common topics in the local people's conversations, and also the appropriate use of words and vocabulary."	
6	"Being different from the locals, I don't really like partying. But I think that it's the most effective way for improving my spoken English." "I will join some societies, for example the Travelling Society."	"Besides the Caving Society, I have also joined the Outdoor Society. This can help to create an environment for English speaking, as in that situation English just plays the role of communication between members. I don't think I can actually improve my English on such occasions."
8		"I have joined the Baking Society, and I have opportunities to interact with the locals and non-Chinese speakers in English. I have got involved in some party gatherings, which have also provided me with opportunities to use English for communication."
9	"I don't really get involved in any social activities now. At the beginning of the first term, I did have few party gatherings with my friends."	
10	"I joined the CSSA (Chinese Students and Scholars Association). Some of the teaching staff would come and join us for some of the activities. There are non-Chinese Asian members, and I have plenty of chances to use English to communicate with them. I can't manage to understand British jokes, but I can easily grasp the meaning of the international students during my conversations with them. They usually speak slower than the locals, and I prefer speaking with international students to speaking with the locals."	"I have joined a few voluntary activities recently. As a matter of fact, I can't really help much as there are only one to two activities appear every month. But I can surely learn a lot from the locals during the activities. I can speak in English more fluently than before. Those activities can increase my exposure to English-speaking environment. My flatmates are mainly Chinese who usually speak with me in Mandarin. I think my spoken English can only improve when I join more such kinds of activities. I always found that my spoken English is worse than before after speaking Mandarin with my flatmates for a long time. In this sense, I should keep on joining all those social activities so as to improve my communication skills. I see that the number of Chinese students is increasing greatly in recent years. "I think most of the Chinese students would prefer speaking in Mandarin in this country because life would be much easier for them if they keep it like this. It turns out that I don't have much chance to speak with the native speakers. My situation is very different from my Chinese friend who is studying in the US. As she is the only Chinese student in her class, she has got much chance to use English. In contrast, I don't have much motive to use English at all in my daily life as I don't actually need to use this language in this country."
12	"I think both classroom learning and social activities can help my language learning. Social activities, such as pubbing or clubbing, can increase my chances to meet the locals. And classroom learning can help me to learn more textbook knowledge."	
14		"I have joined a table-tennis team. English

		speaking is involved, but I feel very embarrassed, as most of the locals speak very fast whereas the Chinese can't always understand. After a while, it sometimes turns out that they are no longer interested in further communicating further with me or their other Chinese peers."
15	"Pubbing or clubbing is a better method to improve English compared to a classroom setting."	
16		"I have joined some societies at the university. As most of the society members are local people, I have got a lot of chance to communicate with them in English. One of the social activities that I joined is the Caving Society, in which I can make a few British friends."

GLOSSARY

AR	Autonomous Regulation
B&B	Bed & Breakfast
CSSA	Chinese Students and Scholars Association
CELT	Centre of English language Teaching
CET	Cognitive Evaluation Theory
City(UML)	A city in the Midlands where its university locates
City(UNE)	A city in the North of England where its university locates
CLT	Communicative language teaching
CR	Controlled Regulation
EFL	English as Foreign Language
ELT	English language teaching
ESL	English as Second Language
FL	Foreign language
GMAT	Graduate Management Admission Test
GRE	Graduate Record Examinations
GSA	Graduate Student Association
IELTS	International English language Testing System
IT	Information technology
L1	First language
L2	Second language
LLA	Language learning activities
LP	Language proficiency
MA	Master of Arts
MS	Mindset
NVivo	A computer assisted qualitative data analysis software
OIT	Organismic Integration Theory
PA	Psychological Adjustment
PP	Positive Psychology
PWB	Psychological Well-being
QSR	Qualitative Solutions and Research International
SA	Studying abroad
SDT	Self-determination Theory
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SPSS	Statistical Product and Service Solutions
T1	Time 1, first time-point
T2	Time 2, second time-point
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TESOL	Teacher of English to Students of Other Languages
UKCOSA	UK Council for Overseas Student Affairs
UML	A university in the Midlands
UNE	A university in the North of England
UNE(College)	A college of a university in the North of England
UNESCO	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

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