

**The Motivational Dynamics of Chinese students  
in College English Classrooms**

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## **Abstract**

Motivation is a significant factor in language learning and both theoretical and empirical research on L2 motivation has found its dynamic nature. The dynamic understanding of L2 motivation can be useful in exploring the exact reasons for motivation flexibility.

College English course is an important part of higher education in China. The government has put a considerable amount of investments in improving the course, but the results are not satisfactory. To facilitate students' learning in the course and to understand L2 motivation in a real context in China, this study explores College English students' in-class motivation flexibility, especially the relationship between the teacher's behaviour and the students' motivation fluctuations.

Motometer, a specially designed instrument for recording motivation changes, was used at first to track motivation changes, but it was abandoned because of several problems in data collection. A case study design was then adopted: 8 participants were selected from a class of College English students via a questionnaire survey; they were required to write learning logs after each lesson in 4 weeks and were then interviewed individually based on their learning logs weekly.

The results confirm the dynamic nature of L2 motivation. Various motivational factors and classroom activities appeared to be the causes of the fluctuations, and their influences on students may be different from each other. The data show that students' attitudes toward English learning play a significant role in determining the individuals' overall motivation levels; Ideal L2 Self can be a powerful stimulus, but its impact can fade rapidly; the students' pressure and anxiety can have both positive and negative influences on their motivation. The research also finds that the teacher, especially the teacher's personality, has significant influences on the students' motivation. The thesis also puts forward a few pedagogical implications for College English based on the findings.

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## **Declaration**

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as References.

## **1. Introduction**

This study explores the motivational dynamics of Chinese students in College English (an English course for Chinese non-English major students at university stage, see more information in Section 1.1) classrooms and the possible causes for flexibility in motivation. My interest in exploring College English classrooms was initially triggered by my experience in university days: I learnt negative comments on College English from the College English students around me: some of those non-English major students felt the College English lessons were not very helpful in improving their English proficiency and there were also some College English students who directly expressed their unwillingness to attend the lessons. Compared with these negative English learners, I have always been a positive English learner and enjoyed English learning; and it has always been interesting to know some other's negative comments on College English. Especially after a few close friends who majored in non-English subjects complained and tried to seek assistance in English learning from me, I strongly hoped College English students could have a better learning experience in the classrooms since they have to spend time in English learning. My interest gradually turned into a clear idea of helping College English students improve their English learning.

In addition, I was eager to be an English translator in my teens as I perceived that translation could help people from different countries understand each other, so I chose English translation as my major at university and also completed a postgraduate programme of English translation. However, after six years of learning translation, I realised that translation has its limitations in conveying meanings between languages, especially in expressing connotations; and I also realised that language learning could be a better way to help people from various countries understand each other. Since then, my interest in learning and researching moved to English language learning and I gradually learnt that motivation, as an important variable in language learning, has been regarded as one of the most significant aspects of research on language learning in terms of its effect on facilitating language learning from the learner's perspective.

Thus, inspired by my long-standing interest and the significance of motivation in

language learning, I decided to explore student motivation in the College English lessons, with a view, eventually, to help students learn more effectively or at least to improve their negative attitudes toward College English.

Following the current dynamic trend of researching L2 motivation, the present study aims at exploring the in-class motivation dynamics of *College English* students at university level in China. On the one hand, this study could introduce the latest dynamic perspective of motivational research, along with its corresponding methods of recording motivation changes, to Chinese English education. On the other, considering the necessity of English education in China and the positive influences of motivation in language learning, investigating the students' motivation could help enhance the effectiveness of English education in China. The aim, then, of the current study is to provide more information about students' motivation in English learning, which could facilitate the English learning of students at university level; the results of the study might also lead to some suggestions for teaching the College English course from the students' perspective.

This chapter aims at introducing the background of the present research. The reason why the motivation of College English students is worth exploring are explained in Section 1.1, including brief introductions to the English Language education in China and College English course; the development of L2 motivation research is introduced in Section 1.2; the structure of the thesis is provided in Section 1.3.

### **1.1 Why is it important to study motivation of College English students?**

The College English course at university stage has the longest history among all kinds of English courses in China (see more information about College English in Section 1.1.2), it has one of the largest groups of English learners and it constitutes an important part of English Language teaching in China. There are two reasons why it is necessary to explore College English students' motivation in English learning: on the one hand, the effectiveness of College English is questionable (see Section 1.1.2 for more information), thus researching student motivation during the lessons might lead

to an enhancement of the students' learning and further improve the effectiveness of the course; on the other hand, motivational research in European and American countries has led to an understanding of the dynamic features of L2 motivation (see more in Section 1.2), while studies in China, including those focusing on the College English courses, have tended to take a static perspective, making it worthwhile, perhaps even necessary, to explore the College English students' motivation from a dynamic perspective.

In the following sections, the context of English education in China is introduced first in Section 1.1.1 and an introduction of College English course is provided in Section 1.1.2, followed by the reasons for researching student motivation in College English classrooms.

### **1.1.1 English education in China**

English education in China has been influenced by the context and development of China. As a developing country, China expects to communicate with other countries in the world. Communications with other countries have two directions: on the one hand, the country needs to learn from other countries, and this is the way to integrate itself into the world; while, on the other hand, China looks forward to introducing itself to the world as well, and this is the way to identify itself among other countries all over the world. For China, it does not matter which direction the communication is in, but it matters how to communicate with other countries. Therefore, foreign language learning becomes the precondition of communicating with the global world. Among the various languages spoken by the whole world, English is the most widely used foreign language, thus, English becomes the first choice of foreign language learning in China and the teaching of English also plays a quite significant role in the education system in China. But it is noteworthy that the significance of English Language education is a result of the evolution of foreign language education over 70 years.

The systematic teaching of foreign languages in China started with the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC). Hu (2009) has divided foreign language education in China into three stages: the first stage was from 1949 to

1965, when the government started to set up the system of foreign language teaching and strongly promoted the teaching and learning of Russian at university stage, following the close diplomatic relations with Russia in the first 10 years of the PRC; meanwhile, English Language education during this period developed tortuously, and finally, at the end of this period, English was identified as the first foreign language by the government and further development was planned. Although it might have been assumed that English Language education would develop quickly with the support from the government, foreign language education was suspended in the beginning of the second period (1966-1977) because of the contemporary national policy. It was not until the second half of this stage that the government renewed foreign language education in accordance with national development and relations with other countries. According to Hu (2009), from 1978, the development of foreign language education in China entered the third stage, and English Language education finally started to develop rapidly: the syllabus, the courses, the textbooks and the exams related to English learning were initially developed and improved at university stage for both English and non-English majors, as developing English as a major in higher education stage could train students to become English teachers for future English education in China; and developing English as a course (College English) for non-English major students could train students for interdisciplinary abilities in order to satisfy the needs of national development in various fields. Since then, the Chinese government has indeed regarded English as the first foreign language in order to meet the needs of the nation, and English has become an indispensable part in higher education in China.

With the consecutive ongoing development of globalisation, the demand for interdisciplinary talents in China is also increasing. In order to train more qualified personnel for the increasing demand of national development, the age at which Chinese students start English learning has become lower and lower: English language education has been gradually included on the curriculums of secondary and primary education successively. Current Chinese students usually have to learn English for over 12 years, including 4 or 6 years in primary schools, 3 years in middle

schools and high schools each, and 2 to 4 years at university stage. In other words, China has gradually established an English Language education system throughout all school ages.

The extended length of English language education has led to an increase in the number of student learners, but students do not constitute the only source of increasing English learners in China: professionals also constitute an important group of English learners. According to a recent investigation based on over 5000 questionnaires and sponsored by Youdao (a famous Chinese internet company mainly engaging in language learning) and Chinadaily.com.cn (the largest English portal in China) concerning the English learning Status of Contemporary Chinese Residents (2019), 56% participants were students while the professional learners accounted for 44%. The growth of professional learners is a result of national development and communications with other countries: more and more jobs in China require personnel with English competence. On the one hand, the ability to speak English has become a common requirement for job hunting in China, graduates who can speak fluent English have absolute advantages in finding jobs; on the other hand, more and more professionals start to invest in English learning in order to adapt to the increasing opportunities of using English in their work. The active role of English in job hunting and working has become a motivation in English learning for Chinese learners and the increasing significance of career-related motivation shows that motivation is changing, albeit relatively slow.

### **1.1.2 College English course**

As mentioned in Section 1.1.1, the earliest English courses in China were set up in universities in the 1970s, and because of the influences of national development and policies, it was not until the 1980s that the English language education for non-English major students at university level in China was formally changed into College English. The corresponding exams, College English Test Band 4 (CET4) and band 6 (CET6) started in 1986 and 1989 respectively. Currently, the College English course has become a compulsory course for all the non-English major students at

university stage and CET has now become one of the largest national English exams in China since passing the test is a requirement for obtaining Bachelor's degrees for non-English major students.

The Chinese government has put considerable investments in improving the teaching of the College English course. Following a development of 30 years, both the College English course and CET have been reformed several times: the syllabus of the College English course was revised in 1999, highlighting the training of reading skills instead of listening and speaking skills; and in 2004, a reform was made to strengthen the roles of listening and speaking in English teaching and learning; further, the reform in 2007 required the College English course to develop students' ability in using English in their specialties. The consecutive changes of the requirements of the College English course show that the government values the effect of the course all the time: as College English is the only formal English course for non-English major students at university level.

It is clear that the Chinese government has made efforts to improve the teaching of the College English course, but the students' learning results seem not to be very satisfactory: according to the Education First (EF) English proficiency Index (EPI) in 2018, English learners in China, ranking 47 among 88 nations all over the world, were marked with low proficiency. It is quite interesting that there is a jocular saying among Chinese people that the most brilliant moment in one's life is in the college entrance examination, as at that time, an individual knows everything in order to pass the exam. In other words, one's knowledge reaches the peak in his or her life around the college entrance examination, since the student at that time has understandings in various subjects in order to have a good performance in the exams; but after the examination, the student may forget most of the knowledge he or she learnt before as there is little chance of using. Although the saying is a kind of joke, it makes sense to some extent: years of English learning does not mean that the students are proficient in English. In addition, some studies or investigations have showed several unsatisfactory aspects of the College English course; and many College English students also have negative comments on the course. Sun (2005) pointed out that



plenty of students still cannot understand or speak English after years of English learning; Cai's (2009) investigation with graduates from 21 universities showed that 44.4% participants believed their English proficiency had not been improved via College English lessons; an even worse fact was that there were 21.1% participants who even perceived that their English levels decreased after they completed their Bachelor's degree. An investigation sponsored by edu.sina.com.cn (a famous educational network platform in China) and The Beijing News in 2014 reported that 52.5% participants believed that "College English course is useless". The above research and surveys not only show that the learning outcome of College English is not satisfactory, but also reflects that the English proficiency of Chinese learners is not in line with their input as they have learnt English for years before taking College English. Therefore, it is necessary to improve the teaching and learning of English and College English.

### **College English course and College English Test (CET)**

As mentioned before, passing CET is a compulsory requirement in university stage for non-English major students; this requirement originally aims at measuring the individual student's English proficiency and motivating the students to learn English, leading to positive influences on College English. On the one hand, the requirement of passing CET has facilitated English learning of College English students: Hua (1998) investigated over 300 university students in terms of their motivation in English learning and found that about 80% of the participants held a specific instrumental motivation, "certificate motive (learning English for passing exams and obtaining certificate)"; the certificate in Hua's research especially referred to the certificate of CET, and the high proportion of "certificate motive" among the participants showed the important influences of the requirement of passing CET on promoting students to learn English. Shi (2000) investigated 78 non-English major students and found that over 80% participants held the specific instrumental motivation, "certificate motive". Huang and Wen (2005) confirmed the results of Hua's (1998) and Shi's (2000) studies and argued that "certificate motive" was a

significant component of English learning motivation of non-English major undergraduates. Gu (2008) also pointed out the necessity of certificate motivation for undergraduates in China.

However, on the other hand, this requirement has also resulted in some negative consequences via excessive exam-oriented English teaching and learning. Considering the requirement of passing CET, teacher's and students' special attentions to CET-related trainings in College English lessons are acceptable. But the problem is that sections of College English classrooms and students give priority to the exam-oriented trainings over learning the English language: some students' desires of passing CET are stronger than their will to learn English, they pay more attention to skills of passing CET than to the English language itself, and some teachers also focus on CET-related trainings in College English classrooms. Sun (2005) pointed out that the exam-oriented English teaching and learning trained students to pay more attention to the skills of passing exams. But although the students' scores in exams could be increased, their abilities of using English in real situations may not be improved. In other words, some College English students may pass CET via abundant exam-oriented exercises rather than improved English proficiency. The active role of exam-oriented trainings in facilitating students to pass CET may lead to some students' ignorance of learning of English language, especially trainings in English listening and speaking. The excessive exam-oriented teaching and learning is not only unmatched with the original purpose of the College English course, which aims at further improving student English proficiency successively after previous learning, but also may put a gloss on some students' English proficiency. So some College English students may pass CET successfully while their English proficiency may not be obviously improved.

Furthermore, Chen (2008) pointed out that exam-oriented English teaching and learning has very a limited effect on stimulating students to learn English; he argued that exam-oriented teaching and learning usually is boring and is difficult to attract student interest, and may have negative influences on student motivation in English learning. Therefore, according to Chen's finding, College English students'

motivation in learning could be decreased by excessive exam-oriented content during the lessons, and student learning results could also be negatively influenced. In addition, Chen (2008) also pointed out that motivating the learners by their interests in English rather than passing exams could have positive effects on the learner's proficiency.

The studies above, to some extent, also provide evidence about the changes of the function of CET in motivating students: Hua's (1998) research found positive impact of CET in motivating College English students, and the later studies (Sun, 2005; Chen, 2008) showed some negative influences of the exam on student learning and motivation. It seems that the influence of CET on College English and student motivation have changed over years. Considering the important role of CET in influencing College English and the potential changes of the effect of CET, the relationship between College English and CET is worthy of further explorations.

As mentioned in the beginning of this section, College English has already been reformed several times in terms of its syllabus, and it is obvious that the Chinese government has made efforts to improve the teaching of College English. However, it seems that the improvements of the several reforms on student learning results are very limited, as the effect of College English is not very satisfactory: there is a large group of students who are not satisfied with College English and their English proficiency seems not to be improved with the College English course, (see the aforementioned results of Cai's (2009) study and the investigation of The Beijing News in 2014). Although the results are not satisfactory, the reforms of College English supported by the government are necessary, as both the system and syllabus of College English need to keep pace with the development of the country and with educational theories.

In order to better improve the current unsatisfactory effects of College English, it is necessary to pay attention to the roles of learners in English learning. Since the reforms of the College English teaching seem not to be quite effective in facilitating the students' learning via College English, it could be a better choice to concentrate

on students themselves, as it is the students who decide whether they learn or not or the way they learn. In other words, even if the most experienced and skilled teacher is teaching, if the students themselves do not want to learn, the learning cannot be satisfactory. Since increasing motivation of students could facilitate their English learning via increasing their autonomy, therefore, researching College English students is necessary for improving the effect of College English. Motivation, as a powerful factor of stimulating learners to learn, has been regarded as an important aspect of researching English learning in China. Considering its function in L2 learning, motivation could be a valuable factor in promoting student learning in College English.

The existing studies on students' motivation in English learning mainly focus on what may be termed a static understanding of L2 motivation, and these studies focus on researching the motivation types and their correlations with the students' performances. Only a few studies (Xu, 2013; Chang, 2016a, 2016b, 2017, 2018; Yuan & Ji, 2017) have considered the dynamic features of L2 motivation: Xu (2013) investigated the motivation changes of university students' in English learning during two years with 3 tests; and Chang's studies in 2016 (Chang, 2016a, 2016b) introduced the dynamic development of L2 motivation theories and research in European and American countries to China. He required postgraduates to recall their English learning motivation trajectories in the past four years when they were undergraduates, basing his study on Directed Motivational Currents (DMC) (Dörnyei, 2014, 2015) (Chang, 2017); he also replicated Waninge, Dörnyei and de Bot's (2014) research by investigating 4 undergraduates' motivation changes (Chang, 2018). Yuan and Ji (2017) also replicated the study of Waninge et al. (2014) with 4 undergraduates majoring in Business English (see more in Section 2.3.1). In other words, L2 motivation research in China has just started to consider the motivation changes following the dynamic trend of L2 motivation research in European and American countries, while currently in European and American countries, there have been more studies focusing on motivation changes in L2 learning (see more in Section 1.2 and Section 2.2). It can be seen that there is a gap in the development of motivation research between European

and American countries and China.

Although there is not much research on motivation dynamics of Chinese English learners, evidence of the motivation flexibility of Chinese students can still be found. As previously mentioned, Hua (1998) found that about 80% of the participants held “certificate motivation”; Gu (2013) argued that it was inevitable that undergraduates learnt English for “certificate motivation” in consideration of their degrees and future career; in 2018, the investigation, *English learning Status of Contemporary Chinese Residents*, sponsored by *Youdao* and *Chinadaily.com.cn*, and based on the data from Youdao’s 800 million users and 5000 thorough questionnaires, showed that nearly 50% of participants learn English for improving themselves and 38% of participants learn English for passing exams. In other words, the number of English learners with “certificate motivation” has decreased, and the decrease over years can be seen as evidence of the dynamic nature of student motivation.

It is quite interesting to know that the students’ motivation types are changing. The fact not only verifies the dynamic understandings of L2 motivation, but also indicates that it is necessary to further explore the dynamic motivation of English students in China since the results of early studies may have changed.

## **1.2 Motivation in second language learning**

Researching motivation in second language learning has a quite long history: as a factor which could drive learners to learn, motivation has always been an essential topic in the field of L2 acquisition.

The understandings of L2 motivation have many different perspectives, such as integrative and instrumental motivation (Gardner, 1985), and L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2005). It seems that some motivational theories are not linked with each other as their explanations of L2 motivation are quite different. But the fact is that the development of L2 motivation theories is consecutive, and the understandings of L2 motivation become ever deeper and more complete. Influenced by the theories of motivation in general and in the field of applied linguistics more specifically, research on L2 motivation has experienced several different stages: the

socio-psychological period (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011), the cognitive-situated period (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011), the process-oriented period (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011) and the socio-dynamic period (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, see more in Section 2.2). The understanding of L2 motivation in the socio-psychological period was general and abstract, exemplified by Gardner's (1985) integrative motive; in the cognitive-situated stage, it was realised that the learning contexts have impacts on L2 motivation and understandings of the motivation were more elaborated (for example, Dörnyei's (1994a) framework of L2 motivation). The understandings of L2 motivation in the above two stages were static, focusing on the factors which could influence L2 motivation. Later, the studies on L2 motivation started to consider the influence of time: the research in the process-oriented stage explored motivation together with the learning process, considering initiating and sustaining L2 motivation. The research in the latest socio-dynamic period focuses on the complexity and the dynamics of L2 motivation; on the one hand, some studies in this stage pay attention to the role of real learners in the learning context, (for example, L2 Motivational Self System in Dörnyei, 2005); on the other hand, the stage also adopts a perspective of complex dynamic system in researching and explores motivation fluctuations in learning.

It can be seen that the understanding of L2 motivation has gradually become more comprehensive: theoretical research has evolved from the early abstract explanations of motivation to the explorations of motivation in realistic contexts. Following the development of L2 motivation, empirical studies have also experienced transitions of the research focus: early research focused on exploring the types of motivational factors and constructs, and the studies were usually one-off surveys since the understanding of motivation was static; more recent studies pay more attention to motivation in realistic contexts of language learning, and attempt to explore motivational dynamics, so the numbers of longitudinal studies is increasing. But because of the high investment of time and energy (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011), longitudinal studies are still scarce. In addition, the trend of researching motivational dynamics in real learning contexts has promoted classroom-based research: some

studies pay attention to the language learning during lessons in order to track student motivation trajectories (e.g. Waninge et. al, 2014 - see more information in Section 3.2.1).

The development of theoretical and empirical research has also enriched the instruments of researching L2 motivation. Questionnaires and interviews are very popular instruments as they are suitable for different research methods: questionnaires can provide quantitative data while qualitative data can be obtained with interviews; and mixed methods research can be satisfied with a combination of questionnaires and interviews. In addition, repeated uses of questionnaires and interviews can even be suitable for longitudinal studies. Apart from the traditional instruments, a few special instruments have been created in order to track motivation dynamics (see more in Section 3.2.1), such as Motometers (Gardner, 2004) and Idiodynamic software (MacIntyre, 2012).

Although the field of L2 motivation is fruitful, the understanding of motivation from a dynamic perspective still needs more explorations because of the lack of research on L2 motivation over time.

Taken together, researching motivational dynamics in College English classrooms can not only provide more understandings about L2 motivation from a dynamic perspective, but also explore L2 motivation in a realistic context (College English classrooms). In addition, considering the gap of motivation theories between European and American countries and China and the lack of dynamic understanding of motivation in China, researching the motivation dynamics of College English students can introduce the latest motivation research to China and lead to practical suggestions for College English teaching at the same time. The present study explores the students' motivational dynamics during the College English lessons via learning logs (see Section 3.4.3.2) first, and further investigate the causes and explanations of the changes based on the students' experiences gained from interviews (See Section 3.4.3.3).

### **1.3 Structure of the thesis**

After introducing the general context to the present study, a review of the relevant literature is presented in Chapter 2. The process of choosing and using the methods is introduced in Chapter 3; this chapter first introduces the using of Motometers, including discussions of a part of data obtained using this method and the problems involved in measuring, in this way, motivation fluctuations during lessons. The chapter goes on to provide information on the methods and instruments finally used, including questionnaire and case study with learning logs and interviews. Chapter 4 presents the data of the main study. Discussions are made in Chapter 5 concerning the research findings, trying to link the findings with the literature. Chapter 6 concludes the thesis by highlighting the significant findings, outlining implications and providing directions for future research.



## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Motivation in psychology**

Motivation is a psychological term which is usually used to explain human behaviour. It can influence people's behaviours as well as their decisions of particular actions, and drives people to achieve certain goals. According to *A Dictionary of Psychology* (4 ed.) (Colman, 2015), motivation is defined as "A driving force or forces responsible for the initiation, persistence, direction, and vigour of goal-directed behaviour"; it can therefore be seen that motivation also has an impact on how long people are able to persist with something. In addition, it is also generally believed that motivation is responsible for the effort that individuals expend on a certain activity. Considering its features, motivation plays an important role in learning and language learning as it can determine an individual's behaviour towards specific goals (Maehr & Meyer, 1997; Pintrich et al., 1993), efforts (Maehr, 1984; Pintrich et al., 1993) and persistence in learning (Larson, 2000). Therefore, motivation is also an important research dimension in language learning as it is one variable which teachers could influence at the level of the individual learner during the process of language teaching and learning. Although researchers have reached an agreement in understanding motivation according to its abovementioned features, they have tried to explain the meaning of motivation from various perspectives and there is no one comprehensive definition or theory which can show the whole picture of motivation so far (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Nevertheless, the development of motivation theories or constructs in language learning has gradually evolved over time.

During the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, motivation theories were influenced by cognitive theories. Expectancy-value theory (Fishbein, 1970s; Eccles, 1983), goal theories (Gardner & Lambert, 1972) and self-determination theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 1985) are the most famous cognitive theories of motivation. Expectancy-value theory has limitations in explaining motivation: it proposes that individuals' motivation is the interaction between their expectancies of success and values of tasks. In other words, motivation is determined by how well individuals expect to perform on a task and how much the reward of the task is. The higher the expectation of task

success and the greater the value of the task, the higher the level of the individual's motivation. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) put forward three factors, which can determine expectancy of success from an educational perspective, including one's past experiences, one's competence and abilities, and maintaining one's self-esteem. Among these factors, individuals' past experiences of successes or failures can be influenced by several attributions related to the environment, such as family background and assistance from others (Graham, 1994). In addition, the values of tasks are also relevant to the environment. There are four components of task values; a) attainment value, such as significance of learning a skill for an individual, b) intrinsic value, such as enjoyment of performing the task, c) extrinsic utility value, such as the benefit a task can bring to individual goals, and d) cost, such as time and effort (Eccles, 2007; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Among these components, c) extrinsic utility value and d) cost mainly depend on the environment. Therefore, the influence of the environment is inevitable in shaping motivation. In expectancy-value theory, the importance of subjectivity in individuals' motivation is stressed, however, the potential effects of objective factors, such as the environment in which behaviour is conducted, are de-emphasised. This makes expectancy-value theory limited in accounting for a whole picture of motivation. Furthermore, an individual's expectancy as well as the environment are not fixed all the time: they are likely to change, meaning that motivation is changeable. The current understanding of motivation has also showed that motivation is variable over time. But expectancy-value theory does not mention the possibility of motivation fluctuations.

In this 'cognitive stage (the second half of 20th century)' of motivation research, goal theories also played an important role; however, they also have their limitations. Goal theories can be divided into three parts (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011): goal-setting theory (Locke & Latham, 1990), goal-orientation theory, goal content and multiplicity. All these divisions explain how people's action is motivated by goals, but they have different focuses. Goal-setting theory gives an interpretation of different individual performances with various properties of goals. Goal-orientation theory, which mainly focuses on students' learning and performance, shows the inclination toward

obtaining and demonstrating ability in achievement situations. Goal-setting and goal-orientation theories concentrate on academic factors, while some scholars, such as Wentzel (2000), consider the influences of social goals or non-academic goals on motivation, and this subdivision of goal theory is classified as “goal content and multiplicity”. Though goal theories show various roles of individuals’ goals in motivating individuals’ actions, they ignore other possible factors which can also influence motivation: for example, one’s interest in foreign languages (Gardner, 1985), and the instrumental roles of using language and self-confidence (Dörnyei, 1994a) can also influence an individual’s motivation of learning the language. In addition, in the same way as expectancy-value theory, goal theories are not well suited to explain motivation dynamics, ignoring the fact that an individual’s goal can change at different stages. For this reason, goal theories have gradually lost ground among motivation theories.

Compared with expectancy-value theory and goal theories, a further cognitive theory, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) has made progress in explaining motivation. It provides a more comprehensive framework for understanding motivation with factors which are external to individuals, and it shows motivation types can change. Although SDT takes account of the variability of motivation, its explanation of motivation dynamics has limitations. SDT is based on a distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Intrinsic motivation (IM) and extrinsic motivation (EM) are two well-known types of motivation: they concentrate separately on the internal and external influences of an individual’s motivation. IM involves factors that influence human action for its own sake to satisfy an individual’s need or human action taken in order to experience new things and pleasant feelings. In other words, intrinsic motivation usually comes from an individual’s subjective desire. The other type of motivation, extrinsic motivation, deals with behaviour which could help to achieve a target or get a reward: the outcome and the behaviour are separable. In addition, the lack of any motivation is called amotivation (AM). SDT demonstrates the relation between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and it proposes that motivation comes from extrinsic goals or values which could be internalized. According to SDT,

motivation can change during the implementation of an action; the most expected change is from extrinsic motivation to intrinsic motivation. The variability of motivation is located not only in motivation types, but also in motivation level. For example, in accordance with expectancy-value theory, one can have a greater expectation of achieving a goal after he or she has been helped by others, and this achievement with others could make him or her recognised by more people. As one has a better expectancy of success and a higher value of task than before, the motivation level must increase; thus, motivation level can also change. Although SDT demonstrates that motivation is not invariable, its account for motivation variability is inadequate since it does not include a consideration of how levels of motivation can change with various factors.

### **Motivation and Context**

In the ‘cognitive stage (the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century)’, it was believed that motivation is located within the individual, and therefore, theories of motivation concentrated on how mental structures and beliefs influence individual behaviour (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011), while the possible impacts from social and environmental factors were ignored. Any theory of motivation cannot afford to ignore these contributory factors, as more recent work clearly establishes. Human behaviour is always embedded in various settings and environmental factors can influence individual’s thoughts and actions (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Thus, what has been termed the ‘cognitive stage’ was gradually abandoned in favour of an approach which takes environmental influences into consideration. The environmental influences were regarded as independent factors which have effects on motivation. For example, Pintrich and Schunk (2002) explored how task and materials design are able to stimulate a student’s interest and promote intrinsic motivation; Ames (1992) and Dweck (1999) found that evaluation practices and grouping structures can possibly affect student motivation in accordance with different learning goals and normative evaluation. In these studies, the different aspects of context (eg. task and material design) were studied as variables of individual motivation, and they were seen as something other than an individual’s cognition. The consideration of contextual

influences in motivational research provided more comprehensive constructs of motivation, and it led to a better understanding of how the environment is likely to influence an individual's motivation. The move from cognitive to socio-environmental approaches to motivation also entailed limitations in that researchers tended to consider contextual influences in isolation, without linking these factors to individuals. As motivation is currently understood, there are complex relationships between individuals and context. Ushioda (2009), for example, points up the inseparability of individuals and context, and individuals are situated in context and they are able to develop context. This means that context and individual are a whole, and context is not stable; rather, it is a process of evolving with individuals over time (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). So contextual factors and individuals are related to each other in controlling motivation. Furthermore, in this post-cognitive period of motivation, the understanding of one certain factor of an individual's motivation was not linked to other motivational variables. In the cognitive stage, researchers were usually focused on one specific factor and explored how one single factor affects motivation. It seemed that, in a certain situation or context, an individual's motivation was affected by merely one factor while other motivational factors had no influences on it. However, as Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) have shown, motivation can be influenced by different factors, such as dynamic and environmental factors and individuals' cognitive and affective attributes, simultaneously. A cause-effect relationship or a linear approach cannot demonstrate the nature of interactions between motivation and context. As explained above, individuals and context, which can both contribute to motivation, are indiscrete in terms of effect on motivation. Individuals cannot influence motivation without situating it in a certain context, while context cannot influence motivation alone if the roles of individuals are ignored in shaping it. Furthermore, it has now been clearly established that fluctuations exist in motivation situated in a specific context (Dörnyei & Ottó, 1998; Dörnyei, 2000). Motivation is therefore actually a result of interactions between individual and context, and motivation can change since context and the individual's cognition are not static. In other words, motivation is a complex and dynamic process

of interactions between various factors, and it cannot be changed by any single factor in isolation. In consideration of the motivation features mentioned above, complex dynamic system approaches have gradually been used in motivation research. Thus, motivation research in general has undergone a movement from an individual-focused period to a stage considering the contextual influences, and then in more recent years to a non-linear and dynamic period. Motivation in second language learning, as a part of motivation in general, has been influenced by general motivation theories and constructs, but has also developed as an independent research field with its own theories. In the next section, motivation in second language learning will be discussed.

## **2.2 Motivation in second language learning**

In language education, motivation is a significant concept. It is usually regarded as an important factor in language learning, which could have a significant influence on success or failure of the learning process. Therefore, the study of motivation in second or foreign language learning has a long history and has evolved as an independent research field; researchers have explored motivation in second or foreign language learning from different perspectives. There follows a brief overview of the development of L2 motivation studies.

Over the past five decades, researchers have set up various motivation constructs and models. According to Dörnyei (2005), the development of L2 motivation has 3 stages: a) the social psychological period (1959-1990), b) the cognitive-situated period (during the 1990s), and c) the process-oriented period (the turn of the century). During these phases, researchers and scholars have established several constructs of motivation and identified components of and influential factors in motivation, leading to the enhancement of understanding motivation. Dörnyei suggests that the development of motivational theories has demonstrated a transfer from a macro-perspective to a micro-perspective and then to a dynamic stage: the study of motivation in the social psychological period considered individuals' attitudes towards different language communities, while in the cognitive-situated period,

research analysed motivations in actual learning contexts, and expanded previous social psychological perspectives of motivation with cognitive motivation concepts (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). At this stage, researchers integrated factors from cognitive motivation theories. For instance, “performance expectancy” from expectancy-value theory, and “goal specificity” and “goal frequency” from goal theories were added to Tremblay and Gardner’s (1995) L2 motivation model which is based on Gardner’s (1985) L2 motivation theory, developed in the social psychological period. The cognitive-situated period in L2 motivation demonstrated the development of extended constructs with cognitive concepts, and also situated the frameworks in classroom settings through the 1990s. Later, in the process-oriented phase, researchers paid attention to the dynamic features of motivation (Williams & Burden, 1997; Ushioda, 1998; Dörnyei & Ottó, 1998).

a) The social psychological period

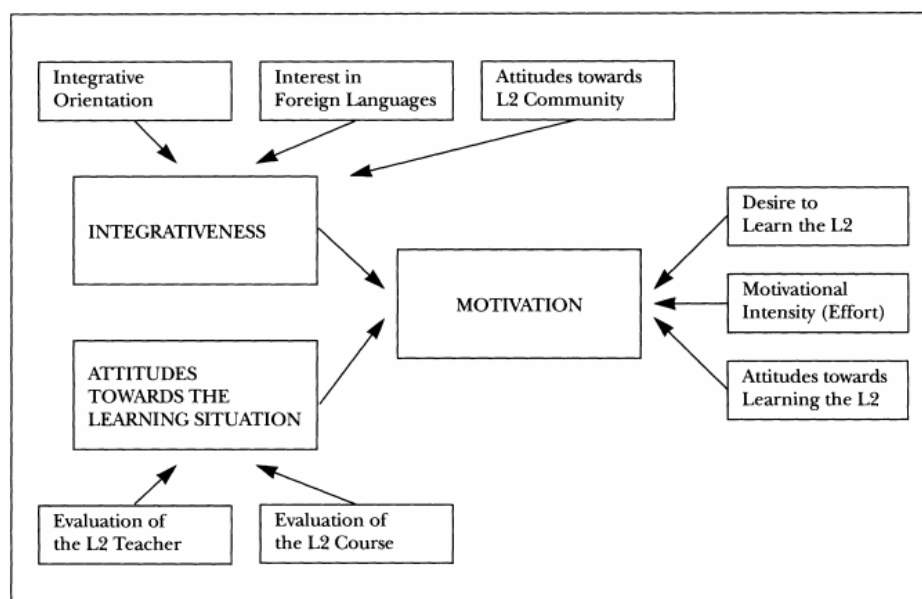


Figure 2-1 Gardner's construct of the integrative motive

In the social psychological period, the most famous motivation model is Gardner’s (1985) L2 motivation theory. Gardner believed that L2 motivation comprised effort, desire to learn L2 and attitudes towards learning the language. He put forward integrative and instrumental orientation in this motivation theory and discussed the relationship between “motivation” and “orientation”. According to Gardner, the

concept of orientation is different from motivation, which can be regarded as goals, while the function of orientation is to arouse motivations and lead L2 learners to targets. Integrative orientation refers to a positive attitude toward L2 speakers and the desire to resemble the valued members of that language community, while instrumental orientation is to use L2 to achieve some goals. Gardner also provided a concept of “integrative motive” (Gardner, 1985), and people with this motive are activated by positive attitudes towards the community of a second language. The integrative motive comprises integrativeness and attitudes towards the learning situation and motivation, while integrativeness, in turn, comprises integrative orientation, interest in foreign languages and attitudes towards L2 community.

It has been found that integrativeness plays the most important role when learners decide how much effort they plan to put into their learning (Dörnyei & Clément, 2001). However, Dörnyei (1994b) pointed out that the concept of “integrative” is not clear enough since the terms “integrative motive”, “integrative motivation”, “integrativeness” and “integrative orientation” appeared at different levels in Gardner’s construct and they were not distinguished from each other. Furthermore, Dörnyei (1994b) points out that these terms have been frequently “interchanged in the L2 literature” and that it was difficult to understand that Gardner conceptualized “motivation” as a sub-component of “integrative motive” (see Figure 2-1) as he believed “motivation” should be at the upper level. These confusions in Gardner’s integrative motive have generated debate for many years (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Furthermore, this motivational construct ignores the dynamic feature of motivation. Gardner regards motivation as an unchanging status in this conceptualization and he provided several factors that could influence an individual’s motivation. While these factors offer information about *what* can influence motivation, there is no consideration of *how* they influence motivation and how motivation changes with these factors. In addition, the focus of Gardner’s motivation structure is individual and underestimates the influence on motivation of learning context. Although the integrative motive includes factors relevant to the context of learning, such as attitudes towards L2 community, as well as the learning situation, “attitudes



towards L2 community” still concentrates on the individual’s opinions instead of the context (L2 community) itself; and “learning situation” is quite general and abstract, being merely a concept related to teacher and course in this construct. Therefore, the integrative motive ignores the dynamic features of motivation and underestimates the contextual influences. With the emergence of other L2 motivation theories and constructs, integrative motive has been gradually losing its influence on L2 motivation research (Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2012; Ushioda, 2014).

**b) The cognitive-situated period**

During the cognitive-situated period, the second stage of L2 motivation research, research started to link with the cognitive theories of motivation in general (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011), and gradually concentrated on motivation in real learning contexts. The shift in the research focus was actually an expansion of the former theories in order to establish more complete and comprehensive motivation constructs.

Dörnyei (1994a) established a “three-level framework of L2 motivation”, which displayed various motivational factors from three dimensions. The framework constituted a step forward in terms of motivational factors with detailed information about contextual influences. In this construct, the three dimensions, which are referred to as three levels, are language level, learner level and learning situation level. Dörnyei categorised the three levels and suggested that each level has an independent influence on motivation. In other words, if one factor from one level is changed while the factors from the other levels remain unchanged, the learner’s motivation is likely to change completely. Dörnyei’s framework demonstrated that teacher, learning group and course are able to influence learner’s L2 motivation. However, it still neglects the dynamic features of motivation. According to Dörnyei’s account, the language level refers to various factors related to L2, the learner level contains learner’s characteristics involved in the learning process, and the learning situation level encompasses specific motivational components which are situated in a classroom. Dörnyei put the integrative motivational subsystem and instrumental motivational subsystem, put forward by Gardner (1985), into the language level. The learner level includes self-confidence and need for achievement. In the learning situation level,

there are three parts, course-specific, teacher-specific and group-specific motivational components. Dörnyei's explanation of learning situation is connected to expectancy-value theory and goal theories, which belong to cognitive motivation theories. This combination demonstrates that cognitive-situated L2 motivation theory adopted ideas from the social psychological period. Further, the motivation theories in the cognitive-situated period expanded the understandings of motivation compared with the previous motivational theories in the social psychological period. Course-specific motivational components are relevant to teaching methods and materials, learning tasks and syllabus, which can be grouped into interest in the course, relevance to one's needs, expectancy of success and satisfaction about the outcome. Teacher-specific motivational components consider the influence on motivation of teacher's personality (see more in the part Teacher's personality on Page 43), behaviour and teaching style. Group-specific motivational components are related to the changes of learner group, which can be described with goal-orientedness and classroom goal structure. Dörnyei's framework has obvious advantages in comparison with previous motivational constructs, as it not only shows the individual effects on L2 motivation, but also highlights the contextual impact on motivation and provides some detailed information about what kind of contextual factors can influence motivation, such as the teaching method and the teacher's behaviour. That said, the framework makes no mention of flexibility in motivation initially just as previous motivational constructs did not: while all the components present a more comprehensive picture of L2 motivational factors, the framework nevertheless does not account for how these factors might change learners' motivation. In this respect it is not a substantial departure from theories in the previous, cognitive stage of general motivation. In sum, Dörnyei's three-level framework represents progress in accounting for motivational factors but leaves unexplored the area of variety within motivation.

Table 2-1 Dörnyei's (1994a) framework of L2 motivation

LANGUAGE LEVEL		Integrative motivational subsystem
		Instrumental motivational subsystem
LEARNER LEVEL		Need for achievement
		Self-confidence
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Language use anxiety</li> <li>▪ Perceived L2 competence</li> <li>▪ Causal attributions</li> <li>▪ Self-efficacy</li> </ul>
LERNING SITUATION LEVEL		
Course-specific components	motivational	Interest (in the course) components
		Relevance (of the course to one's needs)
		Expectancy (of success)
		Satisfaction (one has in the outcome)
Teacher-specific components	motivational	Affiliative motive (to please the teacher)
		Authority type (controlling VS. autonomy supporting)
		Direct socialisation of motivation
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Modelling</li> <li>▪ Task Presentation</li> <li>▪ Feedback</li> </ul>
Group-specific components	motivational	Goal-orientedness
		Norm and reward system
		Group cohesiveness
		Classroom goal structure (cooperative, competitive or individualistic)

c) The process-oriented period

The third stage of L2 motivation research is the process-oriented period. In this period, researchers started to pay attention to the impact of the time factor on L2 motivation. As learning a language is a sustained process, and motivation is not unchangeable, it can change over time. There is a very significant conceptual distinction between “motivation *for* engagement”, which refers to reasons, choices, intentions, and decisions, and “motivation *during* engagement” which concerns individual's feelings, behaviours and responses in the learning process (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, pp.60-61,

italics in the original). Williams and Burden (1997) developed a theoretical L2 motivation construct and highlighted the distinction between motivations for and during engagement. They divided the motivational process into three successive stages: reasons for doing something, deciding to do something and sustaining the effort or persisting. Williams and Burden pointed out that the first two stages are more related to how motivation initiates while the last stage is about how motivation is sustained in learning. They emphasised that initiating and sustaining motivation should be differentiated from both theoretical and pedagogical perspectives. Dörnyei and Ottó (1998) provided a more elaborate model for the process of L2 motivation with action sequence and motivational influences, which is consistent with Williams and Burden's model. Action sequence is the behavioural process of motivation while motivational influences in this model are regarded as the basis and stimulation of the behavioural process. Based on Action Control Theory (Heckhausen & Kuhl, 1985), Dörnyei and Ottó divided the behavioural process into three sections: preactional phase, actional phase and postactional phase, the whole process started with desires and wishes and hopes and finally ended with evaluation. The motivation factors which are likely to influence the behavioural process in each phase were provided separately and in addition. Both Williams and Burden's (1997) motivational construct and Dörnyei and Ottó's (1998) motivational model stressed the distinction of initiating and sustaining motivation, they attempted to demonstrate these two different stages of motivational process and that motivation is not a stable state. According to the motivational theories in the process-oriented period, motivation is actually a process changing over time. But in Dörnyei and Ottó's (1998) motivational model, the motivational influences in different phases were deductions about potential factors. So at that stage, it was still unclear which factors can initiate motivation and what can help learners sustain their motivation during their learning process. In addition, Dörnyei (2005) has, more recently, pointed out that the motivation construct assumes that the behavioural processes of L2 learning was isolated from other behavioural process learners may be engaged in at the same time. Furthermore, though motivation dynamics were considered in the process-oriented period, the account of the change

was based on cause-effect relationships, and the motivational models in this period cannot explain motivation phenomena in real situations (Dörnyei, MacIntyre & Henry, 2015). In conclusion, a more dynamic method was needed for motivational research (Dörnyei, 2009) in view of the complex interactions of L2 motivational factors and flexibility in motivation level.

### **The current socio-dynamic period**

On the basis of previous development, current L2 motivation research has moved into a socio-dynamic period with three new conceptual approaches (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011): a) a person-in-context relational view of motivation (Ushioda, 2009), b) the L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2005), and c) motivation from a complex dynamic systems perspective (Dörnyei, 2009). The first two approaches, (a) and (b), both stress the role of self in motivation: a person-in-context relational view of motivation focuses on real persons situated in contexts; and the L2 Motivational Self System concentrates on the individual's attitudes in determining motivation in varied learning environments. Approach (a) in this socio-dynamic period considers interactions between individuals and contextual factors, emphasising the complexity of real persons rather than the abstract language learners of the previous perspective.

The second approach, b) the L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2005), indicates that L2 motivation is primarily made up of three factors: firstly, an individual's expectation of being an effective L2 speaker (ideal L2 self); secondly, the social pressure from the context (ought-to L2 self); and finally, the learning experience (L2 learning experience). Inspired by Gardner's motivation theory and self theories in psychology (for further information, see Markus & Nurius's concept of "*possible selves*", 1986, 1987; also see Higgins's ideal and ought selves), the L2 Motivational Self System links L2 motivation to an individual's real "self". The L2 Motivational Self System also addresses the idea that the ideal L2 self correlates more with instrumental-promotion (which is also known as instrumentality-promotion, acquiring L2 in order to approach desired or positive outcomes) than with instrumental-prevention (which is also known as instrumentality-prevention, learning L2 for avoiding negative outcomes) while the ought-to L2 self has a prevention focus

(Dörnyei, 2009: 28; Ushioda, 2014: 134), influenced by Higgins's two types of self, *ideal and ought selves* (for further information, see Higgins, 1987,1998). As mentioned above, Gardner's integrativeness or integrative motivation has been gradually losing its influence in explaining motivation in various learning environments (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2012; Ushioda, 2014); with the development of L2 Motivational Self System, many studies have been conducted to validate the approach and explore the relationship between integrativeness and Ideal L2 Self (e.g. Csizér and Kormos, 2009; MacIntyre et al., 2009; Taguchi et al., 2009; Busse, 2010). The findings of the studies which test the effects of integrativeness and the Ideal L2 Self showed that the latter had higher influence on participants' motivation than integrativeness. The results of the studies also confirmed that the Ideal L2 self correlates more highly with Instrumentality-promotion than with Instrumentality-prevention and the Ought-to L2 self has stronger correlation with Instrumentality-prevention.

The above two approaches pay more attention to complexity of L2 motivation, rather than flexibility, while the third approach, c) researching motivation from a complex dynamic systems perspective, concerns both complexity and flexibility. The analysis of L2 motivation from a complex dynamic systems perspective provides a comprehensive account of the dynamic nature and complexity of L2 motivation. Complex dynamic systems consist of multiple interacting components: in complex and dynamic systems, two or more factors would interlink with each other and change over time; the developmental trajectories are complex and difficult to predict (for overviews, see Ellis & Larsen-Freeman, 2006; Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008a; Larsen-Freeman, 2012). In consideration of motivational flexibility and complexity of motivational factors, the complex dynamic systems perfectly match with the features of motivation.

A few concepts have been put forward, in this socio-dynamic stage, to demonstrate how motivation changes over a period of time; two such concepts are motivational flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988, 1990) and motivational currents (Muir & Dörnyei, 2013). Motivational flow and motivational currents both refer to the

experience of an individual's intensive and positive involvement in something challenging. These two concepts might seem similar, but one notable difference is that motivational flow concentrates on one's engagement in one single task, while motivational currents involve multi-tasks during a prolonged period. The need to conceptualise motivation through metaphors of running water (flow and current) arises because of the realisation that motivational levels are not fixed but can be raised in some special contexts and then fall to a lower value. Based on the concept of motivational currents, Dörnyei et al. (2014) put forward a new concept named "Directed Motivational Currents (DMC)". DMC is defined as a heightened motivational drive which can stimulate and maintain long-term behaviour; it is a description or a summary of one specific phenomenon involving motivation changes during a period of time. Dörnyei et al. pointed out that DMC could help engage language learners in pursuing their goals with intensive motivated actions.

Within the current social-dynamic period, empirical studies have also been undertaken in terms of L2 motivational flexibility. Researchers have started to trace the variability of motivation in classrooms (Busse, 2010; Hotho, 2000; Pawlak, 2012; Pourpore, 2013, etc.). It seems from the empirical research that motivation could change over years, months, and even in minutes and seconds. Hotho (2000) found that teachers could feel that students' motivation could change from week to week, even where the overall motivation of students is stable over a semester. Busse (2010) conducted a study involving first-year German learners in universities via questionnaires and interviews and found their motivation changed over one academic year. The fluctuations of short-term motivation in several classroom hours were also found in studies by Pawlak (2012) and Poupore (2013). Pawlak (2012) conducted a study with 28 Polish high school students, examining their motivation in four lessons. He used a motivation grid (more details in Methodology, Section 3.1.1) to investigate the changes of students' motivational levels in class, and used a questionnaire and interviews to learn about the possible factors responsible for these changes. Pawlak found that students' motivation can fluctuate in one lesson and can also change in a series of lessons. But he also pointed out that there were few studies discussing the

in-class motivation fluctuations of students. Further, motivational variability may also exist in intervals of minutes. Waninge, de Bot and Dörnyei (2014), traced students' motivation by minutes during language lessons, and found considerable motivation changes of the participants. They investigated how motivation fluctuated among four students in three Spanish and three German lessons of 45-50 minutes each during two weeks. They used a revised version of the Motometer (Gardner et al., 2004, more details in Methodology, Section 3.1.1) to track the flexibility of student motivational changes every five minutes during the lessons. MacIntyre and Serroul (2015) used a combination of a questionnaire, motivation ratings with Idiodynamic software (MacIntyre, 2012; see more details in Methodology, Section 3.1.1) and interviews to record the students' motivation trajectories in L2 oral tasks and found that students' motivation can fluctuate in seconds during the oral tasks.

In addition, Waninge et al. (2014), de Bot (2015) as well as MacIntyre and Serroul (2015) all pointed out that motivation in learning a foreign language can fluctuate at different timescales with influences of various factors. Waninge et al. (2014) conducted a study with four language learners over a two-week period using a Motometer, classroom observations and a questionnaire to examine the variability of students' motivation in class. Their research results demonstrated that students' motivation can change over time and can also be stable at some phases; the fluctuations of students' motivation cannot be separate from individuals' learning contexts. De Bot (2015) argued that motivation may be generated on different timescales (long-term or short-term) in language learning and that motivation strength could change over time. Macintyre & Serroul (2015) invited 12 undergraduates to examine their motivational fluctuations in communication processes: they required participants to complete eight L2 oral tasks and videotaped the whole process. The participants were then asked to rate their motivation in accordance with their videos via Idiodynamic software. The research results confirmed that students' motivation can change in seconds.

Taken together, L2 learning motivation theories have transferred from static perspectives (the social psychological period and the cognitive-situated period) to



dynamic understandings (the process-oriented period and the socio-dynamic period) of motivation. The fluctuations of students' motivation have been observed in empirical studies, and these studies on motivation flexibility have not only shown different timescales of motivation changes, but also have found some different factors and reasons, which could cause the motivation fluctuations.

### **Teachers' behaviour in motivation**

Teachers' words and behaviour in the classroom could possibly affect a student's motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Teachers' impacts on students' motivation are not only mentioned in motivational theories, but are also proved by many empirical studies. First, based on the various motivational models and structure, it can be seen that the influential factors of motivation have been extended from students' subjective emotions and attitudes to some objective elements related to environment as well as factors relevant to some other people, such as students' parents and teachers. Gardner (1985) regarded "evaluation of the L2 teacher" as a measurement of motivation; Dörnyei (1994) also mentioned that the teacher could have an impact on the learner's motivation. He suggested several teacher-specific motivational components in his L2 motivation structure, which concern the motivational influence of the teacher's behaviour and teaching style. In addition, in the L2 motivation framework of Williams and Burden (1997), language teachers are described as an external factor of motivation.

Second, some research results have also demonstrated the impact of language teachers on students' motivation. Oxford (1998) found that the teacher's personal relationship with the students and attitude towards the course or the material could cause demotivation; Chambers' (1993) study found the teachers' behaviour could have negative influences on students. Csizér, Kormos and Sarkadi (2009, 2010) found that a) a teacher's behaviour could influence dyslexic language learners' attitudes and confidence in language learning and b) a teacher's instruction methods and attitudes towards dyslexic learners have significant impacts on their enthusiasm for the language. Csizér, Kormos and Sarkadi also suggested that it is necessary to explore their research outcomes with other types of language learners. Busse and Walter (2013)

also mentioned that their participants had different opinions about the impact of their teachers in language learning. Some students thought the teachers had no influence on their motivation while others believed their interest in language learning were indeed related to their teachers to some extent. Waninge, de Bot and Dörnyei (2014) also found that students' attitudes toward their teachers have an effect on their attitudes toward language learning. According to their study, the student who has a positive attitude toward the teacher usually actively engages in the classroom activities; and the classroom activities planned by teachers could impact a student's motivation during the lessons. Urhahne (2015) pointed out that teacher behaviour can influence students' motivation and emotion, and advised that teachers should carefully think about their behaviour towards their students to prevent negative influences on students' motivation.

### **Teacher's personality**

Teacher's personality can also work as a motivational factor. In Dörnyei's (1994) L2 motivation framework, teacher's personality has been recognized as a motivational component (see the part of b) The cognitive-situated period on Page 35). Furthermore, the impact of teacher's personality on learners' motivation has also been verified in empirical studies. Eggen and Kauchak (2007) confirmed the influence of teacher's personality on students' motivation: they pointed out that the impact of teachers on motivation is an interaction of several factors including teacher's personality. Research has also confirmed the negative influences of the teacher's personality. Dörnyei (1998) found in his research that the teacher was identified as the largest category among the nine types of negative impacts on students' motivation, and the teacher's personality was one demotivating factor in the category of the teacher. Sakai and Kikuchi (2009) also confirmed the demotivating effect of the teacher's personality on students' learning motivation. So Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) argued that students' motivation can be influenced not only in positive ways, but also in negative ways, and the negative impacts may relate to learners themselves or to the social learning context, such as the teacher's personality and attitude.

It thus has appeared necessary to focus research interest on exploring teachers' influence on students' motivation in different contexts. Dörnyei and Csizér (1998) put forward *ten commandments for motivating language learners*, including recommendations for teachers such as “developing a good relationship with the learners”, “make the language classes interesting” and “create a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom”. These ten recommendations not only provided several measures that can increase students' in-class motivation levels, but also a conviction that language teachers' behaviour can influence students' motivation. Although these commandments were put forward in a Hungarian context, they have been tested in other settings. Cheng and Dörnyei (2007) conducted a piece of comparative research in Taiwan to confirm whether Dörnyei and Csizér's *ten commandments* were appropriate for a new context. Chen and Dörnyei found both some similarities and differences between the original commandments and their new research results. It is clearly necessary to explore the appropriate commandments for language teachers in various contexts, such as some particular classrooms or teacher-learner groups.

In sum, in accordance with the claims from motivational theories and constructs and the results from empirical studies, it is obvious that a teacher's behaviour can influence his/her students' motivation in language learning. In order to understand how to maintain, or even increase students' motivation levels, it is necessary to explore the impacts of teachers on students' motivation in classrooms.

## **2.3 Motivation in College English course in China**

### **2.3.1 Motivation studies on English learning in China**

Chinese scholars and teachers have conducted many studies about motivation in English language learning. Some researchers have focused on motivation theories and discussed their implications in China. For instance, Dai (2000) introduced Arnold's book, *Affective factors in language learning*, which includes motivation and definitions of affective factors. Dai briefly summarised the content of the book and the authors' opinions, and discussed definitions of affective factors, such as anxiety, inhibition and self-esteem. Dai provides a good review of Arnold's *Affective factors in*

*language learning* for Chinese scholars and teachers, but his purpose is limited, seemingly, to an introduction to Arnold's book. Wu (2001) summarises main motivation theories, constructs and factors from European and American countries current in the 1990s, and describes their meanings in teaching. He provides brief introductions to expectancy-value theory, goal theories and self-determination theories, and discusses Dörnyei's (1994) three-level L2 motivation framework and Trembley and Gardner's (1995) model. He lists several empirical studies carried out in the 1990s and summarises their conclusions; he also presents some advice given by Oxford and Shearin (1994) to teachers and suggestions by Dörnyei and Csizér (1998) to language learners. Wu (2001) provides a brief overview of the motivational theories and constructs current in the 1990s giving Chinese researchers and teachers an overall understanding of motivation research in European and American countries during that period. However, Wu limits himself to reporting ideas and comments from other scholars. He does not provide his own opinions nor attempt to apply these theories and constructs to the reality of English education in China. His work is actually an introduction of motivation theories in the 1990s from outside China. Qin (2002) discusses motivation and motivation theories from different perspectives, and provides several suggestions in language learning. She states motivation theories in the psychology field from behavioural psychology, biological psychology and cognitive psychology, where she deals with self-efficacy theory and self-determination theory; and she discusses the roles of these theories in foreign language learning. Qin also explains some motivations of Chinese students in English learning, mentioning the theories discussed above. Though she tries to connect motivation theories to the reality of English learning in China, her claims are actually conjectures lacking in arguments since she made statements without empirical data. She has perceived that motivation is complex, and that it is necessary to combine various motivational theories from different perspectives together in order to understand motivation as a whole. This represents the beginning in China of considering the complexity of motivation; it has provided Chinese researchers and teachers with a wider vision in researching L2 motivation. Although Qin's work tries

to provide a comprehensive picture of L2 motivation, the understanding of motivation in foreign language learning is in a static perspective and there is still no consideration of motivation variety. A little more recently, Zhou and Rao (2007) have demonstrated the research directions and trends of motivation in learning from 1959 to 2005. They summarise motivational research in European and American countries and point out that motivational research is as diversified as motivation is complex; research has gradually paid attention to motivation dynamics, based on the notion that motivation can change over time. They also discussed two problems in L2 motivation studies: first, that the directions of motivation research are very limited with studies usually concentrating on motivational factors and neglecting influences from the macro perspective and second, that the research methods in motivation studies are usually questionnaires or tests which are simplistic and cannot show the overall features of motivation. Zhou and Rao also suggest various methods which could be used in motivation research in order to have more comprehensive understandings of motivation. Based on previous research, they provide several suggestions in researching L2 motivation, such as using multiple methods in exploring student motivation, combining theories from various perspectives and fields in order to draw a more comprehensive motivation framework and paying attention to the time factor in motivation. These studies have provided new theories and constructs as well as evaluations of these theories to Chinese scholars and teachers, but either the researchers have not linked these theories to the real situations of English learners in China, or their efforts of establishing this link were quite limited. It can be seen that there is a gap between the motivational research undertaken in China and in European and American countries, and that motivational research in China falls behind European and American motivation studies.

While the aforementioned scholars offer little or nothing in terms of empirical evidence, some Chinese scholars have endeavored to investigate motivation in the Chinese context. Shi (2000), for example, conducted an investigation with 78 science undergraduates and analysed the relation between college students' motivation and learning results of English learning. She developed a questionnaire about student

motivation types and found that the majority of the participating students learnt English for getting degrees, passing exams or for their future career. The motivation of Chinese students focused on getting degrees and passing exams is called certificate motivation (Hua, 1998), which is obviously a type of instrumental motivation. In accordance with the students' scores of College English Test 4 (CET 4) (See Section 1.1.2 and Section 2.3.2 for more information about College English and College English Test), Shi also divided the students into three groups (high, middle, low) and compared their motivation types. It was found that students with high scores usually were interested in English learning while certificate motivation was the major motivation for students who got lower scores in CET 4. In other words, the successful learners were willing to learn English and had integrative motivation, but those less-successful students had instrumental motivation and didn't like English learning. Therefore, Shi advised teachers to develop students' interests in English learning. Shi's study explored the motivation of Chinese students in English learning and provided reasonable suggestions in English teaching and learning in China. However, Shi's focus was restricted to types of motivation, without paying attention to features of motivation, such as complexity and flexibility. Hao and Hao (2001) explored how achievement motive and anxiety influence student motivation in learning English. They invited one hundred non-English major postgraduates to answer two scales, *state-trait anxiety inventory* (STAI) (for a complete view, see Spielberger, 1980) and *the achievement motive scale* (see Gjesme & Nygard, 1970), and asked the participants to take a self-designed English mock test. They analysed the correlation between their English performance and achievement motivation as well as anxiety, and found anxiety had an effect on students' English performance; the higher the achievement motive students had, the better performance they had in English tests. This study was inspired from motivational theories from European and American countries and made use of mature instruments in order to carry out an empirical study of Chinese students in English learning; it also provided some useful suggestions in English teaching. But it is also obvious that it simply focused on simple relations between one motivational factor (anxiety) or a part of motivation (achievement

motive) and students' performance, ignoring the complexity and flexibility of motivation.

Some Chinese studies have discussed the type and intensity of motivation. Qin and Wen (2002) investigated 500 non-English major undergraduates, by obtaining answers from a questionnaire designed by themselves, matching these to their participant's college entrance examination scores. They were able to confirm the complexity of L2 motivation: finding 13 motivation varieties of non-English major undergraduates and that these varieties, taken all together, influenced the participants' motivation; motivation was not a result of any single factor. With the motivation varieties confirmed in their study, Qin and Wen built a causal model of English learning motivation. They tried to demonstrate the complexity of motivation in English learning.

Based on data from over two thousand undergraduates, another empirical study was taken by Gao, Zhao, Cheng and Zhou (2003a). They explored the types of motivation in English learning as well as the relationship between types and intensity of motivation. They found seven major motivations of undergraduates in China: intrinsic interest, performance in learning, context of learning, going abroad, social responsibility, future development and information medium. They gave several suggestions in teaching on the basis of the intensity of the seven motivations. Their study has the advantage of being empirical but nevertheless is flawed in that the participants included both English major and non-English major undergraduates: there might be differences between the motivations held by English major and non-English major students. In addition, the research did not show the interaction between the various motivation orientations and the changes in motivation. Huang & Wen (2005) conducted an investigation with 200 non-English major undergraduates to understand the motivational factors in English learning. They summarised the research results of previous motivational research in China and put forward a hypothetical model of motivation framework. Huang and Wen asked the participants to answer a questionnaire which was designed on the basis of their model. They confirmed nine motivational factors: value of English, evaluation of the culture of English-speaking

countries, evaluation from others (the teacher and peers), personal needs, evaluation for the teacher and lessons, personality, social requirements, certificate motive and self-efficacy. Huang and Wen argued that motivation in learning English is influenced by various factors, and gave some advice about how to increase the motivation levels of Chinese non-English major undergraduates: first, English teachers should try to inspire students' initiatives; second, it is better to highlight the influence of social environment on motivation and to improve students' abilities of using English in practice; third, it is necessary to enhance the students' understandings about the value of English. Huang & Wen's research established a motivation framework for non-English major undergraduates, and demonstrated several different factors that could influence a student's motivation. But their model was limited to a list of motivational factors; it was static and illustrated nothing about the interactions between these motivational factors.

All of the above researchers (Shi, 2000; Hao & Hao, 2001; Qin & Wen, 2002; Gao et al., 2003a, 2003b; Huang & Wen, 2005) have applied motivation theories to English teaching in China, but their work, in each case, is limited to just one aspect or factor of motivation, and they do not pay attention to the variability of motivation. Though the above studies have been published in reputable journals concerning English education in China, it still can be seen that most existing studies on student motivations in China mainly concentrate on introducing motivation theories from European and American countries, investigating the functions of motivation in improving student's performance and the factors of motivation and their interrelations, as well as exploring the structure, type and intensity of motivation. That said, Chinese researchers have gradually paid attention to motivation dynamics. Gao et al. (2002) explored the relationship between motivation types and changes of self-identification. They invited about two thousand undergraduates to answer a questionnaire designed by themselves about students' motivation types, intensity and self-identification. Their research results showed that students' different types of motivation could interact with different aspects of self-identification, and these interactions could increase or decrease students' motivational levels. Xu (2013) tracked over 200 undergraduates'



motivation level in two years. She revised a language learning motivation scale (see Schmidt, 1996) and asked the participants to use the scale at three time points during two years. She found the participants had higher motivation level at the beginning of the first year. However, both Gao and Xu either focused on the general changes of students' motivation, or simply confirmed that motivation of English learning is variable.

Chang (2016a, 2016b) first introduced the dynamic understanding of L2 motivation from European and American countries to China: he briefly described Directed Motivational Currents (DMC) (Dörnyei, 2014, 2015) (Chang, 2016a) and suggested that researchers should consider the dynamic feature of L2 motivation; Chang also gave an introduction to the book *Motivational Dynamics in Language Learning* (Chang, 2016b) and conducted empirical studies on the basis of the dynamic understanding of L2 motivation. In his investigation, he required 10 English postgraduates to recall the ups and downs of their motivation intensity in the four years of being undergraduates majored in English via charts and interviews (Chang, 2017), and found that different participants may have different motivational trajectories, and that motivation changes were caused by various motivational factors, and that motivational ups and downs were closely related to various English exams. Chang (2018) replicated the research of Waninge et al. (2014) with 4 undergraduates majored in English; he found that the participants' English learning motivation changes were relevant to English exams, which confirmed his finding in his previous study (Chang, 2017); he also found that the participants' learning environment and individual attitudes toward learning can also have impacts on their motivation flexibility. According to the results, Chang suggested that it is necessary to pay attention to the students' motivation dynamics and individual differences in English learning motivation. Chang's studies introduced the latest trend of researching L2 motivation in European and American countries, and undoubtedly the studies have provided a new direction of researching L2 motivation in China. His studies not only confirmed the dynamic nature of L2 motivation, but also provided empirical evidence of the complexity of L2 motivation. However, his research only investigated the

undergraduates who majored in English; information about the motivation dynamics of other groups of English students, such as College English students, is still unknown; following his suggestions in his research in 2017 and 2018, more attention should be paid to the students' motivation variety and the individual differences since his studies were just the beginning of researching L2 motivation dynamics in China.

Yuan and Ji (2017) also replicated Waninge et al.'s (2014) research. They invited 4 Business English undergraduates to record their motivation dynamics during their English lessons via Motometers. Their research result showed that there were individual differences in motivational changes between students and that the changes were influenced by various factors, such as the English proficiency of students, the learning contents and the intonation of the English teacher. Their research explored the motivation dynamics based on a context in China, and it provided more knowledge about the motivation flexibility of English majored students. However, their study does not discuss the above factors thoroughly; further research is needed to explore the links between the students' motivation changes and the aforementioned factors. In addition, Yuan and Ji's research was similar to Chang's in that it focused on English majored students as participants. As discussed above, more explorations are needed to investigate the motivation dynamics of other English learners in China.

Summing up, research into motivational dynamics has only just started in China: on the one hand, Chinese L2 motivational studies, which are mainly replications of European and American studies, are some way behind the research in European and American countries; on the other hand, the understanding of L2 motivational dynamics in Chinese contexts is quite limited; therefore, further exploration on the variation of English learning motivation in Chinese contexts is needed.

### **2.3.2 College English students**

As mentioned in the Introduction Chapter, the current study chooses College English students as participants because of two reasons (see the beginning of Section 1.1): first, the effect of College English is not very satisfactory though the Chinese government has put great efforts into supporting the teaching of the course (see

Section 1.1.2). Considering the facilitating role of motivation in L2 learning, studying the motivation of College English students is possible to improve the effect of College English. Second, the current L2 motivational studies in China fall behind the research in European and American countries (see the end of Section 1.1.2 and Section 1.2): the studies on L2 motivation in China mainly concentrate on a static perspective while the motivational research in European and American countries has highlighted dynamic features of L2 motivation. In addition, although there are merely a few studies in China considering motivation dynamics, the comparison between the results of Hua's (1998) research and *English learning Status of Contemporary Chinese Residents* in 2018 (see the end of Section 1.1.2) shows College English students' motivation has changed over years. The lack of research on dynamic features of L2 motivation and the potential changes of Chinese English learners' motivation make it necessary to pay attention to the motivation of College English students.

The above aspects show that it is necessary to explore the motivational dynamics of College English students. Apart from the necessity of exploring the motivation of College English students, choosing College English students as research participants also has its advantages, as College English students are ideal participants for motivation dynamic studies. First, College English students usually are over 18 years old and they have strong self-awareness. Compared to younger students, they are better able to reflect on something which is not easily observable. Second, as College English students are adults, there are fewer ethical problems for their participation in studies in comparison with younger learners. In addition, compared with non-English major students, English major students are usually perceived as highly motivated in English learning, so they are not the first choice for researchers in investigating English learning motivation. Therefore, researchers are more likely to collect richer and more useful data with the non-English major College English students.

Therefore, considering the necessity and the advantages of researching their motivation dynamics in English learning, College English students are selected as participants of the current research.

## 2.4 Research questions

Following the discussions (section 2.2 above) of the development of L2 motivation and the dynamic nature and complexity of L2 motivation, it can be seen that L2 motivation research has experienced several stages including the social psychological period, the cognitive-situated period and the process-oriented period, and the L2 motivation research focus has also moving from a static perspective to a complex and dynamic perspective. According to the empirical studies on L2 motivation dynamics, it is clear that motivation dynamics is not only a theoretical concept, but also a reality confirmed in several studies: a student motivation in language learning can fluctuate over years and even in minutes (Chang, 2017, 2018; Hotho, 2000; Pawlak, 2012; Poupore, 2013; Waninge, de Bot & Dörnyei, 2014; Mercer, 2015; de Bot, 2015, MacIntyre & Serroul, 2015; Waninge et al., 2014; Yuan & Ji, 2017). Although there have been several studies researching the L2 motivational dynamics, researching L2 motivation dynamics just starts, not only because the number of the studies on L2 motivational dynamics is quite limited, but also because the existed studies are also limited in learning contexts: the majority of the current studies are conducted in European and American countries, and considering the learners motivation can be influenced by the learning context, the research results may differ from the different learning contexts. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct more studies on L2 motivation dynamics in various learning contexts.

Teachers' influences on students' motivation in language learning have also been confirmed in theories and empirical research (see Section 2.2 Teachers' behaviour in motivation). But, just like the studies on L2 motivation dynamics, the research on the impacts of teachers on L2 motivation is much more limited in number. In addition, the current studies on the influences of teachers' behaviour on students' L2 motivation mostly research learners' motivation from a static perspective, and only a few studies (Csizér, Kormos & Sarkadi, 2010; Waninge, de Bot & Dörnyei, 2014) have found out the teachers' impacts on learners' motivation changes when researching L2 motivational dynamics. In other words, there are very a few studies exploring the links between teachers behaviour and the students' motivational dynamics.

Furthermore, the existed studies on the impact of teachers behaviour are also mainly conducted in European and American contexts, and there are few studies investigating the influence of teachers behaviour on students' motivation fluctuations in language learning of students in other contexts. Considering the above limitations of researching the impact of teachers behaviour on L2 motivational dynamics, it is also necessary to further explore the teachers' influences on L2 motivation dynamics.

According to the discussions in Section 2.3, the research on L2 motivation of Chinese students is much more limited compared to the studies in European and American countries, especially the studies on students' motivation flexibility in English learning and the explorations of teachers' impacts on learners L2 motivation. Considering the significance of College English in Chinese higher education and the large population of College English students, it is worth researching the motivational varieties of Chinese College English students since the understanding of their motivation changes could possibly help stimulate their motivation and promote their English learning. Therefore, it is also impelling to explore the leaners motivation dynamics in China.

Taken together, the current study decides to investigate the motivation dynamics of College English students in China and the impacts of the teacher's behaviour on students English learning motivation. In order to understand the flexibility of student's motivation in College English classes, the first research question is "*How do students' motivations change in College English lessons?*"

Further, to explore the factors responsible for the students' motivational fluctuations in College English lessons, especially the influences of teachers and classroom activities on students' motivation, another research question is "*How do these fluctuations relate to teachers' behaviour or classroom activities?*"

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This research set out to investigate how students' motivations fluctuate in Chinese College English classes, and to explore the relationship between motivation changes and teachers' behaviour in conducting in-class activities. The specific research questions are:

- a. How do students' motivations change in College English lessons?
- b. How do these fluctuations relate to teachers' behaviour or classroom activities?

In order to answer these questions, two main methods with different participants were used. The research can be divided into two stages: the pilot study period and the main study period. In the pilot stage, Motometers (Gardner, 2004) and classroom observation (see Section 3.1) were used in the beginning to record students' in-class motivational fluctuations; however, students' responses to Motometers were not as positive as expected and the results seemed not to be reliable (see Section 3.1.3). In consideration of the difficulties in using this method of exploring the complexity of students' motivational fluctuations, another method, case study, was chosen to further explore the depth of College English students' motivation fluctuations. A pilot for a case study was carried out and a few modifications were made to the design, based on its results. The main study was carried out with a revised case study design (see Section 4).

The research design is introduced in Section 2 with reasons for choosing and changing research methods. The pilot studies are described in Section 3.3: the details of the first pilot study (Motometers) are presented in Section 3.3.1, including participants (3.3.1.1), details of study design and instruments (3.3.1.2), data analysis (3.3.1.3) and problems in using Motometers (3.3.1.4); Section 3.3.2 presents the information about the second pilot study (case study) with participants (Section 3.3.2.1), and study design (3.3.2.2), as well as data analysis and directions of improving the study design (3.3.2.3). The description of the main study is in Section 4; Section 3.4.1 presents the study design; the participants taking part in the main study are introduced in Section 3.4.2; the instruments used in the main study are described

in Section 3.4.3. Section 3.4.4 shows the ways of analysing the data collected in the main study.

### **3.2 Research design**

In order to answer the two research questions, the crucial issue was that of how to record the trajectories of College English students' motivation. In the field of researching motivational dynamics in language learning, a few methods have been invented to record the fluctuations of learners' motivation. Comparing the advantages and disadvantages of these methods, as well as considering the context of this research, it was decided at first to use Motometers in order to record College English students' in-class motivation changes (see details in Section 3.3.1.2.1). An eight-week pilot study for Motometers was first carried out in order to test whether Motometers could be fitted into Chinese College English classes. The results of the pilot for Motometers demonstrated many problems (see details in Section 3.3.1.4). In order to have more reliable and richer data about the dynamic motivation of College English students, a four-week case study was then chosen to further explore students' in-class motivation changes (see details in Section 3.3.2). The pilot for the case study confirmed that richer data can be provided in the case study, but the design in the pilot still had some shortcomings in data collection. In order to explore College English students' in-class motivation changes and possible reasons causing those changes, a few modifications were made to the research design (see details in 3.3.2.3), for example, a questionnaire survey was added to the four-week main study.

#### **3.2.1 Researching motivation fluctuations**

As mentioned in the Literature Review, there are several problems to be considered when conducting research on motivation. First, motivation refers to mental states related to an individual's behaviour: it is abstract and subjective. So motivation cannot be observed directly and there is no objective way of measuring it (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). In addition, it is also difficult to measure motivation since motivation is a system with intricate components and structures. Therefore, it is not easy to

choose and settle upon a way of measuring motivation. That said, the subjective nature of motivation actually helps in measuring motivation itself: although abstract and subjective mental states are difficult to be observed, feelings and attitudes can be understood easily. So researchers usually observe student motivation through investigating students' opinions or attitudes. According to Gardner's (1985) understanding, an individual's feelings or attitudes relevant to language are an important part of shaping motivation. Furthermore, Dörnyei's (2005) L2 Motivational Self System made a progression from Gardner's theory with explaining the theoretical basis of the components and situating motivation in various contexts. Therefore, an individual's feelings or attitudes can be regarded as measurements of motivation level. Many researchers have used an individual's feelings or attitudes as a parameter of motivation. Gardner (1985), in the context of English-speaking Canadians learning French, developed the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB), which includes items such as "attitudes toward learning French" and "interest in learning foreign languages", to measure motivation. Waninge et al. (2014) used a question "How much do I enjoy this lesson right now?" as a reference of student motivation level. Busse and Walter (2013) used five items about enjoyment in learning to measure students' motivation level, such as "I really enjoy learning German" and "I find learning German really interesting". All the examples above demonstrated that the students' attitudes toward, and feelings about, language learning can be used as a measurement of motivation level. In addition, researchers usually investigate learners' motivation via their attitudes and feelings with questionnaires (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998; Dörnyei & Kormos, 2000; Chen, Warden & Chang, 2005, etc.), interviews (Ushioda, 2001; Csizér, Kormos & Sarkadi, 2010, etc.) or mixed-methods (Lamb, 2004; Ryan, 2009a, etc.). Questionnaires in motivation research use closed and open questions, as well as Likert scales and some other types of items to collect data. The different scales are quite useful in investigating motivation as they can demonstrate different levels of students' opinions, and help researchers to understand what motivates students most.

A second problem in doing motivation research, considering its dynamic features, is that motivation cannot be represented by one test or one survey only at one time



point. It is necessary to investigate motivation over a period of time in order to understand the motivational dynamic progress. The majority of research on motivation changes also uses questionnaires, interviews (Shoaib & Dörnyei, 2005; Csizér, Kormos & Sarkadi, 2010, etc.), or mixed-methods (Busse & Walter, 2013, etc.). But, in order to track the trajectories of variation in motivation, a few special instruments have been used in dynamic motivation research, such as Gardner et al.'s (2004) Motometer.

Gardner et al. (2004) first used a thermometer-shaped bar chart named “Motometer” to record motivational levels, by drawing a horizontal line and considering a) how hard the participants tried, b) how much the participants wanted to learn and c) how much the participants enjoyed the class. The figure was marked at the bottom with “low” and at the top with “high”. The researchers required students to use one Motometer in one lesson, and students’ motivation was measured in four classes during the academic year. The four Motometers together could directly show the ups and downs of the participants’ motivation over the year.

Waninge, de Bot and Dörnyei (2014) also used Motometers to track the changes of students’ motivation, but they made a little adaptation: they put ten Motometers together on an A4 size sheet of paper, so that participants could rate their motivation levels at ten different time points in one lesson and the ten Motometers together could show the trajectories of their motivation changes during one lesson. They also added a clearer range, from 0 to 100. A comment part was also added on the bottom of the paper. The participants were required to record their motivation levels every 5 minutes with Motometers, and the comment section allowed the participants to give more information about their motivation levels. This revised Motometer was considered to be very helpful in tracking the motivation changes because it could directly demonstrate the ups and downs of motivation, and these changes were made instantly rather than in a retrospective way. However, as participants had to stop to use Motometers during their lessons, their motivations could have been influenced by the interruptions.

Pawlak (2012) used a motivation grid in four consecutive English lessons. The

motivation grid consisted of a scale from 1 to 7, recording the changes of students' interest and engagement and a comment space was provided at the end of the grid. Pawlak required students to use the grid every 5 minutes for 9 times during their lessons as a way of easily tracking the fluctuations of students' motivation. It might be easier for participants to make a choice from a 7-level scale rather than a bar from 0 to 100, as was required by Waninge, de Bot and Dörnyei, but there is little information about the meaning or representation of the rank from 1 to 7, and the scale is too abstract. The thermometer-shaped Motometer, on the other hand, could give participants a visual image. In addition, the motivation grid also has the familiar problem of interrupting the normal lessons.

The 'Idiodynamic' method (MacIntyre, 2012; MacIntyre & Legatto, 2011) represents another new way to record variation in motivation. This method can record the participants' performance during communication tasks via specially-designed Windows-based software; it then allows participants to rate their levels of motivation from -5 to +5 with the computer mouse, when the researcher plays the video recording back. If there is no response from the user, the software is able to mark the point with zero automatically. After the rating process, a graph of ratings will be presented. MacIntyre and Serroul (2015) used Idiodynamic software as one of their instruments to investigate the motivational dynamics of students. The Idiodynamic software could also show motivation changes directly, and with the video recording, the participants found it easier to recall their attitudes toward the learning. However, using this software needs a computer. Compared with other ways of collecting data, it has a higher technological requirement. Furthermore, it takes extra time to review and rate the motivation level, for participants as well as researchers, so it might be difficult to persuade participants to take part.

Since it cannot be guaranteed that College English lessons are allocated in computer-equipped rooms, Idiodynamic software was not appropriate in this study. Motometers (Waninge et al., 2014) and motivation grids (Pawlak, 2012) are similar to some extent, but as motivation grids are tables of numbers, while Motometers look like a line chart, and they are more intuitive, Waninge et al's (2014) Motometer was

chosen as the initial method to collect data about College English students' in-class motivation changes, albeit in a revised form, adapted to this research project.

However, there were two problems in using Motometers. First, using Motometers was difficult to collect data in the College English classrooms: it seemed that the participants were reluctant to use Motometers during the lessons. On the one hand, the whole class of participants showed a low rate in responding to Motometers: only 6 out of 42 students completed all the Motometers in eight lessons; on the other hand, some of the participants recorded their motivational levels as being all the same in each lesson, and this kind of Motometer data cannot be considered reliable (see more in Part a of Section 3.3.1.4). Second, the combination of Motometers and classroom observation could only show what classroom activities or teacher's behaviour could cause students' in-class motivation changes, it could not explain why and how the classroom activities or the teacher's behaviour could increase or decrease students' in-class motivation levels. Therefore, a new method was needed to substitute Motometers in consideration of the above problems and shortcomings in using it in current research context.

### **3.2.2 Case study**

Since the pilot study demonstrated several shortcomings of using Motometers with College English students (see details in Section 3.3.1.4), a method was needed which could have more active responses from participants and could explore students' in-class dynamic motivation and reasons more deeply.

In the aforementioned pilot study, the data from Motometers could show the students' motivational fluctuations in class, and the classroom observation could demonstrate the procedures of the lessons. The combination of these two methods demonstrated what happened when students' motivation levels changed or remained constant over a period of time. In other words, the relationship between students' in-class motivation varieties and their teacher's behaviour mainly depended on linking the data from Motometers and classroom observation together. But the participants' responses to Motometers were not very active, among the 42 students of the

participating class, only 6 participants used Motometers properly in all the eight College English lessons. In addition, the combination of Motometers and classroom observations could not show all the possible factors that influenced students' in-class motivation, since the two methods could not tell one student's feelings or thoughts about some certain activities or the teacher's behaviour and could not show what motivated or demotivated the student during the lessons. It seemed that it was difficult to collect information about College English students' in-class motivation changes from a large number of students with Motometers during over a period of time. Therefore, the focus of the further data collection turned to investigate in-depth information about College English students' motivational changes and paid more attention to College English students' personal attitudes and feelings. Considering the above difficulties and the shortcomings of the combination of Motometers and classroom observation, it was necessary to think about changing the method of data collection.

As case study is able to collect rich data of a bounded unit or one aspect of the unit (Yin, 1983; Stake, 1995; Pollard, 1996; Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013): it could obtain an in-depth understanding of a bounded entity in contexts of real life (Yin, 2009), and it is apt to explore the "how" and "why" of specific contemporary phenomena. Consequently, a case study was chosen to further explore student motivation flexibility during College English lessons. The case study design could potentially collect sufficient information about the students' personal evaluations toward their teacher's behaviour and classroom activities, which could show how and why student motivation changes. Furthermore, the form of data collection in a case study is not prescriptive (Vanwynsberghe & Khan, 2007; Elliott & Lukeš, 2008; Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013). A variety of methods can be used to collect data in a case study. This flexibility is very helpful in further data collection as, according to the demands of the research, one or more tools can be used to collect data. In this research, the flexibility of a case study (a free combination of methods) could help collect information about how and why student motivation in English fluctuates during the lessons.

Considering the effectiveness of students' memory, it is better to obtain students' personal evaluations of their teacher's behaviour or classroom activities as soon as possible after the teaching event. Although a better way might be to require students to write their opinions during the lessons so that they can clearly remember what happened or what they felt or thought at that time, this would interrupt their learning; College English students are usually around 18 years old: participants at this age are able to recall enough information of what they experienced in class when the lessons end. In order to prevent the interruptions in the lessons, it was decided to ask the students to give their comments at the end of each College English lesson. It was decided not to use interviews, to avoid the situation where, while when one participant is being interviewed, the other participants have to wait and may lose some of their thoughts about the teacher's behaviour and classroom activities. Further, it was also important that participants could independently give their own responses, since their personal opinions might be influenced by each other if they were asked to give their evaluations together. Thus, a focus group approach was not appropriate either. A questionnaire seemed to be a better choice at this stage, but, with its directive questions, this could limit students' answers.

All in all, it was considered that a case study could better explore in-depth information about College English students' in-class motivation varieties and corresponding causes. Therefore, after the unexpected results of the pilot for Motometers, a new pilot with a case study design (see Section 3.3.2) was conducted to explore the students' attitudes toward the impact of the classroom activities and the teacher's behaviour on their in-class motivation in English learning. The pilot was successful in general: it highlights a few directions for improvement (see Section 3.3.2.4), leading finally, in the main study, to the substitution of reflective comments with learning logs; additionally, You and Dörnyei's (2016) questionnaire was adopted, instead of the questionnaire designed by the researcher (see more details in Section 3.4).

Since the explorations of the methods researching motivation fluctuations in this study are significant components which could provide some notes in researching motivational dynamics, such as using Motometers, the complete procedures of exploring motivational dynamics of College English students are demonstrated chronologically in the following sections.

### **3.3 Pilot Study**

#### **3.3.1 First pilot study (Motometers)**

In this pilot, revised Motometer, classroom observation and a focus group discussion were used together to explore changes of College English students' in-class motivation and possible reasons for the changes. Revised Motometers were used to record the fluctuations of students' in-class motivation in eight lessons and eight College English lessons were observed in order to obtain data concerning in-class activities and the behaviour of the teacher. An observation coding system and classroom observation forms were used in the observation. The information obtained through classroom observation was used in conjunction with the data from Motometers in order to explore the relationship between students' motivation changes and teacher behaviour including class activities.

Gardner's (2004) Motometers were revised and used in the eight lessons for recording the trajectories of motivation changes. The Motometers were given to the students before the lessons started. The students were required to use the Motometer when an instruction was given to them during the lesson. When the class ended, the Motometers were collected. Then the data from Motometers were recorded with Microsoft Office Excel for later analysis.

A focus group discussion was conducted at the end of the pilot study. The focus group aimed at understanding the students' ideas about the College English course, their motivational fluctuations and the influences of class activities and teacher's behaviour. The data obtained from the focus group discussion was also regarded as a supplement and extension for the Motometer use and class observation, which could provide more detailed information of the influences of class activities and teacher's

behaviour on motivation changes.

The pilot was conducted for eight weeks during an autumn term. The length of this pilot was decided considering the following aspects: on the one hand, in previous studies (Gardner et al., 2004 and Waininge et al., 2014), Motometers were used multiple times in multiple lessons, and the length of the research could be as long as one academic year. In order to test the effect of the revised Motometers, it was thus planned to conduct the pilot for one term. On the other hand, an autumn term in China starts from early September and ends in the end of December and it is about four months long. The participants in this study were all first-year students who were not familiar with College English. Thus, in order to minimize the influence of the pilot on the students and the College English classroom, it was planned to start piloting from the second month of the autumn term so that the teacher and the students could gain familiarity with each other in the first month (September); in addition, the autumn term also includes a one-week holiday and two to three weeks' revision, so the term actually had nine to ten weeks. Therefore, considering the above aspects, it was finally decided to pilot the revised Motometers and classroom observation for eight weeks.

### **3.3.1.1 Participants**

The participants in the pilot for Motometers comprised a class of College English students in China. These student participants were first-year non-English major students from a class at a University in the northwest of China. Since College English is a compulsory course for all the non-English major students in Chinese higher education, all the Chinese universities and colleges share the same teaching requirements, laid down by the Ministry of Education, though each university or college can make adjustments in designing detailed teaching plans in accordance with the local situation. In other words, College English courses in different Chinese universities and colleges are virtually the same. But considering the convenience of data collection, a university which could be easily accessed was randomly selected. The first-year class was selected as the College English course was new to these

students, meaning that students' motivation for participating in this course was not tinged by English learning experiences in earlier university stages. In addition, the English teachers in the participating university also suggested that first-year students could be the best choice in consideration of students' cooperation in research; the teachers perceived that first-year students usually could be more willing to follow teachers' instructions, so they could be more cooperative in data collection. Before they entered the university, the first-year students had learnt English for about 6 years. One class was randomly selected from the university. These students started the College English course from late September 2016, and their major was Human Geography and Urban Planning. With their agreement, the whole class, 42 students, took part in the first phase of the research, including the use of in-class Motometers and classroom observation in 8 College English lessons. Four students in this participating class volunteered to take part in the focus group discussion.

### **3.3.1.2 Methods**

As mentioned above, a combination design of Motometers, classroom observation, and a focus group discussion were adopted in the pilot. In this first pilot study, Motometers were revised (see details in 2.3.1) and used as a main method. Classroom observation was used as a supplement to Motometers by providing information about what activities or tasks students took part in at different times. A focus group discussion was set up, aimed at learning more information about the reasons that can cause students' in-class motivation changes.

In the following sub-sections, the processes of designing the instruments and materials will be provided.

#### **3.3.1.2.1 Motometers**

##### **a. Modifying Motometers for Students**

This research made use of a modified Motometer, much more similar to Pawlak's motivation grid than to Gardner et al.'s (2004) Motometers. These modifications were made to simplify the use of the instrument as much as possible.

There were several stages in this process. At the earliest stage, the instrument to



record the motivation fluctuations was a slightly modified Motometer, very close to the one used by Waninge, de Bot and Dörnyei in 2014. Since the purpose of this research was to investigate the relationship between the in-class motivational fluctuations of students and the teacher behaviour, motivation in this research was measured by students' effort and feelings of learning and their attitudes toward the teacher's behaviour. Three questions were therefore presented on the top of the Motometers: "How much effort have you put into the learning during the 10 minutes?", "How much do you like the teacher's behaviour during the 10 minutes?" and "How much do you enjoy the learning at this time point?".

The range of Waninge et al.'s Motometer is from 0 to 100 and there are no numbers marked between the bottom and the top of the bar. Users may therefore find it difficult to draw a horizontal line on the graph showing their motivation level. It was therefore decided to add 3 numbers (20, 50 and 80) and 9 short horizontal lines as a calibration on one side of the bar chart in order to help participants to clearly recognise the scale. Furthermore, on the other side of the bar chart, there was space for students to add comments about their learning experience in every 10 minutes with every motivation record instead of the comment part below the Motometer in Waninge's version. This first modified Motometer is shown in Figure 3-1.

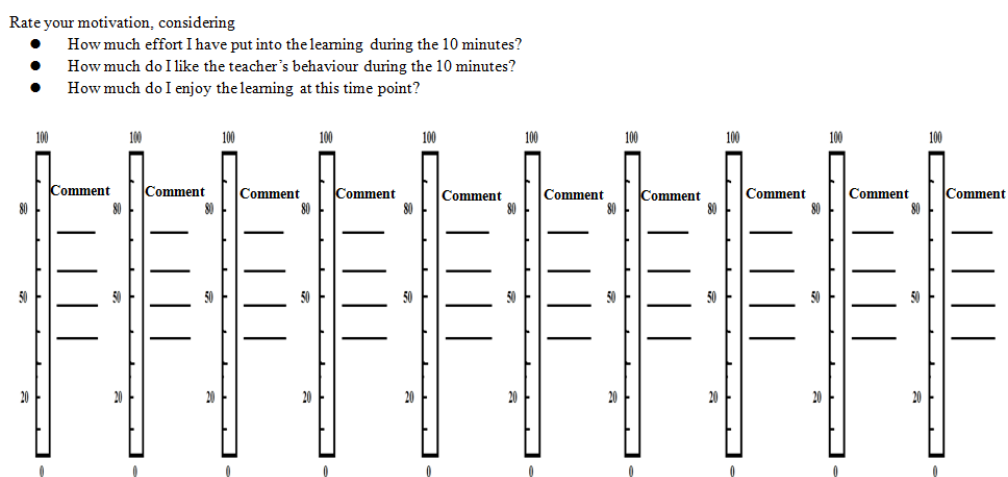


Figure 3-1 Modified Motometer

Though several modifications were made to the original Motometer, it was clear that the modified version still had some potential problems of use, making further, continual simplification necessary. First, although several calibrations were added to

the Motometer and the height of the bar had a clearer representation, drawing a line of motivation level on the bar chart came down to making a choice from 100 options. For some participants, there might be no difference between the Motometer with and without the added numbers. So it was still difficult for participants to make their decision. Furthermore, a participant's motivation level could not be clearly and accurately matched with an exact number. Since both Gardner et al.'s (2004) and Waninge's (2014) Motometers do not have elaborate calibrations, participants are able only to give a general motivation level on the bar: it is not possible to tell the exact value of their motivation level. Although the motivation fluctuations can be clearly demonstrated with several Motometers, it could still be difficult to analyse the data from Motometers as the numerical value of a participant's motivation level can only be estimated. Following Pawlak's (2012) use of a scale to measure motivation fluctuations, a five-level scale was substituted for the original thermometer-shaped bar chart in consideration of the difficulty of making choices from a number of options as well as the convenience of data analysis with specific motivation levels. The second further simplification was in response to students who needed to record their motivation levels every 10 minutes in the class, which means the lessons would have to be interrupted and the in-class activities would have to stop. Third, the comment part with every Motometer could take participants more time to finish, so the lessons had to be interrupted for a longer time. These interruptions in the lessons might have influenced the students' motivation. However, they were considered necessary for tracking the in-class trajectories of students' motivation. In order to reduce the effect from the interruptions, it seemed better to shorten the time of the interruptions in the lessons. Therefore, the comment section was deleted. In addition, the participants were required to provide their email addresses (see Figure 3-2) in order to match the data collected from the same person in different lessons.

Date (dd/mm/yy) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Gender  
☐ Male  
☐ Female  
**Rate your motivation, considering**  
*How much effort have you put into the learning during the 10 minutes?*  
*How much do you like the teacher's behaviour during the 10 minutes?*  
*How much do you enjoy the learning at this time point?*

□

Please rate your motivation level

	very low	low	medium	high	very high
<b>10 minutes</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please rate your motivation level

	very low	low	medium	high	very high
<b>20 minutes</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Figure 3-2 Revised Motometers

In consideration of the data size, an electronic version of the modified Motometer was made with a Chinese online questionnaire tool *Sojump*. If the participants were able to use the electronic Motometers, it could be very helpful in the later data analysis. Later, it was found that the environment of the site for conducting the pilot study had no stable access to the Internet, so the electronic version of Motometers was eventually not used.

## b. Revising the Motometers

The pilot study for the in-class 5-level Motometer had two parts. The first pilot study was conducted in June 2016 and it aimed at checking the validity of the three questions in the second version of the Motometer. In order to get thorough evaluations, the online version of the Motometer was sent to five people including two PhD students in Education, one English major student and two non-English major students. The five participants reported that they had no difficulty in understanding the meaning of the questions. However, one PhD student thought that the three questions were not closely relevant to each other, especially the second question about the teacher's behaviour, so it could be difficult to combine the answers of the three questions together in just one scale, and it was suggested to provide one scale with each question. It was necessary to reduce the confusion in understanding the questions as much as possible, in consideration of the participants' need to give their responses in the classroom very quickly. As the research aimed to find out the relationship between students' motivation fluctuations and teacher's behaviour, the second question, "How

much do you like the teacher's behaviour in the 10 minutes?", was kept. On the other hand, the first question, "How much effort have you put into the learning during the 10 minutes?", was deleted as it is usually believed that effort is influenced by motivation rather than being a part of motivation. In addition, the English major students and one non-English major student mentioned they were not sure about the differences between "Very low" and "Low" as well as "High" and "Very high". To make the expressions more concrete and clearer, the numbers from 1 to 5, respectively representing "not at all", "not really", "so-so", "quite a lot" and "very much", were used to mark the different levels of motivation. Furthermore, in consideration of the participants' English level and in order to decrease the difficulty in understanding, the Motometer was translated into Chinese (see Figure 3-3).

<b>10min 第 10 分钟</b> Please giving marks from 1 to 5. 请根据自身感受，从 1 至 5 中选择： 1= not at all 完全不喜欢； 2= not really 不太喜欢； 3= so-so 一般喜欢； 4= quite a lot 比较喜欢； 5= very much 非常喜欢					
	1	2	3	4	5
How much do you like the teacher's behaviour in the 10 minutes? 你喜欢老师在这十分钟里的行为表现吗？	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much do you enjoy the learning in the 10 minutes? 你喜欢在这十分钟里的学习吗？	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>20min 第 20 分钟</b> Please giving marks from 1 to 5. 请根据自身感受，从 1 至 5 中选择： 1= not at all 完全不喜欢； 2= not really 不太喜欢； 3= so-so 一般喜欢； 4= quite a lot 比较喜欢； 5= very much 非常喜欢					
	1	2	3	4	5
How much do you like the teacher's behaviour in the 10 minutes? 你喜欢老师在这十分钟里的行为表现吗？	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much do you enjoy the learning in the 10 minutes? 你喜欢在这十分钟里的学习吗？	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Figure 3-3 2nd version of Motometers

The second pilot for the 5-level Motometers was conducted in early October 2016 in China in order to ensure that the student participants could become accustomed to the Motometers. Furthermore, the pilot was also used to check the possibility of the interruption of the lessons. The university chosen to conduct this research did not have a full cover of WIFI all over the campus, so students might have problems in accessing the Internet and in using the electronic version of the 5-level Motometers. Therefore, it was decided to use hard copies of the 5-level Motometers in the class. In the beginning of the second pilot, the Motometers were briefly introduced to the student participants. The students were required to read the Motometers carefully before the class began so that they could complete the two questions as soon as possible in the lessons, and it could help decrease the impact of

interrupting the lessons. The ringtone for stopping the lessons and reminding the students using Motometers in the class was also played to the participants before conducting the pilot study. In this pilot study, the ringtone rang every 10 minutes, but the majority of student participants did not realise the sound was a signal for answering the Motometer. It was therefore decided to directly remind the students to answer the Motometer in the pilot lesson. It was also found that the students were reluctant to be interrupted when they were concentrating on something or completing tasks assigned by the teacher. The teacher was also wary of this factor and advised to record students' motivation at the end of activities or tasks. Therefore, after discussion with the teacher, the decision was made to record the motivation level with the change of in-class activity in order to decrease the influence of the interruptions on students' motivation. In other words, students were asked to record their motivation-level at the end of an activity or a task in the class. In addition, for activities or tasks which took over 20 minutes, such as text explanation, it was determined to record the students' motivation level at convenient pauses.

### **c. Implementation and data analysis of the 5-level Motometer**

The 5-level Motometers were formally used from the second College English class onwards. The hard copies of the Motometers were distributed to all the students who attended the lesson, before classes began. During the lessons, the time to use the Motometers was decided in accordance with the classroom activities. When the ringtone was played, the students stopped to answer the Motometers. The teacher began to speak again when she saw the students stop writing. At the end of each lesson, the Motometers were collected.

The raw data of the Motometers were fully entered in a Microsoft Excel file. Then the data were presented through line charts according to the participants and the different lessons. The charts demonstrate the increase or decrease of students' motivation levels at several time points during each lesson. Together with the data from the classroom observation, the in-class motivation varieties could be matched with the classroom activities and teacher's behaviour (see examples in Section

3.3.1.3.1, Figure 3-6, 3-7 & 3-8), and the relationship between the motivation fluctuations and classroom activities and teacher's behaviour could be found.

### **3.3.1.2.2 Observation**

#### **a. Observation rationale**

As the study attempted to explore the possible reasons for students' in-class motivation fluctuations, it was important to know how lessons developed. Two methods were used in previous studies about motivation changes to obtain information about the procedures of lessons. Pawlak (2012) asked for detailed lesson plans from the teacher, to link the motivation changes to the particular activities in the lessons. Lesson plans are easy to obtain and this reduced the workload of the researcher during the lessons. But if the researcher only depended on the lesson plans, many details of how the College English lessons developed may have been missed or ignored, as the plan is usually a structure or an outline of a lesson. A lesson plan is not able to provide all the procedures of the class, it cannot demonstrate the teacher's behaviour and students' reactions. Waninge et al. (2014) used an observation form to record the activities in the lessons, and retrospective comments from students and teachers were also required in the forms. The starting time and length of the activities were recorded in order to match with the data from Motometers. In comparison with drawing information from lesson plans, observation has a higher requirement of the researcher's focus during the lessons. However, observation can provide fresh and real first-hand data rather than descriptions from other people (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Through classroom observation, the details of the lessons can be obtained and it is possible to take notes on the specific information needed by the observer.

Since the teacher's behaviour was an important aspect of this research, information about the procedures of the lessons as well as how the teacher behaved in the classroom, was needed. Furthermore, it was thought that the students' reactions to the lessons might be a useful way to reflect their motivation level. Therefore, detailed information about the class was necessary. Considering the data needed by the research, it was decided to observe the College English classroom.

## **b. The development of observation instruments**

During each lesson, the classroom activities and teacher behaviour, were observed and documented. Since it was necessary to take notes on the details of the lessons, a coding system was developed to simplify the classroom observation. Firstly, the coding system included a few classroom activities and the language skills that students might be trained in during the lessons, and all these codes were mixed together. Then, with the help of the observation tools of Bilbrey, Vorhaus and Farran (2007), some more classroom activities related to the College English lessons were added to the coding system. In order to simplify the use of the coding system, the codes were classified into different groups and each code was numbered. The code numbers were used in recording the procedures of the lessons, saving the time of recording; and the observer was able to put more energy and attention to the unexpected activities or behaviour in the class. Based on their functions, the codes were divided into five groups. The potential groupings of students were classified under “configuration”; the usages of devices, such as computers and blackboard, were set as “mode”; the four language skills were grouped under “skill”. Other codes in the coding system were divided into “activity” and “technique”. Later, a few adjustments were made to this coding system based on the facts in the pilot lesson (the first lesson) for the 5-level Motometers. The final coding system is provided in Appendix II. In addition, as there were some classroom activities and facts which fell out of the range of expected behaviour, it was decided to take notes on these facts when it was necessary.

Observation forms were used in the 8 lessons. At first, it was planned to record on the form how the lessons developed and how the teacher behaved. Consequently, the observation form just had two columns: the first column was for noting time or duration and the other was intended to record the information about the procedures of the lessons. However, it was also decided to record the students’ activities as well. Since the students’ activities and their responses to the teacher’s behaviour and classroom activities could affect their motivation levels, recording students’ activities

in the lessons could be useful in judging the relationship between teacher's behaviour and the fluctuations of students' in-class motivation. Thus, another column was added to the observation so that the students' activities could be recorded (see Figure 3-4).

Observation of College English classroom		
Teacher	Class	
Date	Time	
Time	Teacher activity	Student activity

Figure 3-4 Classroom Observation form

### c. Implementing classroom observation

In the classroom observation, both the teacher and the students' activities were recorded using the observation forms. The coding system was used in the observation, but sometimes there were some activities which were not included in the coding system. At that time, these activities were noted with simple words.

The procedures of the lessons were recorded in the observation forms, and the information was linked to the line charts of students' in-class motivation levels. Thus it was possible to identify correlations between students' in-class motivation and teacher's behaviour and classroom activities.

### 3.3.1.2.2 Focus group for students

#### a. Advantages of using focus group for students

A focus group discussion was set up to collect information about the influence of teacher's behaviour on students' in-class motivation. Interviews could also have been used to elicit the students' views, however, focus group work was considered suitable in this study. First, since the students in a focus group communicate with each other rather than with the interviewer, the conversation would not be dominated by the interviewer and the participants would be able to speak out their opinions (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). In a focus group, students are the major participants



while the researcher only needs to provide guidance when necessary. Second, some information needed from students may be of interest to their teacher, so it might not be easy to get the answers from students in an interview, as the participants might be overcautious in front of the researcher. In a focus group, the students mainly discuss with their peers. The environment of the focus group is just like a common conversation among the participants; they are more likely to be relaxed and free to talk. In addition, the communication among participants in a focus group is capable of reminding the students of some facts they would otherwise forget to mention. Therefore, the discussion with other participants could help them generate more ideas about the topic compared to in a one-to-one interview. Furthermore, a focus group can generate rich data even in a short time (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). This study planned to collect data in eight lessons in order to understand the motivation fluctuations of students in one term, constituting a significant time cost for both participants and the researcher. Participants could be reluctant in cooperating with the researcher as they needed to spend a lot of time and energy in this study. In comparison with one-to-one interviews, conducting a focus group can be economical in time-using. Thus, the researcher is able to get sufficient data, and the time that participants have to spend in the research can be reduced.

For all the above reasons, a focus group was used with the student participants to learn how students understood their motivation varieties and how their teacher influenced their motivation.

#### **b. Developing and piloting the focus group outline**

In accordance with the purpose of using a focus group in the research, an outline of the focus group was firstly created with six questions (see Figure 3-5).

- Do you think the teaching methods/classroom activities have effect on your motivation level?
- Do you think the teacher's general conduct/behaviour has influence on your motivation of English learning?
- If so, how does the teacher influence your motivation? Can you provide a few examples?
- Do you think the variety of teaching methods/classroom activities could change your motivation level?
- Do you notice any factors that increase/decrease your motivation level in class?
- In order to motivate your English learning, can you give some suggestions/ideas on teacher's behaviour?

Figure 3-5 Focus group outline

The researcher then carried out a pilot study for a discussion in May 2016. The purpose of the pilot study was to check the validity of the questions in the focus group outline. The pilot for the focus group was conducted with five Chinese students from a University English class in a British University, who were taking a pre-sessional English course. These five students were volunteers in their class after the information about the research had been conveyed to them. Considering that it might be difficult for the participants to begin discussing, the first two questions in the outline were yes-no questions and were easy to answer. But in fact, the simple questions limited the participants' thinking. All the answers to the first questions were "yes" and then the students became silent. In their responses to the second question, there was just one student who provided more ideas, while the question received positive answers from all the students. The other participants started to think and discussed actively after they were encouraged. In the following discussion, these students were more active, and they freely exchanged their opinions with each other. Their answers to the following questions consequently provided relatively rich information.

Generally, the result of the pilot study for the focus group was satisfying. The majority of the questions in the outline elicited useful and rich information from the participants, while the first two questions needed to be extended. But some answers to the questions were a little abstract. The performance of the participants at the beginning was not good, so it was decided that it would be better to give the participants some guidance and more encouragement. In addition, in the group talk, there were always one or two students who were leading their discussion. Therefore, it was necessary to balance the talking time of different participants. Furthermore,

though these student participants did not question the meaning of “general conduct” in Q2, the expression was misunderstood by one teacher participant in the interview pilot. So “general conduct” was substituted by “personal quality/character”, the same as the adjustment in the outline of the teacher’s interview.

After the pilot, some more modifications were made to the focus group outline. Based on the data collected from the pilot, a few questions were added to the outline in order to better maintain the focus of the discussion, such as “Do you like College English course?” It was also expected that the participants could provide less abstract information to the focus group topics, as it was hoped that the newly added questions might give participants some guidance of thinking. The final version of the focus group questions is provided in Appendix III.

### **c. Implementation and data analysis of the focus group**

A random sampling was used to form the pilot focus group: the invitation to the focus group was made to the whole class in the end of the fourth lesson, and there were only four students who were willing to take part in the focus group. The focus group was conducted before the start of the seventh lesson, using Chinese, as the four students preferred to use their mother tongue rather than English when the focus group was introduced to them. In addition, with the agreement of the four participants, the focus group was fully recorded with a digital recorder. In the event, though all the four students were volunteers, two of them were not very active in speaking out their opinions, so the researcher tried to encourage them to talk more in the discussion.

The audio recording was later transcribed and open coding was used in analysis of the transcripts in order to ascertain the classroom activities or teacher’s behaviour which had had an influence on students’ in-class motivation. Information about activities or the teacher’s behaviour mentioned in the discussion were regarded as coding units, irrespective of whether the participants’ motivation levels were increased or decreased. Since it was merely a pilot study, the data of the focus group was analysed by the researcher only.

### 3.3.1.3 Data analysis

Only 6 participants persisted in their use of the 5-level Motometers in the eight College English lessons: in consideration of the reliability of the data (see more details in 3.1.4), the data analysis only used data provided by these 6 students.

As mentioned above, data from Motometers and classroom observation were combined together in order to show the relationship between students' in-class motivation changes and classroom activities and teacher's behaviour. The combination data of Motometers and classroom observation were demonstrated in line charts, the horizontal axis represented the time of each College English lesson and the classroom activities and the teacher's behaviour were indicated underneath this horizontal axis. The vertical axis represented the 5 levels of motivation (see Figure 3-6). In the following section, the data collected in the first College English lesson in the pilot study is presented as an example (see also in Appendix IV).

#### 3.3.1.3.1 Data from Motometers and classroom observation

In this section, the data from one lesson (the first lesson on October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016) in this pilot are presented as an example. In the following charts, Line 1 represents the students' attitudes towards teacher's behaviour and Line 2 represents students' feelings about their learning.

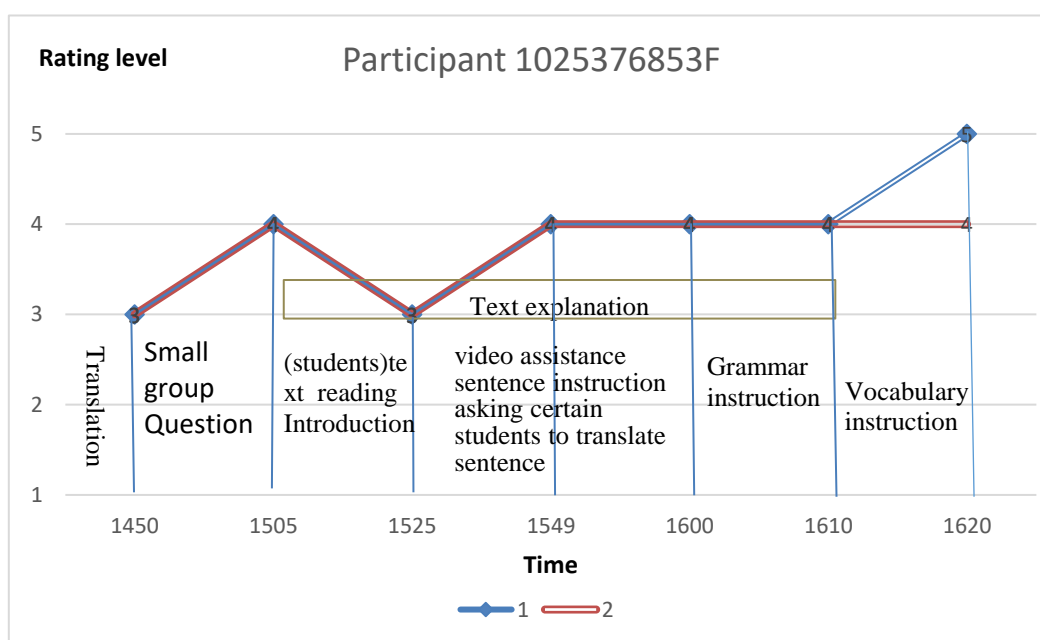


Figure 3-6 Motivation trajectories of Participant 1025376853F

As can be seen in Figure 3-6, Participant 1025376853F had very similar feelings towards her English learning and the teacher's behaviour. The English lesson started with some exercises of translation: when she was asked to record her motivation level for the first time in that lesson, it was "3". Then, her motivation level increased in the following 15 minutes when she was required to have a small group discussion with her classmates. But her motivation level went down when she was reading a text quietly in the next 20 minutes, and the teacher also made a brief introduction to the text. In the following 24 minutes, the teacher started to explain the text with video assistance and her motivation increased again; the text explanation lasted for about 45 minutes, and this participant's motivation levels remained the same until the end of text explanation. During the text explanation, the teacher also gave explanations about sentences and grammar; sometimes she would require particular students to translate some sentences in the text. In the last ten minutes of the lesson, the teacher taught the students some vocabulary, though participant 1025376853F still had the same feeling toward English learning, her attitude towards the teacher's behaviour was raised.

Figure 3-7 displays the motivation levels of Participant 2572133570F. In this lesson, she usually had higher evaluations of her teacher's behaviour than suggested by her feelings towards English learning. It can be seen that Participant 2572133570F's rating of the teacher's behaviour increased during the group discussion and then decreased when students were asked to read a text, while her feeling toward her English learning during these 35 minutes remained the same. In the following 35 minutes, the teacher explained some sentences with video assistance, the participant's attitude toward the teacher's behaviour and feeling about English learning were both slightly raised from "3" to "4" in the first 24 minutes, but in the following 11 minutes, her feeling about English learning decreased to "3" while her attitude toward the teacher's behaviour kept at level 4. When the teacher started to give grammar explanation in the next 10 minutes, Participant 2572133570F's overall motivational level increased and she gave the highest score to the teacher's behaviour during the 10 minutes. In the last 10 minutes of this lesson, her motivational level went down.

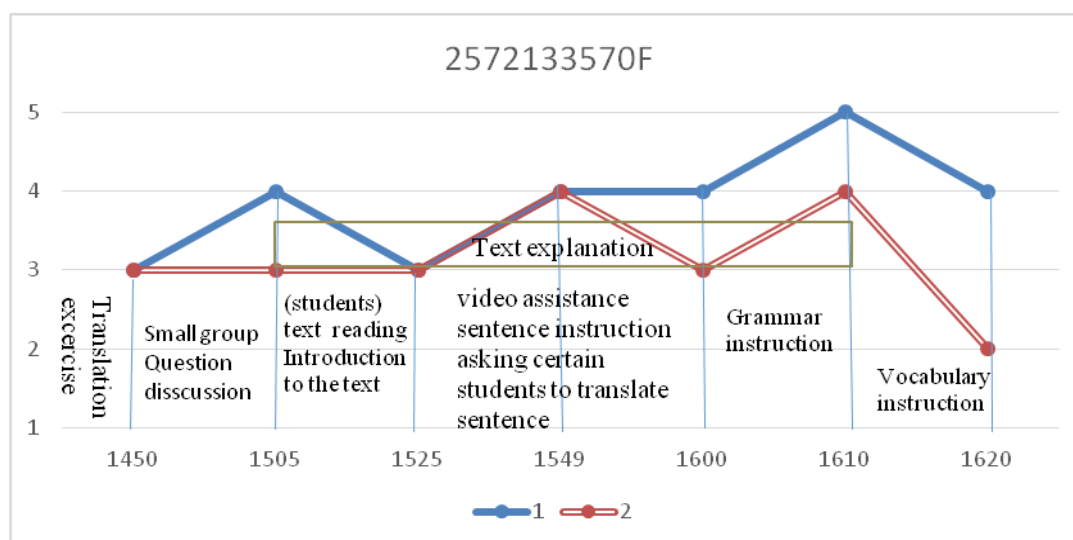


Figure 3-7 Motivation trajectories of Participant 2572133570F

The motivation changes in one College English lesson of Participant 2677119753F are demonstrated in Figure 3-8. The participant's motivation level was at a low level at the end of a translation exercise. On the one hand, her rating of her teacher's behaviour increased during the group discussion and when the teacher required students to read a text; in the first 24 minutes of sentence explanation with video assistance, Participant 2677119753F's attitude toward her teacher's behaviour kept at level "4" and decreased to "3" at the end of the sentence explanation. The following grammar explanation quickly raised this participant's evaluation of her teacher's behaviour, but the evaluation fell to "3" in the last 10 minutes. On the other hand, Participant 2677119753F's feeling about English learning remained the same during the group discussion, started to get better when she was reading the text and reached the highest level in the first 24 minutes of sentence explanation. In the remaining time of sentence explanation, her feeling about English learning went down to "3", but it was increased to level "4" by the grammar explanation. Her feeling in the last 10 minutes' vocabulary explanation decreased to "3" again.

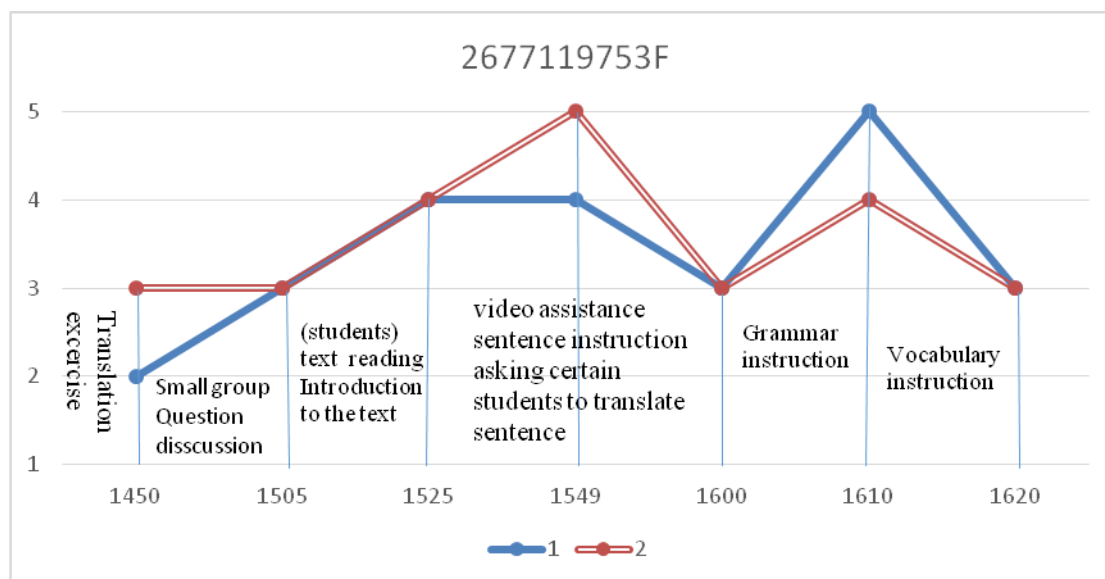


Figure 3-8 Motivation trajectories of Participant 2677119753F

### 3.3.1.3.2 Data of students' focus group

The recording of the students' focus group was transcribed, and then the transcript was coded to extract the information about what classroom activities could influence students' in-class motivation. In order to protect participants' identities, the four participants were named with codes: female participants were Fa and Fb, and male participants were Ma and Mb. A part of the results from this focus group are shown below.

Participant Fa said she liked group discussion in lessons, as she thought the atmosphere was relaxed. But the other three participants all thought group discussion was useless, since some students would not take part in discussion: for example, Participant Mb said he would not discuss with his partner, as he thought group discussion was meaningless.

The two female participants both expressed their reluctance to answer the teacher's questions, because they felt very nervous when they were asked. Participant Ma said if he focused on the lesson or he was able to answer the question, it was nothing serious to be asked by the teacher; however, if he could not answer the question, Ma said he could be extremely embarrassed. Participant Mb said that he

didn't care whether the teacher asked him or not.

Participant Fa expressed her interest in practicing English listening. She said she had a strong hope that she could improve listening skills in College English lessons since she didn't have much practice of listening during her high school. The other three participants all said that they preferred more speaking practice. They thought speaking skills could help them communicate with others. Ma also believed that oral English could help his future career. In addition, Fa agreed with the other participants' opinion about oral English, she said that the ability of speaking English should be a result of English learning.

The four participants shared their opinions about the variability of in-class activities or tasks. They all thought new content was necessary in lessons but they didn't like one lesson to have too many activities or tasks. On the one hand, they said they had already got used to a single teaching mode, if there were too many different activities or tasks, they might not be able to follow the teacher's steps; on the other hand, all the participants hoped there could be something new or different in their College English lessons, so that they would not be bored with a single teaching mode. Participant Ma said that he preferred one lesson with one way of teaching and different lessons could be taught in different ways. The two male participants also mentioned that they wanted more interactions with their teacher. Both of them said they preferred interactions with their teacher rather than interactions with their peers, they felt that interactions with their peers were not useful since some students would not cooperate well with their partners.

When they were asked about "any factors that increase or decrease your motivation level in class", the four participants provided various answers. Participants Fa said she could be confident and was more willing to learn English when she was encouraged by her teacher; off-syllabus knowledge or information, such as culture of English-speaking countries, could stimulate her desire to learn how English-speaking people live and communicate; but if the teacher taught them for a long time, Fa said she just wanted to end the College English lesson. Participants Fb agreed with Fa's opinion about the long-time teaching, she said that if the teacher kept teaching, she



did not want to learn English because she could not catch up with the teacher, and she needed time to digest what she had already heard and learned from the teacher. Compared to the various factors provided by the two female participants', which could affect their in-class English learning motivation, the two male participants said that their English learning motivation could not be easily influenced by anything that happened in College English lessons. Ma said he didn't find anything during the lessons that could increase or decrease his motivation level in English learning, while Participant Mb said that he had to learn English no matter whether he wanted to learn or not: he had no choice, so his English learning motivation level could not be easily changed.

### 3.3.1.4 Problems in first pilot study

In this section, the details of the problems occurring in the process of data collections will be presented. The problems in using the revised Motometers will be described first, and then several stories about students' behaviours observed in the eight lessons will be presented.

#### a. Problems in using Motometers

In this pilot study, there were a few problems in using Motometers: a) a large amount of data collected via Motometers was not valid or was not incontrovertibly representative of the true trajectories of students' motivation levels in College English lessons; b) only 6 out of 42 students persisted in completing Motometers properly during the two-month time frame (eight lessons).

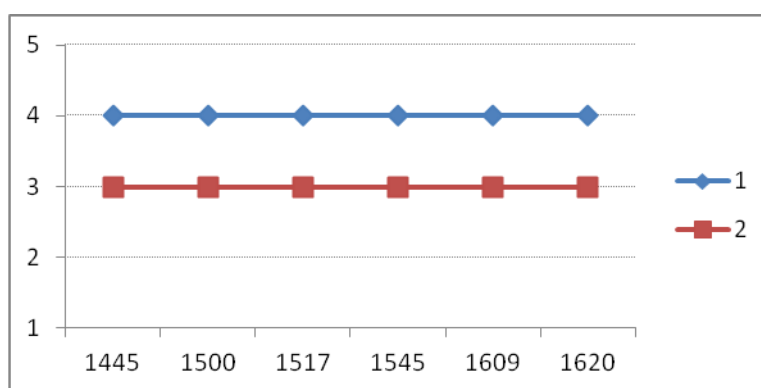


Figure 3-9 An example of a participant's answers to Motometers

After the Motometers were collected at the end of each lesson, it was found that there were always a few students who marked both questions with the same ranking during one lesson. For example, if the students were required to record their motivation levels for 6 times in one lesson, one participant chose “4” for Q1 and “3” for Q2 6 times (see Figure 3-9 for example). When this kind of answers appeared, it was not easy to determine whether the student’s motivation indeed remained at the same level in the whole lessons or the student just completed the Motometer in the easiest way. There were also some students who used the 5-level Motometers more than they were required in some lessons. As mentioned before (see Section 3.3.1.2.1, c), it was finally decided to record student’s motivation levels at the end of each activity during the lessons and students were usually required to rank their motivation levels about 7 times. However, some students rated their motivation levels ten times in some lessons. It seemed that these students did not answer the Motometer as required, and they may not have taken the Motometers seriously. But this conjecture cannot be confirmed, as there might be another possibility, that these students ranked their motivation levels every ten minutes as they were required in the earlier pilot lesson.

In accordance with the problems mentioned above, it was decided that all data collected from the 5-level Motometers would be analysed. However, the result of this part would mainly depend on the data from participants who strictly followed the researcher’s requirements.

What follows represents attempts to explain the problems in using Motometers in this research. First, comparisons were made to the uses in the studies of Gardner et al. (2004), Waninge et al. (2014), Yuan and Ji (2017) and Chang (2018). Gardner et.al (2004) required 197 participants to record their motivation once in four lessons across one academic year, and Waninge et al. (2014) asked their participants to rank their motivation levels ten times in six lessons during two weeks; the uses of a Motometer in Chang’s and Yuan and Ji’s research were replications of Waninge et al.’s usage. But it is unknown whether Gardner et al. (2004), Waninge et al. (2014), Yuan and Ji (2017) and Chang (2018) had similar problems in using Motometers. Compared with their

research designs and implementations, one possible reason for the problematic experience with Motometers in this pilot could be that many participants were required to complete Motometers more than once at the same time during eight lessons and it was hardly possible to watch over how all the students used Motometers and to supervise whether the participants took Motometers seriously. In the research of Waninge et al., four students were invited to record their motivation levels ten times in each lesson, since the number of their participants was small, it could be easy for the researchers to watch how those participants used Motometers and it was difficult for those participants to answer Motometers perfunctorily. In this pilot, some participants didn't take Motometers seriously from the very beginning, and more than twenty participants answered Motometers seriously and carefully in the first few lessons, but the majority of these twenty participants started to treat Motometers perfunctorily when they found their answers to Motometers would not be checked by their teacher or the researcher. So the large amount of unreliable data collected in the study can be probably attributed to a lack of supervision of the process of using Motometers. In addition, a possible reason for the very limited number of participants who completed all the eight-week Motometers in a high-quality manner could be that the using of Motometers in the pilot was difficult for the participants to complete consecutively. Though Gardner et.al had a large number of participants, those participants needed to use the Motometer once only in each lesson and the one-off record in one lesson was not difficult for each participant to complete; and the participants of Waninge et al. were required to use Motometers ten times in one lesson, but they just needed to use Motometers in a time span of two weeks. The student participants in this pilot were required to use Motometers averagely six or seven times in one College English lesson and they had to use Motometers in eight consecutive weeks. Although in this research and Waninge et al.'s, Yuan and Ji's and Chang's research, the number of lessons involved in data collections and the times of using Motometers in each lesson were similar, the duration of data collection in the pilot (eight weeks) was much longer than that in the research of Waninge et al, Yuan and Ji and Chang. The majority of the participants could not sustain collecting data for eight

weeks in the pilot. Furthermore, compared with the research design of Gardner et al., participants in the pilot had to use Motometers more than once in one College English lesson, which meant they had to stop to answer Motometers for several times during each lesson. It can be much easier for students to complete Motometers once instead of answering Motometers several times in one lesson. Therefore, the longer duration of the process of collecting data and the multi-use of Motometers in one single lesson increased the difficulties of using Motometers in this pilot.

#### **b. Stories of students in lessons**

The classroom observation mainly aimed at recording the procedures of lessons as well as the teacher's behaviour in class. But several interesting phenomena were observed in the eight lessons. The students' behaviour during the lessons, reported below, made their response to Motometers unreliable.

In the last ten minutes of the second lesson, it seemed that the lesson in another classroom was over. The students of that class started leaving the classroom and they were talking to each other when they were walking through the corridor. Their noise could be heard clearly by the research participants. At that time, some students who sat in the back of the classroom started to chat with their deskmates in a very low voice and it seemed that the teacher didn't notice that. After one or two minutes, the noise from the students outside the classroom stopped as they had all left the corridor. But the students inside the classroom did not stop their chatting. Instead, more students started chatting and their whisper became louder and louder. The teacher then raised her voice to get the students' attention. But it did not work well. The possible reason was that it was almost the end of the class, students wanted to end their study especially when they noticed another class was over. In this condition, even though the teacher tried to attract students' attention again, it had little effect. The students' whispering and ignoring the teacher's talking at the end of the lesson can be seen as evidence of their motivation decrease in English leaning. In the following lessons, the teacher gave her students some tasks to complete in the last few minutes and there were fewer students chatting at that time. It seemed that the tasks were allocated on purpose by the teacher; she tried to keep students' focus at the end of the class in a

better way.

A few students who always sat in the back row of the classroom showed gradually declining enthusiasm during the eight lessons. In the first lesson (the pilot lesson), they were just like other students and followed the teacher's instruction. Compared to the other participants, these students had more whispers between each other. A possible reason might be that they were in the rear of the classroom and they thought the teacher could not pay much attention to them. It was also found that these students might glimpse the observer who sat behind them sometimes, especially before they murmured to others. In the following lesson, these students were more distracted. They listened to the teacher most of the time, but they occasionally engaged in activities other than those required by the teacher. For instance, they perhaps used their smart phones for a few minutes, or they read something else instead of their textbooks. It seems that these participants were not highly motivated to learn English during the lesson and their response to Motometers in that lesson may not be reliable. Then, in the third lesson, there was a participant who started to play games on his smart phone in the second half of the lesson. He listened to the teacher for a few minutes and then played with his phone for a while; he started to follow the teacher's instruction later. In the following five lessons, this student always played games on his phone and he did not pay much attention to the lessons. It seemed that the student tried to observe the observer in the first three lessons in order to check whether the observer would report his performance to the teacher. When he had reassured himself that the observer would not interfere in his classroom performance, the participant was no longer worried about whether the lesson was observed or not and he began to do what he wanted to do in the class. It seems that this participant had little interest in the College English lessons and English learning; in other words, his motivation in English learning was usually at a quite low level. In addition, according to his performance, it could be confirmed that the data provided by this participant was not reliable.

There were also some students who did not concentrate on the teacher's speaking until they might be appointed to complete some certain tasks or exercises. When these

students noticed that they were required by the teacher to answer a question or do an exercise, they usually sought help from other students around them. When they finished the task assigned by the teacher, some of them started to focus on the lessons and the others still did not follow the instructions from their teacher. Since these students did not concentrate on the lessons all the time, their response to Motometer may not be reliable.

### **3.3.2 Second pilot study (case study)**

It has been confirmed in the first pilot study that Motometers can show the motivation fluctuations of College English students, however, the pilot also demonstrated that difficulties existed (see Section 3.3.1.4, part a): first, some participants provided invalid responses to Motometers; and second, there were only a few participants who persisted in completing Motometers in the eight lessons. Comparing the usages of Motometers in the studies of Gardner et al. (2004) (once in each lesson with 194 participants), Waninge et al. (2014) (10 times in each lesson with four participants), Yuan and Ji (2017) (10 times in each lesson with four participants) and Chang (2018) (10 times in each lesson with four participants), the unsuccessful experience of using Motometers in this study may have been caused by multi-uses of Motometers with too many participants in the same time (see also in Section 6.1): first, the multi-uses of Motometers in each lesson may have made it difficult for the students to respond consecutively, some participants might have been reluctant to use the Motometers repeatedly and frequently: they might have missed using the Motometers a few times during the lessons or they might have chosen to complete perfunctorily. Second, the duration of the research (eight weeks) may also have increased the difficulty for the participants to complete all the Motometers in the eight lessons, some participants might have got bored with the routine and been reluctant to use the Motometers in every lesson and they might have provided reliable data in a few lessons while in the other lessons, they might have provided unreliable data because of their reluctance. In addition, the 42 participants in this study were required to use Motometers together in each lesson, compared to the abovementioned research, the number of participants in

the current study made it difficult to supervise their usages during the lessons; and this might be the major reason why many participants used the Motometers improperly and provided plenty of invalid responses. The above reasons finally led to the unsuccessful pilot with Motometers.

Because of the limitation of Motometers in exploring motivation fluctuations with many participants simultaneously, it was necessary to adjust the usage of the instrument. As discussed above, the failure was possibly caused by the lack of supervision when the participants were using the Motometers. Although the possible cause of failure was found, it was still quite difficult to supervise the students' using of Motometers since the data collection process proceeded during the lessons: the in-class supervision could hardly avoid interferences with the participating students, their teacher and the lessons, and according to the teacher's and the students' feedback on the interruptions during the classes in piloting Motometers (see Section 3.3.1.2.1, part c), the potential interferences of the supervision might have caused the participants' further reluctance in completing the Motometers. It can be concluded that it would be difficult to carry out the supervision of using the Motometers in consideration of its potential impact on the participants. In addition, the adjustment of the Motometers was also restricted by the time limit of completing this research: it was considerably difficult to re-adjust the use of Motometers in a way which might have reduced the negative impacts on the participants in a short time. Furthermore, Motometers have limitations in exploring the possible reasons of the students' motivation flexibilities, although they can show the motivation trajectories directly: Motometers are restricted to recording motivation levels at various timepoints, they cannot delve into the students' thoughts about how the in-class activities influenced their motivation; and this limitation may have an impact on the response to the second research question. Thus, considering all the above aspects, including the data collection problems and the time investment, it was decided to change the method.

As mentioned above (see Section 2.4 and Section 3.1), one purpose of this research is to explore the relationships between the students' in-class motivation variability and their teacher's behaviour. In order to answer this question, it was

necessary to collect data on students' motivation flexibility and the teachers' behaviour and in-class activities relevant to that flexibility; in other words, it was necessary to explore the students' opinions and experiences about their in-class motivation fluctuations and the teacher's behaviour comprehensively. Therefore, conducting a case study was considered to be a better choice of method as it could provide in-depth understanding of students in-class experiences, and because it allows for multi-methods to collect data which means it was possible to adopt various methods to meet the demand of data collection. (see Section 3.2.2).

Considering the research questions and the advantages of a case study, it was decided to use reflective comments and a questionnaire instead of Motometers. Reflective comments were able to help the participants record their in-class experiences without interruptions and the questionnaire could be useful in understanding the participants motivation orientations generally.

In order to ensure students could speak out their thoughts freely, it was thought better to give them an outline and ask them to write their comments about the lessons. Therefore, reflective comments were used at the end of each lesson to gather a more detailed evaluation about the influences of the teacher's behaviour on students' in-class motivation.

A short questionnaire was added into the case study, trying to explore the potential relationship between students' general motivation in English learning and their in-class motivation fluctuations.

The case study lasted for one term so that various evaluations toward different behaviour of the teacher and classroom activities could be collected.

### **3.3.2.1 Participants**

The participants in this pilot case study were from the same class which participated in the previous pilot. Based on the students' responses in the previous stage, the six students who used the Motometers effectively were invited to take part in the second stage of data collection. However, only two students (one male and one female) finally agreed to participate in this one-term pilot.



### **3.3.2.2 Methods**

The pilot for the case study was conducted after the previous pilot for Motometers. The aim of the case study was to collect students' direct evaluations of classroom activities and the teacher's behaviour in each lesson. In the case study, the participants were required to write comments after each College English lesson. An outline about classroom activities and the teacher's behaviour was provided in order to ensure the appropriate directions of students' comments. The length of the case study was one Chinese spring term (from March to June); however, since there were several holidays and university activities in the term, the data of the case study was actually from six College English lessons in the term. After the last lesson of the term, the participants were asked to answer a short questionnaire about their English learning.

#### **3.3.2.2.1 Reflective comments in the case study**

Since the purpose of the second pilot study was to obtain, directly from the students, more information about what can influence in-class motivation levels, the reflective case study was designed to collect the students' evaluations through written comments after each College English lesson. An outline of the reflective comments (see Figure 3-10) was designed in order to ensure that the students could give effective evaluations in appropriate directions relevant to the teacher's behaviour and classroom activities.

The core of the case study was to explore the factors that can influence a student's in-class motivation level, especially the factors relevant to the teacher's behaviour or the classroom activities. Therefore, the outline for the reflective comments was designed to guide students' answers toward that direction. The participants were asked to think about the teacher's behaviour or classroom activities which stimulated or reduced their motivation in English learning. They were also required to write anything that influenced their motivation in English learning, as the "anything" mentioned by the participants could provide richer data and could help discover more factors that lead to the students' motivation variability in lessons.

The outline was written in English at the beginning of the case study. But when

they first saw the English outline, all the three participants perceived that there might be some difficulties in writing their comments in English. Therefore, the outline was translated into Chinese. The bilingual version of the outline was sent to five English-major undergraduates and postgraduates in China to check the fidelity of the translation to the English version. The five students all agreed that the translation was appropriate.

The bilingual version of the outline was given to the participants through emails (see Figure 3-10). They were asked to write their comments as soon as possible after the end of each College English lesson. According to their convenience, the participants could choose to provide electronic documents or photos of handwritten documents.

**Reflective comments (after class)**

During the lesson: 回忆这节课中

- Activities or tasks you like / dislike 喜欢/不喜欢的课堂活动或任务
- Content you are interested in 感兴趣的课堂内容
- Teacher's general conduct you like / dislike 喜欢/不喜欢的老师的行为
- Anything that you believe influence your English learning positively / negatively 你认为对你英语学习产生积极/消极影响的事情
- Anything happened in this lesson that helps you continue English learning 课堂上发生的促使你继续英语学习的事情

Figure 3-10 Outline of reflective comments

### 3.3.2.2.2 Questionnaire in the case study

The questionnaire used in the case study aimed at capturing the cases' (students) basic attitudes toward English learning. The data from this questionnaire was connected to the reflective comments in order to examine whether a student's general motivation in English learning could influence his or her in-class motivational variability. In other words, this questionnaire was used to explore the relationship between students' attitudes toward English learning and their attitudes toward teacher's behaviour and classroom activities. The questionnaire was therefore designed with items of students' reasons of learning English and College English, and their attitudes toward English learning.

The questionnaire consisted of multiple-choice questions only, for the participants' convenience. Considering a learner's attitude toward L2 learning

(Dörnyei, 1994; Dörnyei & Otto, 1998; Gardner, 1985; Williams & Burden, 1997) is a motivation factor, the item “Do you like English?” and “What do you think about English learning?” were included in the questionnaire. On the basis of previous research results of motivation types of Chinese College English students (Hua, 1998; Shi, 2000; Gao et al., 2003), the items “Why do you learn English?” and “Why do you attend College English?” and the corresponding answers were decided. In addition, an item, “Do you think the researcher has an influence on your motivation in English learning?”, was also included in consideration of the Hawthorne Effect in the research.

The questionnaire was first written in English and then translated into Chinese, following the requirements of the participants. The Chinese version of the questionnaire was sent to five English-major undergraduates and postgraduates to check the fidelity to the original English version (see Figure 3-11). All the five students agreed that the translation was appropriate. Then an electronic version of the questionnaire was made with a Chinese online questionnaire tool *Sojump*. The link of the electronic questionnaire was sent to the participants through emails after they had finished their last reflective comments.

#### The questionnaire in the case study

Please choose all the appropriate answers

- Do you like English? 你喜欢英语吗?
  - a. Yes 是
  - b. No 否
- Why do you learn English? 你为什么学习英语?
  - a. I am interested in English. 对英语有兴趣
  - b. A Requirement of university (Obtaining a certificate) 学校要求 (获得证书)
  - c. For my future career 为了未来发展
  - d. Other reason 其他原因\_\_\_\_\_
- What do you think about the English learning? 你是怎样看待英语学习的?
  - a. It's useful. 有用
  - b. It's not useful. 没用;
  - c. It's interesting. 有意思
  - d. It's boring. 枯燥
  - e. I like learning English 我喜欢学习英语
  - f. I don't like learning English. 我不喜欢学习英语
  - g. I neither like nor dislike learning English. 我既不喜欢也不讨厌学习英语
  - h. Other 其他\_\_\_\_\_
- Why do you attend College English? 你为什么上大学英语课?
  - a. It's a compulsory course. 它是必修课
  - b. I'm interested in this course. 我对这门课感兴趣
  - c. I attend the course considering my future career. 考虑到未来发展
- How long do you usually spend on English learning? 你通常花多少时间进行英语学习?
  - a. Every day 每天\_\_\_\_\_ mins / hours 分钟/小时
  - b. Every week 每周\_\_\_\_\_ mins / hours 分钟/小时
  - c. Every month 每月\_\_\_\_\_ mins / hours 分钟/小时
  - d. I learn English before tests. 考试前集中学习
- Does your opinion about English learning change since last September? 从进入大学到现在, 你对于英语学习的看法有什么变化吗?
- Do you think the researcher has an influence on your motivation in English learning? If so, is it a positive or negative impact? 你认为研究者是否对你的英语学习动机产生了影响? 如果有影响, 是积极影响还是消极影响?

Figure 3-10 Questionnaire in the case study pilot

### 3.3.2.3 Data of the second pilot study

In order to differentiate the two participants and protect participants' individual information, the participants were named with codes. Since the female participant also took part in the previous focus group and had been coded as Fa, her code was also used in this part. The male participant was coded as Mc. In the following section, selected data of this pilot are presented.

#### 3.3.2.3.1 Data of reflective comments

In her after-class comments, Fa mentioned several times that she had more interest in listening and learning the contents relevant to the culture and customs of English-speaking countries. Fa felt excited when the teacher used unusual ways to teach: she conveyed her fondness for one lesson which was taught by role-play; she wrote that it was very interesting to have a lesson in the form of playing roles. Fa also

expressed her strong enthusiasm in one lesson which mainly consisted of students' discussion on one topic with video assistance, she commented that the speaking and listening lesson was quite interesting and the whole class took part in the discussion actively. In addition, Fa mentioned in the same lesson that the teacher encouraged the students who were nervous, to answer questions and she said she liked the teacher's encouragement to students very much.

Participant Mc mentioned that in one lesson, the teacher divided the whole class into different groups to play short dramas and gave feedback to all the groups after their performances. He liked this way of teaching; however, he wrote in his comments that he didn't like his teacher's feedback because the teacher gave higher feedback to another group rather than his group. Mc said that although the feedback helped him understand the distance between his and the other group, he felt a little frustrated when he heard the feedback from his teacher. Interaction between the teacher and students was mentioned in Mc's comments two times; he wrote in one lesson's comment that there was little interaction between the teacher and students and he didn't like that lesson; and in another comment, Mc was quite happy about that lesson since the teacher interacted with students a lot and the class atmosphere was very active. He also gave a positive comment to one lesson which focused on speaking and listening via students' discussion and video assistance.

#### **3.3.2.3.2 Data of the questionnaire**

Participant Fa said she liked English and English learning; she thought English learning was interesting and useful. English learning for Fa was not only the result of her interest and the requirement of the university, but also a support for her future career. Although she said she liked English and English learning, Fa attended College English because it is a compulsory course and could be helpful in her future career.

According to his answer to the questionnaire, Participant Mc did not like English and English learning because he believed English was boring though it was useful in his future career. His purpose of English learning was to meet the requirement of the university and for his future career, and he attended College English for the same

reasons.

#### **3.3.2.4 Directions of improving**

According to the participants' responses in this pilot for a case study, it can be confirmed that the reflective comments after class can effectively collect information about what influenced the participants' motivation levels during the lessons. But it is important that the comments should be written as soon as the lessons have finished, since the two participants both mentioned that if they had not been able to write the comments, they might have forgotten something they noticed during the lessons. Therefore, a requirement of completing the reflective comments when the College English lessons ended could help the participant to better recall what happened during the lessons. Furthermore, though the information from the reflective comments was useful, sometimes the comments were quite simple and short; for example, Participant Mc mentioned he liked the teacher's "explanation of words", but he didn't write anything about how the teacher explained words and why he liked the "explanation of words". The in-depth information about how the event happened and why the participant liked or disliked the event could provide more data about how his or her motivation level was influenced in the lesson. In order to further explore the data from the reflective comments, it could be helpful to interview the participants with their comments after each lesson.

The questionnaire collected information about participants' attitudes toward English learning, and also helped understand the participants' motivation orientations. However, its explorations on participants' attitudes toward English learning and motivation orientations were very limited as it has seven items in total, and there are only two items (the third and fourth questions) relevant to learners' motivation orientations. In order to have a better understanding of College English student's motivation orientations, a more reliable questionnaire was necessary. In addition, one participant said the item about English learning time was difficult to answer since he didn't have a fixed time in English learning and he had no idea about the time he spent on English learning.

### **3.4 Main study**

Based on the previous pilot studies, the main study of this research adopted the design of case study used in the second pilot study. Some modifications were made to the detailed case study design according to the results of the pilot study.

#### **3.4.1 Study design**

The main study consisted of two sections: the first section was a questionnaire survey to learn about participants' motivation orientations, using a revised version of You and Dörnyei's (2016) motivation orientation questionnaire (see Section 3.4.3.1). All the students in the participating class were invited to answer the questionnaire at the beginning of the main study, and then 10 students were selected from the class (see Section 3.4.2) to take part in the second stage, which lasted for four weeks and included learning logs and interviews. The participants were required to write one learning log entry after each College English lesson (see Section 3.4.3.2) in order to record the possible factors or events which influenced their English learning motivation in class. The 10 participants were also interviewed individually once per week, the interview aimed at exploring in-depth information about the participants' learning logs (see Section 3.4.3.3), especially the reasons why the factors or the events mentioned in their logs could influence their in-class motivation.

#### **3.4.2 Participants**

The participants in the main study were also first-year non-English major students, who were invited from the same university as those who participated in previous pilot studies. They all majored in Credit Management and were selected from the same class. The selection had the following steps: first, the whole class (38 students) was invited to answer the revised English learner questionnaire (You & Dörnyei, 2016), which was used as a sampling tool; then based on their answers to items relevant to "attitudes toward English learning" in the questionnaire (see more details in Results Chapter, Section 4.1), the whole class was divided into two groups: students who were strongly interested in English learning and students who were not very interested

in English learning (see more details in Results chapter, Section 4.1.2). Meanwhile, in order to gain thorough information from various types of students, students' scores from one English test of this class were also used to divide the whole class students into different groups. The scores were provided by their College English teacher. As mentioned in a previous pilot study (see Section 3.1.1), College English students had six years' English learning experience at least, so their English was commonly at intermediate level. Based on their English scores, the 38 students were also classified into lower intermediate level, intermediate level and upper intermediate level. Considering the participants' general motivation orientations and their English scores, 10 students (6 students with strong interest and 4 participants with weak interest) were invited from the whole class to join further research. However, one male participant stopped providing his response after the first-week of data collection; in the second week, another female participant also didn't want to participate in this research any more. So, finally, there were 8 students who completed the four-week study.

In order to protect the participants' information, the names of participants were substituted with codes of six or five letters. The first letter of one participant's identity code represents the participant's gender, using F (female) or M (male); the second letter shows the participants' general motivation orientations with S (strongly interested in English learning) or W (weakly interested in English learning); the third letter is the participants' English level represented by L (lower intermediate level), I (intermediate level) or U (upper intermediate level); the last two or three letters form an acronym of one participant's name. The general information of the 8 participants is provided in Table 3-1.

Participant	Age	gender	Motivation orientation	English level	Code
MZB	19	M	Weakly interested	Upper intermediate	MWU-MZB
SJQ	18	M	Weakly interested	Intermediate	MWI-SJQ
SYH	17	M	Strongly interested	Lower intermediate	MSL-SYH
JJY	18	F	Weakly interested	Lower intermediate	FWL-JJY



ZQ	18	F	Strongly interested	Upper intermediate	FSU-ZQ
LXJ	18	F	Strongly interested	Intermediate	FSI-LXJ
WXJ	18	F	Strongly interested	Intermediate	FSI-WXJ
MQJ	18	F	Strongly interested	Upper intermediate	FSU-MQJ

Table 3-2 Basic information of the participants

### 3.4.3 Instruments

#### 3.4.3.1 Dörnyei's English Learner Questionnaire (2016)

In the previous pilot for the case study, the results of the questionnaire showed that a more reliable and systematic questionnaire was needed. Therefore, a few questionnaires concerning English learners' motivation were considered to be used in the research.

Taguchi, Magid and Papi (2009) conducted a comparative motivational survey in Japan, China and Iran, using three questionnaires (Japanese version, Chinese version and Iranian version) mainly based on Dörnyei et al's (2006) Hungarian studies and most items in their questionnaires were from the Hungarian studies, concerning cultural interest, integrativeness and attitudes toward L2 community. Taguchi, Magid and Papi also chose some items from established questionnaires (e.g. Clément & Baker, 2001; Dörnyei, 2001; Gardner, 1985; Noels et al., 2000). In addition, there were also some newly designed items in their questionnaire. Considering the differences among Japan, China and Iran, there were some differences in the three questionnaires, the Japanese and Chinese versions had 67 items and the Iranian version contained 76 items, while all the questionnaires included nine background questions. But all the items in the three questionnaires were relevant to 10 motivation factors, 1) ideal L2 self, 2) ought-to L2 self, 3) instrumentality-promotion, 4) instrumentality-prevention, 5) integrativeness, 6) cultural interest, 7) family influence, 8) attitudes to learning English, 9) attitudes to L2 community, 10) criterion measures (Taguchi, Magid & Papi, 2009). The three questionnaires all had two sections, the first part included statement-type items measured by 6-point Likert scales from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree"; the second section contained question-type items

measured by 6-point rating scales with “not at all” at the left end and “very much” at the right end. Taguchi, Magid and Papi’s (2009) questionnaire was a good summary of previous motivational questionnaires, especially in the aspect of L2 Motivational Self System.

You and Dörnyei (2016) conducted a study about Chinese students’ motivation, using a questionnaire with 73 6-point Likert scale items and 7 background questions (You & Dörnyei, 2016; You, Dörnyei & Csizér, 2016). The questionnaire mainly focused on L2 Motivational Self System, Intended Effort and Language Learning Vision (You & Dörnyei, 2016). The questionnaire was divided into three sections, the first two sections were mainly focused on L2 Motivational Self System and intended effort, and the third Section was about English learning vision. The items in the questionnaire included components from Taguchi, Magid and Papi’s (2009) questionnaire as well as some newly designed items. Further, the questionnaire provided both English version and Chinese translation.

Considering You and Dörnyei’s (2016) questionnaire not only included items related to various motivation orientations, but was also designed for Chinese English learners, it was this questionnaire which was finally chosen to be used in this study. Although, as has been indicated, You and Dörnyei’s questionnaire was designed to investigate Chinese students, it was still revised in order to be better adapted to this research. As the purpose of the questionnaire survey was to understand the general motivation orientations of the participants, the items aimed at further exploring Language Learning Vision were deleted. Table 3-2 shows the nine motivation orientations and the question numbers of the corresponding items in the final questionnaire.

An online version of the revised questionnaire was prepared through the Chinese online questionnaire tool *Sojump* (which was used in the preparation of Motometers, see Section 3.3.1.2.1, Part c). With the agreement of the English teacher of the participating class, the link of the electronic questionnaire was sent to the whole class (38 students) via the teacher in late September, 2017 and was required to be completed by the end of September. The questionnaires were analysed (see Section

3.4.4.1) once the students had submitted them; then the participants for the following case study were selected in the very beginning of October.

Table 3-3 Motivation Orientations in the Questionnaire

Ideal L2	6,12,23,	Instrumentality-	4,8,13,18,22,	Parental	2,9,17,
Self	31,37	promotion	28,33,39	expectation	24,32
Ought-to	5,10,15,21,	Instrumentality-	7,20,26,35	Intended	3,11,19,
L2 self	21,39,40	prevention		effort	25,30,36
Cultural	43,48,54	Attitude toward	45,53,56	Travelling	1,16,38,
interest		learning English			55

### 3.4.3.2 Learning logs

In the previous pilot studies, participants were required to record their learning experiences in College English lessons via Motometers or after-class comments. Compared to the data from Motometers, it can be seen that the after-class reflective comments could provide clearer and more detailed information about the events which could influence students' in-class motivation changes. Therefore, the reflective comments were more useful in further exploring the causes of motivation fluctuations. But the students' responses about the in-class teacher's behaviour in the pilot study were still general and limited, which might have been because of the item relevant to teacher's behaviour in the outline: students may not have had clear ideas about what "teacher's general conduct" was. Thus, in the main study, the item about teacher's behaviour, "Teacher's general conduct you like/dislike", was modified into two more detailed items, "anything which your teacher usually does in the classroom" and "anything your teacher does not always do in the classroom". Figure 3-11 shows the final outline of the learning logs. Considering the participants in previous pilots usually provided very short answers to the open questions, a word limit was imposed to each item in the outline in order to restrict the length of the answers. Meanwhile, the word limit could make participants stressful when answering the question and the stress may influence their response, even influence their willingness of participating in this research. In order to reduce the potential negative impact of word limit on the

participants, the requirement was written as “no more than...”, trying to alleviate the students’ pressure of writing.

Please write down your experience in this lesson in accordance with the following hints 请根据以下提示

回忆你在这节课中的经历

- Activities or tasks you like / dislike (no more than 50 characters)  
喜欢/不喜欢的课堂活动或任务(不超过 50 字)
- Content you are interested in (no more than 20 characters)  
感兴趣/不感兴趣的课堂内容 (不超过 20 个字)
- Anything which your teacher usually does in the classroom you like/dislike (no more than 20 characters)  
课堂上老师通常的做法中, 你喜欢/不喜欢的
- Anything which your teacher not always does in the classroom you like/dislike (no more than 20 characters)  
课堂上老师不经常的做法中, 你喜欢/不喜欢的
- Anything happened in this lesson that helps you continue English learning (no more than 50 characters)

课堂上发生的促使你继续英语学习的事情(不超过 50 字)

- Anything that you believe may influence your English learning positively / negatively (no more than 50 characters)  
你认为对你英语学习产生积极/消极影响的事情(不超过 50 字)

Figure 3-112 Outline of learning logs

### 3.4.3.3 Interviews

Interviews in the case study mainly aimed at exploring more information about participants’ learning logs. Since the data collected via learning logs were usually short and concise phrases or sentences, or even types of in-class activities or tasks, they could show the events which affected the participants’ in-class English learning motivation, but might not provide more information about how a certain event influenced participants’ in-class motivation or why the event might have influenced their motivation. In order to further explore the College English students’ in-class

motivation changes, especially how their motivations were affected, interviews were chosen as supplements to students' learning logs. During the four weeks, every participant was interviewed once weekly about his or her learning log entry reporting the corresponding College English lesson; the places and time of conducting interviews were decided by the participants in consideration of their convenience. The interviews were usually conducted at the weekends since participants had fixed schedules in weekdays. The places where the interviews were conducted were usually the participants' dormitories or unscheduled classrooms.

As the purpose of the interviews was to explore more information about the corresponding learning logs, the detailed questions used in each interview were different and could not be completely confirmed before the participants' logs were collected. But on the basis of the data collected in the previous pilot for the case study, and considering the purpose of the interviews, some potential questions, such as "Why did you like/dislike ...?" or "How ... positively/negatively influences your learning?", were prepared in advance. Figure 3-12 shows the potential questions for use in the interviews. These potential questions were mainly "How" and "Why" questions, which needed more information from participants' logs to be completed, so that in-depth information about the reasons of the participants' in-class motivation changes could be obtained. Furthermore, in consideration of the different English levels of the eight participants, before the interviews started, the participants were asked about the language they preferred to use in their interviews, and all of them chose to communicate in Chinese since they could be more relaxed and could also express themselves more freely when they were using their native language, in the same way they chose to write their learning logs in Chinese. Thus, the potential questions were translated into Chinese, and all the interviews were conducted in Chinese.

The interviews were usually between 15 and 25 minutes, and were all fully recorded with a digital voice recorder with the agreement of the participants. After each interview, the recording was transcribed as soon as possible. Since the interviews were conducted in Chinese, the transcripts were written in Chinese first in order to

keep the maximum information from the interviews; later, English translations were also provided in consideration of the language used in this thesis. Each transcript was identified with the code of the participant (see Section 4.2, Table 3-1) and the date the interview was conducted.

**Possible Interview questions**

- Why did you like/dislike...  
你为什么喜欢/不喜欢……
- Why were you interested in...  
你为什么对……感兴趣/不感兴趣
- Why do you think ... positively/negatively influences your learning?  
你为什么觉得……对你的英语学习产生积极/消极影响?
- Do you think your feelings or opinions towards the contents/activities/tasks have influences on your motivation in English learning?  
你觉得你对课堂内容/活动/任务的看法或者喜好会影响你的英语学习动机吗?

Figure 3-13 Possible questions in Interviews

#### 3.4.3.4 Ethical issues

The study considered ethical issues, including confidentiality, anonymity, and consent in the process of data collection and analysis.

In June 2017, information about the study was sent to the administration of the college of foreign languages in the university and the College English teacher via email, and the college permission and the teacher's agreement was obtained in the next month. With the teacher's agreement, consent forms (see Appendix V) together with the link of the questionnaire were first sent to the whole class in late September, two weeks prior the case study. All the students in the class were informed that their participation in the study was voluntary and they could withdraw from the study at any time; they were also informed that their privacy would be protected and stored confidentially, and their email address required in the questionnaire would only be used to further select participants in the case study.

After the participants of the case study were selected, the confidentiality and anonymity of their participation were emphasised again to the participants: the information about their identity would not be revealed to the public and unique codes would substitute their names in the study; their data, including questionnaire, learning logs, and audio-recordings of interviews would be stored in identifiable format for

about three months and would be kept for three years after which time it would be destroyed. In addition, the participants were also given the right to withdraw from the study at any time during data collection and up to 6 weeks after the data collection.

### **3.4.4 Data analysis**

The data analysis of the main study is divided into two parts: analysis of questionnaire data and interviews data analysis. Analysis of questionnaires was first used as a tool to further select case study participants, and then the questionnaire data of the selected participants were further analysed to establish participants' personal profiles in order to support their interview data. The core of analysing interview data was to code the information relevant to the participants' in-class motivation fluctuations; since the learning logs in the case study were used to help conduct the interviews, the analysis of learning logs was a part of the interviews.

#### **3.4.3.1 Analysis of Questionnaire data**

As mentioned in Section 4.3.1, the revised English Learner Questionnaire was first provided to the whole participating class to gather general information about the students' attitudes toward English learning. After the whole class had finished the questionnaire, the students' answers to the 3 questions (see Results chapter, Section 1) relevant to "Attitudes toward English learning" were extracted; the mean values of each student's answers to the 3 "Attitudes toward English learning" questions were used as one standard of selecting case study participants (see more in Section 4.2). With the help of the "Attitudes toward English learning" related items and students' English levels, the final participants for the case study were confirmed; the questionnaires of these students were picked out and further analysed in order to have comprehensive understandings about the participants' motivation orientations, since the motivation orientations may be helpful in understanding the participants' in-class motivation changes.

### **3.4.3.2 Analysis of learning logs**

The purpose of collecting participants' learning logs was to explore the possible factors or events that could influence students' in-class motivation and further provide information for the later interviews. The analysis of learning logs was therefore used to select appropriate information for the later interviews. The participants' learning logs were read several times before the interviews started; the key information which had effects on the participants' motivation was marked and then the information was applied into the preliminary list of possible questions for interviews, so that a particular outline had been prepared before its corresponding interview started.

### **3.4.3.3 Analysis of interviews**

The data from the interviews were the most important part in this research since they provided various reasons or causes for students' in-class motivation fluctuations. Therefore, the analysis of the interviews was more complicated than the analysis of questionnaire data. Qualitative software Nvivo was used for the analysis.

The purpose of the analysis of the interview transcripts was to look for information related to the participants' motivation changes and which encoded the relevant information. On the one hand, based on the questionnaire survey, the nine motivation orientations were accepted as possible topics which could cause participants' motivation fluctuations and could be mentioned by the participants in their interviews. However, on the other hand, it was uncertain, during the lessons, what kind of teacher's behaviour and classroom activity could influence the students' in-class motivation in English learning and how the students' motivation could be changed. In other words, there were no certain topics or codes which could be prepared in advance, in terms of teacher's behaviour and classroom activities; and the possible topics depended on the information from the interviews. Therefore, open coding (see more from Grounded Theory, Strauss, 1987; & Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Flick, 2009), which could form topics inductively, was mainly used in the analysis of the interviews' transcripts. The information about participants' attitudes and opinions towards their teacher and in-class activities, which



had a complete meaning, was regarded as one encoding unit. The following is an example from one interview with Participant FSU-ZQ and there are 3 coding units:

I like interactions (between the teacher and students). They can help me concentrate (on English learning in the lessons) and we (students) can benefit a lot from interactions.

In addition, in order to increase the reliability and validity of the interview analysis, one Chinese postgraduate was invited as an assistant in coding all the 32 interview transcripts (8 participants and four interviews one person) and she was told how to code the transcripts in advance. The coding process had the following steps:

Step 1. Preparation: the aim of coding interview transcripts was introduced to the Chinese postgraduate, and a few examples (extracts from the transcripts) of how to code were provided to her. The process of the coding was also introduced.

Step 2. Preliminary coding: the researcher and the Chinese postgraduate read the interview transcripts respectively and undertook a preliminary coding of units and elicitation of themes. The researcher coded the transcripts via NVivo and the postgraduate coded manually.

Step 3. Discussion: based on the coding results obtained in Step 2, the researcher and the postgraduate assistant compared their coding units and themes together, and then discussed the differences in order to unify their understandings of coding units and corresponding themes.

Step 4. Secondary coding: the researcher and the Chinese postgraduate respectively coded the transcripts for a second time on the basis of discussion in Step 3.

Step 5. Final discussion: at this stage, the researcher and the assistant compared the results of the second coding and discussed the differences. The coding units and themes from the interviews were finally confirmed.

The coding units were categorised into different topics based on their meanings: some of them were marked with some certain topics from the questionnaire as mentioned before, and other coding units were classified into appropriate new themes.

After the first coding, comparisons were made between the results of the researcher and the assistant, and there were about 83% similarities between the coding units of the researcher and the assistant. The differences in coding were discussed and then the researcher's and the assistant's understandings of coding units reached an agreement.

After the steps above, the interview transcripts were coded for a second time and the coding units had 96% similarities. The differences were mainly about the categories of some coding units; for example, some participants always mentioned their interests in culture in English speaking countries and off-syllabus knowledge together, or they even regarded their interests in culture and off-syllabus information as the same thing. Although the researcher and the postgraduate had reached agreement on the themes and what they refer to, the participants' blend of information about off-syllabus knowledge and their interest in culture made it difficult to differentiate the categories of some coding units. Therefore, there were still differences between the researchers and the postgraduate's coding. The most appropriate topics of each unit were finally confirmed with further discussion.

Based on the final results of coding, the themes obtained from the learning logs and interviews were different from the pre-determined themes at the beginning: a few themes from the questionnaire were deleted because of non-occurrence while some new topics were added in accordance with the participants' descriptions. Table 3-3 shows the final topics obtained from the interviews and the number of corresponding coding units. Some topics just appeared for a few times in the interviews or even appeared in only one certain participant's interviews their extremely low frequencies were probably because these topics were not important in influencing the participants' in-class motivation; therefore, in the Results chapter, interview data about Instrumentality-promotion are presented in summary form, and as the coding units of Pressure and Travelling usually appeared with some certain classroom activities, they are merged into corresponding topics respectively. In addition, although Ideal L2 Self related contents are only mentioned 9 times by the participants, it was decided still to present this topic in the Results chapter, since it had strong influences on participants' motivation levels in accordance with students' descriptions.

Topic	No. of coding units	Topic	No. of coding units
Attitudes toward English learning	132	Ideal L2 Self	9
Instrumentality-promotion	5	Interaction between the teacher and students	65
Cultural interest	58	Dictation	60
College English test (CET)	98	Off-syllabus knowledge*	35
Teacher's personality	66	Text and vocabulary learning	93
Oral communication and practice	52	Listening practice	61
Pressure and anxiety	7	Traveling	6

\*Off-syllabus knowledge refers to any information which is irrelevant to the syllabus of *College English* but added by the teacher during teaching.

Table 3-3 Results of the interview coding

Furthermore, there were a few coding units relevant to some special events in some participants' English learning which cannot be divided into any of the topics above. Although these events occurred once only, they had quite strong influences on the participants' motivation in English learning. Therefore, these special coding units are also presented in the Results chapter.

Table-3-4 showed the numbers of coding units in each participant's interviews.

No. of coding units Themes	Participants							
	MWU-MZB	MWI-SJQ	FWL-JJY	MSL-SYH	FSU-ZQ	FIL-LXJ	FSI-WXJ	FSU-MQJ
Attitudes toward English learning	14	11	11	20	22	18	19	17
Ideal L2 self	0	3	3	0	0	0	2	2
Instrumentality-promotion	0	0	0	3	0	0	2	0
Cultural interest	7	4	7	12	7	6	8	7
Interaction between the	10	9	5	13	3	10	7	8

teacher and students								
Dictation	12	9	15	0	0	3	2	17
Off-syllabus knowledge	5	0	7	8	2	6	6	1
Text and vocabulary learning	7	12	3	18	20	13	15	5
Listening practice	11	0	15	11	10	0	8	6
Traveling	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	1
College English test (CET)	11	6	14	10	13	17	16	11
Teacher's personality	9	7	11	17	1	12	3	6
Oral communication and practice	7	3	3	5	14	9	7	4
Pressure and anxiety	0	0	5	0	0	1	1	0

Table 3-4 The numbers of coding units in participants' interviews

### 3.4.5 Reliability and validity

While reliability and validity are generally considered to be of great importance in research, where case studies are concerned, and following Dörnyei (2007), the concepts appear to be less applicable. Understanding the particularity of a certain case or bounded group is of more interest here. Consequently, reliability and validity have here been substituted with the fresher concepts of dependability and credibility, following moves in similar qualitative research (Mackey & Gass, 2005; Merriam, 1988; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

#### **Dependability (reliability)**

Dependability, as mentioned above, has substituted for reliability in qualitative research; it is an evaluation of the integrated processes of collecting and analysing data. Case study protocols, which include procedures and rules of data collection and analysis, and case study data bases, referring to the documentation about the complete data collection process including what was planned and what actually carried out as well as the documentation about the record of data sources, are two ways of

addressing dependability (Yin, 2009). The processes of data collection and data analysis has been described above (see Section 3.3 and 3.4) in order to enhance dependability.

### **Credibility (validity)**

Credibility, which have substituted for validity in qualitative research just like dependability, means the findings are credible. It is believed that triangulation could enhance the credibility of qualitative study (Mackey & Gass, 2005; Merriam, 1988; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Furthermore, Mackey and Gass (2005) mentioned that participants could feel relaxed when facing the researcher by the researcher's frequent visits to the research site: in other words, it is more possible for the participants to provide true and accurate data if they are accustomed to the presence of the researcher. This study investigated multiple cases via a questionnaire, learning logs and interviews over four weeks. In addition, the researcher visited the participants frequently during the data collection process, making the participants relaxed and comfortable with the researcher's presence.

## **4. Results**

In this chapter, the results of the main study are presented. Section 4.1 presents the data collected via questionnaires, including both the responses of the 8 participants who took part in the full case study and the other students who only participated in the questionnaire survey. The data from the 8 participants' learning logs and interviews are jointly presented in Section 4.2. Comprehensive reports of the 8 cases are provided in Section 4.3.

### **4.1 Questionnaire results**

As mentioned in the Methodology chapter, 38 College English students took the questionnaire survey; however, two students' questionnaires were eliminated. One participant answered all the questions with the same answer, choosing "4" for all the items in the questionnaire; it cannot be ensured that this participant regarded the questionnaire seriously, so his answers to the questions were probably unreliable. The other student had contradictory answers to similar questions; for example, the student chose "5(agree)" for the question "Learning English is important to me because I would like to travel internationally", while his answer to another question, "Studying English is important to me because without English I won't be able to travel a lot.", was "1(strongly disagree)"; the two questions were similar, but the participant provided contradictory responses. It is obvious that this participant did not read the two questions carefully, and it is uncertain whether he read and answered other questions with care, so this participant's questionnaire was eliminated. Therefore, the questionnaires of the two participants mentioned above were not reliable, and eventually 36 questionnaires were used in the data analysis.

#### **4.1.1 General questionnaire results of the whole participating class**

The 36 participants were divided into two groups; this classification was based on the participants' responses to questions concerning their attitudes toward English learning comprising Question 45 "Do you find learning English really interesting?", Question 53 "How much do you like English?" and Question 56 "Do you really enjoy learning

English?”. Participants who chose “1 (not at all)”, “2 (not so much)”, and “3 (so-so)” were defined as students who had a *weak* interest in English learning while participants were allocated to the group of students who had a *strong* interest in English learning if their answers were “4 (a little)”, “5 (quite a lot)”, “6 (very much)”. Table 4-1 shows the numbers and percentages of the two groups of students. 14 of 36 students were not very interested in learning English while the other 22 students had a strong interest in English learning, according to their responses.

Table 4-1 No. of two groups of students

	Participants who had a <i>weak interest</i> in English learning	Participants who had a <i>strong interest</i> in English learning
No. of participants	14	22
Percentage (%)	38.9	61.1

As the whole-class questionnaire survey did not constitute the main data for the case study, the analysis of this data was quite simple, focusing on descriptive results and providing a general overview of the students’ motivation orientations. The descriptive results of the whole class’ questionnaire were also used to make comparisons with the results of the case study participants’ questionnaires, checking whether the 8 participants were properly representative of the whole class. Table 4-2 shows the descriptive results of all the 36 participants in terms of nine motivation variables. Cultural Interest (M=5.10) had the highest value among all the nine motivation directions, followed by Ideal L2 Self (M=4.82) and Instrumentality-promotion (M=4.50). Ought-to L2 Self (M=3.43), Parental Expectation (M=3.47) and Instrumentality-prevention (M=3.92) were the least important motivation factors in English learning for the whole class. Intended effort (M=4.23) and Travelling (M=4.21) had similar mean values.

Table 4-2 Mean values of nine motivation orientations

Motivation orientation	Attitudes toward English learning	Ideal L2 Self	Ought-to L2 Self	Instrumentality-promotion	Instrumentality-prevention	Cultural interest	Intended effort	Parental expectation	Travelling
Mean values	4.03	4.82	3.43	4.50	3.92	5.10	4.23	3.47	4.21

#### 4.1.2 Questionnaire results of the case study participants

As mentioned in the Methodology chapter (Section 4.2), 10 students, 6 students with a strong interest in learning and 4 with a weak interest, were invited at first. In order to better represent the participating class, the numbers of the participants in the two groups were decided by the corresponding percentages of the participants with weak interest (38.9%) and strong interest (61.1%) in the whole class (see Table 4-1). But only 8 students, including 5 students with strong interests and 3 students who had little interest in English learning, finally took part in the four-week case study. The ratio of strong interest participants to weak interest participants was still close to the proportion in the whole class, so no more participants were invited. Table 4-3 displays the detailed results of the 8 participants' answers to the questions concerning their attitudes towards learning English. It can be seen that MWI-SJQ gave the lowest scores to the questions related to his attitudes towards English learning ( $M = 1.33$ ), and FSU-ZQ had the strongest interest in English learning ( $M = 5.67$ ). In addition, it seemed that there was no direct or obvious relationship between students' interests in English learning and their levels of English test scores, since the three participants, who were not very interested in English learning, were respectively at upper-intermediate level (MWU-MZB), intermediate level (MWI-SJQ) and lower level (FWL-JJY); and among the participants who were interested in English learning, two participants' (FSU-ZQ and FSU-MQJ) had English at upper-intermediate level, two participants (FSI-LXJ and FSI-WXJ) at intermediate level, and one student, MSL-SYH, was a lower level English learner.

Table 4-3 Participants' attitudes toward English learning

		Question number			Mean	
		45	53	56		
Participants who had <b>weak interest</b> in English learning	MWU-MZB	3	3	3	3.00	2.45
	MWI-SJQ	2	1	1	1.33	
	FWL-JJY	3	3	3	3.00	
	MSL-SYH	6	5	5	5.33	
Participants who had <b>strong interest</b> in English learning	FSU-ZQ	6	5	6	5.67	5.13
	FSI-LXJ	4	4	4	4.00	
	FSI-WXJ	6	5	5	5.33	
	FSU-MQJ	5	6	5	5.33	



Table 4-4 provides an overall view of the 8 participants' motivation orientations with the mean values of the nine motivation directions. It can be seen that Cultural Interest (M=5.17) obtained the highest score among all the motivation orientations; the scores of Instrumentality-promotion (M=4.83) and Ideal L2 Self (M=4.70) ranked the second and third place; Parental expectation (M=3.25), Ought-to L2 Self (M=3.32) and Instrumentality-prevention achieved the lowest mean values, which were the least important factors in influencing the 8 participants' motivation in English learning. The mean values of the case study sample were quite similar to the results of the whole class: the Cultural Interest (M=5.17) value of the case study sample was a little higher than that of the whole class (M=5.10), where it was also ranked first place among the nine motivation directions; Ought-to L2 Self had the lowest score in the case study sample while the mean value of Parental Expectation was the lowest in the whole class, however, the differences of the values of Ought-to L2 Self and Parental Expectation between the 8 case study participants and the whole class students were quite small; there were also minor discrepancies of Ideal L2 Self and Instrumentality between the two groups, and Ideal L2 Self was the third most important factor in the case study group while the value of Ideal L2 Self ranked second place in the whole class.

Table 4-4 Participants' Motivation orientations

Motivation orientation	Attitudes toward English learning	Ideal L2 Self	Ought-to L2 Self	Instrumentality-promotion	Instrumentality-prevention	Cultural interest	Intended effort	Parental expectation	Traveling
Mean	4.13	4.70	3.32	4.83	3.84	5.17	4.5	3.25	4.47

#### 4.1.2.1 Participants' personal data

In the following section, the questionnaire results of each participant will be shown respectively. Personal profiles were established for each participant on the basis of their questionnaire data. The purpose of establishing the personal profiles is to highlight the different motivation orientations of the eight participants in English

learning, in order to further explore the participants' learning logs and interviews in the case study.

a. Participants with a weak interest

The data of the 3 participants who had a weak interest in English learning will be presented first, followed by those who had a strong interest in English learning.

*Participant MWU-MZB*

Table 4-5 shows MWU-MZB's various motivation orientations. Although he was not very interested in English learning (Attitudes toward English learning,  $M=3$ ); he showed a strong "Cultural interest ( $M=5.33$ )", and Ideal L2 Self ( $M=4.6$ ) was the second most important motivation orientation. His average score for factors relevant to "Intended effort ( $M=4.17$ )" was a little lower than the average level of the whole case study group. Ought-to L2 self ( $M=1.57$ ) and Parental Expectation ( $M=2.60$ ) had the least influences on MWU-MZB's English learning among all the nine motivation directions, which were much lower than the average values of the participants group. His mean value for Instrumentality-prevention ( $M=4.50$ ), which was higher than the average value of the participants group, was higher than Instrumentality-promotion ( $M=3.50$ ), which was lower than the average value of the group.

According to his questionnaire, it can be seen that MWU-MZB was not very interested in English learning; however, interestingly he still spent much time in English learning and was very interested in the culture of English-speaking countries. He could be highly motivated by Ideal L2 Self factors while Ought-to L2 Self factors may have very limited positive effects on his English learning. Parental expectation did not have a strong effect on MWU-MZB's English learning. In addition, there was a significant difference between Instrumentality-promotion ( $M=3.50$ ) and Instrumentality-prevention ( $M=4.50$ ), which means MWU-MZB was convinced more by the disadvantages of not learning English than by the benefits of learning English.

Table 4-5 MWU-MZB

Motivation orientations	Mean	Range
Attitudes toward English learning	3.00	(3,3)
Ideal L2 Self	4.60	(4,6)
Ought-to L2 Self	<b>1.57</b>	(1,4)

Instrumentality-promotion	3.50	(1,6)
Instrumentality-prevention	4.50	(1,6)
Cultural interest	<b>5.33</b>	(5,6)
Intended effort	4.17	(2,6)
Parental expectation	2.60	(1,6)
Travelling	3.25	(1,6)

#### *Participant MWI-SJQ*

MWI-SJQ had the lowest value in Attitudes toward English learning (M=1.33) among all the case study participants. His highest score was given to Instrumentality-prevention (M=5.00), and Cultural interest (M=4.33) and Instrumentality-promotion (M=4.25) ranked the second and third place; compared to the average values of the whole group, MWI-SJQ's score for Instrumentality-promotion was lower, while his score for Instrumentality-prevention was much higher than the average value. His scores for Ideal L2 Self (M=3.00) and Ought-to L2 Self (M=2.14) were also lower than the average values of the participant group; Parental expectation (M=2.80) did not play an important role in his English learning and he gave the lowest score to "Travelling (M=2.50)" among all the participants.

Compared to other participants, MWI-SJQ had the least interest in English learning and he was not very willing to spend time in learning, but he was quite interested in culture in English-speaking countries. Instrumental roles of English seemed to matter a lot to him while Instrumentality-prevention factors had a stronger influence on his learning than the Instrumentality-promotion related factors. The role of self was not very active in his learning since his scores for Ideal L2 Self and Ought-to L2 Self related questions were quite low. In addition, among all the 8 participants, travelling to English-speaking countries had the least positive effect on MWI-SJQ's English learning motivation.

Table 4-6 MWI-SJQ

Motivation orientations	Mean	Range
Attitudes toward English learning	<b>1.33</b>	(1,2)
Ideal L2 Self	3.00	(2,4)
Ought-to L2 Self	2.14	(1,4)
Instrumentality-promotion	4.25	(1,6)

Instrumentality-prevention	<b>5.00</b>	(2,6)
Cultural interest	4.33	(3,6)
Intended effort	3.67	(3,4)
Parental expectation	2.80	(2,4)
Travelling	2.50	(1,6)

#### *Participant FWL-JJY*

FWL-JJY was not very interested in English learning (Attitudes toward English learning,  $M=3.00$ ). However, she gave very high scores to all the other motivation orientations (see Table 4-7). The highest score was Ideal L2 Self ( $M=6.00$ ), which was also the highest value among all the participants, followed by Instrumentality-promotion ( $M=5.75$ ) and Ought-to L2 Self ( $M=5.71$ ). “Parental expectation ( $M=5.40$ )” and “Travelling ( $M=5.25$ )” were also very important factors in FWL-JJY’s English learning; the scores of these two orientations were even much higher than the average values of the whole participants group. Her score for “Intended effort ( $M=5.00$ )” was relatively low among her other motivation orientations except for “Attitudes toward English learning”.

FWL-JJY’s interest in English learning was not strong, but, unexpectedly, she was quite willing to learn English as she could be easily motivated by other factors. Factors relevant to Ideal L2 Self and Ought-to L2 Self had the most powerful influences on her English learning. Instrumentality of English was also a significant factor, and Instrumentality-promotion valued slightly higher than Instrumentality-prevention. FWL-JJY was quite interested in culture in English-speaking countries and travelling abroad, and she seemed to be strongly motivated by these interests. Furthermore, parental expectation was a very important factor in FWL-JJY’s learning as well.

Table 4-7 FWL-JJL

Motivation orientations	Mean	Range
Attitudes toward English learning	<b>3.00</b>	(3,3)
Ideal L2 Self	<b>6.00</b>	(6,6)
Ought-to L2 Self	5.71	(5,6)
Instrumentality-promotion	5.75	(4,6)
Instrumentality-prevention	5.50	(5,6)
Cultural interest	5.33	(4,6)
Intended effort	5.00	(4,6)

Parental expectation	5.40	(4,6)
Travelling	5.25	(4,6)

Taken together, for the group of students who had a weak interest in English learning, the two male participants, MWU-MZB and MWI-SJQ had more similarities in their motivation orientations and the influences of the orientations on their English learning were quite different; while FWL-JJY could be easily motivated by all the motivation factors except for “Attitudes toward English learning”.

Although all the three participants above had a weak interest in English learning, it can be seen that there were both similarities and differences in their motivation orientations. MWI-SJQ had the lowest interest in English learning among the three participants; his score for “Cultural interest” was also the lowest, though all participants were quite interested in culture in English-speaking countries. The three participants could be more motivated by “Ideal L2 Self” than “Ought-to L2 Self”, and compared to FWL-JJY, MWU-MZB and MWI-SJQ gave lower score to the two orientations. For the instrumental roles of English, FWL-JJY valued more the benefits of learning English while both MWU-MZB and MWI-SJQ were more likely to be motivated by factors relevant to “Instrumentality-prevention”. Furthermore, all the three participants seemed not to reject learning English: compared to their “Attitudes toward English learning”, they gave higher scores to “Intended effort”. In addition, MWU-MZB and MWI-SJQ did not value “Parental expectation” and “Travelling” much in their English learning, however, FWL-JJY could be easily influenced by parental expectations and travelling.

#### b. Participants with a strong interest

##### *Participant MSL-SYH*

It can be seen from Table 4-8 that MSL-SYH was extremely interested in English learning (Attitudes toward English, M=6.00, which was the highest value among the whole case study group), and was willing to spend time on learning English (Intended effort, M=4.80). He also had a strong interest in the culture of English-speaking

countries (Cultural interest, M=5.33). Travelling (M=4.25) seemed also to play an important role in his English learning though its value was a little lower than the average value of the whole group. MSL-SYH could be also easily motivated by factors relevant to Ideal L2 Self (M=5.00), while Ought-to L2 Self (M=2.43) factors had very limited influence on his learning. He gave his lowest score to Instrumentality-prevention (M=2.00); however, Instrumentality-promotion (M=4.13) had a stronger influence on his English learning motivation, and his scores for the above two motivation orientations were lower than the whole group's average values.

According to his questionnaire, MSL-SYH could be identified as a positive English learner not only because he held a very positive attitude toward English learning, but also because he enjoyed and valued more the benefits of learning English than the disadvantages of not learning English since his scores of "Ideal L2 Self" and "Instrumentality-promotion" were higher than the scores of "Ought-to L2 Self" and "Instrumentality-prevention". It seemed that MSL-SYH's own willingness to learn English had a more positive impact on his motivation than the influence of other people's opinions about the advantages of English. In addition, culture in English-speaking countries and the idea of travelling abroad could also motivate MSL-SYH to learn English actively.

Table 4-8 MSL-SYH

Motivation orientations	Mean	Range
Attitudes toward English learning	<b>6.00</b>	(5,6)
Ideal L2 Self	5.00	(5,5)
Ought-to L2 Self	2.43	(1,4)
Instrumentality-promotion	4.13	(2,6)
Instrumentality-prevention	<b>2.00</b>	(2,2)
Cultural interest	5.33	(5,6)
Intended effort	4.80	(4,5)
Parental expectation	2.40	(1,4)
Travelling	4.25	(3,6)

#### *Participant FSU-ZQ*

Participant FSU-ZQ showed her extremely positive attitudes towards all the 9 motivational orientations as her scores were all over "5", and her scores of all the nine motivation orientations were higher than the average values of the whole case study

group (see Table 4-9). Her highest score was given to “Cultural interest (M=6.00) and “Intended effort (M=5.00)” achieved the lowest score. She showed very similar scores for “Ideal L2 Self (M=5.40)” and “Ought-to L2 Self (M=5.43)”, and the scores of “Instrumentality-promotion (M=5.88)” and “Instrumentality-prevention (M=5.75)” were also quite close. Parental expectation (M=5.80) was an important factor in FSU-ZQ’s English learning, and she could also be easily influenced by ideas of traveling abroad (Travelling, M=5.50).

FSU-ZQ was an obviously positive English learner in accordance with her answers to the questionnaire. She had a strong interest in English learning and was happy to spend time on learning English. She was extremely interested in culture in English speaking countries and the idea of travelling abroad also attracted her, which became a strong motivation orientation for her. In addition, FSU-ZQ could be significantly affected by the instrumental roles of English; factors relevant to Ideal L2 Self and Ought-to L2 Self were also able to easily motivate her, and the impact of Ought-to L2 Self factors was slightly stronger than Ideal L2 Self factors. Overall, FSU-ZQ held a very positive attitude toward English and her motivation in learning could be easily strengthened by various factors.

Table 4-9 FSU-ZQ

Motivation orientations	Mean	Range
Attitudes toward English learning	5.33	(5,6)
Ideal L2 Self	5.40	(4,6)
Ought-to L2 Self	5.43	(1,4)
Instrumentality-promotion	5.88	(5,6)
Instrumentality-prevention	5.75	(1,6)
Cultural interest	<b>6.00</b>	(6,6)
Intended effort	<b>5.00</b>	(3,6)
Parental expectation	5.80	(5,6)
Travelling	5.50	(5,6)

#### *Participant FIL-LXJ*

In comparison with other participants in the “strong interest” group, Participant FIL-LXJ’s values of the nine motivation orientations were not high. According to Table 4-10, she provided the lowest score to her “attitudes toward English leaning (M=3.67)”, which was lower than the average value of all the case study participants.

Her highest scores were given to Instrumentality-promotion (M=4.50) and Intended effort (M=4.50), while the lowest score was for Instrumentality-prevention (M=2.25). Cultural interest (M=4.33) and Travelling (M=4.23) achieved the second and third highest scores among all the nine orientations. The factors relevant to Ought-to L2 Self (M=3.71) had a slightly stronger influence on FIL-LXJ's motivation than the factors relevant to Ideal L2 Self (M=3.40), which was much lower than the average value of the whole group. Parental expectation (M=3.20) had no significant impact on her English learning. Overall, the scores of FIL-LXJ's nine motivation factors were lower than the average values of the whole case study group.

Participant FIL-LXJ was not a very positive learner since her overall scores for the nine motivation orientations were not very high. Her interest in English learning was not very strong; however, unexpectedly, she was still willing to learn English. She could be more affected by the benefits of learning English than the disadvantages of not learning English. Her interest in culture in English-speaking countries and the idea of travelling abroad could have significant impact on her motivation. Further, the influence of Ideal L2 Self and Ought-to L2 Self factors on FIL-LXJ's motivation were quite limited; and she was one of the two participants (another one is Participant FSU-ZQ) who could be more influenced by Ought-to L2 Self factors than Ideal L2 Self factors. In addition, parental expectation did not have a strong impact on her English learning. Overall, Instrumentality-promotion had the most powerful influence on FIL-LXJ's motivation; however, compared to other participants who had a strong interest in English learning, the impacts of the nine motivation orientations on FIL-LXJ's motivation were not strong.

Table 4-10 FSI-LXJ

Motivation orientations	Mean	Range
Attitudes toward English learning	3.67	(3,4)
Ideal L2 Self	3.40	(3,4)
Ought-to L2 Self	3.71	(2,5)
Instrumentality-promotion	<b>4.50</b>	(4,5)
Instrumentality-prevention	<b>2.25</b>	(2,3)
Cultural interest	4.33	(4,5)
Intended effort	<b>4.50</b>	(4,5)



Parental expectation	3.20	(1,6)
Travelling	4.23	(4,5)

#### *Participant FSI-WXJ*

Table 4-11 shows that Participant FSI-WXJ had a very strong interest in English learning (Attitudes toward English learning,  $M=5.33$ ) and her interest in culture in English-speaking countries (Cultural interest,  $M=5.67$ ) was even stronger. According to her answers, the most important factor of her motivation was Travelling ( $M=5.75$ ). Conversely, Parental expectation ( $M=2.80$ ) had the least impact on her learning. FSI-WXJ could be more motivated by factors relevant to Instrumentality-promotion ( $M=5.00$ ) than the factors relevant to Instrumentality-prevention ( $M=3.50$ ). Further, “Ideal L2 Self ( $M=4.80$ )” had a more significant influence on her motivation than “Ought-to L2 Self ( $M=3.14$ )”. FSI-WXJ’s scores for the most motivation orientations in the questionnaire were higher than the average values of the whole case study group, but her scores for Ought-to L2 Self, Instrumentality-prevention and Parental expectation were a little lower than the average values.

It can be seen that FSI-WXJ held very positive attitudes toward English learning and culture in English-speaking countries, and she was quite willing to spend time in English learning. She could be most motivated by the idea of travelling abroad; it seems that travelling abroad was one of her major reason to learn English. The benefits of learning English obviously had a more positive impact on FSI-WXJ’s English learning than the disadvantages of not learning English. In addition, FSI-WXJ could be more motivated by the Ideal L2 Self factors than the Ought-to L2 Self factors.

Table 4-4 FSI-WXJ

Motivation orientations	Mean	Range
Attitudes toward English learning	5.33	(5,6)
Ideal L2 Self	4.80	(4,5)
Ought-to L2 Self	3.14	(1,6)
Instrumentality-promotion	5.00	(4,6)
Instrumentality-prevention	3.50	(1,5)
Cultural interest	5.67	(5,6)
Intended effort	4.50	(3,6)
Parental expectation	<b>2.80</b>	(1,5)

Travelling	5.75	(5,6)
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#### Participant FSU-MQJ

Table 4-12 shows participant FSU-MQJ's motivation orientations. It can be seen that FSU-MQJ's scores for most orientations were quite high except for Instrumentality-prevention (M=2.25) and Ought-to L2 Self (M=2.43), and these two factors had the least impact on her motivation in English learning. Her highest score was given to Parental expectation (M=5.80), which was much higher than the average value (M=3.25) of the case study group. The second and third highest score were Instrumentality-promotion (M=5.63) and Ideal L2 Self (M=5.40), which were also higher than the average values of the whole group. Her score for Attitudes toward English learning (M=5.33) was much higher than the whole group's average value, while her score for Intended effort (M=4.30), which was slightly lower than the average value, was the lowest among all the participants who had a "strong interest" in English learning. In addition, Cultural interest (M=5.00) and Travelling (M=5.00) were also important factors in FSU-MQJ's English leaning.

Like most participants in the "strong interest" group, FSU-MQJ was quite interested in English learning. But according to FSU-MQJ's response to the questionnaire, the most important factor in her English leaning motivation was Parental expectation, which means that she could be most motivated by the expectations from her parents; however, for all the other participants, "Parental expectation" was never the most significant factor in their English learning motivation. "Ideal L2 Self" factors had an obviously stronger impact than "Ought-to L2 Self" on FSU-MQJ's motivation. The benefits of learning English were also very useful in motivating her to learn English, while the effects of disadvantages of not learning English were quite limited. In addition, since she obtained the lowest score for "Intended effort" in the group, FSU-MQJ seems to be the least hard-working student in the "strong interest" group.

Table 4-5 FSU-MQJ

Motivation orientations	Mean	Range
Attitudes toward English learning	5.33	(5,6)
Ideal L2 Self	5.40	(5,6)

Ought-to L2 Self	2.43	(1,6)
Instrumentality-promotion	5.63	(4,6)
Instrumentality-prevention	<b>2.25</b>	(1,3)
Cultural interest	5.00	(4,6)
Intended effort	4.30	(3,6)
Parental expectation	<b>5.80</b>	(5,6)
Travelling	5.00	(5,6)

In general, the group of students who had a strong interest in English learning obviously had higher scores for the nine motivation orientations than the “weak interest” group. Though the five participants all had higher scores in “Attitudes toward English learning”, the motivation orientations had different roles in each participant’s motivation: MSL-SYH had the strongest interest in English learning; FSU-ZQ was an extremely active English learner and could be easily motivated by all the nine motivation factors; FSI-LXJ could be least influenced by her interest in English-speaking countries and “Travelling” related factors; and the most important factor in English learning for FSI-WXJ was “Travelling”; and “Parental expectation” had the strongest impact on FSU-MQJ’s motivation. Apart from the above varieties of their motivation orientations, these participants also had some similarities: first, the benefits of learning English had a stronger influence on their motivation in English learning than the disadvantages of not learning English; second, the participants all had a strong interest in culture in English-speaking countries.

In addition, there was one main difference between the “strong interest” and “weak interest” group; students who had a stronger interest in English learning valued the benefits of learning English more than the disadvantages of not learning English, while the disadvantages of not learning English played a more significant role in the motivation of students with a “weak interest”.

## 4.2 Results of learning logs and interviews

As shown in the Methodology chapter, the interview results were coded with various motivation factors and in-class activities, and the codes were classified into various themes, such as “Attitudes toward English learning”, “Interaction” and “pressure”

(see details in Methodology chapter, Section 4.4).

Although the research adopted a case study design, in this section, the data of participants' learning logs and corresponding interviews will be presented by different topics. The decision to report data by themes rather than cases was made in consideration of the similar or different influences on participants of the same topic or motivation factor: since the participants provided similar or various reasons for how a specific motivation orientation or classroom activity influenced their in-class motivation level, it is easier to show the similarity and differences of the effects of the topic via presenting the results by themes instead of reporting by cases.

The themes presented in the following sections are not always the same as the codes shown in the Methodology Chapter: some themes are the same as the codes, such as motivation factors included in the questionnaire "Attitudes toward English learning" and "Ideal L2 Self", and the topics extracted from the learning logs and interviews, such as "listening practice" and "interaction". However, there are also some topics which could be a combination of different codes, for example, "Off-syllabus knowledge" in this section includes two codes, "off-syllabus knowledge" and "cultural interest".

In the following sections, the results relevant to participants' "Attitudes towards English learning" are first presented, as the attitudes were the baseline of their motivation in English learning.

#### **4.2.1 Attitudes toward English learning**

Students' attitudes toward English learning play an important role in influencing their motivation. The interview data coded as "Attitudes toward English learning" are included in this section. In total, there were 132 "Attitudes toward English learning" coding units; some selected codes and the corresponding events are presented below.

The content of "Attitudes toward English learning" in this research is mainly about the participants' interests in English and English learning, for example, both MWU-MZB and MWI-SJQ had a low interest in the lessons and FSU-ZQ was quite interested in English learning. This topic also includes a few special feelings of

participants toward College English lessons, for example, FSI-WXJ thought English is “art”.

Participant MWU-MZB said he was not very interested in English learning, since he felt the College English lessons were boring and humdrum. He said the teacher usually gave explanations to the texts and vocabulary, as the explanations commonly were translations of the text and explanations of grammar, and he said he felt these explanations were quite boring. In addition, MWU-MZB said the teacher sometimes would plan one whole lesson only for listening practice or text and vocabulary explanations, and he said “these lessons were very humdrum and they made me less motivated in English learning”; he also said the way his teacher taught the College English lessons was “the same as the English lessons in (my) high school times”. MWU-MZB also said that the teacher should control and adjust the atmosphere of the class through various activities or content, in order to activate the students’ motivations to follow her instructions and even to learn English.

MWI-SJQ also said the College English lessons were boring since the teacher usually gave explanations and translations of the texts and vocabulary in the lessons; he said this content was not interesting and he had “very little interest in these English lessons”.

Both the above two participants who had a weak interest in English learning held negative attitudes toward learning during the College English lessons, but FWL-JJY, who was also not very interested in learning, had both positive and negative attitudes toward English learning. Her interest in English learning changed with different activities; she sometimes felt English learning was interesting, while sometimes she held negative attitudes toward English learning. It appeared that FWL-JJY could be more easily influenced by various activities during the lessons.

Participant MSL-SYH had a very strong interest in English learning: he said he liked English and English learning could provide him more opportunities in future, so he said he was very willing to learn English. He also said that he was always “the most active student in the College English lessons”. In addition, MSL-SYH also mentioned that he had a habit of reading English literature in his spare time; it can be

seen that MSL-SYH was a very positive English learner.

FSI-WXJ said she had been interested in English learning since the teacher shared her experience abroad with the class, and she found the experience was “very interesting”. She said English will be useful for her as she planned to go abroad in the future, and “learning English is to use it”. In addition, she also said she liked English learning because she liked English; she believed languages were arts, and she “preferred ‘art thing’ rather than ‘technology thing’”. FSI-WXJ said she felt English learning was not difficult and she just “liked it (English) without any reason”.

FSI-LXJ said she was very interested in English since her childhood. She said “English could refresh my mood.”, since she thought her major was “quite boring” and “abstract”; she said “English could bring me confidence and motivation for leaning”, and she wanted to learn English. So it can be said that FSI-LXJ had interest in learning English because of her interest in English. However, she also said that “English (learning), sometimes, it becomes a burden because the learning pays too much attention to the test (CET).”

Participant FSU-ZQ held a very positive attitude toward English learning. She said she was quite fond of English and also had a strong interest in English learning, and she was willing to learn. Further, FSU-ZQ perceived that her motivation in English learning could not be influenced by any other factors, such as her teacher or activities during the College English lessons. When she was asked whether her motivation could be influenced by her teacher’s behaviour, FSU-ZQ said decidedly she would not be influenced by her teacher, and she stressed that “I like learning English because I like English very much”. She believed that her desire for learning English depended on her “individual will” rather than on her teacher or classroom activities.

FSU-MQJ also held a positive attitude toward English learning during the College English lessons; she thought the College English lessons were interesting at most times and was interested in learning. In addition, FSU-MQJ was also willing to learn English as she said English could be useful in future.

#### 4.2.2 Ideal L2 Self

The motivation factor Ideal L2 Self was not mentioned by all the participants. However, when some participants mentioned their experiences or some events which were relevant to the Ideal L2 Self, according to their descriptions, it became clear that this factor can definitely strengthen or stimulate their English learning motivation. Based on its obvious effect on the participants, Ideal L2 Self is still a very important factor in students' English learning. The Ideal L2 Self relevant coding units appeared 9 times in all the interviews, and some selected information is presented below.

Participant MWI-SJQ said that his motivation in English learning was not strong, but he could be strongly motivated when he heard his peer's fluent oral English. He further explained that he could be easily bored with English learning himself; however, when he heard other students who were able to speak English fluently, he was envious and wanted to learn English. MWI-SJQ said that some students in his class were quite good at English, he hoped he could speak English as well as these students when they spoke fluent English in the class, "I was quite motivated to learn English."; however, it is noteworthy that MWI-SJQ said "...at the time..." together with his description, it appears that the influence from his peers was short-lived.

People who can speak fluent English were also stimuli to FWL-JJY. She said she admired and envied people who can speak fluent English and she also hoped she would be able to speak English fluently like those people. Therefore, FWL-JJY said she could be strongly motivated by her teacher and classmates who can speak fluent English.

FSU-MQJ mentioned her envy for her teacher's oral English many times in her interviews. She said that she admired her teacher's fluent spoken English very much, and she said "I want to learn English well so that I can speak English as fluent as my teacher." But FSU-MQJ also said the stimulus of being a better speaker could not last a long time, "I felt motivated to learn English speaking well, but soon I am (my motivation is) as usual."

FSI-WXJ said she was motivated by her teacher's fluent oral English. She said since she heard her teacher fluently and freely speaking English in the class, she was

eager to speak English as fluently as her teacher. Thus, FSI-WXJ said “my teacher’s fluent English can motivate me to learn English”.

### **4.2.3 Teacher’s behaviour**

In this part, several different topics relevant to the participating teacher are presented. These topics could be about the teacher’s personality and her ways of teaching, since, in the interview, when the participants mentioned the teacher’s personality, the information always came with examples of the teacher’s behaviour. Therefore, in this research, the teacher’s personality was classified as “teacher’s behaviour”. In addition, the data about the teacher’s way of teaching were also included in this category, as the ways of teaching were actually the choices of the teacher and could have effects on the teacher’s actions during the lessons, while the teacher’s behaviour reflected her ways of teaching. Thus, the information about the participating teacher’s ways of teaching was also classified in “Teacher’s behaviour”.

#### **4.2.3.1 Attitudes toward classroom activities**

This topic is a very important result in this research: the eight participants mentioned various activities or tasks which influenced their English learning motivation during the lessons, and all this information was classified as “Attitude toward teaching”. In the following sections, the data relevant to the teacher’s teaching were presented by different topics.

##### **4.2.3.1.1 Listening practice**

In their learning logs and interviews, most participants expressed their dislike of the listening practice in their College English lessons, however, there were also positive comments on this activity.

Participant MWU-MZB said he was not interested in listening practice as it was boring and he did not want to practice listening in College English lessons. He complained about the large volume of the exercises and type of the in-class listening



practice in College English lessons, MZB said “we usually cannot use many listening materials (prepared by the teacher). Because if we keep listening, we cannot focus on the practice and we also don’t want to continue listening only”.

MSL-SYH usually held a positive attitude toward listening practice, though he said he could also feel stressed when his teacher arranged a lot of listening exercises. He said he was quite willing to practice listening both in class and after class; he also said that “...in fact, I have my own plan of practicing listening...but our teacher sometimes required us (students) to complete quite a lot of listening exercises, I feel too stressful to do so much (listening) exercises.”

FSI-WXJ did not like listening practice either. She said she could easily feel tired when she practised listening, and she “could not insist all the time in the listening practice”. She then explained that she disliked English listening for two reasons; first, she said she was not good at listening and if the time of listening practice was long, she felt “very, very tired”; second, she complained she got too much pressure on listening as she had to insist practising in order to pass CET, though she did not want to practise.

Participants FWL-JJY was also not interested in listening practice, as she also thought listening practice was “boring”. In addition, she gave another reason for her lack of interest in listening; FWL-JJY said she failed in a previous listening test and she was “scared by listening”. Her unsuccessful experience made her “lose confidence in listening”, she also said she even became nervous when her English teacher was checking whether she finished listening homework. FWL-JJY mentioned that she was always worried about receiving negative feedback from her teacher, as she thought she answered the listening exercises incorrectly all the time. She said she has “too much pressure” in listening. The failure in one of FWL-JJY’s listening tests obviously made her “frustrated in listening”.

Participant FSU-MQJ said she was happy to practise listening and her attitudes toward the practice could be different according to the listening materials: she mentioned that she was afraid of listening to news since she was not good at the exercises relevant to news while she could get full marks in listening to dialogues.

FSU-ZQ held a quite positive attitude toward the listening practice. She said she usually enjoyed the listening practice a lot, as the topics of the listening materials were different from each other, and she could not only practice listening, but also “learn the knowledge contained in the materials”. She was quite happy with the listening practice. However, she also said, “Sometimes, if the (listening) practice keeps too long, I may feel bored and don’t want to continue the practice.”

Taken together, participants’ attitudes toward listening practice can be mainly divided into two kinds: a) the listening practice was boring; b) the time of practicing English was too long. Both the above attitudes made listening practice one unpopular activity during the lessons.

#### **4.2.3.1.2 Dictation**

According to the students’ descriptions, dictations seemed to be the most unpopular activity in their College English lessons.

MWU-MZB said he did not like the dictation because he thought it was a waste of time. He further explained that “...dictations, this kind of words checking, can be completed by ourselves (students) after class; I think, in the class, the teacher should spend more time on teaching us knowledge other than checking words, it (dictation) really wastes time.”

MWI-SJQ thought dictations were “not necessary” as he said “It makes no sense to check words in university stage”. He also said the dictations were “quite boring”. Participant MSL-SYH said he did not like dictations, since “I don’t want to learn words only for remembering words”. He also said that the dictation was “boring, sometimes quite boring”.

FWL-JJY firstly said “I don’t like words and sentences dictations”, as she said she felt nervous in dictations and sometimes she forgot word spellings because of anxiety. In contrast, in another interview, JJY said she was quite “happy” about her “big progress” in one vocabulary dictation as she got full marks. She said she thought her effort was rewarded. Although JJY said “I don’t like words and sentences

dictations” in one interview, she clearly expressed that the dictation was not very annoying in one certain lesson.

FSU-MQJ also expressed her dislike of dictation in class. She said that “I dislike dictations most, they are boring...” In one of her interviews, she even said that “As I don’t like the dictation, I completed an exercise from one past CET paper.” This event mentioned by FSU-MQJ could also show her extremely low interest in dictations. However, in one lesson, FSU-MQJ accepted the word dictation pleasantly. According to her description, she was “quite serious about the dictation” since the particular College English lesson was the last lesson of that day; furthermore, she said that she suddenly thought dictation was not bad and was necessary as a way to supervise and facilitate them to remember words when she met unknown words in translation in that particular lesson. Although FSU-MQJ usually held negative opinions towards dictation, she could still give positive comments on this activity when she realised its effect in her learning.

#### **4.2.3.1.3 Off-syllabus knowledge**

In the interviews, all the participants showed strong interests in culture in English-speaking countries; in addition, most participants mentioned their wiliness to acquire various knowledge and information through College English lessons. These two kinds of information were separately coded as “Cultural interest” and “Off syllabus knowledge”. But in accordance with their interviews, it can be found that all of the participants mentioned their interests in English-speaking countries and information and knowledge together, and sometimes the codes about “Cultural interest” and “Off-syllabus knowledge” overlapped. Therefore, the results related to these two codes were jointly presented in this “Off-syllabus knowledge” section. In addition, the interview data coded as “Travelling” are also presented in this section since the coding units usually appeared with the information about the teacher’s experiences abroad, which was coded as “off-syllabus knowledge”. Some participants perceived that the off-syllabus knowledge and information made the English lessons fun; and the other participants thought it was good to learn something other than the

textbook. But, no matter whether they were strongly or weakly interested in English learning, all the participants expressed their welcome for this kind of topics.

MWU-MZB believed that college students should learn various types of knowledge via lessons; he said he liked his teacher to discuss current affairs, novels and some other information with them, and he liked his teacher to link the knowledge from the textbook to their real life since the links were “helpful in both living and learning”, and made English learning “real”.

Participant FWI-JJY mentioned that she can be refreshed when the English teacher tells them something other than the knowledge from the English textbook. She said the atmosphere of the classroom could be tense or dreary because of the content of lessons, especially when the teacher had talked to students for a long time. FWI-JJY said she believes the off-syllabus talks can activate the atmosphere of a lesson and can make her feel relaxed. She said that she likes the off-syllabus information woven in among different activities in the English lessons, as she feels “energetic” for the following part of the lessons with the help of these off-syllabus talks. In addition, every time the English teacher shares her experience abroad, FWI-JJY said she decided to work hard in English learning, especially in practicing oral English. She mentioned that she admired people who can speak English fluently and she had a desire of speaking fluent English. So when she learnt her teacher’s experiences of communicating with people from other countries, FWI-JJY said she was motivated.

MSL-SYH was very interested in “cultural and background information” woven among different sections during the lessons. He perceived that “... learning the language (English) without learning its culture (culture in English-speaking countries), it’s nonsense...” MSL-MYH said learning culture in English-speaking countries could be very helpful in learning and understanding English. Further, he said he found that “the listening materials could be easier to understand if I knew about the background information”. Therefore, he said he was quite willing to hear various stories or experiences from his teacher. In addition, MSL-SYH said he had a habit of reading English masterpieces, sometimes it could be difficult for him to understand the work,

even with the help of Chinese translation; but “the background information could help me understand the English masterpieces.”

FSI-WXJ said the teacher’s experience abroad could promote her English learning. She said “I am quite interested in her experience (abroad), and am curious about that (life in foreign countries)”; she said, in order to satisfy her curiosity, she was happy to listen to the teacher’s experience abroad, and she was willing to learn English because “if I don’t learn English, I am even unable to satisfy my curiosity (about English-speaking countries).” In addition, she said English as well as her teacher’s experience abroad would be very useful when she had the opportunity of going abroad.

Participant FSI-LXJ also held a very positive attitude toward the off-syllabus knowledge. She said she liked the teacher talking about some interesting topics in the class, and these topics could be about “daily life, something we are concerned, or even just some jokes”. FSI-LXJ believed that these off-syllabus contents “can not only enhance the relationship between the teacher and students, but also can develop our interests in learning”. She also said that these talks may only take a few minutes, but “...we (students) can be definitely cheered up.”

#### **4.2.3.1.4 CET**

This section presents the interview contents coded as “CET”. There were totally 156 coded items, but just some selected items are presented below. In considering the different topic involved in “CET” codes, this section is divided into two parts, the first part is about the participants’ attitudes toward CET itself; the second part is the students’ opinions about the CET-related activities or practice.

##### **a. Attitudes toward CET**

As mentioned in the previous chapter, College English Test (CET) is a requirement of Chinese college students’ graduation, so it plays a significant role in students’ English learning. According to their interviews, the eight participants held different attitudes toward CET in their English learning. Some of them regarded CET as their only purpose of English learning, while, for the other participants, though

CET was quite important, it was not the major reason of their English learning.

Participant MWU-MZB said passing CET was the priority of English learning at the university stage, and he also said that “To be honest, learning English, for me, just aims at passing CET.”

For MWI-SJQ, CET was extremely important in his English learning. He said, “To be honest, my purpose of attending the College English lessons is passing CET.” MWI-SJQ said that as the College English lessons were not “fun”, so passing CET became his “main motivation for English learning”.

MSL-SYH stressed that passing CET should not be the only purpose for English learning. He said he didn’t like learning English for passing exams though passing exams was very important for non-English major students. He repeated that learning English should not be merely exam-oriented; he believed “English will be quite useful in the future, our career and life... I don’t want to learn English just for obtaining a single page of certificate (of CET)!”

Passing CET was also a significant target in English for participant FSI-WXJ. However, she said passing CET was just “a short-term aim”; she said she planned to continue English learning after she passed CET, considering her future career or life. Participant FSI-LXJ had the same opinion about CET; she also regarded CET as “a short-term target”; as for her “long-term target”, she would like to learn English for her “future career and travels (to English-speaking countries)”.

FSI-LXJ said passing CET was important, but she also said that she did not like learning English just for passing CET. However, she said that “I feel like I am forced to learn (English) by the teacher because of the pressure of obtaining certificates (of CET).” FSI-LXJ thought the “the efficacy of this forced learning is not good”. She also said that “once the students obtained the CET certificates, the students who learn English for CET certificates via the forced learning will obviously retrogress in English learning in comparison with those students who learn English by their own willings.”

FSU-ZQ also thought CET was important, however, she looked very far in her future. She said “CET is important, but it is not all (of my English learning). It is a

part of my motivation, and just one of my aims. English, its usages in communications, travels, my future career and all the other potential roles in my future life, these possibilities also motivate me to learn English.”

CET was also important for FSU-MQJ since she said the test was a way to “judge” the learning outcome; but she also mentioned that it was important to learn speaking and how to use English.

#### b. CET-related practice

CET-related practice is welcomed by most of the students since passing CET is a must at their university stage; but the participants held various opinions toward the CET-related exercises prepared by their teacher.

Since CET was quite important to him, MWU-MZB had strong interests in CET-relevant contents. He said he hoped the teacher could provide more CET-related content during the College English lessons, as “...after all, passing CET is the most important target of College English lessons.”

MSL-SYH said it was good to have some CET-related practice in class; however, “I think College English should not focus on CET preparation, it should guide us to learn English, not passing exams!”

According to several participants’ descriptions, the College English teacher of the participating class often required the students to do some CET-related exercises in a fixed time in class. The participants gave positive evaluations to the CET-related exercises and they also provided their own reasons why they liked the exercises in fixed time.

Participant FSU-ZQ said she liked doing exercises in a fixed time in lessons, as “I can focus more on the exercise and the in-class practice can be much more effective than my own practice after class”. FSU-ZQ said she believed that the teacher-supervised exercises were more like formal tests and they could better train them in preparing CET.

Doing CET-related exercises in a limited time in class was also an effective training for FWL-JJY as she said she believed she could have better practice of

time-control in this training compared with her self-training after class. She perceived that “a few minutes’ in-class limited-time training is much more effective than one-hour limited-time training done by myself”.

FSI-LXJ expressed her satisfaction about the in-class CET-related exercises in a fixed time. She said that she liked the exercises in a limited time for two reasons: first, “It can help me control time in the real exams”. She explained that in the limited time required by the teacher, she could be “focused more” on the exercises. She believed that the training could provide her opportunities to simulate the feelings in real exams and helped her adapt to the “real exam situation”. She said she sometimes could not answer the questions in exams even if she actually knew the correct answers because of her “poor” mental state in real exams. Therefore, she said that “the in-class exercises in a fixed time can train me adapt to the true exam environment”. Second, FSI-LXJ said that the fixed-time exercises could also be helpful in checking her learning status. She said she couldn’t help looking up the answers when she did CET-related exercises after class, but she definitely cannot check the answers in the in-class exercise; in addition, FSI-LXJ said the teacher always provided detailed explanations to the in-class exercises and “the explanations helped me understand why I gave incorrect answers to the questions”. Therefore, FSI-LXJ said the in-class exercises could better help her find her “deficiencies in English learning”.

#### **4.2.3.1.5 Interactions between the teacher and students**

Interactions between the teacher and students were very popular among the participants, and all the participants were eager to interact with their teacher.

MWU-MZB said “I like interactions between the teacher and students since the interactions can not only promote the communications between the teacher and students, but also refresh the atmosphere of the class.” He said that if the teacher herself kept talking in the lesson, some students may lose their concentration and even did not follow the teacher’s instructions; however, the interactions between the teacher and students could effectively activate the classroom atmosphere. Therefore, MZB said that interactions between the teacher and students could promote students’



English learning in the class.

MWI-SJQ also expressed his willingness to interact with his teacher. He said “I like interacting and communicating with the teacher, but the lessons lack interactions between the teacher and us (students)”, and he hoped the teacher could “increase the opportunities of interacting with students”. MWI-SJQ believed that “the interactions can make the lessons more fun”.

Participant FSU-ZQ was fond of interactions between the teacher and students as well. She said she could “benefit a lot from interactions” and she believed that the interactions could help her “concentrate” on the lessons. She also said that some of her classmates sometimes did not like learning English because they thought English learning were boring, and she perceived that interactions between the teacher and students were “good and interesting ways to stimulate students’ interests in English learning”. In addition, FSU-ZQ, like MWU-MZB, thought the interactions could influence the atmosphere of the class; she said that “Interactions are able to refresh the classroom atmosphere and make us (students) relaxed.”

FSI-LXJ said she liked the interactions between the teacher and students since she believed the interactions could “increase efficiency of learning”. She said sometimes her teacher had to follow her teaching plan and then the teacher may neglect the interactions; FSI-LXJ said the neglect of interactions between the teacher and students may not have an influence on the first half of the lesson; however, she said she may lose concentration on learning gradually in the second half of the lesson. In addition, FSI-LXJ said that sometimes the teacher would chat with the students about daily life, and the interactions could not only strengthen the relationship between the teacher and students, but also could liven up the atmosphere of the lesson. She said “this kind of interactions can really activate our motivation in learning”.

#### **4.2.3.1.6 Text and vocabulary learning**

This section is a collection of various codes relevant to text and vocabulary learning in College English lessons. Participants talked a lot about their teacher’s way of teaching texts and vocabulary during their lessons: this information was coded as

“text and vocabulary learning”. In addition, participants also mentioned their teacher’s teaching in English writing, and this information was coded as “writing”; according to the participants’ descriptions, the approach to teaching writing involved a lot of vocabulary and sentence summaries, so the “writing” codes were combined with “text and vocabulary learning”.

MWU-MZB said the detailed translations of the texts were quite boring. But he was very satisfied with linking the real life to the texts (see also in Section 4.2.3.1.3), as he said the links made the texts learning “real”.

MWI-SJQ liked the autonomous learning of texts; he said he could raise necessary questions to the teacher. However, like MWU-MZB, he said the detailed explanations to the texts were quite boring and he hoped the teacher’s explanations could be more “targeted”. He also said the teacher spent too much time on vocabulary and he believed vocabulary learning could be completed by students themselves.

MSL-SYH mentioned that his English teacher always taught grammar involved in texts with “proper and practical examples”; he said that “...our teacher’s way of teaching grammar is “livelier”. He also said that his teacher usually added similar or relevant grammar according to the grammar appearing in the texts and he liked his teacher’s way of grammar teaching. He further explained that the similar or relevant grammar extended by his teacher not only helped him establish “a clear “network” (framework)” of English grammar, but also gave him a feeling that English learning in the College English classroom was not only for passing exams.

FSI-WXJ said she liked learning vocabulary with associations as “...it helps me remember words better”. She said she could easily forget the words she learnt if they could not be used frequently. However, FSI-WXJ said she could clearly remember the new words when the teacher taught words via associations with other words she already knew or with their usages. “I like this method”, she said, “It helps my memory.”

Participant FSU-ZQ also enjoyed learning words with associations. She said the associations about words and their usages were very effective in remembering words, and the usages of words could also help her in writing. FSU-ZQ said “I can apply the

words and the relevant collocations into my writing...it's (learning words with associations) a good method," In addition, FSU-ZQ said her teacher always provided analysis of the sentence types and grammar in text, and she believed the analysis was very helpful in applying the sentence types and grammar in her own writings. Furthermore, FSU-ZQ mentioned "autonomous learning" in one of her interviews: she said her teacher usually asked the whole class to do some autonomous learning before the teacher gave formal explanations of the texts; FSU-ZQ said she could have her own understandings of the text via the autonomous learning and then she could be more targeted at her difficulties in the teacher's explanations.

FSI-LXJ liked her teacher's summaries of words on various topics. She said that the teacher usually picked out words frequently used in writing on different topics and asked the students to remember; in addition, she also said the teacher made summaries of frequently used sentence patterns as well. FSI-LXJ perceived that these summaries were very helpful since "It's quite convenient to learn words by topics and the sentence patterns are also very useful in writing."

#### **4.2.3.1.7 Oral communication and practice**

Most participants expressed their willingness to practice their oral English in their interviews. This section presents the code "oral communication and practice" which had 52 coding units, and shows students' various reasons why they welcomed oral practice.

Participant MWU-MZB said he liked communicating with his teacher "in English". He said communication with the teacher was a kind of interaction with the teacher, as he liked interacting with his teacher, so "I like talking with my teacher". In addition, MWU-MZB further explained that since he perceived he had a large vocabulary, he was quite confident and willing to talk with the teacher.

Oral English was quite important for MWI-SJQ in his English learning and he held very positive attitudes toward activities or tasks involving oral English. On the one hand, the peer students who can speak fluent English could drive him to learn English; on the other hand, he believed that learning English aims at using the

language, so it was important for him to speak English.

MSL-SYH expressed his preference for oral practice on certain topics; he said learning English aimed at using it rather than “just passing exams (CET)”. He believed that the oral practice was more than practice speaking English; he said that “...it (oral practice on certain topics) can really train us (students) to use English”.

FSI-WXJ said “I like expressing my opinions in English in the class.” She said she liked the teacher to ask them to give a short talk about something or on certain topics. FSI-WXJ said speaking English in the class could not only practice her oral English, but also bring her confidence in English learning. She said she hoped her teacher could “provide more opportunities of speaking English on some certain topics in class”.

Participant FSU-ZQ also had a high evaluation of oral practice on certain topics in the lessons. She said “I liked this kind of oral practice very much”, as she perceived the topic discussion could not only practice her oral English, but also “enlarge her vocabulary”. In addition, FSU-ZQ said she agreed her teacher should point to someone to answer or express his or her opinions in the class. As she believed that “confidence and courage are preconditions of learning English well”, though someone might be “forced” by the teacher to answer questions, the teacher’s “force and encouragement” could be helpful in “establishing confidence and courage in learning.”

The oral practice on certain topics was also quite welcomed by FSI-LXJ. She said that she liked to give a short talk on some certain topics, but the students did not have many opportunities to talk because of the limited time in lessons. She said she hoped the teacher could regularly provide opportunities of speaking English to the students, “I think the (oral English) practice will also be helpful in our future (job) interviews”.

#### **4.2.3.2 Teacher’s personality**

According to the participants’ interviews, the teacher’s personality played a very important role in affecting students’ in-class English learning motivation. The

participants perceived that some traits of their teacher were able to motivate them to learn English or increase their English learning motivation.

Participant MWI-SJQ said College English lessons were boring for him and he was not willing to learn, but, since his English teacher was earnest and enthusiastic about teaching, he was “motivated by the teacher”.

MWU-MZB said he could be motivated to learn English since his English teacher was “good”, and he said that “good” meant the teacher’s personality was good. He explained that his teacher was earnest, humorous, and it was easy to communicate with her, therefore, MWU-MZB said he was willing to learn English because of the good teacher. He stressed that he was willing to follow the teacher’s instructions since “it’s easy to communicate with the teacher, so I am willing to listen to her”.

Participant MSL-SYH clearly expressed his liking of the English teacher in his interviews. He said his teacher was very earnest in teaching and was very kind and willing to support students, therefore, he was always willing to follow the teacher’s instructions. He also mentioned that the teacher’s patience helped him in English learning: he said the teacher always answered and provided detailed explanations to his questions with patience when he had any problems in English learning, and he said he enjoyed the progress of the Q & A and he was willing to participate in this kind of discussion. MSL-SYH also said that his teacher patiently taught the whole class again and again in terms of something she had already taught them many times; he said he felt the teacher’s painstaking efforts to teach them (students) at that time, and he decided to better cooperate with his teacher and to learn English well.

FSI-LXJ stressed many times that the teacher was very “earnest and responsible”, and she also mentioned that her teacher would “adjust her ways of teaching based on the students’ requirements and demands”. She said her teacher was a responsible teacher, for which she was grateful and felt motivated in English learning.

#### **4.2.4 Instrumentality-promotion**

The coding units of Instrumentality-promotion totally appeared only 5 times, and the low frequency of this topic made it one of the least significant factors for the

participants in this research. The promotion orientations mentioned by the participants included two aspects: future learning and future career.

MSL-SYH said English learning could be helpful in his future life; he said he was considering having further education after he acquired his bachelor's degree and English could help him if he finally decided to apply for a postgraduate programme. He also said English learning could also provide him more opportunities in choosing future jobs.

FSI-WXJ believed that English plays a more and more important role in people's life, so she said she needed to learn English well in order to get a better career and life in future. In addition, it is quite interesting that her pursuit of a future career and life was not always a promotion in her English learning; she said in another interview that she was often forced to learn English because of the pressure from future career.

#### **4.2.5 Outliers**

In this section, a few special events mentioned by the participants are presented. These events may not belong to any motivational factors or topics above, or they may only appear once in all the interviews; however, these events are still quite interesting in the participants' English learning.

Participant MWU-MZB mentioned one special reason for his demotivation in English learning in one of his interviews: he missed the registration for CET and he could not take the exam which he had already prepared for 6 months. He said "I was interested in English, but I am really frustrated now and I feel like I have little motivation in learning English" because he believed he could pass the CET this time. He further explained that missing the exam registration meant that he had to wait for another six months, and he said the waiting for the next CET registration was quite a long time.

FSI-LXJ lost her interest in one College English lesson since one of her classmates who sat next to her disturbed her a lot and she could not concentrate on the lesson. She said she was not willing to stay in the classroom during that lesson since the classmate constantly asked her about what the teacher taught had said just now.

She was annoyed by the frequent interruptions and had no interest in listening to the teacher's talk.

### **4.3 Descriptions of individual cases**

In this part, comprehensive reports will be provided to each case (participant). The reports involve evidence from the corresponding data, including the questionnaire, the learning logs and the interviews.

#### **4.3.1 MWU-MZB**

MWU-MZB was a confident but less-motivated English learner. He was confident in his English proficiency, and had his own opinions about how College English lessons should be. His interest in English learning was not strong, but he was still willing to learn English, motivated by the aim of passing CET. MWU-MZB was also a self-contradictory learner: on the one hand, he thought the College English course should contain various knowledge and information which could “broaden” his view instead of teaching English only; on the other, he was quite willing to have more trainings on CET in the lessons.

The questionnaire data showed that MWU-MZB was not very interested in English learning, but he was still willing to spend time in English learning; he had a strong interest in the culture of English-speaking countries. In addition, MWU-MZB valued the benefits of English learning more than the disadvantages of not learning English since he gave higher scores to the Instrumentality-promotion related questions than to the Instrumentality-prevention related items.

MWU-MZB's interviews showed similar results with his questionnaire data: he said the College English lessons were “boring” and “humdrum” and held negative attitudes toward various in-class activities and tasks, showing very little interest in learning English. However, he said passing CET was his only purpose of English learning and showed strong interests in CET-related trainings during the lessons. MWU-MZB also valued information about the culture in English-speaking countries and off-syllabus knowledge added by the teacher. In addition, though MWU-MZB had little interest in English learning, he could be strongly motivated by his teacher's

seriousness in teaching.

According to his interviews, it can be seen that MWU-MZB was a confident learner: he was confident in his vocabulary and was active in communicating with the teacher in English, and he was also confident in passing CET. Considering his confidence in his English proficiency and valued benefits from learning English, it is not difficult to understand why he showed little interest in most in-class activities and even said the dictation was “a waste of time”: most activities and tasks were quite easy for him and he could hardly benefit from them; in addition, he could benefit from the CET-related trainings which could facilitate him in preparing for the test, and benefit from the off-syllabus knowledge and the information about the culture in English speaking countries which could “broaden” his view. Therefore, when he talked about his attitudes towards the activities in the lessons, MWU-MZB was self-contradictory, hoping more CET-related trainings on the one hand while, on the other, expecting more cultural information and off-syllabus knowledge other than English.

Furthermore, MWU-MZB’s motivation of English learning did not always stay at a low level. In the end of his first interview, he mentioned an event which had influenced his motivation negatively: he missed registration for CET recently and had to wait for another sixth month. He said the long wait made him think that his efforts of preparing for the test were wasted. The event had such a significant impact on his English learning motivation that his motivation level remained at a low level during the whole data collection process.

#### **4.3.2 MWI-SJQ**

MWI-SJQ had many similarities to MWU-MZB in his attitudes toward English learning: he had very little interest in English learning while he had clear requirements or opinions about how the lessons should be. He held very negative attitudes toward most in-class activities and tasks, but he showed a strong interest in practising oral English. In addition, the teacher could be a driving force in his English learning.



MWI-SJQ's questionnaire showed that he had the weakest interest in English learning among all the participants. Instrumentality roles of English could be strong drives for him in learning, while Ideal L2 Self seemed not to be a powerful motivation factor.

In the interviews, MWI-SJQ did not talk much, but the data could still confirm his weak interest in English learning: he gave negative comments to most activities and tasks in the lessons, and he, just like MWU-MZB, said that passing CET was his major motivation for learning English. But oral English was one aspect that MWI-SJQ valued in English learning, since he believed that learning English aims at using it rather than passing exams, and speaking English was an important way to use the language. So activities or tasks relevant to practice oral English could stimulate MWI-SJQ's motivation. Ideal L2 Self, which was not a strong factor in his questionnaire, had a strong influence according to the interviews. Considering the importance of oral English for MWI-SJQ, the data of his questionnaire and interviews data were not contradictory since the strong impact of Ideal L2 Self in the interviews was caused by oral English: MWI-SJQ mentioned that he could be motivated by his peers who can speak fluent English. However, he also said the positive influence could not last long, so his motivation level stayed at a low level most of the time.

In addition, MWI-SJQ mentioned "autonomic learning" several times and gave high evaluations to it though he was usually less-motivated in English learning. He believed a student's independent thinking was significant in learning, so he was quite active in the opportunities for autonomous learning during the lessons.

#### **4.3.3 FWL-JJY**

FWL-JJY was a less-motivated learner. On the one hand, she, like MWU-MZB and MWI-SJQ, had a weak interest in English learning; but, on the other, she was not always negative about the lessons, her attitudes towards the lessons varied from activities and tasks. FWL-JJY was also an unconfident and sensitive learner: her confidence was undermined by one listening test and she could easily become nervous in activities or tasks involving listening.

FWL-JJY's questionnaire showed that her motivation in English learning was not strong and all the other motivation orientations involved in the questionnaire could have strong influences on her motivation.

In her first interview, FWL-JJY mentioned she had no interest in listening practice because she lost her confidence after a failure in one listening test, and she even said she was "scared by listening". The impact of the result of the listening test was so serious for FWL-JJY that she could even feel stressed when the teacher was checking whether she completed the homework relevant to listening.

In addition, the interviews data also confirmed that FWL-JJY's motivation could be easily influenced by various factors or activities, such as Ideal L2 self, information about the culture in English speaking countries and off-syllabus knowledge: the peer students who can speak fluent English could be a strong drive for FWL-JJY in English learning just like MWI-SJQ, and she also expected to be a fluent English speaker. Cultural information and off-syllabus knowledge, which were believed to be able to make the lessons fun and to make her "energetic", could increase FWL-JJY's motivation level. She held positive attitudes toward in-class CET-related exercises since she could have effective trainings in time-control. She also mentioned that her motivation in learning was stimulated after she got a full mark in one dictation, though a dictation could usually make her less-motivated.

#### **4.3.4 MSL-SYH**

MSL-SYH was an active and far-sighted learner. He always held a positive attitude toward English learning because of his strong interest, and he preferred learning English based on his own willingness rather than requirements from other people, and the benefits of learning English could have more powerful influences in motivating him than the disadvantages of not learning English. His strong interests in culture in English speaking countries and off-syllabus knowledge also had positive influences on his motivation. The English teacher could have positive impacts on MSL-SYH's English learning. In addition, MSL-SYH was the only participant who mentioned his future plan in the interviews and his plan was also a driving force for him in English

learning.

According to his questionnaire, MSL-SYH had a very strong interest in English learning and was quite willing to learn English; his willingness to learn English had a more positive influence on his motivation in English learning and he could be more motivated by the benefits of learning English rather than the disadvantages of not learning English. The questionnaire also showed that he was very interested in the culture in English speaking countries.

The interviews data confirmed MSL-SYH's questionnaire results: he held positive attitudes toward the lessons most of the time and said he was "the most active student" and he would like to read English literatures in his spare time. He welcomed any cultural information and off-syllabus knowledge added by the teacher during the lessons since he believed the information could facilitate his English learning, especially the understanding of some listening materials. Although he was positive in English learning, MSL-SYH could be less-motivated sometimes in the lessons: he could be tired with listening practices that lasted for a long time.

In his interviews, MSL-SYH conveyed that he liked learning English by his own willingness and disliked being pushed to learn English by other people, therefore, MSL-SYH held quite negative attitudes toward CET: he repeated he did not like learning English for passing exams, so he thought the lessons should not concentrate on CET preparation. MSL-SYH was the only participant who was not active in both CET and CET-related practices.

In addition, MSL-SYH, like MWI-SJQ, believed learning English should aim at using the language, so it was important to speak and use it rather than to pass exams.

#### **4.3.5 FSU-ZQ**

FSU-ZQ was an extremely positive learner whose motivation in learning English stayed at a high level most of the time. Her high motivation level in English learning was driven by her strong interests in English. The power of her interest was so strong that her motivation usually stayed at a high level during the lessons.

The questionnaire results showed FSU-ZQ had a very strong interest in English

learning; all the motivation factors included in the questionnaire could have strong motivating effect on her motivation, just like FWL-JJY.

In her interviews, FSU-ZQ showed her positive attitudes toward almost all the activities and task during the lessons. Passing CET was one of FSU-ZQ aims and a part of her motivation to learn English, and she valued the teacher-supervised CET-related exercises during the lessons as the in-class exercises were more effective than her own trainings because of the binding force from the teacher. FSU-ZQ gave positive comments to activities or tasks involving vocabulary learning in the lessons: she was very interested in learning words with associations; in addition, she also welcomed vocabulary learning contained in the in-class oral practice. On the one hand, she held a positive attitude toward oral practice, like most participants; on the other hand, she said the teacher would help students to express their ideas if they did not know the proper expressions, so FSU-ZQ thought the practice could not only provide her opportunities to practise speaking, but also expand her vocabulary.

In one of her interviews, FSU-ZQ said that it was good that some students could be assigned by the teacher to answer questions, she thought confidence and courage were important in English learning, the teacher's assignment to the students could encourage student to establish their confidence.

In addition, FSU-ZQ, like MWI-SJQ, held a positive attitude toward autonomous learning. Furthermore, FSU-ZQ was the only participant who believed her motivation in English learning would not be influenced by the teacher: she perceived that her motivation in English learning derived from her strong interest in English and it was her "individual will", not the teacher, that motivates herself to learn English.

FSU-ZQ also had less motivated times in the lessons and the only negative evaluation from her was given to the listening practice which lasted for a long time: she usually enjoyed the practice, but she could get bored with the lengthy practice and may have had little interest in practising listening.

#### **4.3.6 FSI-LXJ**

FSI-LXJ was a positive learner who was quite willing to learn English while her

attitudes toward English learning were not very positive because of CET. Passing CET was a burden for her while it was also a motivation for her. Off-syllabus knowledge and oral English practice could both stimulate her to learn English, and the English teacher could be a powerful motivation for FSI-LXJ.

FSI-LXJ's questionnaire showed that her attitudes toward English learning were not very positive but she was still willing to spent time in English learning. The benefits of learning English could have stronger impact in motivating her to learn English than the disadvantages of not learning English; her interest in culture in English-speaking countries and travelling could also have a strong motivating effect.

According to the interviews, FSI-LXJ had been very interested in English since her childhood; she said English could refresh her mood since her major was boring, so she had a strong desire to learn English. But learning English could be a “burden” for her because of the requirement of passing CET. Passing CET was important for FSI-LXJ, but it was “a short-term target”, she did not like regarding passing CET as the only purpose of English learning, just like MSL-SYH. Meanwhile, FSI-LXJ also held positive attitudes toward in-class CET-related exercises which were believed to be quite effective in CET preparation, just like FWL-JJY and FSU-ZQ; she said the teacher-supervised CET-related exercises could train her in time-control in the real exams and her anxious status in exams could also be alleviated through the training.

FSI-LXJ was also very interested in the off-syllabus knowledge added by the teacher; she perceived the information could cheer her up during the lessons and could develop her interest in learning. FSI-LXJ also enjoyed the in-class oral practice: she believed oral English could be very useful in her future and she wanted more opportunities to practise speaking during the lessons.

FSI-LXJ mentioned her gratitude toward the teacher since the teacher would adjust ways of teaching based on the students' requirements and demands; and she also appreciated the responsibility of the teacher very much. Her gratitude to the teacher was a strong motivation in her English learning.

Although FSI-LXJ usually was quite willing to learn English, in one College English lessons, her motivation levels stayed at a low level because of one peer

student. The student who sat next to her disturbed her a lot and she could not concentrate on the lesson, thus her motivation level had a severe decrease in that lesson.

#### **4.3.7 FSI-WXJ**

FSI-WXJ was a positive learner who had a strong desire of traveling abroad. Her strong interest in traveling abroad was one powerful driving force in her English learning.

The questionnaire results showed that FSI-WXJ was quite interested in English learning and travelling abroad had a powerful impact in motivating her to learn English. The influence of Cultural interest was quite strong on driving her to learn. Both Ideal L2 Self and the benefits of learning English had positive influences on FSI-WXJ in English learning.

According to her interviews, FSI-WXJ provided two reasons for her interest in learning English: her interest in English and her interest in traveling abroad in the future; her interest in English derived from her like of English and her preference of “art thing” (see more in Section 4.2.1). Ideal L2-self was a strong motivation for FSI-WXJ, like MWU-SJQ and FWL-JJY, but the difference is that her image of “ideal self” came from her teacher’s fluent English.

The interview also confirmed FSI-WXJ’s strong interest in the culture in English-speaking countries: she was quite interested in the teacher’s experiences abroad because of her curiosity and her expectation of going abroad. She said learning English could help her satisfy her curiosity about the culture and life in English-speaking countries. FSI-WXJ was also interested in oral practice as she liked expressing her ideas in English and she thought that she could be more confident if she could speak English fluently.

According to the interviews, listening practice usually had a negative influence on FSI-WXJ’s motivation: she said she could get tired easily if she was required to keep listening, on the other hand, she could be very stressed in the lengthy practice. The tiredness and stress in the listening practice could weaken her motivation level.

FSI-WXJ regarded passing CET as “a short-term target”, like FSI-LXJ, she said

she would continue learning English in consideration of her future career. Future career and life were also a driving force for FSI-WXJ: on the one hand, she realised the increasing impact of English in people's life; on the other hand, her pressure of thinking of her future career forced her to learn English.

#### **4.3.8 FSU-MQJ**

FSU-MQJ was also a positive learner who had a strong interest in English speaking. The benefits of learning English could have a stronger stimulation in motivating her than the disadvantages of learning English. The culture in English-speaking countries and off-syllabus knowledge could both have positive influences on her in-class motivation.

FSU-MQJ's questionnaire showed that her attitudes toward English learning were very positive, and she valued the benefits of learning English rather than the disadvantages of not learning English. Ideal L2 Self had a strong influence on FSU-MQJ's motivation in English learning; her interest in the culture in English-speaking countries could also motivate her in learning English. In addition, FSU-MQJ was the only participant who could be strongly motivated by parental expectations.

The interview data confirmed FSU-MQJ had a strong interest in English learning, and she thought the lessons were interesting at most times. She was interested in the off-syllabus knowledge added by the teacher during the lessons, which could not only make the lessons interesting, but also refresh her. FSU-MQJ was quite happy with the listening practice during the lessons, unlike most participants; according to her descriptions, she enjoyed the listening practice because she was good at listening.

FSU-MQJ could also get bored during the lessons: she, like the most participants, held a quite negative attitude toward dictation and mentioned her dislike of dictation in two interviews; however, in a certain lesson which was the last lesson of the day, she was quite positive in the dictation as she realised that the dictation could facilitate vocabulary learning.

FSU-MQJ valued oral English in English learning, so practising oral English was

a strong driving force for her. In her interviews, she gave positive comments to activities or tasks involving speaking. She expected herself to speak English fluently, so she welcomed oral practice very much. In addition, FSU-MQJ, the same as FSI-WXJ, could be strongly motivated by the teacher's fluent English, but, just like MWI-SJQ, she also mentioned that her drive could disappear very soon.



## **5. Discussion**

The Results chapter has shown that the data collected in the case study brought to the fore various factors, events or classroom activities that caused students' motivational ups and downs during the College English lessons. In this chapter, the results are linked to L2 motivation theories, and are compared with results of other research on motivation changes in L2 classrooms. Efforts are also made to find out possible reasons and explanations of the results in consideration of the background in China.

This chapter consists of two parts: the research questions are answered first (Section 5.1); then attempts are made to explain the results obtained in the case study (Section 5.2).

### **5.1 Answers to research questions**

After meandering explorations of the ways (pilot studies) to record students' in-class motivation changes, this research finally obtained sufficient data to answer the research questions via learning logs and interviews. The answers to the two research questions are provided separately in the following parts.

#### **5.1.1 How do students' motivations change in College English lessons?**

According to the data collected, the participants' in class motivation fluctuations were quite complex. First, the students' motivation levels could be increased or decreased by various in-class activities or their teacher's behaviour, and sometimes a student's motivation level could remain the same during the lesson. For example, participant MWU-MZB's motivation in English learning could be increased when his teacher linked the knowledge from the textbook to real life, but when the teacher asked students to do dictations, MWU-MZB expressed his strong repulsion and was, thus, less-motivated in this activity; participant FSU-ZQ's motivation usually could remain at a high level because of her strong interest in English learning.

Second, the ranges of students' motivation fluctuations were varied, sometimes the participant's motivation was changed just a little by the classroom activities or the teacher's behaviour while sometimes the student's motivation level could increase or

decrease considerably. For instance, most participants found listening practice was boring and their motivation levels could easily decrease during this activity, while listening practice had hardly any negative influence on participant FSU-ZQ's motivation level unless the practice lasted too long.

Third, in accordance with the data, there is no clear or specific pattern of the participants' motivation changes during College English lessons. The data collected in this research showed some similarities in the in-class motivation fluctuations of different participants, however, the participants could usually provide different reasons or explanations for the "similar" ups and downs of their motivation levels, and in most cases, there might be only two or three participants who shared some certain similarities in how their motivation changed. It is therefore barely possible to find commonalities which could apply to most of the participants' in-class motivation fluctuations. For instance, the interactions between the teacher and the students could motivate both students with strong and weak interests, but the participants had different explanations about how the interactions could stimulate their motivation (see Section 4.2.1.3.5), in other words, the influence of the interactions on the participants' motivation differed in different participants. In addition, there were only 8 participants in the case study making it inappropriate to adduce any patterns with such a small sample. In other words, even if some certain commonalities or patterns exist in students' in-class motivation changes, it is difficult to find or confirm the potential commonalities since the sample size in this study was small. Therefore, patterns of students' in-class motivation changes are likely to be found, if at all, only with larger research samples.

### **5.1.2 How do these fluctuations relate to teacher's behaviour or classroom activities?**

Based on the learning logs and interviews, the students' in-class motivation fluctuations were clearly related to their teacher's behaviour and classroom activities; however, the relationships between the motivation changes and the corresponding factors were quite complex. First, the participants' motivation levels could be either

increased or decreased by their teacher's behaviour or classroom activities, and the influences of various activities or the teacher's behaviour could be different; for instance, the off-syllabus knowledge provided by the teacher could increase the participants' motivation levels during the lessons, and listening practice could usually demotivate the participants. Second, the same factor could have diverse effects on different participants' motivation in English learning. In other words, one certain in-class activity or one certain behaviour of the teacher could increase one participant's motivation in English learning while decrease another participant's motivation level; or the activity or the teacher's behaviour could have a stronger influence on one participant's motivation than on another participant's motivation level. For example, the CET-related contents could have a positive influence on most participants, but the same content could decrease MSL-SYH's motivation in English learning; listening practice could have a stronger influence on MWU-MZB's motivation than on FSU-ZQ's motivation. Third, the teacher's personality usually had a stronger influence on participants who were not very interested in English learning than on participants who were strongly interested in English learning, for instance, for participants MWU-MZB and MWI-SJQ, who had the lowest interest in English learning, their teacher's earnestness in teaching could strongly motivate them to learn, even if they actually had little interests in English learning during the lessons; meanwhile, for some participants who were quite interested in English learning, their motivation in English learning could be strengthened by their teacher's earnestness, but this kind of increase was not as strong as the increase in the motivation levels of students who were not very interested in English learning.

Taken as a whole, during the College English lessons, students' motivation in English learning could be increased, decreased and even remain at a stable level; the motivation fluctuations could be caused by teacher's behaviour and classroom activities in complex ways.

## **5.2 Discussions of the case studies**

As shown in the Results chapter, the questionnaire data of each participant were

closely related to their interview data. Participants' scores for different motivation orientations were reflected in the contents of their interviews: participants' attitudes toward English learning in their interviews were consistent with their scores for "Attitudes toward English learning" in the questionnaire; "Cultural interest" and "Ideal L2 self", which had high scores in the questionnaire, showed strong influences on the participants' motivation; according to the interviews, "Ought-to L2 Self", "Instrumentality-prevention" and "Parental expectations" had very limited impacts on the participants' motivation, borne out by their low scores in the questionnaire. The above consistency between the data of the questionnaire survey and the learning logs and the interviews can be viewed as a test of the validity of the influences of the above-mentioned motivation orientations: supported by the participants' telling of real examples or events related to the motivation factors during the lessons. The consistency between the interviews and the questionnaire provides additional support for the scores of the above mentioned motivation factors.

As well as this consistency, there are also differences between the data from the questionnaire survey and the case studies. First, some highly-rated motivational orientations, such as "Instrumentality-promotion", "Intended efforts" & "Travelling", in the questionnaire did not frequently appear in the participants' learning logs and interviews. It appears that the three motivation orientations had very limited influences on students' motivation expressed in the interviews. This discrepancy between the data from the questionnaire and the interviews may raise a doubt about the questionnaire data. However, considering the above mentioned consistency of the six motivation orientations between the questionnaire and the interviews, the questionnaire data can be considered to be reliable. So, a possible explanation, in view of the given context (College English lessons) of the research, could be that the three motivation factors did not have opportunities to impact greatly on the participants' in-class motivation, even if they are capable of strongly influencing their motivation. In other words, in some certain contexts, there could be some factors in inactive state, even if these factors have strong influences on motivation when they are active. Therefore, discrepancy of a motivational factor's significance between the

questionnaire and interview data shows that not all the strong factors could influence the students' in-class motivation.

Second, compared to the motivation orientations expressed in the questionnaires, the learning logs and interviews provided some new factors and classroom activities that could influence students' motivation levels during the College English lessons, such as "College English test (CET)" and "Listening practice". On the one hand, these new factors are closely relevant to the context of College English and their appearances in influencing students' motivation confirm that the context of language learning could have an impact on students' motivation in language learning (see Literature review chapter, Section 2.2, part b) The cognitive-situated period); on the other hand, the various factors from both the questionnaire and the interviews verify that motivation in English learning has a multidimensional structure (see various motivational theories and factors in Literature review chapter, Section 2.2). In addition, the interview data also showed that the motivation factors could have either strong or weak impacts on students' motivation, and the influences could be positive or negative. It is the positive and negative influences that show the motivation ups and downs, something which is difficult to show with a simple questionnaire involving a few motivation variables. It can thus be seen that learning logs and interviews are very helpful in exploring the motivation changes. Furthermore, this discrepancy between the questionnaire data and the interviews also shows that, when exploring the possible factors which could cause motivation fluctuations during the English lessons, it is advisable not to limit the motivation types or orientations, as some factors, which are believed to be strong motivation factors in English learning, are likely not to function as expectations, for example factors such as "Intended efforts", "Instrumentality-promotion" and "Travelling".

Further, the discrepancies between the average group data and individuals' data are also interesting. The descriptive results of the questionnaire data were provided in the first section of the Results chapter, and it can be seen that the average group data of the whole participating class and the 8 case study participants were quite similar (see section 1.1 & 1.2, Results chapter). However, the 8 participants' personal data

showed very little consistency with the average group data; since the participants were divided into a group of students with a strong interest and group of students with a weak interest, and the participants showed different preferences in their motivation orientations. The average descriptions of the whole participant a group were actually the average of the two different groups, so it is understandable that discrepancies existed between the macro-data and the individuals' micro-level data. In addition, even for the participants who were in the same group, the average group data cannot cover the complete features of every participant; the group shared a few commonalities, but every participant's individual data differed from others'; each participant had his or her own particular features. This chimes with other researchers' work: their motivational research has shown that the average group data could not capture the participants' individualities though data types were different: Larsen-Freeman (2006) found the macro-data of the whole participants group differed from the individual's performance; Waninge et al. (2014) also confirmed that the average group data were problematic in demonstrating the motivational changes of individual participants. It can be seen that the average group data could conceal some truth concerning the individual's data. Further, MacIntyre and Serroul's (2015) research found that their undergraduate participants showed different patterns of motivation variability in completing L2 oral tasks: there were participants' whose motivation levels fluctuated wildly, while other participants' motivation showed a fairly steady trajectory. Further, the degrees of the participants' motivation fluctuations were also different from each other. This result of MacIntyre and Serroul's research also provided evidence of individuals' variability in motivation changes. So, the results of MacIntyre and Serroul's research and this study both showed the necessity of observing an individual's motivation fluctuations. In sum, it is clearly important to pay attention to individual information while acknowledging that, to some extent, the average group data could indeed provide information about overall trends or characteristics.

All the consistency and inconsistency between the data of the questionnaire and the interviews confirm that motivation in English learning is a complicated system

with many components, and the influences of a range of factors on the students' motivation are also complex. In the following sections, the factors and classroom activities which had influences on students' in-class motivation are discussed by topics. The discussions attempt to link the results to motivation theories and results of other studies, and to provide possible explanations for the phenomena mentioned by the participants in their interviews. The sequence of the discussions of the topics is different from that in the Results chapter since some topics involve the same or similar factors in influencing students' motivation. These topics are therefore arranged together. "Attitudes toward English learning" (Section 5.2.1) and "Ideal L2 Self" (Section 5.2.2) still come first in consideration of their importance in influencing participants' motivation; the discussion of "Off-syllabus knowledge", which had positive influences on almost all the participants, is in Section 5.2.3, and is followed by "College English test (CET)" (Section 5.2.4), a unique motivational factor for Chinese non-English major students. The various classroom activities are together discussed in Section 5.2.5. Section 5.2.6 is the discussion of "Teacher's personality". The outliers in the interviews are addressed in Section 5.2.7. The motivation orientations which had contradictory results between the questionnaire and the interviews are discussed in Section 5.2.8 and the last section discusses the differences between the questionnaire results of You and Dörnyei's (2016) research and the present research.

### **5.2.1 Attitudes toward English learning**

Attitudes toward L2 learning constitute an important motivation factor: they have been regarded as a component in Gardner's (1985) conceptualisation of integrative motive, Dörnyei's (1994) framework of L2 motivation, Williams and Burden's (1997) framework of L2 motivation, Dörnyei and Otto's (1998) process model of L2 motivation, and also in Dörnyei's (2009) L2 Motivational Self System. The frequent appearances in various motivation theories and constructs in different periods provide a sound theoretical basis to the significance of attitudes toward English learning in influencing learners' motivation.

a. Questionnaire data

As reported in the Methodology chapter, the scores of items relevant to “Attitudes toward English learning” were used to differentiate whether a participant was positive or negative in English learning. With the participants’ English levels based on one of their previous tests, it seems there is no direct link between students’ attitudes toward English learning and their English proficiency, as positive learners could have lower scores while negative learners could be more proficient in English. Participant MSL-SYH, who was at lower intermediate level, was one of the most positive learners; while MWU-MZB, an upper intermediate learner, held very negative attitudes toward English learning. Certainly, there are also examples of the correlation between the students’ attitudes and their English levels: another most positive student, FSU-ZQ, was at upper intermediate level, and FWL-JJY, who was a lower intermediate level learner, held negative attitudes toward English learning. The uncertainty between the students’ attitudes toward English learning and their English proficiency shows that there is some relation between the two factors, but it is not a linear or a simple cause and effect relationship. English proficiency cannot be regarded as a reference of students’ attitudes toward English learning or motivation levels, and students’ attitudes toward English learning cannot represent their English levels.

b. Interview data

In this study, “Attitudes toward English learning” is not a highly rated motivation orientation in the questionnaire, but it is the most frequently appearing code among all the codes obtained in interviews. Its very high frequency can be regarded as evidence of the significance of attitudes toward English learning, and a confirmation of the motivational theories and constructs. It is also noticeable that frequency is not the only evidence; the effect of this factor, according to the participants’ descriptions in their interviews, also showed its significance in students’ motivation. The participants’ attitudes toward English learning can contribute to determining their overall motivation levels in learning, and the effect could further influence their attitudes toward the English lessons and the activities during the lessons. Participant



MWU-MZB, MWI-SJQ and FSU-ZQ are salient examples: MWU-MZB and MWI-SJQ had the most negative attitudes toward English learning, and it also appears that he had more negative comments on various in-class activities, while FSU-ZQ, who had a very strong interest in learning, always had positive attitudes toward different activities. It seems that students with a weak interest in English learning are more likely to get bored with the English lessons, and the strongly motivated learners are more able to enjoy the different activities during the lessons. It is clear, then, that students' attitudes toward English learning are capable of influencing their attitudes toward various learning activities.

The above information shows the importance of attitudes toward English learning in influencing the students' motivation levels: it is not only a regular in motivation theories (see Literature Review chapter or the brief summary at the beginning of Section 2.1), but also a truly powerful factor in influencing students' in-class motivation. While it is useful to confirm the significance of attitudes toward English learning, but it is more important to understand how the students' attitudes toward English learning might be influenced in order to further promote their learning. It therefore becomes necessary to see what kind of attitudes can influence the students' motivation and how these attitudes are developed.

Students in this research mainly focused on their interest in English and English learning when they talked about their attitudes toward English learning. Clearly interest is a crucial factor in determining students' attitudes toward English learning. According to the participants' descriptions, their interests in English learning was usually represented by two kinds of feelings: interest and the usefulness of English. Interest in English usually involved participants' feelings about whether English was interesting or the College English lesson was interesting and it was mentioned by all the participants. Students, who thought English was interesting and liked English, held positive attitudes toward English learning, and they seemed to enjoy the learning during the College English lessons. These students could also have negative attitudes, but the negative feelings were usually caused by some certain activities. The participants' feelings show that interest in language and interest in learning are more

helpful in developing learners' positive attitudes toward English learning. Apart from the students' own feelings, the teaching style of the teacher can also influence the students' judgments of "interest in English"; English and English learning had no attraction to MWU-MZB and MWI-SJQ as they both perceived the College English lessons to be boring because of their teacher's "humdrum" way of teaching. In other words, MWU-MZB and MWI-SJQ held negative attitudes since the lessons were not interesting, and if the lessons could have been interesting to them, they may have become positive in English learning. So interesting lessons could also help students develop positive attitudes toward English learning, and then increase the students' motivation. Dörnyei (1998) also pointed out that making the lessons interesting could motivate the students. The above shows a key word, "interesting", and how to be "interesting" is important to develop students' positive attitudes toward English learning. It is obvious that the language itself, the learning process and the lessons cannot become interesting by themselves: it must largely be the teacher who makes English, the language learning and the lessons interesting via lessons planning. Certainly, it is not possible to meet every student's standard of "interesting", but it is still worth the effort to satisfy as many students as the teacher can, considering the importance of attitudes toward English learning in influencing students' motivation.

The usefulness of English is another reference of deciding the participants' interest in English learning. Participants who believed English could be useful, such as MSL-SYH and FSU-MQJ, showed a much stronger willingness to learn, since they realised the value of English in their future life. In other words, the possible usages or the significance of English in life can stimulate students' learning motivation. Pawlak (2012) also found that the awareness of the importance of English could motivate students to learn. It is therefore necessary to highlight the significance of English to the students. Furthermore, students' understandings of the possible roles of English were able to help them make plans for their future; MSL-SYH, who believed English could provide him more opportunities, mentioned his potential plan for further education; and he also talked about his habit of autonomously reading English literature after class. Similarly, in Pawlak's (2012) study, it was found that students

who had far-reaching goals were more likely to do additional things related to English learning in their own time beyond the requirements of their school. The autonomy of MSL-SYH in English learning confirmed Pawlak's finding, and it also showed the power of understanding the possible roles or the significance of English in motivating students to learn English. Therefore, in order to motivate the students' English learning, it could be a good choice for the teacher to emphasise the importance, to the College English students, of English and possible roles of English in their future life.

It is important to understand that interest and usefulness are the two main components of the participants' attitudes toward English learning, and more important to understand how the participants form their ideas of "English is (not) interesting" and "English is (not) useful". The interviews showed two sources of participants' attitudes toward English learning: participants' experience in the past and experience at present. Since the participants were in their first year of university and when the research was conducted, they had had only a few College English lessons previously, their opinions were more likely to have been formed before starting their College English course unless they directly mentioned the impact of current learning experiences. Some participants' interests in English learning had been formed in their past learning experience before they were enrolled into the university, such as FSI-LXJ and FSU-ZQ. In other words, the previous English learning experiences of these students helped them realise that English is interesting, and this kind of "interesting" feeling also influenced their current English learning: they were more likely to find interest in English during the current College English lessons. There are also a few participants who found some interesting points from the present English learning, such as FSI-WXJ and FSU-MQJ. In contrast, participant MSU-MZB and MWI-SJQ held negative opinions because of their current learning experience: they did not gain an interest in English learning and were bored with the lessons. MSU-MZB's previous learning experiences in English lessons in his high school also had an influence on his current attitudes toward English learning. The participants' previous and current learning experiences can not only influence their interest in English, but also can have an impact on their understandings of usages of English. A

few participants realised the usefulness of English in their past experiences, while according to some coding units relevant to “Off-syllabus knowledge”, some participants learned about the usages of English in the College English lessons, such as MWU-MZB.

The influences of students’ previous learning experiences are not easy to change since the past is past and cannot be changed, but the present can be improved. Therefore, in order to make the students more active in English learning, the College English teachers may consider making the lessons as interesting as possible to help the students find an interest in English and English learning: for example, the teachers could arrange various activities or contents in one lesson in order to avoid participants’ comments of “humdrum”, or they may try to add some activities which are not always done in the lessons to make the lesson interesting.

The interviews data about “Attitudes toward English learning” provided a few interesting opinions of the participants. FSU-ZQ perceived her liking of English to be strong enough and her motivation level not to be changed by her teacher or the classroom activities, but her interviews actually revealed some motivational fluctuations during the lessons. It seemed that FSU-ZQ’s descriptions about her attitudes towards English learning were not reliable, however, aligned to her beliefs, her comments on her teacher’s behaviour and classroom activities seldom showed negative influences on her motivation in English learning: the way she wrote in her learning logs and the way she talked in her interviews were more like introductions or sharing of methods in learning. In other words, participant FSU-ZQ could be hardly influenced by her teacher or classroom activities, and her motivation level usually stayed at a stable level. But FSU-ZQ’s motivation level was not absolutely unchanged; it fluctuated slightly with a few in-class activities. So, in fact, her motivation can be influenced by the teacher’s behaviour or classroom activities: only the range of the changes was small. Further, Waninge et al. (2014) and MacIntyre and Serroul (2015) both found some students’ motivation levels usually kept stable and only had slight ups and downs. The stability of students’ motivation levels is not a denial of the motivation dynamics, it is actually a powerful evidence of the dynamics, as stability

has time spans and it cannot last forever. Similar to a well-known concept in physics, motion is absolute while rest is relative; the motion of motivation is absolute and the stability is relative.

It is also noteworthy that some special events in the participants' lives may cause severe changes to their motivation levels. MWU-MZB told of a special event, missing the registration of CET 4, which happened to him just before the research started; this event made him frustrated and severely decreased his motivation level. MWU-MZB mentioned he was interested in English, however, this very event made him become one of the most negative learners among all the participants. Although this event is rare, its influence is powerful and it seems that MWU-MZB's motivation level could not be increased in a short period. This sudden event is indeed unpredictable, but it absolutely showed the significance of attitudes toward English learning in influencing students. The teacher was not able to prevent the happening of the event, but if she could provide more guidance or advice to this participant, then MWU-MZB may be more positive in learning or he could get rid of the negative feelings quickly.

Considering the information obtained from both the questionnaire and the interviews, a possible suggestion to increase the students' motivation level is to learn their attitudes toward English learning first: as it can determine the general motivation levels of the students; the teacher may want to pay attention to the attitudes of students at all levels since proficient students may also hold negative opinions. The understanding of students' attitudes toward English learning can better facilitate the teacher to develop students' positive opinions in learning English; and based on this research, interest and importance of English can attract students to learn positively.

### **5.2.2 Ideal L2 self**

Items relevant to Ideal L2 self were highly rated in the questionnaire survey and this was expected to be a strong factor in influencing the students' in-class motivation; that said, as mentioned previously, the codes related to Ideal L2 self did not frequently appear in the students' interviews, but its strong effect has been verified in the interviews in accordance with the descriptions of some participants in particular.

#### a. Questionnaire data

As mentioned in the Literature Review chapter (see Section 2.2, the current socio-dynamic period), Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) pointed out that Ideal Self has a promotion focus while Ought-to Self has a prevention focus. In this research, there were several participants, such as FWL-JJY, MSL-SYH, FSI-WXJ and FSU-MQJ, who gave higher scores to “Ideal L2 Self” relevant items than “Ought-to L2 Self” relevant items and usually gave higher values to the questions related to “Instrumentality-promotion” than to the questions related to “Instrumentality-prevention”. In other words, these participants, who could be motivated more by Ideal Self than by Ought-to Self, valued the promotion brought by English learning more than the prevention of not learning English. It seems that the above four participants confirm the aforementioned opinion. However, the questionnaire data of other participants showed some differences: the “Ideal L2 Self” of MWU-MZB, MWI-SJQ and FSI-LXJ seemed to have a prevention focus, and their data go counter to the opinion, while Participant FSU-ZQ’s scores of Ideal and Ought-to L2 Self, and Instrumentality-promotion and Instrumentality-prevention were quite similar. For MWU-MZB and MWI-SJQ, their prevention orientation may be caused by their negative attitudes in English learning, and they gave priorities to prevent bad outcomes in their English learning. But for the conditions of FSI-LXJ and FSU-ZQ, future explorations are needed to further understand the relationships between Ideal L2 Self, Ought-to L2 Self, Instrumentality-promotion and Instrumentality-prevention.

Taguchi et al. (2009) claimed that learners’ engagement with language learning was consistent with Integrativeness and Ideal L2 Self; it seemed that integrativeness and Ideal L2 Self had similar influences on their participants’ motivation. But Busse (2010) found that “Ideal L2 Self” can better explain students’ engagement with language learning than Integrativeness; and she further explained that Integrativeness was measured by a positive attitude toward the L2 people or countries and emotional identification. However, a positive attitude was linked to effort, partially, while there was no link between emotional identification and effort; therefore, Busse perceived

that Ideal L2 Self was more powerful in influencing students' effort for foreign language learning. In this research, the scores for "Ideal L2 Self" were closer to "Intended effort" than "attitudes toward English learning", and it can be seen as a confirmation of the result in Busse's study. Furthermore, the closer relationship between Ideal L2 Self and Intended effort than between Attitudes toward English learning and Intended effort also confirm the finding that the Ideal L2 self is more powerful in influencing learners' motivation than integrativeness (see Section 2.2, the current socio-dynamic period).

b. Interview data

As mentioned previously, the codes related to Ideal L2 Self did not appear in the students' interviews frequently. However, Ideal L2 Self is still a powerful factor in this research according to the participants' descriptions. Participants who had little interest in English learning, such as MWI-SJQ and FWL-JJY, could be strongly motivated by Ideal L2 Self; positive learners, FWU-MQJ and FSI-WXJ also had experiences of being strongly stimulated by Ideal L2 Self. The low frequency and the strong effect show that the frequency should not be regarded as the only standard to represent the significance of a factor in influencing motivation.

The strong stimulation of Ideal L2 Self is doubtless a great assistance for both the learners in English learning and the teacher in English teaching. According to Dörnyei (2005), Ideal L2 Self is a strong motivator for learners who have a desire to narrow the gap between the actual and the ideal selves. In other words, the stimulating effect of Ideal L2 Self comes from the discrepancy between the real self and the ideal self; the image of ideal self is the key to activate "Ideal L2 Self". Dörnyei (2009) also confirmed the importance of creating the vision of ideal self, which is the first step in forming the Ideal L2 Self. Considering the specific requirement of triggering Ideal L2 Self, it is not difficult to understand why this strong factor just appeared 9 times in the interviews: Ideal L2 Self could only have an influence on student motivation when the image of the ideal self occurs to the students, and the image of ideal self did not appear frequently in this research, leading to the low frequency of Ideal L2 self in the participants' interviews.

Although there were not many ideal visions for the participants, the interviews still displayed two sources of the vision: the teacher and the peer students. The English teacher was the main source of the participants' visions of ideal selves, FSU-MQJ and FSI-WXJ were strongly motivated by their teacher's oral English; for MWI-SJQ, his vision of ideal self was created by his peers who can speak fluent English; and FWL-JJY's ideal vision could come from all fluent English speakers, including her teacher and classmates. It seems that proficient students are more likely to create their visions of ideal selves on the basis of their teacher while peer students are possibly sources of the ideal visions of students who were at lower English levels. It can be difficult for the proficient English learners to find an image of better language learners among the peers in their class, so their English teacher becomes the most possible model of an ideal language self and the teacher is their major source of developing their ideal visions during the lessons. For the less proficient students, compared to their peers, the English levels of their teacher might be a little far to reach, thus the proficient students in the same class become the most reasonable visions of the less proficient students' ideal selves. Considering the different sources of the visions of ideal selves, the teacher could consider to take advantages of his or her personal proficiency in English and the performances of advanced students in the class in order to help students of all levels to create their ideal self visions.

It is also noticeable that all the visions of ideal self were related to oral English no matter whether they were from the teacher or the students. The reasons that oral English plays an important role in creating the ideal vision for College English students could be as follows: on the one hand, the basic purpose of learning English is to communicate, and oral English is an essential part of communication, so the students value the ability of speaking fluent English; on the other hand, speaking is a productive skill which could easily show the students' English proficiency, and students may have a desire to show off their capability; thus, the students ideal visions were mostly relevant to oral English. Thus if the teacher thinks about the possible trigger of Ideal L2 self, showing fluent oral English to the students could be a good start.



Another noticeable aspect of the Ideal L2 Self in this study is its short effect on the students: MWI-SJQ and FSU-MQJ mentioned that the influence of Ideal L2 Self on their motivation in English learning could not last long. It appears that even if the students were strongly stimulated by their visions of ideal selves during the College English lessons, the effect of Ideal L2 Self was quite short and it seems that this motivation factor was not as powerful as it supposed to be in motivating students' English learning. In fact, the Ideal L2 Self is a strong motivation factor as the participants said they were strongly motivated; the only problem is its length of being a powerful stimulation. In other words, the Ideal L2 Self as it appeared in this research was not very effective; its strong influence still needs to be developed. Ushioda (2003) argued that it is necessary for the teacher to help the students sustain their motivation. So, apart from developing the students' motivation via Ideal L2 self, it is also worth thinking about how to sustain its effect. Dörnyei (2009) discussed six steps to ensure the function of Ideal L2 Self, including creating the "Ideal" vision, strengthening the vision, sustaining the vision, keeping the vision alive, operationalising the vision and counterbalancing the vision. As discussed above, creating the ideal vision is the first step to activate the Ideal L2 Self, and the following steps aim at extending the time of the impact of the factor. But, in this research, the functioning process of all the Ideal L2 Self seems to stay at the first step; there were no further procedures to extend the influence of the Ideal L2 Self, and the teacher seemed not to take full advantage of the Ideal L2 Self factor. Therefore, some participants said the stimulation of the factor could not last long. The teacher's negative act toward the Ideal L2 Self might be caused by unconsciousness of the factor and its potential impact on students' motivation in English learning, and in order to develop the complete effect of Ideal L2 Self, the teacher could consider Dörnyei's (2009) findings about how to make Ideal L2 Self effective.

Above all, Ideal L2 self is capable of strongly stimulating the students' motivation in English learning, but it is quite important to extend the influence of the Ideal L2 self for a longer time to guarantee its effect, and the teacher's guidance or intervention is necessary for the extension.

### 5.2.3 Off-syllabus knowledge

As mentioned in Section 4.2.3.1.3 in the Results chapter, the “Off-syllabus knowledge” can be seen as a combination of a few similar factors in the interviews, including “Off-syllabus knowledge” itself, plus “Cultural interest” and “Travelling”. Since “Cultural interest” and “Travelling” are also motivation factors in the questionnaire, the questionnaire data of these two factors are discussed first and then possible explanations are made to the interview data.

Dörnyei (1994) pointed out that increasing the attractiveness of the lessons with some exotic and unusual materials could motivate the L2 learners to learn; he also believed that if the students are familiar with the target language culture, they could be motivated. Williams and Burden (1997) also regarded “attitudes to the target language culture” as a factor which could influence learners’ motivation in L2 learning. The questionnaire and interview data clearly confirmed the impact of the off-syllabus knowledge and culture on students’ motivation.

#### a. Questionnaire data

Since the final “off-syllabus knowledge” section also includes “Cultural interest” and “Travelling” codes, the questionnaire data of these two factors are discussed together in this part.

“Cultural interest” is a motivation orientation which was confirmed in the learning logs and interviews. Williams and Burden (1997) also argued that a learner’s attitudes toward the culture of L2 were able to influence their motivation. All the participants, no matter whether they had a strong or a weak interest in English learning, showed a strong interest in English-speaking cultures. It appears that cultural information could have significant influences on participants’ motivation in English learning, and the frequency of the coding units relevant to “Cultural interest” (58 times) in the interviews can be seen as a confirmation of the impact of this factor in the questionnaire on the participants’ motivation (see more in the following interview data).

“Travelling” was also contained in both the questionnaire and the interviews, though it only appeared 6 times in the interviews. In the questionnaire survey, most

participants gave high scores to items relevant to this factor, but it seems that travelling to English-speaking countries was not attractive enough for MWU-MZB's and MWI-SJQ in motivating them to learn English. The high scores of the majority of the participants may come from their strong interests in travelling to English-speaking countries in consideration of their high scores of the items relevant to culture in English-speaking countries; the participants may want to learn English in order to guarantee their travelling experiences in English-speaking countries. The lower scores of MWU-MZB and MWI-SJQ in terms of the influence of travelling to English-speaking countries on their English learning might be caused by their low interest in travelling, since these two participants had strong interests in culture in English speaking countries; in other words, though MWU-MZB and MWI-SJQ were interested in culture in English-speaking countries, they may have had lower interests in travelling, and compared with the majority of participants, English and English learning seems to have very limited applications in the aspect of travelling. This explains why they gave high scores to "Cultural interest" and lower scores to "Travelling".

b. Interview data

Participants provided quite positive comments on the information relevant to off-syllabus knowledge, culture and travelling in English-speaking countries. Although the participants' descriptions were positive, Travelling had the lowest frequency (6 times) among the three factors; it could be partially because Travelling was not a strong motivation factor for MWU-MZB and MWI-SJQ, as they neither mentioned any information about travel, nor had comments on their teacher's travelling experiences. Another possible explanation may be that Travelling is not closely related to the English learning in the College English lessons since the lessons usually focus on English itself and CET practice, and information relevant to travelling has very limited opportunities to appear in the lessons; so Travelling was not a frequent factor in the interviews and it usually came with the teacher's experiences in English-speaking countries.

Generally, the participants' favourable view of the off-syllabus knowledge can be

mainly divided into two kinds: first, the off-syllabus knowledge makes the College English interesting and students could be motivated by the “interest” of the lessons; second, the off-syllabus knowledge sometimes can help the students link English learning to their real life, and the link strengthened the participants’ understandings of the usefulness of English.

One reason that the off-syllabus knowledge, including information about culture and travelling, can motivate students to learn English is that it is interesting. Some participants believed that the off-syllabus knowledge makes the lessons more interesting: The FWI-JJY perceived that the off-syllabus knowledge could change the dreary atmosphere of the College English classroom; FSI-WXJ said the off-syllabus knowledge could satisfy her curiosity and FSI-LXJ directly stated that the off-syllabus knowledge was interesting. These participants were all motivated by the interesting off-syllabus knowledge during the College English lesson. Further, Dörnyei (1994) claimed that adding some unusual or exotic content in L2 lessons could increase the learners’ motivation in learning; and in accordance with the data in this research, the off-syllabus knowledge which included unusual (off-syllabus) and exotic (culture in and travelling to English-speaking countries) information was quite effective in motivating the participants to learn English. Clearly, the teacher’s choices of adding the off-syllabus knowledge during the lessons were quite effective in motivating students. In addition, it has been discussed that the interest of the lessons could increase students’ motivation in learning (see Section 5.2.1); and in this section, it can be seen that the off-syllabus knowledge could make the lessons interesting, so the above information relevant to the off-syllabus knowledge confirmed again that interest is powerful in motivating students’ English learning.

As discussed in Section 5.2.1, students’ awareness of the importance of English could increase their motivation in English learning: Pawlak (2012) found this result with his participants and the participants in this current study were also motivated by their awareness of the importance of English. Some participants found that the off-syllabus knowledge, including culture in English-speaking countries, combined their English textbooks with their life, so these participants seemed to be willing to

learn English. MWU-MZB said in his interviews that the off-syllabus knowledge helped him link his life together with English learning and make him learn the real roles of English; for MSL-SYH, the off-syllabus knowledge helped him to further understand the importance of English via expanding his horizon and helping him better understand various information he learnt in his life. Although the ways of realizing the significance of English could be different, the power of the off-syllabus knowledge in showing the various roles of English could not be changed.

In addition, MSL-SYH also mentioned an interesting opinion about the off-syllabus knowledge: he believed that learning culture in English-speaking countries is an essential part of English learning. It appears that, for MSL-SYH, culture is an important component of his English learning and it shows his very positive attitudes toward culture in English-speaking countries. On the one hand, MSL-SYH's opinion of the significance of culture in English learning may come from his experiences about the benefits brought by learning culture in English-speaking countries: he mentioned that, no matter whether learning and practising relevant to College English lessons or in his autonomous learning after class, the culture information could help him understand English better. On the other hand, according to Williams and Burden's (1997) L2 motivation construct, learners' attitudes toward L2 culture could influence their motivation; so MSL-SYH's positive attitudes toward culture in English-speaking countries allowed him to increase his motivation level. In sum, the off-syllabus knowledge, especially the culture information about English-speaking countries, could be helpful in motivating students.

Above all, off-syllabus knowledge is quite effective in increasing students' motivation levels through making the lessons interesting and helping students realise the importance of English. It is definitely a good choice for the teacher to add these interesting contents into the English lessons.

#### **5.2.4 CET**

CET is a unique factor which could strongly influence College English students' motivation in English learning, as it is a requirement for non-English major students

to acquire their bachelor's degrees, so the participants had both positive and negative attitudes toward CET while almost every participant held positive attitudes towards CET related contents. Considering the differences of the contents, this section has been divided into Attitudes towards CET (Section 5.2.4.1) and CET-related practice (Section 5.2.4.2).

#### **5.2.4.1 Attitudes towards CET**

Although passing CET is a necessity for non-English major students to acquire their Bachelor's degrees, it is not the only target for all students to learn English. Based on their attitudes toward CET, the participants could be mainly divided into three groups: students who regarded passing CET as the only purpose of attending College English lessons, such as MWU-MZB and MWI-SJQ; students who learn English not only for passing CET, such as FSI-WXJ and FSU-ZQ; and the third group of students, MSL-SYH and FSI-LXJ, who disliked learning English for passing CET.

It seems that the participants who had lower interests in English learning were more likely to regard passing CET as the only reason for learning English; the absolute role of CET in motivating these students with a weak interest may be caused by their negative attitudes toward English learning. On the one hand, as discussed in Section 5.2.1, the students who held negative attitudes toward English learning may not find interest in English learning or they may not realise the significance of English, so they lacked positive drives to learn English; on the other hand, the compulsory requirement of passing CET forced these students to learn English in order to meet the requirement. Thus, passing CET becomes the only reason for the negative participants to learn English. In addition, Pawlak (2012) found that passing school-leaving exams was an important drive, especially for less-proficient participants, to learn English. In this research, CET can be seen as a school-leaving exam and its strong effect in motivating MWI-SJQ, who was an intermediate English learner, can be seen as a confirmation of Pawlak's finding. But it is also noticeable that CET was also an important factor in motivating MWU-MZB, a proficient student. Therefore, a student's proficiency in English cannot be regarded as the only standard of estimating the influence of exams on students' motivation.

For the students who were strongly interested in English learning, passing CET was just a short-term target, they may have various plans for using English in their future, such as careers and travelling. This group of students usually believed English and English learning is interesting, or they were aware of the importance of English in their life, and they are willing to learn (see Section 5.2.1); so, even if they were required to learn English to pass CET, the exam was just a part of their aims or reasons to learn.

Apart from the above two kinds of attitudes, it is quite interesting to know that MSL-SYH and FSI-LXJ, unlike all the other participants, held quite negative attitudes toward the role of CET in their English learning; they did not like learning English for passing CET. As a positive English learner, MSL-SYH not only had a strong interest in English learning, but also perceived that English plays a significant role in his future life; because of his positive attitudes, he may believe that English learning should be voluntary rather than compulsory, so he disliked the idea of passing CET as a reason for learning English. FSI-LXJ's negative attitude toward CET was caused by her pressure of passing CET, though she was a positive learner, she disliked being forced into learning; further, she believed that the motivation deriving from pressure could be easily decreased when the pressure was reduced. In other words, the pressure of passing CET decreased FSI-LXJ's motivation; and the effect of the pressure-oriented motivation was not easy to be maintained (see more about the pressure in Section 5.2.4.2).

The above results show that the requirement of passing CET could have both positive and negative influences on the students' motivation; in the following section, further explanations are made for the different attitudes of the participants.

#### **5.2.4.2 CET-related practice**

CET-related practice was one of the widely welcomed activities in the College English lessons. All the participants showed their acceptances of the in-class CET related exercises, but there were differences between their levels of accepting the practice; MWU-MZB hoped for more CET-related practice during the lessons though he was not positive in English learning, MSL-SYH could accept some practice but he

hoped the lessons would not focus on CET; the other participants expressed their like of the practice.

Most participants' attitudes toward CET-related practice were consistent with their attitudes toward CET, however, FSI-LXJ showed inconsistency between her attitudes toward CET and CET-related practice: she held negative attitudes toward CET while she liked CET-related practice very much just like the majority of students. According to the descriptions FSI-LXJ provided in her interviews, it is not difficult to understand why her attitudes were quite different. When she talked about CET, FSI-LXJ's motivation stayed at a low level because of the pressure of being forced to pass the exam; but when she talked about CET-related practice, FSI-LXJ seemed to be motivated to learn English as she perceived she could benefit a lot from the practice. The negative impact of CET on FSI-LXJ's motivation may be because CET is a compulsory exam the participant has to pass, and FSI-LXJ suffered the stress of this abstract target of passing the exam; at the same time, the CET-related practice provided detailed methods to achieve the goal and FSI-LXJ may find it is feasible to pass CET. Thus, FSI-LXJ's motivation was decreased by CET and was increased by CET-related practice. In other words, FSI-LXJ expected more benefits from CET-related practice, so she was more willing to do the exercises and her motivation in the practice increased. This result verified one opinion of Dörnyei (1994): who argued that increasing the students' expectancy of task fulfillment could increase students' motivation levels. For FSI-LXJ, CET-related practice increased her expectancy of passing CET, therefore, her motivation in the practice increased.

Dörnyei (1998) argued that increasing the students' goal-orientedness could motivate their learning. The requirement of passing CET for the students in order to get their Bachelor's degrees is not only the reason why the teacher planned the CET-related practice during the lessons, but is also a strong motivator in their English learning. The participants' widespread acceptances of CET related practice can also be seen as a result of the requirement; so MWU-MZB, who was not strongly interested in English learning, preferred more CET-related practice, and even MSL-SYH, who did not want to learn English for passing CET, could also accept the practice for the



exam during the lessons. The participants' different acceptances were closely related to their attitudes toward CET. For example, MSL-SYH, who said he did not like learning English for passing exams, expressed his acceptance of the practice while he again stressed his dislike of the exam-oriented content. FSI-WXJ and FSU-ZQ, who regarded CET as their important short-term target, expressed their welcome of the practice. However, students with similar opinions about CET could also have slight differences between their attitudes toward the CET-related practice. MWI-SJQ, who was not very interested in English learning, learnt English just for passing CET and he said almost nothing about the CET-related practice; it seems that MWI-SJQ just accepted the practice since he had no choice and he had to pass the exam. MWU-MZB, who was also not very interested in English leaning, said he too was learning English just for passing CET, but he was more positive about the practice than MWI-SJQ; this difference may be caused by discrepancies in their attitudes toward English learning: as discussed in Section 5.2.1, MWU-MZB was usually interested in English learning and when he was invited to this research, he became a negative English learner because he missed the CET registration and he had to wait six months for the next exam. So MWU-MZB's motivation seemed to be in a trough, but he was actually a positive learner. This could be the reason that MWU-MZB was more positive in confronting the CET-related trainings.

In addition, there was another reason why the students liked this practice: many participants said the in-class practice was like a mock test and it can help them get familiar with the real exam. In fact, the participants mentioned they undertook self-trainings in their spare time, but compared to the teacher-supervised practice, their own practices were less effective. According to the participants, the key factors that lead to the different effects were pressure and anxiety they experienced in the in-class trainings; the participants perceived that the pressure and anxiety they experienced in the teacher-supervised CET-related practice made them feel as if they were in real exams, and in this way the in-class CET-related practice could help them better confront the pressure and the anxiety in a real CET exam. In other words, the participants liked the CET-related practice because of the pressure and the anxiety

they experienced in the activity, they were motivated by the pressure and the anxiety.

It is usually believed that pressure and anxiety could have negative impacts on learners' motivation: Dörnyei (1994) argued that decreasing students' anxiety in L2 classrooms could increase their motivation; Williams and Burden (1997) pointed out that anxiety could decrease the students' motivation and they also believed that a comfortable learning environment could have positive influences on students' motivation. As discussed at the beginning of this section, FSI-LXJ's motivation was decreased by her pressure of passing CET, and this confirms the above theories. However, according to their interviews, the motivation levels of FWL-JJY, FSI-LXJ and FSU-ZQ were increased by the pressure and anxiety in the CET-related practice.

It is quite interesting to know that the pressure and the anxiety in the CET-related practice could have positive impacts on students' motivation. But, carefully considering the FWL-JJY's, FSI-LXJ's and FSU-ZQ's descriptions, it can be found that the positive influences actually derived from a combination of several factors, including pressure, anxiety and students' expectancy of benefits from the CET-related practice. The three participants all mentioned the benefits they could obtain in the in-class training, such as time control and ways of dealing with the pressure and the anxiety in the actual CET; and they all felt the teacher-supervised practice was more effective than their own exercises after the lessons. It seems that the CET-related practice had various advantages in training the students, but, in fact, the different benefits above could all be seen as the outcomes of the pressure and the anxiety deriving from the teacher's supervision: just like FSU-ZQ said in her interviews, the students could concentrate more on the exercises in the class with their teacher's supervision, so they found that the in-class CET-related practice was more effective than their own after-class practice; in their own practices, the students could be easily distracted by various things, such as their mobiles, even if they told themselves the practice ought to be a mock test, as they may have little pressure of taking the practice seriously. In other words, in accordance with the teacher's requirement during the lessons, the participants had to focus on the exercises and might not be distracted from the exercises with the stress of being supervised by their teacher.

The students' concentration in the in-class CET-related practice could not only lead to more efficient practising, but also help the students know the time they spent on the practices, so some participants believed the in-class practice could help them control time in real exams. Since their concentration was an outcome of the pressure they experienced in the exercise, the benefit of learning to control time can also be regarded as a result of the pressure and the anxiety.

As for the participants' opinion that the CET-related practice could help them deal with the pressure and the anxiety in real exams, a possible explanation could be that the practice provided the students opportunities to adapt to the pressure and the anxiety they may experience in the real exams. The students could get used to the negative feelings and they could train themselves to have better performances in an environment full of stress before they sit for the real CET. In other words, the pressure and the anxiety the students experienced in the teacher-supervised practice could help them reduce the negative influences of the feelings on themselves during the real CET. In this way, the teacher-supervised practice could facilitate students' preparation for CET and increase the students' probability of passing CET, and FSI-LXJ believed the CET-related practice could help them deal with the pressure and the anxiety in the real CET. Therefore, in order to get used to the stressful environment of the real CET, the pressure and the anxiety in the CET-related practice could motivate students to learn English.

As discussed above, the pressure and the anxiety in the CET-related practice became attractive for the students because of the benefits they perceived they could get from the practice. Dörnyei (1994) found that increasing the students' expectancy of task fulfillment could have positive influences on students' motivation levels; in other words, if the students are aware of how to complete the task successfully or to get higher scores, they are motivated to complete the task. Dörnyei's finding could also be a possible explanation of the positive effects of pressure and anxiety. Applying the Dörnyei's theory to FWL-JJY's, FSI-LXJ's and FSU-ZQ's experiences in the CET-related practice, it can be seen that: the task in the practice is to pass or increase the students' grades in CET; as the students had effective trainings in controlling time

and dealing with the pressure and the anxiety in the exercises, they were more likely to have a good performance in the real CET. So the participants' expectancy of passing CET with the CET-related practice were increased; and the pressure and the anxiety, which could be seen as the triggers of the benefits in the practice, had positive influences on the students' motivation.

In addition, there is also another possible explanation for the positive impacts of pressure and anxiety. On the one hand, the pressure and the anxiety could decrease the participants' motivation levels; on the other hand, the potential activity benefits could stimulate their motivation in English learning; the benefits brought by the in-class CET-related practice may have stronger positive impacts on students' motivation than the negative influences from the pressure and the anxiety. Therefore, the CET-related practice eventually had positive influences on the students' motivation and they may owe the positive influences on their motivation completely to the pressure and the anxiety they experienced in the practice.

The above information shows that pressure and anxiety, which are usually seen as negative factors in influencing students' motivation, could have positive impacts on stimulating students to learn English. But the positive effects were actually derived from the interactions between pressure, anxiety and students' expectancy of passing CET. Thus, the teacher could consider to taking advantages of combining the students' pressure and anxiety together with their expectancy of the benefits they can get from certain activities in order to reduce the negative influences of pressure and anxiety on students' motivation. Further studies could pay attention to how pressure and anxiety could have positive influences on students' motivation, such as the interactions between pressure, anxiety and other potential factors.

#### **5.2.5 Classroom activities**

In this section, the classroom activities which had influences on students' motivation levels are addressed in alignment with motivation theories, results of other studies and the context of China.

As mentioned in the Literature review, Csizér, Kormos and Sarkadi (2010) found

that a teacher's methods of instruction could influence dyslexic language learners' attitudes toward language learning; though their participants were a special group, the researchers believed the result could apply to general language learners. In this research, the interviews with the College English students showed that the in-class activities could increase or decrease the participants' motivation levels; the results provided sufficient evidences to support Csizér, Kormos and Sarkadi's speculation; various activities planned by the teacher had both positive and negative influences on students' in-class motivation levels. Although the teacher's way of teaching had significant influences on these activities and some findings in this research may be restricted to the certain College English lessons, there are still some interesting points that may apply to other College English classrooms and language lessons.

According to the interviews, it can be found that some participants also experienced pressure and anxiety in the listening practice and the dictation, just like in the CET-related practice. However, the effects of the pressure and the anxiety in these activities were different; the pressure and the anxiety the participants experienced in CET-related practice had positive influences on their motivation (see Section 5.2.4.2), while the pressure and the anxiety in listening practice and dictation had negative impacts on students' motivation in English learning. MSL-SYH felt stressed in the listening practice because of the plethora of exercises which needed to be completed; FSI-WXJ felt pressure because she had to keep on practicing listening in order to pass CET even if she was not willing to continue practicing listening; FWL-JJY's pressure and anxiety in listening practice came from her experience of failing in one listening test, and her anxiety in dictations could have negative impacts on her performances. The above students' pressure and anxiety all derived from their negative attitudes toward the activities, or the pressure and anxiety had negative influences on the students' learning. As discussed in Section 5.2.4.2, pressure and anxiety are usually believed to decrease students' motivation, the negative influences of the pressure and the anxiety in listening practice and dictation were clearly evidence of this conclusion. Dörnyei (1994) suggested that providing a supportive learning environment could motivate the students to learn, and a relaxed classroom atmosphere could also

facilitate the students' motivation (Dörnyei, 1998). Therefore, in order to avoid or minimize the students' motivation decrease caused by the pressure and the anxiety, the teacher could consider decreasing the pressure and the anxiety during the two activities, such as reducing the time and the quantity of listening exercises (see more in Section 5.2.5.1).

It is quite interesting that students' pressure and anxiety in CET-related practice and in listening practice and dictation are quite different. Based on the participants' descriptions of the pressure and the anxiety they experienced in these different classroom activities, it can be found that the key factor determining the positive or the negative impacts is the students' expectancy of the benefits they can get from the activities. Participants who were positively influenced by the pressure and the anxiety they experienced in CET-related practice all had clear and high expectations of the benefits they could get from the practice, while the students who experienced negative influences of their pressure and their anxiety in listening practice and dictations did not mention any information about their expectations of the benefits they could obtain from the two activities. So, as discussed in Section 5.2.4.2, pressure and anxiety could stimulate the students' motivation in English learning, if the students could have clear and high expectations of the benefits they could accrue from the classroom activities. In other words, if the students could expect to benefit from the activities during the lessons, the pressure and the anxiety they experienced in the activities could possibly influence their motivation positively. Therefore, increasing the effectiveness of the listening practice and the dictation activity may also transform the negative impacts of the pressure and the anxiety into positive influences.

Apart from pressure and anxiety, the participants also mentioned some other factors which influenced their in-class motivation in English learning. These factors and phenomena are discussed separately in the following sections.

#### **5.2.5.1 Listening practice**

Listening, as one important language skill, is an important aspect of language teaching, and listening practice was one of the frequent classroom activities in the College English lessons. Although the teacher had put a lot of effort into training the students

in listening, the effect of the practice was not satisfactory: most students believed the practice was not effective and it also had negative impacts on their motivation. The students' negative attitudes toward the listening practice mainly derived from the length of practising. According to the participants' descriptions, the practice usually contained a lot of exercises and could last for quite a long time and their motivation in English learning was negatively influenced; even a student such as FSU-ZQ, who had the most positive attitudes toward English learning, could become tired and bored with the learning in the lengthy practice, or a positive learner such as MSL-SYH could even feel stressed. It can be seen that the long duration of listening practice had quite negative impacts on students' motivation; in other words, their motivation in English learning decreased because the practice was too long: teachers may want to shorten the length of listening practice every time.

In addition, the variety of the classroom activities may also be helpful in reducing the negative impacts of the lengthy listening practice. Waninge et al. (2014) found that a change in classroom activity may cause students' motivation changes; some of their participants' motivation levels increased when a lengthy activity ended and a new activity began. It seems that the change of classroom activity could help strengthen the participants' motivation during the lessons. Considering the participants in this research also experienced lengthy activities which caused motivation decrease of the students, Waninge et al.'s result may be regarded as a measure to minimize the negative influences of lengthy practice. The teacher could consider changing the forms of practising listening, or could completely change to another activity, which does not involve listening. The key to reduce the negative impacts of lengthy listening practice is still to make the activities interesting rather than humdrum.

It is also noteworthy that FWL-JJY mentioned another reason for her dislike of listening practice: her lack of confidence in listening. According to her interviews, FWL-JJY was unconfident in listening because of her failure in one test, so she was not willing to practise listening. In addition, her loss of confidence in listening triggered her anxiety in the practice and the anxiety further decreased her motivation

in the listening practice (see the beginning of Section 5.2.5). Dörnyei (1994) argued that developing students' self confidence could increase their motivation, Williams and Burden (1997) also pointed out that learners' confidence could influence their motivation in learning. It follows that, for FWL-JJY, if she could be more confident in listening, her motivation in practicing listening could increase and her motivation may not be negatively influenced by her anxiety, as it could be even possible that she would not experience anxiety in the activity. Therefore, it could be important for the teacher to pay attention to the students' confidence in English learning, since confidence itself could not only influence the students' motivation, but also trigger other factors that could change students' motivation.

Taken together, the main reason for the unsatisfactory effect of listening practice for most participants in this research is the length of practice rather than the listening itself. Reducing the length of practising might be helpful in minimising the negative influences of listening practice on students' motivation; it might also be useful to pay attention to the duration of other lengthy activities during the lessons. Further, given that students' confidence can also play an important role in their motivation in English learning, the teacher could consider developing the students' confidence in order to facilitate their English learning.

#### **5.2.5.2 Dictation**

The participants described dictation as a regular activity in their College English lessons, and they understood it was the way their teacher checked their vocabulary learning. But the participants expressed their dislike of this activity, and the most common reason was that the dictation was very boring. Both MWU-MZB and MWI-SJQ perceived that doing dictations in the lessons was wasting time as they believed they could have more useful or necessary content during the lessons instead of checking their vocabulary; FSU-MJQ even completed an exercise from one CET paper in one dictation. The above participants showed their low motivation in doing dictations through their low interest in dictations and their low expectancy of the benefits they could get from the dictation. For these participants, dictation, which they considered neither interesting nor useful, became a killer of their motivation in



English learning during the College English lessons.

FWL-JJY's reasons for her dislike of dictation were different from the other participants; she usually disliked dictation because of her anxiety (see the beginning of Section 5.2.5). However, she once commented on one dictation quite positively since she got full marks: she seemed to be quite satisfied with her performance in that particular dictation and seemed to be very positive with the experience. Dörnyei (1994) and Williams and Burden (1997) argued students' self-confidence can motivate them in learning, and Dörnyei (1994) also pointed out that students' satisfaction with their successes in activities could also increase their motivation. The above findings could provide a theoretical basis to FWL-JJY's experience in relation to the particular dictation activity: FWL-JJY's motivation in dictation was usually decreased by her anxiety, but her good performance brought her confidence, which increased her motivation; further, she was satisfied with her performance in that dictation and she was also motivated to do dictation at that time. In accordance with FWL-JJY's description, the positive impacts from her confidence and satisfaction were stronger than the negative influence from her anxiety, thus, she eventually held a positive attitude toward dictation.

Although the participants could have motivation increase in relation to dictations just like FWI-JJY, the conditions that could lead to the positive effect could not be guaranteed; it is therefore worth finding a more positive way to check the students' vocabulary or supervise their vocabulary learning. The teacher may consider the possibility of increasing the interest of the dictation or the students' expectancy of the value of the dictation. In addition, as most participants usually held negative attitudes toward dictation, the teacher may also consider not requiring the students to do dictations during the lessons, which could be the easiest way to reduce the students' motivation decrease, in order to directly remove the negative factor in influencing the students' motivation.

#### **5.2.5.3 Text & vocabulary learning**

As mentioned in the Results chapter, this topic is a combination of various coding units involving text and vocabulary learning. The participants' attitudes toward the

contents of text and vocabulary learning were also varied.

Both MWI-SJQ and FSU-ZQ gave positive comments on the autonomous learning of the texts; they were quite satisfied with the teacher's explanations which targeted their questions in autonomous learning of the texts. Dörnyei (1994) suggested that teachers should promote students' autonomy, finding that giving students opportunities to be in charge in some activities or tasks could increase their motivation in English learning. The autonomous learning mentioned by the participants was student-oriented learning since the students were given the authority to choose what the teacher would teach them by her answering their questions. In accordance with Dörnyei's finding, it is clear why the autonomous learning was welcomed by the two participants during the lessons. Further, according to MWI-SJQ's and FSU-ZQ's descriptions of the "targeted" explanations after their autonomous learning, it seems that the true reason that the two participants liked the autonomous learning could be its high effectiveness; as the teacher's explanations could focus on the contents the students did not understand instead of teaching everything involved in the texts even if the students already knew the knowledge.

MWU-MZB and MWI-SJQ were bored with the teacher's detailed explanations of the texts. Since the explanations usually consisted of translations and grammar analysis of each sentence in the texts, and for the two students who were not interested in English learning, these explanations were truly boring. As discussed above, MWI-SJQ preferred targeted learning rather than learning everything during the lessons. Clearly, then, the teacher's detailed explanations of the texts usually decreased his motivation in English learning while the teaching following the autonomous learning were more attractive. For MWU-MZB, though the usual explanations of the texts were boring, if the teacher gave the explanations together with references to real life, he became quite satisfied and then was motivated by this kind of explanations. It seems that the problem in text learning for MWU-MZB and MWI-SJQ is still a problem of their interests. Therefore, the teacher could try to explain the texts with more examples from real life and also consider providing more explanations of the things the students may not know instead of explaining everything

in the texts. However, compared to MWU-MZB's and MWI-SJQ's negative attitudes toward their teacher's explanations of the texts, FSU-ZQ held very positive attitudes toward the analysis of sentence types and grammar in the text explanations as she believed the explanations were useful in her writing; in other words, the true reason FSU-ZQ liked the text explanations was that they could be helpful in her learning: the text explanations could motivate FSU-ZQ by facilitating her English learning.

Although almost all the participants held negative attitudes toward dictations, vocabulary learning was welcomed by most participants, such as FSI-WXJ, FSU-ZQ and FSI-LXJ. But the above participants all had different comments on different aspects of vocabulary learning. FSI-WXJ and FSU-ZQ gave positive comments on learning words with associations because both of them believed this way of vocabulary learning was useful in remembering words. Summaries of words were very welcomed by FSI-LXJ since she believed the summaries helped her memory. It seems that the above participants all had different reasons for their like of the vocabulary learning; however, in fact, the only reason was that the vocabulary learning during the lessons could facilitate the students' memory of words and then further facilitate their English learning. Therefore, making the text and vocabulary learning more useful in the students' English learning could also be a way of increasing their motivation in the activities.

Furthermore, just as FSI\_LXJ liked the summaries of words, MSL-SYH also liked summaries, but he liked summaries of grammar. The summaries helped him establish a clear framework of English grammar; the deeper reason why MSL-SYH was interested in the framework could be that he was able to remember each grammar points clearly with the summaries. In other words, the framework established through the summaries helped him to learn English grammar systematically and he could remember grammar more clearly in this way. So, although the content of summaries was different, it seems that both MSL-SYH and FSI-LXJ had similar reasons for their liking of the summaries: the summaries were helpful in facilitating their learning and memory of vocabulary or grammar. Thus, the summaries of words or grammar could increase the students' motivation, and the teacher could consider providing more

summaries in order to facilitate the students' memory.

The coding units relevant to text and vocabulary learning again show that students' interests are important in motivating their English learning; the teacher could increase the students' motivation in the text explanations by making these more attractive to the students, by, for example, linking real life to the texts. Strengthening the facilitating roles of the activities in English learning could also increase the students' motivation. In addition, the teacher could also motivate the students via providing them more opportunities of autonomous learning.

#### **5.2.5.4 Oral Communications and practice**

The opportunities of and the practice relevant to speaking were very welcomed by the participants during the lessons. As discussed in Section 5.2.2, oral English is one major factor that could help students create their ideal selves; in other words, fluent oral English is a model or a symbol of successful English learning. Even the students with lower interests in English learning, such as MWI-SJQ and FWL-JJY, in English learning were eager to be able to speak fluent English (see Section 5.2.2, part b). Therefore, the students were motivated to take part in oral communications and practice by their strong desire of speaking fluent English.

MacIntyre and Serroul's (2015) participants showed motivation increase when they had sufficient vocabulary in oral tasks. In this study, MWU-MZB perceived he had sufficient vocabulary to communicate with his teacher and he was willing to talk to his teacher directly; his experiences about the oral communications with his teacher confirmed MacIntyre and Serroul's result: his sufficient vocabulary seems to increase his confidence in communicating with his teacher, so, for MWU-MZB, he could be motivated by his vocabulary to talk to the teacher. Another possible reason of MWU-MZB's high motivation could be that communication with his teacher provide a good opportunity for him to practise speaking. In addition, MWU-MZB also believed he liked communications with the teacher as he could interact with the teacher, and the interactions could facilitate his learning (see more in Section 5.2.5.5).

The majority of the participants preferred giving a short talk on a certain topic. Compared to real-time communications, such as communications with their teacher,

these talks were prepared in advance and their vocabulary requirement was not very high since the students could seek help from dictionaries. Comparing with MWU-MZB who confidently talked about his vocabulary, it seems that most students may be not very confident about their vocabulary. MacIntyre and Serroul's (2015) research found that anxiety and frustration could have negative influences on participants' motivation when they were completing the L2 oral tasks; so, for most students, they are more likely to experience anxiety and frustration when communicating with their teacher since they may not have sufficient vocabulary. Thus, most students welcomed the short talks rather than communication with their teacher.

The above shows that vocabulary plays an important role in students' motivation in oral practice, but it should be students' confidence that plays an important role in students' motivation. Sufficient vocabulary could provide the students more freedom in expressing their ideas: the students with sufficient vocabulary could be confident to convey what they want to say; while the students who had vocabulary problems may find it difficult to express themselves since they have a very limited choice of words and they may feel anxious and frustrated in communication in accordance with MacIntyre and Serroul's (2015) result. The positive influence of vocabulary in speaking actually, therefore, derives from the students' confidence about their vocabulary.

In addition, FSU-ZQ also mentioned a quite interesting opinion: she liked the teacher pointing to certain students to answer questions or expressing their ideas in the lessons. She believed this kind of compulsory speaking could help the students establish confidence and courage in learning with the teacher's encouragement. It can be seen that this FSU-ZQ's opinion involved two motivational factors: a student's confidence and the teacher's encouragement. Dörnyei (1994) pointed out that students' motivation could be increased if the teacher could encourage them to set small goals the students can achieve. Generally, it is not a difficult task for the College English students to answer a question or express their opinions in English, as they have been learning English for several years; and for the students who want to practice oral English but who lack the courage to voluntarily speak, the seemingly compulsory

requirements of speaking in the lessons can be seen as the teacher's encouragement for them to speak. This may explain why FSU-ZQ held positive attitudes toward the teacher's requirements of speaking, as it is actually the teacher's encouragements which increased her motivation. In addition, as confidence has positive influences on students' English learning (Dörnyei, 1994; Williams and Burden, 1997), so FSU-ZQ mentioned that the compulsory speaking in the lessons could help her establish confidence, which could further influence her motivation positively.

Taken together, oral English, as a skill which students could easily show off to other people, is quite popular for all the students; and the students' motivation could be increased in various oral exercises. According to the participants' descriptions, one possible way to increase the participants' motivation in oral practice could be enlarging their vocabulary. The teacher may, then, consider strengthening the vocabulary learning in order to increase the students' motivation. But, as mentioned before, students' motivation could be decreased by pressure and anxiety, and too much vocabulary learning could make the students bored with the lessons. Therefore, the teacher has to balance the negative effects, such as pressure and anxiety, and the positive influences, such as strengthening the students' confidence, of increasing the quantity of vocabulary learning. Further, the teacher's encouragement could also be helpful in motivating students; in particular, the teacher's encouragement has the possibility to change the negative impacts of some compulsory requirements into positive influences.

#### **5.2.5.5 Interactions between the teacher and students**

According to the interviews, participants' comments on interactions between the teacher and students were always positive; they provided a few reasons why the interactions helped their English learning during the lessons, which explained how the interactions stimulated their motivation in English learning.

Some participants, such as MWU-MZB, MWI-SJQ, liked the interactions because they could have opportunities to communicate with their teacher; as discussed in Section 5.2.5.4, the students valued oral English and they were willing to practise speaking during the lessons. The interactions with the teacher were

undoubtedly good opportunities for the students to practice English. Clearly, the interactions could increase some students' motivation during the lessons by providing them opportunities of practising oral English.

In addition, there were also several students, MWU-SJQ, FSU-ZQ and FSI-LXJ, who believed the interactions could help them concentrate on the lessons; according to their descriptions, sometimes they may lose their concentration because of the humdrum explanations and the dull atmosphere in the lessons. The participants stated that they may lose their interest or concentration in the lessons, especially when the teacher's talking lasted for a long time. The lessons could easily become boring when the teacher kept speaking, then the students may lose their interests in and concentration on the lessons. In accordance with their descriptions, the interactions between the teacher and students could activate the classroom atmosphere and make the lessons interesting. The interactions need the students' participations and could attract their attention. So the interactions could increase the students' involvement in the lessons, and the atmosphere of the classroom could become active with the students' participations. Dörnyei (1994) believed that increasing the students' involvement in tasks and arousing students' attention via breaking the static environment of the class could motivate the students to learn, so the participants' descriptions of the interactions confirmed Dörnyei's finding. In other words, the interactions could attract the students' attention and guide them to focus on the lessons.

Further, MWI-SJQ perceived that the interactions could make the lessons interesting. As mentioned above, the interactions need students' participation and the participations may interest the students; and then the students could be motivated to learn English by their interest (see the functions of interests in Section 5.2.1, part b). Sometimes, then, the positive influence of the interactions on students' motivation comes from the effect of interest.

Above all, the interactions between the teacher and the students are able to influence the students' motivation in different ways: students who want to practise oral English could be motivated by the opportunities provided by the interactions; for

the students who lost their concentration on the lessons, the interactions could attract their attention and increase their involvement in the lessons; and the interactions could interest the students and further motivate them to learn. The interactions between the teacher and students could be a very easy way to motivate the students, since they may not require a long time to prepare. The teacher could interact with the students at any time during the lessons, and the way of interacting could also be very simple, even a short conversation with the students could work. Therefore, the teacher could consider interweaving the interactions into different parts of the lessons in order to increase the students' motivation.

#### **5.2.6 Teacher's personality**

Although the above classroom activities are more or less relevant to the teacher's behaviour, the personality of the teacher is the only factor that directly relates to the teacher. In this research, the teacher's personality is a quite interesting factor: it did not appear frequently, but its effect on students' motivation in English learning cannot be ignored. Even the participants with lower interest in English learning, MWU-MZB and MWI-SJQ, could be motivated by their teacher's personality. Waninge et al. (2014) also found that teachers have "powerful" influences on students' motivation. It is clear that the teacher's personality, which seems not relevant to the students' English learning, is indeed a strong factor in motivating the students. The participants' were motivated by various aspects of the teacher's personality, such as the teacher's earnest attitudes in teaching and her patience.

The teacher's earnest attitude in teaching seems to be the most powerful aspect of the teacher's personality in motivating the students, as "earnest" is the word most frequently mentioned by the participants in their interviews in terms of the teacher's personality. No matter whether the participants were strongly or weakly interested in the English learning, all of them were able to be motivated by their teacher's earnestness. The teacher's patience in teaching could also be a driver for students' motivation; the teacher's patient explanations can be also seen as an aspect of the teacher's earnestness. The participants' liking of the teacher also has positive



influences on their motivation in English learning, confirming Waninge et al.'s (2014) results.

In addition, MWU-MZB also mentioned he could easily communicate with the teacher and this had very positive impacts on his English learning. It is very interesting that communications between the teacher and MWU-MZB could increase his motivation in English learning: the reason could be that MWU-MZB realised that the teacher was very supportive because of the easiness of communicating with the teacher, he may like the teacher and then he was willing to follow the teacher's instructions. So MWU-MZB was motivated by the ease of communicating with his teacher.

It is quite interesting that the above aspects of the teacher's personality could have the power to motivate the students, as several studies identified teacher's personality as a demotivating factor (see the part of Teacher's personality in Section 2.2). But it is not difficult to understand how the teacher's personality relates to the students' English learning. Dörnyei (1994) regarded "affiliative motive" as a motivational factor, he pointed out that students may want to learn English to please their teacher; developing a good relationship with the students is also regarded as a strategy to motivate the students (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998). According to the participants' descriptions in this research, because of the teacher's earnest attitudes in teaching and other good traits, the students had quite positive impressions of their teacher and they even liked the teacher; in this way, the teacher developed a good relationship with her students. With the close teacher-student relationship and the students' liking for the teacher, the students may also want to impress their teacher, and one of the possible ways is to learn English. Therefore, the teacher's personality could have powerful and positive influences on the students' motivation in English learning.

Furthermore, FSI-LXJ mentioned that she could be motivated in English learning because the teacher could adjust her teaching according to the students' requirements. According to Dörnyei (1994), students could be motivated if the teacher could discuss the teaching material with the students. Although FSI-LXJ's description did not

mention a discussion between the teacher and the students on the teaching contents, it can be seen that the teacher did not decide the contents alone; she listened to the students' voice and adjusted the teaching contents based on the students' requirements. In line with Dörnyei's suggestion, the teacher decided the teaching materials together with the students. So FSI-LXJ's motivation was increased because the teacher could teach them with their requirements; and Dörnyei's theory can be also confirmed by the FSI-LXJ's experience.

The teacher's personality could definitely influence the students' motivation. But it cannot be assured which kind of traits could positively influence the students' motivation as different students may be touched by different traits. However, the most important thing for a teacher could be to try his or her best to teach and support the students: according to the students' descriptions, they are able to understand their teacher's efforts and support in their learning; further, they are able to "find" the appropriate traits of the teacher that could touch them and get them motivated by the teacher's personality. So, in terms of the impacts of the teacher's personality on students' motivation, the teacher just needs to consider being a good teacher in the student's eyes.

### **5.2.7 Addressing outliers**

As presented in Section 4.2.5, there were a few special events that influenced the participants' in-class motivation in English learning. Although these events were only mentioned once by the participants, their effects on student motivation cannot be ignored.

According to MWU-MZB's description, his motivation in English learning was significantly decreased by his missing registration for CET. This event seemed not to directly relate to English learning, however, it had a negative impact on MWU-MZB's attitudes toward English learning, and then his attitudes toward English learning further influenced his in-class motivation (see also in Section 5.2.1, part b). MWU-MZB mentioned that he was interested in English learning, but the negative influence of missing registration for CET seemed to last for quite a long time, so, during the process of data collection, MWU-MZB's motivation in English learning

always remained at a low level.

FSI-LXJ's mentioned her in-class motivation was once negatively influenced by one of her peer student's disturbances during one lesson. The peer student's constant disturbances made FSI-LXJ unwilling to learn English in the lesson. On the one hand, the peer student's disturbances confirmed that learners' motivation could be influenced by their peers (Williams and Burden, 1997). On the other, this event could be seen as evidence of the influence of learning environment on student motivation: as mentioned in Section 5.2.5, a supportive learning environment (Dörnyei, 1994) or a relaxed classroom atmosphere (Dörnyei, 1998) could have positive influences on student motivation; Williams and Burden (1997) also pointed out that a comfortable learning environment could facilitate students to learn English. According to FSI-LXJ's description, her desk mate's disturbances seemed to make the environment of the lesson in question intolerable for her and she lost her interest in English learning in that lesson. In other words, if her peer student had not interrupted her constantly, FSI-LXJ would have been willing to learn English in the lesson. Therefore, if the teacher could have paid more attention to classroom management and the peer student's disturbances had been stopped, FSI-LXJ's motivation may not have been decreased.

The influences of the above events show that student motivation could not only be influenced by various motivational factors, but also be impacted by some unexpected events which may not influence student motivation directly. These events may not happen frequently; however, they may have significant influences on student motivation over a relatively long period. Therefore, apart from common motivation factors, unexpected events could also influence students' motivation in English.

#### **5.2.8 Addressing other motivation factors**

This section comprises a discussion of the factors which had inconsistent results between the questionnaire survey and the interviews, and of the factors which did not appear in the learning logs and interviews.

### 5.2.8.1 Instrumentality-promotion & Instrumentality-prevention

#### a. Questionnaire data

Instrumentality is an important and interesting motivation factor: its promotion orientation usually had higher scores than its prevention orientation. The questionnaire data also shows that students who were interested in English learning had higher scores for Instrumentality-promotion factors than Instrumentality-prevention factors; while for the participants who had a weak interest in English learning, the factors relevant to Instrumentality-prevention had more significant influences on their motivation. It seems that the positive students are more willing to set and pursue promotion-orientated targets, while those less-positive participants are more likely to learn English in order to prevent negative outcomes. The positive students are more likely to learn English by their own willingness, so they valued more highly the promotion that English learning could bring to them; for the less-positive students, their learning may be more motivated by the compulsory requirements, so they paid more attention to preventing unsatisfactory or bad outcomes in their English learning.

Taguchi et al. (2009) found a close link between their participants' *instrumentality-promotion* and *ought-to L2 self*; they perceived this result was caused by the young people's heavy burden of supporting their aging parents who retired at an early age with extremely low pensions. But with the development of the years after they conducted their research, the economic conditions have been improved a lot, though supporting the aging parents is still a burden of young people, it is not as heavy as the past. So, in this research, there is no close link between the above two motivation orientations for most participants; only for the less-positive students, their instrumentality-promotion and Ought-to L2 Self had a closer relationship.

#### b. Interview data

Although participants gave high scores to Instrumentality-promotion in the questionnaire, this motivation factor appeared just 5 times in the interviews. It seems Instrumentality-promotion is not a strong factor in influencing the students' in-class motivation. This discrepancy may be caused by the context of this research, the

College English lessons in progress: Instrumentality-promotion, a factor which involves more future visions, may not be very active for the students during the College English lessons, especially given that these participants were in their first year: although they are able to realise the importance of the promotion aspect of instrumentality, the effect of this factor could be weakened because of their newness to the university and they did not consider the factor frequently. So Instrumentality-promotion could simply lose its power in influencing the students' motivation in the ongoing lessons.

As for instrumentality-prevention, it was not highly rated in the questionnaire, and there were no coding units relevant to this factor in the interviews. It can be seen as a confirmation of its weak influence on the students' motivation in learning.

#### **5.2.8.2 Intended effort**

Intended effort is a strong motivation factor according to the questionnaire data, but the learning logs and interviews showed that participants' motivation was not affected by "Intended efforts" during the lessons. The discrepancy between the questionnaire data and the interviews could have the following explanations. On the one hand, considering the literal meaning of "Intended efforts", it is also possible that the participants highly rated the questions related to this topic in order to give the impression that they are "active" English learners; the absence of "Intended efforts" in the learning logs and interviews may reveal a deeper truth. On the other hand, intended efforts was not an active factor in influencing the students' in-class motivation; its high score in the questionnaire shows its importance in the students' motivation, the reason that "intended efforts" was not mentioned by the participants in their learning logs and interviews could be that Intended effort had little influence on the students' in-class motivation changes since the students may be more focused on the current learning during the lessons instead of their potential plans in the learning. So, just like instrumentality-promotion, "intended efforts" was inactive in influencing the students' in-class motivation.

Apart from the above motivation orientations, “Ought-to L2 Self” and “Parental expectation” did not appear in the learning logs and interviews. Their absence in the participants’ interviews could be owing to their lowest scores in questionnaires, in other words, they had the smallest influences on the students’ motivation, meaning that, during the lessons, the above two orientations did not affect or only slightly affected the students’ motivation.

### 5.2.9 Comparisons with You and Dörnyei’s (2016) questionnaire results

As mentioned in Section 3.4.3.1, the questionnaire used in this research was developed from You and Dörnyei’s (2016) questionnaire; considering the similar participant group, the questionnaire results of the two studies could both show the motivation orientations of Chinese English learners at university level, so comparisons are made to the questionnaire results of You and Dörnyei’s research and this research in order to see whether the English learners’ motivation orientations have changed. Since the participants in this research are all from a university in the west of China, in order to decrease the potential influence of regional differences, the questionnaire results of the university participants of west China are used in the comparisons. The reason for presenting the comparisons is that there are many differences between the two studies and these differences can be seen as evidence of the students’ changing motivation in English learning.

		Attitudes toward English learning	Ideal L2 self	Ought-to L2 self	Instrumentali ty-promotion	Instrumentali ty-prevention
You	&	3.48	3.57	3.43	3.71	4.03
Dörnyei						
This		4.13	4.70	3.32	4.83	3.84
research						
		Cultural	Intende	Parental	Travelling	

		interest	d effort	expectatio	n
You & Dörnyei		3.75	4.16	3.05	3.50
This research		5.17	4.5	3.25	4.47

Table 5-6 The mean values of the questionnaire results of You and Dörnyei's (1996) and the current research

Although the participants of the two studies were all from the west of China, according to Table 5-1, it can be seen that there are considerable discrepancies between the results of the two research endeavours. The values of most motivation factors increased, while the values of Ought-to L2 self and Instrumentality-prevention decreased. A possible explanation for these differences could be that it has been a few years since You and Dörnyei (2016) conducted their research, China is now more integrated into the global development and English plays a more and more significant role in the life of China. The development of the nation needs more people who can speak English, and the requirements of people's proficiency in English have become higher. Therefore, the students' attitudes toward English learning are changing with the changing context in China; they are more positive in English learning and have realised that English learning is able to offer them more opportunities and promotions in their future. So, compared with You and Dörnyei's results, the values of Attitudes toward English learning, Instrumentality-promotion and Intended efforts increased in the questionnaire survey in this research, and the influences of the instrumentality-prevention and Ought-to L2 Self decreased. The participants' realisation of the significance of English and positive attitudes toward English learning of the participants also mean that they are more likely to expect satisfactory performance in learning English, therefore, the effect of ideal L2 self becomes stronger. The parents could have higher expectations of their adult children in learning English because of the more significant role of English in daily life, so the value of

Parent expectation also increased. In addition, as mentioned in Section 5.2.7.1, the Chinese economic conditions are better; with the development of science and technology, the transportation has become more rapid and convenient, and more and more Chinese are able to travel all over the world, so the influence of travelling on English learning increases and the value of Travelling also increased in this research.

According to the differences of the two questionnaire surveys, it can be confirmed again that the students' motivation is changeable. But it is noteworthy that the motivation could be changed with the macro context, the nation that the students live in (see the paragraph above). The broad environment of the students' nation could have influences on their motivation in English learning, the influences may not be powerful, but are able to change the effects of motivation factors on the students' English learning. As discussed above, the types of the motivation orientations could stay the same, however, the effect of each direction may become stronger or weaker. So, in order to better understand the students' motivation in learning English and to motivate them, it is necessary to pay attention not only to the types of motivation factors, but also to the effects of the factors.

### **5.3 The role of the researcher**

The current study explored the students' in-class motivation dynamics via the participants' experiences and feelings during the lessons. In order to reduce the influence of the researcher on the data provided by the students, the researcher attempted to act as a mediator, reporting the reality learnt from the participants and always trying to hold a non-judgmental and neutral role in the research process. Several measures were taken in order to minimize the researcher's impact: the mixed-methods in data collection can help reduce the researcher's bias and enhance the trustworthiness of the study (Cohen et al., 2007); in the interviews, the researcher asked the participants non-directional questions on the basis of their learning logs in order to elicit further information about the students' motivational dynamics rather than lead the participants to provide answers relevant to specific directions.





## **6. Conclusion**

The present study set out to explore the students' in-class motivation dynamics in English learning in the context of College English classrooms in China. It has investigated the dynamics of L2 motivation in a Chinese context and has attempted to establish links between L2 learning motivation theories and the practical context of language learning, especially exploring the relationships between the students' in-class motivation and in-class activities and the teacher's behaviour. This Chapter provides a summary of the significant findings and implications.

As well as summarising and commenting on the findings on students' motivation changes during the language lessons, it is also important to pay attention to the exploration of the methods of recording motivational fluctuations.

The conclusion will start with the methods of researching motivation dynamics in Section 6.1. The significant findings are highlighted in Section 6.2, and Section 6.3, followed by the contribution of this study (Section 6.4). The limitations and directions of future research are discussed in Section 6.5 and 6.6.

### **6.1 Methods of recording the students' in-class motivation fluctuations**

As presented in Chapter 3, although the Motometer has successfully collected data of students' motivation changes in the research of Gardner et al. (2004), Waninge et al. (2014), Yuan and Ji (2017) and Chang (2018), the use of Motometers in this study encountered a few problems: many participants provided unreliable data and they did not respond to the Motometers actively (see Section 3.3.1.4, Part a). The above problems may have been caused by the multiple times of using Motometers in one lesson and the length (two months) of the research as well as the number of participants taking part in the current study: the multiple uses in each lesson in the relatively long duration may be the reason for participants' low response to Motometers, as it could not be easy for the participants to consecutively complete repeated tasks in a period of time; the sample size was larger than the numbers of participants in the research mentioned above (Gardner et al., 2004; Waninge et al., 2014; Yuan & Ji, 2017; Chang, 2018) and it could mean a lack of supervision of the

participants' using of Motometers, which may also be a reason for their improper uses of the instrument.

The unsuccessful experience of using Motometers in the present study provided several suggestions in using the instrument, and the experience can facilitate successful using of the Motometer in future research. First, it is necessary to supervise the process of using Motometers, especially with a big sample and multiple uses in one lesson. That said, the way to supervise the use needs careful consideration as it may generate further interference in the lessons (see Section 3.3.1.4, part a). Second, it is important to consider carefully the rhythm of using Motometers since multiple uses during one lesson can cause several interruptions, which may influence the participants' enthusiasm for using Motometers, and repeated multiples uses over a time span may lead to the participants' negative response.

In addition, the difficulties with Motometers also provided an opportunity to expand the way of researching motivation dynamics with a case study design, combining students' learning logs and interviews. The case study cannot directly show the trajectories of students' motivation changes, but it has an advantage in exploring the possible reasons of the motivation fluctuations on the basis of the students' descriptions (see Section 3.3.2). In other words, the data from the case study have solid support from the students' experiences.

Above all, the present study provides practical notice on using Motometers, and expands methods of exploring students' motivation fluctuations, especially in the aspect of exploring the causes of the changes.

## **6.2 Significant findings**

This section summarises the answers to the research questions (see Section 5.1) briefly and highlights the important and interesting findings of the study.

The present study originally aimed to explore motivation dynamics in the context of Chinese English classrooms, but the findings are not restricted to dynamic understandings: the study also shows some links between L2 motivation theories from a static perspective and in-class activities as well as the teacher's behaviour.

The results of this study provide sufficient evidence of the relevance of dynamic

theories of L2 motivation. During the lessons, student motivation may increase (for example, MWI-SJQ could be motivated by Ideal L2 self), or decrease (for example, MSL-SYH usually became less-motivated in dictation during the lessons) and it can also stay at a steady level (for example, FSU-ZQ's motivation usually stayed stable and could hardly be influenced); and the increase or the decrease in students' motivation levels could be considerable or subtle (see Section 4.2 and Section 5.2 for more details). The above findings answer the first research question of how the students' in-class motivation fluctuates.

As for the second research question, the findings show that the motivational dynamics are related to different classroom activities and the teacher's behaviour: the impacts of the classroom activities and the teacher's behaviour can be positive (the teacher's personality could motivate the participants to learn, see Section 4.2.3.2) or negative (dictation would usually weaken the participants' motivation, see Section 4.2.3.1.2), involving various motivational factors, and the effects may vary with different individuals (for example, listening practice could have negative impacts on MWU-MZB and FWL-JJY, while it may have a positive influence on FSU-ZQ's motivation, see Section 4.2.3.1.1).

The data have not only shown the variability of students' in-class motivation in English learning, but also confirmed the complexity of the students' motivation fluctuations. On the one hand, the variety of the students' motivation were flexible; the trends and the ranges of the motivation fluctuations can differ from student to student and classroom activities: for example, MWU-MZB was not strongly interested in English learning but he was highly motivated in CET-related practice, while MSL-SYH who had a strong interest in English was less motivated in CET-related practice; the motivation flexibility is complex. On the other hand, the motivation variations are caused by different factors. The findings show that similar fluctuations can be caused by different factors from various motivation theories: for instance, dictation could decrease the motivation of MWI-SJQ and FWL-JJY, but MWI-SJQ's motivation was weakened because he thought dictation was boring, while FWL-JJY was usually less-motivated in dictation because of her stress; and the same

motivational factor can have different impacts on different students: for example, MWU-MZB was less motivated in listening practice because it usually lasted for quite a long time, however, listening practice usually had no negative impacts on FSU-ZQ's motivation. In addition, the flexibility in motivation may be caused by more than one factor, for example, the participants' strengthened or weakened motivation in CET-related practice during the lessons was actually to do with the interaction of their attitudes toward English and their attitudes toward CET, and even the pressure and anxiety they experienced in the practice (see Section 5.2.4). Taken together, the present study confirms that motivation in English learning is complex and any single theory or construct can only provide limited understandings of students' motivation in English learning.

The participants in the current study showed many differences between their in-class motivation dynamics. As mentioned in Section 3.4.2, the students were marked as “strongly interested” or “weakly interested” in English learning; participants in different groups showed different features in their motivation changes and even for the students in the same group, there were very limited similarities in their motivation fluctuations. In other words, the participants' motivation varieties are quite personal. Waninge's (2014) findings also showed their participants' individual differences in in-class motivation flexibility rather than generalisability. It seems that there are no models that can describe the students' in-class motivation changes. However, it must be pointed out that both the research design of Waninge's study and this study (case study) focus more on the individual's motivation changes.

The data also showed some discrepancies in students' motivation orientations between the questionnaires and the interviews. Several strong motivation factors (Travelling, Instrumentality-promotion and Intended efforts, see Section 4.1.1) in the questionnaires, which did not frequently appear in the learning logs and the interviews (see Table 3-3 in Section 3.4.3.3), seem not to play roles in influencing the students' in-class motivation. For example, according to the questionnaire, “Travelling” was a strong motivator, but it was inactive during the lessons since information relevant to travelling was not involved in the class, and thus, “Travelling” could not be activated.

In this way, the abovementioned strong factors in the questionnaire did not generate impacts on the participants' motivation. This finding indicates that a powerful motivation factor may have little influence on the student motivation in a given context (see the beginning of Section 5.2).

The findings indicate that Attitudes toward English learning is one of the most important factors in influencing the students' in-class motivation (see Section 4, and Section 5.2.1), and this result is consistent with its regular appearance in motivation theories and constructs (Gardner, 1985; Dörnyei, 1994; Williams & Burden, 1994; Ottó, 1998; Dörnyei, 2009). Its high frequency in the interviews indicates how powerful the factor is; a student's overall motivation level is determined by his or her attitudes toward English learning (see Section 5.2.1). Students with a strong interest in English learning (such as MSL-SYH and FSU-ZQ) usually have positive attitudes toward various class room activities while students with a weak interest in English learning (such as MWU-MZB and MWI-SJQ) are more likely to see College English lessons negatively. The interviews showed two sources of students' attitudes toward English learning: interest and usefulness of English (see Section 5.2.1, part b). All the students can be motivated to learn English if they find English, or the learning of it, is interesting. In contrast, boredom in English learning can result in student motivation decrease, and it is the most common reason for a decrease in the students' in-class motivation. Therefore, the interest of English learning is a very important factor in determining the students' attitudes toward English learning. The usefulness of English can also be a motivator in learning; a few participants (such as MSL-SYH and FSU-ZQ, see Section 5.2.1, part b) in this study were positively influenced by their realisation of the significance of English. This finding is consistent with the result of the investigation, *English learning Status of Contemporary Chinese Residents*, which showed that more and more Chinese learn English for self-promotion (see Section 1.3). The finding of the positive effect of the usefulness of English also confirms Pawlak's (2012) result, which found learners' awareness of the significance of English could facilitate their learning. The interviews showed that students' previous and present English learning experiences can both influence their attitudes toward English

learning and that the influences from previous learning experiences are difficult to change. In addition, according to participant FSU-ZQ's data, her motivation in English learning during the lessons can remain at a high level because of her strong interest in English.

The data also confirmed the impact of Ideal L2 Self on students' motivation in English learning. The importance of this factor was reflected in the students' descriptions rather than its frequency in the interviews. The low frequency of Ideal L2 Self was restricted by the limited opportunities of establishing the vision of ideal self during the language lessons (see Section 5.2.2). According to the data, both the teacher and the students can be their peers' ideal models, and oral English is the main source of the participants' ideal visions: the participants (MWI-SJQ, FWL-JJY, FSI-WAJ and FSU-MQJ) were usually motivated by the teacher or peer students' fluent oral English. On the one hand, it is noticeable that Ideal L2 Self is a powerful factor which could stimulate the participants to learn during the lessons. However, on the other hand, the interviews also revealed that the influences of Ideal L2 Self on the students' motivation could not last long; a few participants (MWI-SJQ and FSU-MQJ) who were motivated by this factor during the lessons described the rapid disappearance of its stimulating effect. According to Dörnyei's (2008, 2009) six procedures of keeping Ideal L2 Self effective, the factor in this study remained at the level of creating ideal visions, which is the first step of activating the effect of the factor. The stimulus of Ideal L2 Self to the participants could not last long and it seems that the participating teacher did not pay attention to how to extend the impacts of Ideal L2 Self, or even did not realise the function of Ideal L2 Self.

Passing CET is a compulsory requirement for non-English major students in obtaining their Bachelor's degrees (see Section 1.1.2 and Section 2.3); the influence of CET on students' motivation in learning has been confirmed in the interviews (see Section 5.2.4.1), but its effect seems to be decreasing in comparisons with the previous studies on College English student motivation (Hua, 1998; Shi, 2000), which found passing CET was the major motivation of the students in English learning. For most participants, especially students with a strong interest in English learning (such

as FSI-WXJ and FSU-ZQ), passing CET was a short-term target, and was only one of their motivation orientations rather than the main, or even the only purpose of learning English. Participants with a lower interest in English learning were more likely to regard passing CET, such as MWU-MZB and MSI-SJQ, as their only purpose of attending the College English course. Whether or not it is one of the reasons or the only purpose of English learning, CET can be a motivator for most College English students. The data confirmed Pawlak's (2012) result that passing exams could drive students to learn English. In addition, there were also a few participants who disliked learning English for passing exams (MSL-SYH and FSI-LXJ). In other words, most students could be motivated by CET to learn English while a few participants may experience motivation decrease because of the requirement of passing CET.

The findings show two sides of the influences of pressure and anxiety on student motivation: positive stimulus (see Section 5.2.4.2) and negative impact (see the beginning of Section 5.2.5). It is usually believed that pressure and anxiety have negative impacts on learners' motivation (Dörnyei, 1994, 1998; Williams & Burden, 1997); and the participants in the research were less-motivated to learn English in listening practice and dictation because they felt stressed. Compared with the "traditional" understanding of the negative effect of pressure and anxiety, it is quite interesting to find that pressure and anxiety can promote student motivation in English learning. The pressure and the anxiety the students (FWL-JJY, FSI-LXJ and FSU-ZQ) experienced in CET-related practice made them regard the exercises positively. The students perceived that the pressure and the anxiety could help them better adapt to the real exams, and because of their desire to pass CET and the benefits they can obtain from the practice, the pressure and the anxiety in CET-related practice had positive influence on the students' motivation. Clearly, it is also possible that the stimulating effect of the pressure and the anxiety on student motivation may be a result of interactions between students' expectancy of task fulfillment, or goal-orientedness and pressure and anxiety.

The interviews also showed that the contents of the College English lessons,



such as off-syllabus knowledge, can influence the students' motivation in English learning (see Section 5.2.3). Off-syllabus knowledge, including information about culture in English-speaking countries and travelling (see Table 3-3, Section 4.2.3.1.3 and Section 5.2.3), can have a positive impact on student motivation in English learning. Dörnyei (1994) argued that students could be motivated in L2 learning via adding unusual and exotic content during the lessons; Williams and Burden (1997) pointed out that students' attitudes toward L2 culture have an influence on their motivation in language learning. The data showed, on one hand, off-syllabus knowledge can stimulate the students, such as FWI-JJY, FSI-WXJ and FSI-LXJ, to learn English by making the lessons interesting; on the other hand, the various information can help students better understand the importance and the role of English in their life and further become a motivator for the students, such as MWU-MZB and MSL-SYH (see Section 5.2.3). The above two reasons for why off-syllabus knowledge can positively influence the students' motivation also confirmed the findings about "Attitudes toward English learning" in the research (see Section 5.2.1, part b).

The current study also found influences of various classroom activities on students' in-class motivation, including CET-related practice (see Section 5.2.4.2), listening practice (see Section 5.2.5.1), dictation (see Section 5.2.5.2), text and vocabulary learning (see Section 5.2.5.3), oral practice (see Section 5.2.5.4) and interactions between the teacher and students (see Section 5.2.4.5).

The impact of listening practice on student in-class motivation was usually negative as the length of the practice was too long. The students could feel tired and bored (such as MWU-MZB, FWL-JJY and FSU-ZQ) and stressed (such as FWL-JJY and MSL-SYH) in the long practice activities, thus they could become less-motivated in the listening practice. Waninge et al. (2014) found that student motivation may increase when a new activity replaced an activity which had lasted a long time. The data about listening practice in this research confirms the influence of the activity length on student in-class motivation; and the changes of different classroom activity could have positive influences on student motivation in English learning.

The students' attitudes toward classroom activities may influence their motivation in the corresponding activities. The CET-related practice in the lessons usually could influence the students' in-class motivation since passing CET was a motivation direction for the participants; most students were quite motivated in the practice, but there were also a few participants, such as MSL-SYH, who became less-motivated because of their negative attitudes toward the requirement of passing CET. The in-class dictation can usually decrease student motivation because of its boredom factor; participants (such as MSL-SYH and FSU-MQJ) perceived that dictation was boring, and MWU-MZB and MWI-SJQ even believed this activity was a waste of time (see Section 4.2.3.1.2). The students' extremely negative attitudes toward dictation determined their motivation decrease in the activity during the lessons. In contrast, the students' positive attitudes toward oral English made them willing to practice speaking, and some of them (FSI-WXJ and FSI-LXJ) even hoped for more opportunities for oral communications; thus, their motivation increased in the activities or tasks related to oral practice (see Section 4.2.3.1.7). The students' opposite attitudes toward the above activities led to opposite motivation fluctuations. It can be seen that the students' attitudes toward a certain classroom activity can indeed influence their motivation in learning during a certain activity.

The benefits students could obtain from the activities may influence their motivation in English learning. On the one hand, the activities which could facilitate students learning can drive the students (such as MSL-SYH, FSI-LXJ and FSU-ZQ) to learn during the lessons; for example, some participants' experienced motivation increase when learning vocabulary with associations and summaries of vocabulary and grammar (see Section 4.2.3.1.6 and Section 5.2.5.3) because they found the associations and summaries were helpful in their study: FSI-WXJ realised that the associations could help her to use the words and MSL-SYH perceived he could learn grammar clearly with the summaries, and FSU-ZQ's and FSI-LXJ's memories could be strengthened with the associations and summaries. On the other hand, the activities which are believed to be useless by the students can cause motivation decrease; dictation, mentioned above, can be seen as an appropriate example. The students are

likely to be motivated by the classroom activities if they are aware of the benefits they can obtain from the activities, and they could be less motivated in the activities which may be less helpful in their English learning.

The data showed that interactions between the teacher and students could stimulate students' motivation in English learning (see Section 4.2.3.1.5 and Section 5.2.). The participants provided two reasons for the positive influence of the interactions on their motivation. One reason is that the students, such as MWI-SJQ, may have opportunities to practise oral English in the interactions; since the students held positive attitudes toward practising oral English, the interactions could have a positive impact on student motivation. In addition, the interviews showed that the positive effect of the interaction can be caused by its capacity to break the dull atmosphere in the classrooms during the lessons, which confirmed Dörnyei's (1994) suggestion of motivating student by arousing their attention in the class. Some participants (MWU-MZB, FSU-ZQ and FSI-LXJ) believed that the interactions with the teacher could save them from the humdrum teaching and could help them concentrate on the lessons again. In sum, the interactions between the teacher and the students can lead to student motivation increase during the lessons.

The findings confirm the role of a teacher in influencing students' motivation (Dörnyei, 1994; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Williams & Burden, 1997) in the classrooms. On the one hand, participants' motivation fluctuated in various classroom activities, such as listening practice and CET-related practice. As mentioned in the part of Teacher's behaviour in motivation in Section 2.2, Dörnyei's (1994) L2 motivation framework regarded the teacher's teaching style as a motivational factor; and Csizér, Kormos and Sarkadi's (2010) research also found that the ways of a teacher's teaching could influence the students' attitudes toward language learning. The teacher's influences on students' in-class motivation could be reflected in the influences of various classroom activities on students' motivation, as it is the teacher who plans the classroom activities and the activities can be tinted with his or her style. The result, the impacts of various classroom activities on students' motivation, confirms the above findings of the theory and the empirical study.

On the other hand, this research found that the teacher's personality can influence student motivation. This result also confirms Dörnyei's (1994) L2 motivation framework (see Section 2.2, the part of Teacher's personality) and the result of Waninge et al.'s (2014) study, which found the strong effect of the teacher on student in-class motivation (see Section 2.2, the part of Teachers' behaviour in motivation). However, in contrast to the negative influences of teacher's personality finding in Dörnyei's (1998) and Sakai and Kikuchi's (2009) studies, the current research provides evidence of the positive influence of teacher's personality on students. The data clearly showed the power of the teacher's personality in motivating the students to learn, even if the students were originally not positive in learning English, they could be strongly motivated by their teacher's traits (see Section 4.2.3.2 and Section 5.2.6). "Earnestness" was a word which was frequently mentioned by the participants when talking about the impact of their teacher; this personality was so powerful that even the less-motivated students, such as MWU-MZB and MWI-SJQ, can be strongly motivated by their teacher's earnestness in teaching.

Apart from the above regular and common motivation factors, the interviews also showed that some unexpected events (see Section 4.2.5, Section 5.2.7) were able to influence student motivation. The influences of these events may last for a period of time, such as MWU-MZB's missing of CET registration, or may only have impact on student motivation in one lesson, such as the disturbances to FSI-LXJ by her deskmate. In addition, though the events mentioned by the participants in this study both had negative influences, it is still possible that unexpected events can have positive impacts on student motivation.

In summary, the students' motivation in College English classrooms can be strengthened or weakened by various factors or classroom activities, and these motivation factors can involve various L2 motivational theories or constructs. Some factors may be restricted in a certain context, such as passing CET. The influences of the same factors could differ from each other. In addition, the pressure and the anxiety that learners experienced in English learning could have both positive and negative impacts on their motivation.

### 6.3 Implications

The present study provides indepth understandings of the students' motivation during College English lessons from both static and dynamic perspectives. Although the research was conducted in College English classrooms, the findings can be also applied to other contexts of language learning. These findings have practical implications on motivating students during the language lessons, and on the teaching of College English course as well.

In order to motivate students during College English lessons, understandings of students' motivation orientations are necessary since each student has his or her features in English learning (see reports for each participant in Section 4.3). First, it is useful to investigate the students' motivation orientations at the very beginning of the College English course, though realising the types of motivation orientations cannot directly influence the students' motivation. The study indicates that the students could have various motivation orientations, and there are some differences in the motivation orientations between the students who are strongly interested in English learning and the students who are not very interested in English learning (see Section 4.1.2.1). Investigations of students' motivation directions can help the teacher understand the students' individual features of motivation and the differences between the two groups of students; with comprehensive understandings of students' motivation, the teacher could be more targeted in motivating students, making it is necessary to investigate the students' motivation orientations. Second, the interview data in the current study revealed some factors that have impacts on students' motivation, usually hiding behind students' attitudes toward classroom activities, such as the boredom and the pressure in dictation activities; in addition, the students' attitudes toward classroom activities can influence their motivation in the corresponding activities. It is therefore necessary for the teacher to explore students' evaluations of the English lessons so that the teacher can adjust the way of teaching based on the students' feedback, and further increase the students' in-class motivation levels. Thus, investigating the students' motivation orientations can be helpful in facilitating their English learning,

and it can possibly help teachers and students in other groups as well.

Interest in English learning can motivate students to learn and losing interest in English learning or the contents of the lessons is a major reason for student motivation decrease during the lessons. Clearly, making the lessons interesting can be an effective way to increase the students' in-class motivation. The findings in this research have shown several classroom activities which increased the participants' motivation levels in English learning by making the lessons more interesting; and it can be seen that it is not difficult to achieve this goal. College English teachers do not need to design complex activities during the lessons: the teachers can make the lessons more attractive to the students by simply adding some off-syllabus knowledge, or increasing opportunities of interactions between the teacher and the students.

Teacher training in motivation theories and strategies may improve the effect of classroom teaching through helping College English teachers learn how to motivate students. The data revealed that some influences of the motivation factors or the classroom activities could be optimized, such as the strong but short influence of Ideal L2 Self; the negative influences of some factors on student motivation could be prevented, such as the motivation decrease caused by lengthy listening practice. In other words, if the teacher can follow Dörnyei's (2009) suggestions of sustaining the influence of Ideal L2 Selves, the students could be strongly stimulated to learn English for a longer time, and if the teacher could pay attention to the length of the listening practice, the student motivation in the practice may not decrease. The above two kinds of influences on student motivation may be partially caused by the teacher's insensitivity to motivation theories; training in motivation theories for the teachers could help them get familiar with various motivation factors and strategies, thus, the teachers could become sensitive to the student in-class motivation and might be able to make appropriate decisions for dealing with the various motivation fluctuations, such as strengthening the students' ideal selves or reducing the lengthy listening practice. In addition, teacher training in motivation theories can be also applied to other groups of teachers. Therefore, training in motivation theories and strategies can help the teacher to deal with various situations about the students'

motivation in English learning during the lessons.

Furthermore, it could be helpful to reduce the size of a College English class in order to better motivate students during the lessons. The participants mentioned they expected more opportunities of interacting with the teacher (see Section 4.2.3.1.5) and practising speaking (see Section 4.2.3.1.7), and both the interactions and the oral English practice can increase the students' motivation in learning. But restricted by the length of a lesson, the teacher only can provide very limited opportunities for these activities, and the more students in a class, the fewer opportunities every student can have in a lesson. So, it is not practical to increase the opportunities of interactions only by the teacher, the class size can also influence the effects of the teacher's teaching or the students' experiences in the classroom; the results in this study provided empirical evidence of the impact of class sizes. As mentioned in Section 1.1, the number of the non-English major students in China is very large. No matter how big a class is, the whole class would not be divided into groups and all the students have to take the lessons all together. In other words, it is possible that about a hundred students are allocated to one teacher in one College English lesson. The participating class, which had about 40 students, can be seen as a medium-sized or even small class in China; but even in this small class, the teacher was still unable to provide sufficient opportunities for teacher-student interactions and practising speaking. It could be very difficult for the teacher to carry out activities with a large number of students in the classroom, and each student is likely to have fewer opportunities to take part in the activities compared to the students in a smaller class. Further, in a smaller class, classroom management can be easier for the teacher to complete. The data showed that a participant's in-class motivation in learning was decreased by the constant murmur of her deskmate; this motivation decrease could be avoided if the student's murmur could be stopped. But the teacher may not notice the murmur since she has many students to look after in the lesson. If the number of students in a classroom can be reduced, it could be much easier for the College English teachers to manage the whole classroom. In addition, in a smaller class, the teachers can observe the status of each student during the lesson, understanding the students' in-class motivation in

English learning; in other words, the teachers are able to pay more attention to the students' in-class motivation and then they could adjust their teaching to motivate the students. Therefore, considering the potential advantages of a small class in classroom teaching, reducing the sizes of College English classrooms could be a possible way of assisting the teachers to manage and motivate their students during the lessons.

Taken together, in order to motivate students in College English classrooms, it is necessary for the teachers to learn their students' motivation orientations and their attitudes toward in-class activities, and then to adjust their teaching and behaviour during the lessons; it is very helpful to motivate the students by arousing their interest and making the lessons interesting; it is also necessary for the teachers to learn motivation theories and strategies in order to deal with students' various motivation-relevant problems in learning; and reducing the class size may also help the teachers to strengthen their students' in class motivation via classroom activities and management.

#### **6.4 Contributions of the current study**

The current study has made some contributions to the field of L2 motivation research and the research of College English teaching in China.

First, the present study has contributed to the research on L2 motivational dynamics by exploring in-class activities and the teacher's behaviour. Previous studies (Gardner et al., 2004; Pawlak, 2012; Waninge et al., 2014; Chang, 2017, 2018; Yuan & Ji, 2017) investigated the motivation changes of L2 learners and attempted to find out the possible reasons for the corresponding changes, this study also explored the possible reasons for the variety in students' motivation, but it focused more on establishing links between the students' in-class motivation flexibility and the teacher's behaviour during the lessons and on how the teacher's behaviour influences the in-class students' motivation variety. In summary, the current research has provided information of the influence of the teacher's behaviour on students' in-class motivation flexibility.

Second, the study researched L2 motivation dynamics in a certain Chinese



context, College English classrooms. As mentioned in Section 1.1 and Section 2.2, the previous studies on L2 motivation changes were mainly conducted in European and American countries (Gardner et al., 2004; MacIntyre, 2012; Pawlak, 2012; Waninge et al., 2014), and although there have been a few studies, in China, (Chang, 2017 & 2018; Yuan & Ji, 2017) investigating students in-class motivation changes and exploring the flexibility of the English learning motivation of English major students, these studies all invited as participants students who majored in English (Chang, 2018) or in Business English (Yuan & Ji, 2017). In contrast with the above studies in China, this study has explored the in-class motivation dynamics of non-English major students, College English students, contributing to an understanding of the learners' motivational dynamics in College English classrooms. Further, the study has contributed a few suggestions for the pedagogy of College English courses based on its findings: making the lessons fun to arouse and maintain the students' motivation, creating and extending the effect of Ideal L2 self on students (see Section 5.2.1 and 5.2.2).

Third, the present study has also contributed to the methods of researching students' in-class motivation dynamics. The study made several attempts with different methods of researching L2 motivation dynamics (see Section 3.3 and Section 3.4), and has not only demonstrated that the combination of learning logs and interviews has the strength of exploring the possible causes of students' in-class motivation dynamics, but has also revealed several problems in using Motometers. On the one hand, the participants could record their in-class experiences relevant to their motivation flexibility via learning logs, and the interviews, which were conducted based on the learning logs, were able to dig deep into the information from the corresponding learning logs and to find out the causes of the participants' motivation variety. The combination of learning logs and interviews can provide deep understandings of the possible reasons for the students' in-class motivation dynamics. On the other hand, the current study also provided a few notes on using Motometers (see Section 6.1): in contrast with the successful applications in the studies of Gardner et al. (2004), Waninge et al., Yuan and Ji (2017) and Chang (2018), the unsuccessful

experience of using Motometers (see Section 3.3.1.4) in the current study shows that the use of Motometers with plenty of participants during one lesson needs supervision and that the duration of data collection may have an impact on the participants' activity in using Motometers (see Section 6.1).

In addition, the study has contributed to the pedagogy of College English courses in higher education in China. As highlighted in the Introduction and Literature review chapters, there have been only a few studies considering the students' motivation changes in L2 learning in China; this research has provided a further understanding about the motivational dynamics of Chinese learners, especially College English students.

## **6.5 Limitations of the research**

Although the present study has made some contributions in the field of L2 motivation, there are still limitations of the methods.

After the unsuccessful pilot study with Motometers, the main study adopted a case study design to investigate the dynamic motivation in English learning in College English classroom via learning logs and interviews. First, although the participants were required to write their learning logs after each lesson as soon as possible, they may still have forgotten or ignored some points of their motivation fluctuations during the lessons. So the changes found in this study could be merely just a part of the participants' in-class motivation changes.

Second, the current study involves a small number of participants because of the case study design, so the findings may be limited within the small sample. On the one hand, the data from the several participants cannot show the generalisability of the motivational dynamics of College English students. On the other hand, the sample was from one university located in the northwest of China, and the findings may be different in other regions of China. You and Dörnyei's (2016) study showed that the students from different regions of China could have different motivation orientations. Considering the regional differences, the findings of the present study may not be applicable to College English students in other regions of China. Therefore,

considering the possible influences of regions and participants' specialties, the findings of this study could be particular rather than universal.

Third, the findings of the current study mainly depend on qualitative data from the case study, which deeply explored the phenomenon and reasons about students' in-class motivation changes; in other words, the present study focuses more on in-depth understandings of motivation dynamics. As mentioned above, this study has fewer possible interpretations concerning the generalisability of the motivation changes of College English students.

## **6.6 Future directions for research**

The methods of researching motivation changes need more development. With the unsuccessful experience of using Motometers, future motivational studies might use Motometers taking notice of the limitations emerging from the present study. In addition, because of the limitations of the methods used to record the in-class motivation fluctuations, explorations on more effective ways of researching motivation dynamics are needed, especially in the aspects of obtaining real-time data and involving a large number of participants.

The present study has only explored students from one university in west China. Future research might be conducted in various regions of China in order to have a more comprehensive picture of students' motivation changes in College English lessons. The sample size of this research is very limited; more participants might be involved in future studies exploring College English motivation dynamics and it may be possible to find some certain modes of the motivation changes among College English students. In addition, the present study has only investigated the motivation changes of the first-year students, the in-class motivation fluctuations might be different with the second-year students: there may, for example, be more pressure and anxiety around passing CET or increasing impacts of future career prospects, making it perhaps necessary to investigate the second year College English students.

The finding of the positive influences of pressure and anxiety on students' motivation in English needs further explorations in order to find the exact reasons or

explanations. A study on the College English students' pressure and anxiety on their motivation may provide the reason why pressure and anxiety have positive effects on the students' English learning rather than negative influences. According to the conclusion about the interactions between the students' pressure and anxiety and their expectancy of passing CET in Section 5.2.4.2, future studies may also explore the correlation between the above factors with College English students, and research may be also conducted with other groups of language learners to explore whether the finding of this study can be applied to other learner groups.

## Appendices

### Appendix I

#### Revised Motometers in the first pilot study

Motivation dynamics in College English classroom 大学英语课堂中的学生动机变化

In this anonymous questionnaire, you will be asked to answer two questions every 10 minutes in the class. Thank you for your participation!						
本问卷为匿名问卷，在课堂中，你需要每隔若干分钟回答两个问题。感谢你的参与！						
Date (dd/mm/yy) 日期 (日/月/年) ____/____/2016						
Email address 电子邮件 _____						
Gender 性别: <input type="radio"/> Male 男 <input type="radio"/> Female 女						
<b>min 第__分钟</b> Please giving marks from 1 to 5. 请根据自身感受，从 1 至 5 中选择： 1= not at all 完全不喜欢； 2= not really 不太喜欢； 3= so-so 一般喜欢； 4= quite a lot 比较喜欢； 5= very much 非常喜欢						
		1	2	3	4	5
How much do you like the teacher's behaviour in the 10 minutes? 你喜欢老师在这十分钟里的行为表现吗？		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much do you enjoy the learning in the 10 minutes? 你喜欢在这十分钟里的学习吗？		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>min 第__分钟</b> Please giving marks from 1 to 5. 请根据自身感受，从 1 至 5 中选择： 1= not at all 完全不喜欢； 2= not really 不太喜欢； 3= so-so 一般喜欢； 4= quite a lot 比较喜欢； 5= very much 非常喜欢；						
		1	2	3	4	5
How much do you like the teacher's behaviour in the 10 minutes? 你喜欢老师在这十分钟里的行为表现吗？		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much do you enjoy the learning in the 10 minutes? 你喜欢在这十分钟里的学习吗？		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>min 第__分钟</b> Please giving marks from 1 to 5. 请根据自身感受，从 1 至 5 中选择： 1= not at all 完全不喜欢； 2= not really 不太喜欢； 3= so-so 一般喜欢； 4= quite a lot 比较喜欢； 5= very much 非常喜欢；						
		1	2	3	4	5
How much do you like the teacher's behaviour in the 10 minutes? 你喜欢老师在这十分钟里的行为表现吗？		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much do you enjoy the learning in the 10 minutes? 你喜欢在这十分钟里的学习吗？		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>min 第__分钟</b> Please giving marks from 1 to 5. 请根据自身感受，从 1 至 5 中选择：						

1= not at all 完全不喜欢; 2= not really 不太喜欢; 3= so-so 一般喜欢; 4= quite a lot 比较喜欢; 5= very much 非常喜欢 ;					
	1	2	3	4	5
How much do you like the teacher's behaviour in the 10 minutes? 你喜欢老师在这十分钟里的行为表现吗?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much do you enjoy the learning in the 10 minutes? 你喜欢在这十分钟里的学习吗?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>min __分钟</b> Please giving marks from 1 to 5. 请根据自身感受, 从 1 至 5 中选择 1= not at all 完全不喜欢; 2= not really 不太喜欢; 3= so-so 一般喜欢; 4= quite a lot 比较喜欢; 5= very much 非常喜欢 ;					
	1	2	3	4	5
How much do you like the teacher's behaviour in the 10 minutes? 你喜欢老师在这十分钟里的行为表现吗?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much do you enjoy the learning in the 10 minutes? 你喜欢在这十分钟里的学习吗?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>min __分钟</b> Please giving marks from 1 to 5. 请根据自身感受, 从 1 至 5 中选择 1= not at all 完全不喜欢; 2= not really 不太喜欢; 3= so-so 一般喜欢; 4= quite a lot 比较喜欢; 5= very much 非常喜欢 ;					
	1	2	3	4	5
How much do you like the teacher's behaviour in the 10 minutes? 你喜欢老师在这十分钟里的行为表现吗?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much do you enjoy the learning in the 10 minutes? 你喜欢在这十分钟里的学习吗?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>min __分钟</b> Please giving marks from 1 to 5. 请根据自身感受, 从 1 至 5 中选择 1= not at all 完全不喜欢; 2= not really 不太喜欢; 3= so-so 一般喜欢; 4= quite a lot 比较喜欢; 5= very much 非常喜欢 ;					
	1	2	3	4	5
How much do you like the teacher's behaviour in the 10 minutes? 你喜欢老师在这十分钟里的行为表现吗?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much do you enjoy the learning in the 10 minutes? 你喜欢在这十分钟里的学习吗?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>min __分钟</b> Please giving marks from 1 to 5. 请根据自身感受, 从 1 至 5 中选择 1= not at all 完全不喜欢; 2= not really 不太喜欢; 3= so-so 一般喜欢; 4= quite a lot 比较喜欢; 5= very much 非常喜欢 ;					
	1	2	3	4	5
How much do you like the teacher's behaviour in the 10 minutes? 你喜欢老师在这十分钟里的行为表现吗?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How much do you enjoy the learning in the 10 minutes? 你喜欢在这十分钟里的学习吗?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>min ____分钟</b> Please giving marks from 1 to 5. 请根据自身感受, 从 1 至 5 中选择 1= not at all 完全不喜欢; 2= not really 不太喜欢; 3= so-so 一般喜欢; 4= quite a lot 比较喜欢; 5= very much 非常喜欢 ;					
	1	2	3	4	5
How much do you like the teacher's behaviour in the 10 minutes?你喜欢老师在这十分钟里的行为表现吗?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much do you enjoy the learning in the 10 minutes?你喜欢在这十分钟里的学习吗?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>min ____分钟</b> Please giving marks from 1 to 5. 请根据自身感受, 从 1 至 5 中选择 1= not at all 完全不喜欢; 2= not really 不太喜欢; 3= so-so 一般喜欢; 4= quite a lot 比较喜欢; 5= very much 非常喜欢 ;					
	1	2	3	4	5
How much do you like the teacher's behaviour in the 10 minutes? 你喜欢老师在这十分钟里的行为表现吗?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much do you enjoy the learning in the 10 minutes? 你喜欢在这十分钟里的学习吗?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Appendix II

### Coding system for the classroom observation in the first pilot study

Group work	G	Writing	W
Pair work	Pw	Dictation	Dict
Speaking/oral practice	S	Role play	RoL
Reading	R	Vocabulary learning	VoL
Listening	L	Grammar learning	G
Computer task	C	Video	V
Participation in group/pairs	Pg	Instruction	I

Speaking: oral activities, conversation or discussion with other students

Reading: browsing the textbook or reading materials; listening to someone's reading

Listening: listening practice;

Writing: writing something as the teacher's requirement, a few sentences;

Dictation: words or sentences dictation

Vocabulary learning: learning the pronunciations and meanings of words;

Grammar learning: learning the grammar structure; analysing the grammar in sentences

Video: using video as a tool

Configuration	Mode	Skill	Activity	Technique
Whole class	Default	Speaking	Extensive reading	
Large group	Audio	Listening		
Small group	Video	Reading		
Pair		writing		

Default mode: teacher doesn't use any audio/video materials in the teaching.



## Appendix III

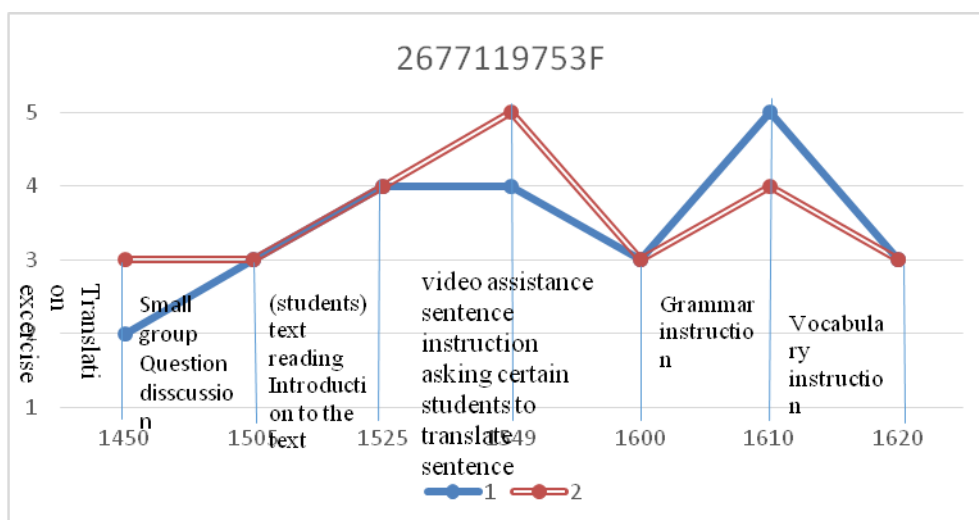
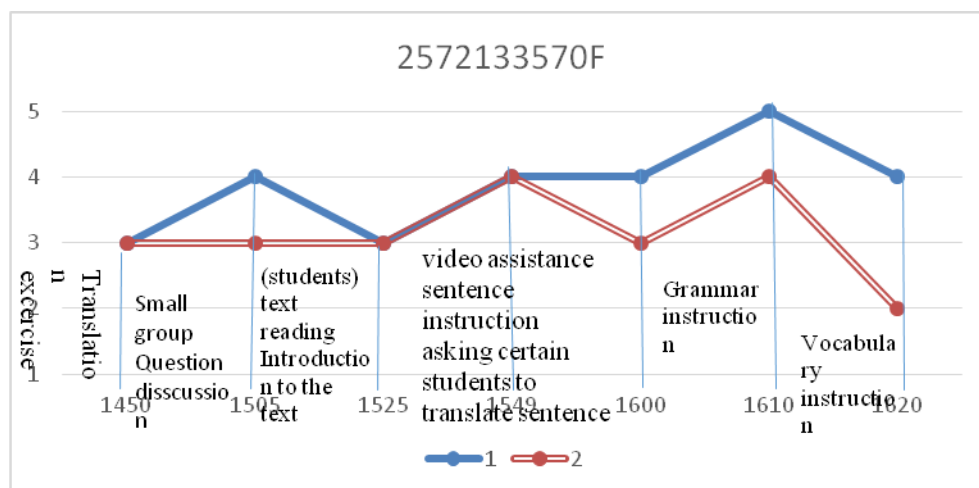
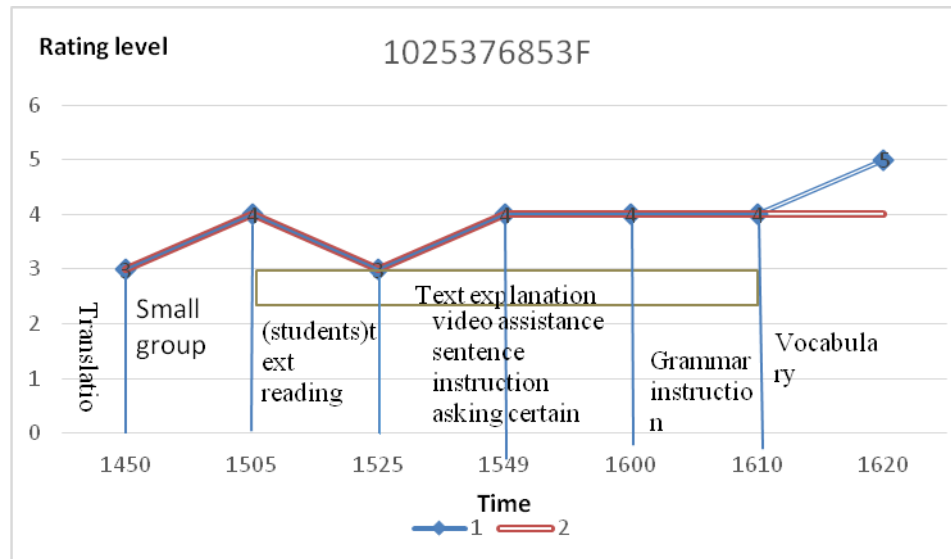
### Outline for (students) Focus group in the first pilot study

- Do you like College English course? 你喜欢大学英语课吗?
- Does the teacher have influences on your attitude toward the lessons? 老师会影响你对课程的看法吗?
- Do you think the teaching methods /classroom activities have effect on your motivation level? 你认为教学方法/课堂教学活动会影响你的动机水平吗?
- Is the personality of the teacher important? Do you think the teacher's personal quality/character has influence on your motivation of English learning? 老师的性格重要吗? 你认为老师的性格会影响你的英语学习动机吗?
- If so, how does the teacher influence your motivation? Can you provide a few examples? 如果你认为老师的性格会影响你的动机, 是如何影响的? 你能给出几个例子吗?
- Do you think the variety of teaching methods/ classroom activities could change your motivation level? 你认为教学方法/课堂教学活动的多样性会改变你的动机水平吗?
- Do you notice any factors that increase/decrease your motivation level in class? 在课堂中, 你有注意到任何提高或是降低你动机水平的影响因素吗?
- In order to motivate your English learning, can you give some suggestions/ideas on teacher's behaviour? 为了促进你的英语学习, 对于老师的行为, 你能给出一些建议或想法吗?

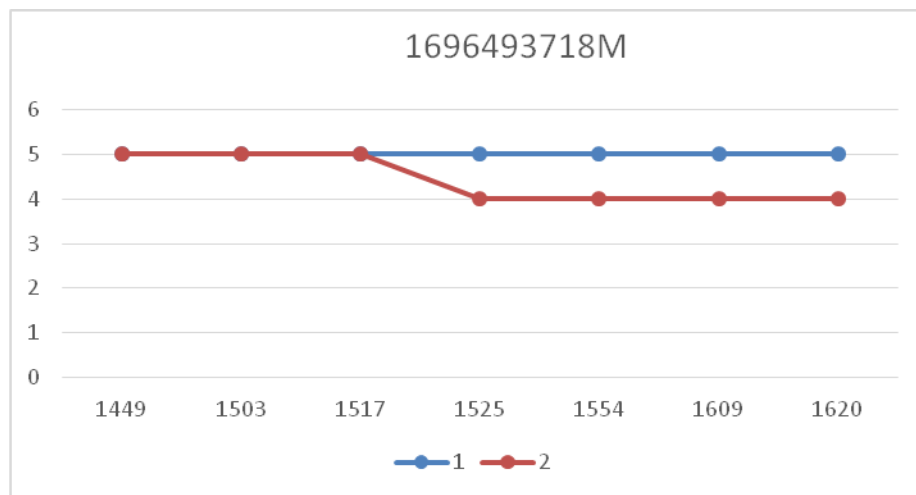
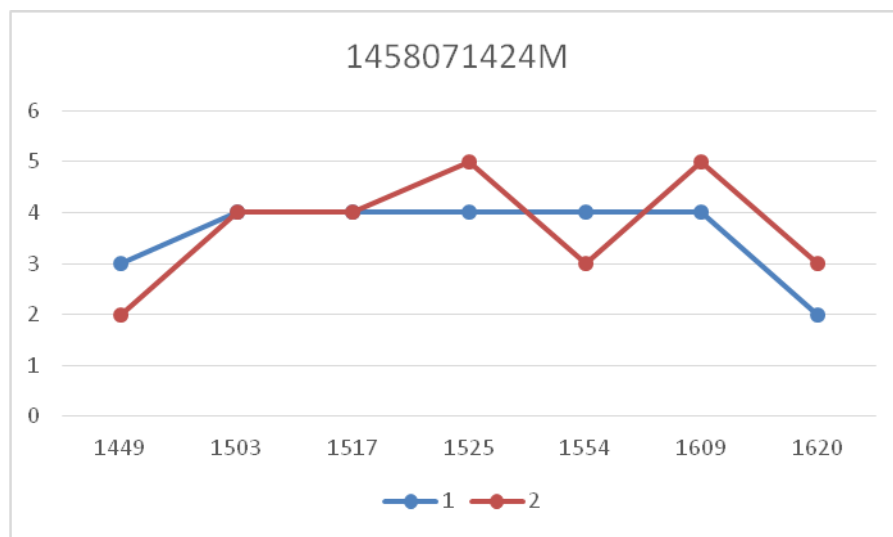
## Appendix IV

Examples of some students' motivation trajectories in the first pilot studies

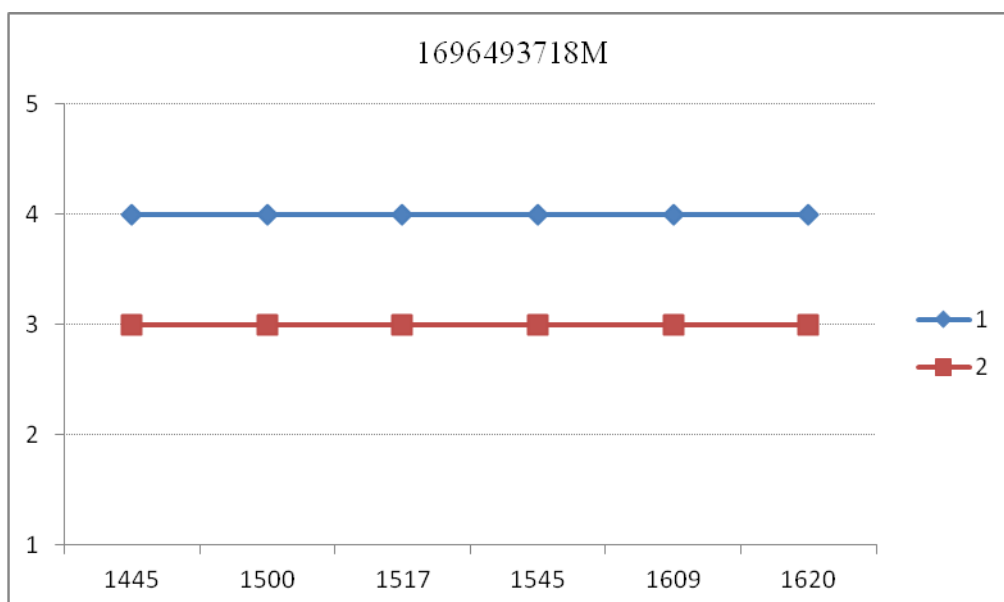
2016-10-11



2016-10-18



2016-10-25





## Information Page

### Motivational Dynamics of Chinese students in College English Classroom

Dear Students,

My name is Li Yanru, a PhD student of University of York. I am currently carrying out a research project to explore your motivation in English learning in the classroom. I am writing to ask if you are able to take part in the study.

#### **What would this mean for you?**

The research will be conducted in about four weeks. You and your classmates will be invited to answer a *questionnaire* about your motivation in English learning first; then based on your answers, some students will be invited to write learning *logs* at the end of four College English lessons. These selected students will also be *interviewed* based on their logs in each week, and the interviews will be recorded for further data analysis.

#### **Anonymity**

The data that you provide (the questionnaire, the logs and audio recordings of the interviews) will be stored by code number. Any information that identifies you will be stored separately from the data.

#### **Storing and using your data**

Data will be stored on a password protected computer. The data will be kept for three years after which time it will be destroyed. The data may be used for future analysis and shared for research or training purposes, but participants will not be identified individually. The data will be stored in identifiable format for about three months; if you do not want your data to be included in any information shared as a result of this research, please do not sign this consent form.

You are free to withdraw from the study at any time during data collection and up to 6 weeks after the data collection. You will be given the opportunity to comment on a written record of your interviews.

#### **Information about confidentiality**

The data that I collect (the questionnaire, the logs and the audio recordings of the interviews) will be used without any information relevant to your identity. Please indicate on the consent form attached with a ☒ if you are happy for this anonymised data to be used in the ways listed.

I hope that you will agree to take part. If you have any questions about the study that you would like to ask before giving consent or after the data collection, please feel free to contact me by email [yl2168@york.ac.uk](mailto:yl2168@york.ac.uk), or the Chair of Ethics Committee via email [education-research-administrator@york.ac.uk](mailto:education-research-administrator@york.ac.uk)

Please keep this information sheet for your own records. Thank you for taking the time to read this information.

Yours sincerely  
LI YANRU

**Motivational dynamics of Chinese students in College English classroom  
Consent Form**

**Please initial each box if you are happy to take part in this research.**

I confirm that I have read and understood the information given to me about the above named research project and I understand that this will involve me taking part as described above.

☐

I understand that the purpose of the research is to understand motivation in learning English.

☐

I understand that data will be stored securely on a password protected computer and only Li Yanru and her supervisor Dr. Paul Roberts will have access to any information related to my identity. I understand that data will be stored by use of a code. I understand that data will be stored separately from information related to my identity. I understand that data will be kept in identifiable format for three months.

☐

I understand that I will not be identified by my data and the data may be used ....

in publications that are mainly read by university academics

☐

in presentations that are mainly read by university academics

☐

in publications that are mainly read by the public

☐

in presentations that are mainly read by the public

☐

freely available online

☐

I understand that data will be kept for three years after which it will be destroyed

☐

I understand that data could be used for future analysis or other purposes

☐

I understand that I can withdraw my data at any point during data collection and up to 6 weeks after data is collected.

☐

I understand that I will be given the opportunity to comment on a written record of my responses.

☐

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix VI

### English Learner Questionnaire 英语学习者的问卷调查

This questionnaire aims at better understand the thoughts of English learner in China, and there are no "right" or "wrong" answers. Thank you very much for your help! 本问卷旨在调查中国英语学习者的想法，答案没有对错之分。非常感谢您的帮助！（本问卷所涉及的个人信息仅用于区分不同被试，问卷答案不会被透露给任课老师，请放心填写，感谢您的配合！）

In this part, please tell me how much you agree or disagree with the following statements by simply choosing a number from 1 to 6. Please do not leave out any items.

请根据以下的问题选择相应的数字代表同意或不同意的程度。

**1=Strongly disagree 强烈不同意**

**2=Disagree 不同意**

**3=Slightly disagree 基本不同意**

**4=Slightly agree 基本同意**

**5=Agree 同意**

**6=Strongly agree 强烈同意**

1. Learning English is important to me because I would like to travel internationally.

对我来说学习英语很重要是因为我想去国外旅游。

[单选题] \*

强烈不 同意	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	强烈同 意
-----------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	----------

2. My parents/family believe(s) that I must study English to be an educated person.

我家人认为要成为受教育良好的人，我必须学英语。 [单选题] \*

强烈不 同意	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	强烈同 意
-----------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	----------

3. I think that I am doing my best to learn English.

我觉得自己正尽全力学习英语。 [单选题] \*

强烈不 同意	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	强烈同 意
-----------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	----------

4. Studying English can be important to me because I think it will someday be useful in getting a good job.

对我来说学习英语很重要是因为对将来找好工作有帮助。 [单选题] \*

强烈不 同意	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	强烈同 意
-----------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	----------

5. I study English because close friends of mine think it is important.

我学习英语是由于我的好朋友认为英语重要。 [单选题] \*

强烈不 同意	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	强烈同 意
-----------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	----------

6. I can imagine myself living abroad and having a discussion in English.

我可以想象自己在国外生活并用英语和当地人交流。 [单选题] \*

强烈不 同意	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	强烈同 意
-----------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	----------

7. I have to study English because I don't want to get bad marks in it.

我不得不学习英语是因为不想考试分数低。 [单选题] \*

强烈不 同意	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	强烈同 意
-----------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	----------

8. Studying English is important to me because English proficiency is necessary for promotion in the future.

对我来说学习英语很重要是因为精通英语对我将来的提升是必不可少的。 [单选题] \*

强烈不 同意	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	强烈同 意
-----------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	----------

9. Studying English is important to me in order to bring honours to my family.

学习英语对我来说之所以重要是为了为我们的家庭争光。 [单选题] \*

强烈不 同意	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	强烈同 意
-----------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	----------

10. I consider learning English important because the people I respect think that I should do it.

我认为学习英语重要是由于我所尊敬的人认为我需要做它。 [单选题] \*

强烈不 同意	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	强烈同 意
-----------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	----------

11. I would like to spend lots of time studying English.

我想花大量时间学习英语。 [单选题] \*

强烈不 同意	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	强烈同 意
-----------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	----------

12. I imagine myself as someone who is able to speak English.

我可以想象我能说英语。 [单选题] \*

强烈不 同意	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	强烈同 意
-----------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	----------

13. Studying English can be important to me because I think I'll need it for further studies.

学习英语很重要是因为我今后的学习将要运用英语。 [单选题] \*

强烈不 同意	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	强烈同 意
-----------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	----------

14. Studying English can be important to me because I think I'll need it for further studies.

学习英语很重要是因为我今后的学习将要运用英语。 [单选题] \*

强烈不同意    ☐1        ☐2        ☐3        ☐4        ☐5        ☐6        强烈同意

15. Learning English is necessary because people surrounding me expect me to do so.

学习英语之所以必要是由于我周围的人希望我学。 [单选题] \*

强烈不同意    ☐1        ☐2        ☐3        ☐4        ☐5        ☐6        强烈同意

16. Studying English is important to me because without English I won't be able to travel a lot.

学习英语很重要是因为如果不会英语，我将不能经常去国外旅游。 [单选题] \*

强烈不同意    ☐1        ☐2        ☐3        ☐4        ☐5        ☐6        强烈同意

17. I must study English to avoid being punished by my parents/relatives.

我必须学习英语以免被父母或亲人责怪。 [单选题] \*

强烈不同意    ☐1        ☐2        ☐3        ☐4        ☐5        ☐6        强烈同意

18. Studying English is important because with a high level of English proficiency I will be able to make a lot of money.

学习英语之所以重要是因为精通英语可以帮我增加收入。 [单选题] \*

强烈不同意    ☐1        ☐2        ☐3        ☐4        ☐5        ☐6        强烈同意

19. I am prepared to expend a lot of effort in learning English.

我准备努力学习英语。 [单选题] \*

强烈不同意    ☐1        ☐2        ☐3        ☐4        ☐5        ☐6        强烈同意

20. Studying English is necessary for me because I don't want to get a poor score or a fail mark in English proficiency tests.

学习英语之所以必要是因为我不想成绩不好或不及格。 [单选题] \*

强烈不同意    ☐1        ☐2        ☐3        ☐4        ☐5        ☐6        强烈同意

21. Studying English is important to me in order to gain the approval of my peers/teachers/family/boss.

学习英语很重要完全是为了获得同学、老师、家人和老板对我的认可。 [单选题] \*

强烈不同意    ☐1        ☐2        ☐3        ☐4        ☐5        ☐6        强烈同意

22. The things I want to do in the future require me to use English.

我将来要做的事要求我使用英语。 [单选题] \*



强烈不同意      ☐1      ☐2      ☐3      ☐4      ☐5      ☐6      强烈同意

23. I can imagine myself speaking English as if I were a native speaker of English.

我可以想像我用英语像自己母语一样交流。 [单选题] \*

强烈不同意      ☐1      ☐2      ☐3      ☐4      ☐5      ☐6      强烈同意

24. Being successful in English is important to me so that I can please my parents/relatives.

英语学好了我的家人就会高兴。 [单选题] \*

强烈不同意      ☐1      ☐2      ☐3      ☐4      ☐5      ☐6      强烈同意

25. I would like to concentrate on studying English more than any other topic.

我想花大部分学习时间在英语课程上。 [单选题] \*

强烈不同意      ☐1      ☐2      ☐3      ☐4      ☐5      ☐6      强烈同意

26. I have to learn English because I don't want to fail the English course.

我得学习英文是因为我不想英语考试不及格。 [单选题] \*

强烈不同意      ☐1      ☐2      ☐3      ☐4      ☐5      ☐6      强烈同意

27. I think the cultural and artistic values of English are going at the expense of Chinese values.

我认为英语文化和艺术价值观正削弱我们的价值观。 [单选题] \*

强烈不同意      ☐1      ☐2      ☐3      ☐4      ☐5      ☐6      强烈同意

28. Studying English is important to me because it offers a new challenge in my life.

学习英语之所以重要是由于它给我的生活带来新的挑战。 [单选题] \*

强烈不同意      ☐1      ☐2      ☐3      ☐4      ☐5      ☐6      强烈同意

29. It will have a negative impact on my life if I don't learn English.

要是不学英语，我的生活就会受到负面的影响。 [单选题] \*

强烈不同意      ☐1      ☐2      ☐3      ☐4      ☐5      ☐6      强烈同意

30. Compared to my classmates, I think I study English relatively hard.

与我的同学相比，我认为我学习英语比较努力。 [单选题] \*

强烈不同意      ☐1      ☐2      ☐3      ☐4      ☐5      ☐6      强烈同意

31. I can imagine myself speaking English with international friends or colleagues.

我可以想象和国外朋友或同事用英语交流。 [单选题] \*

强烈不同意      ☐1      ☐2      ☐3      ☐4      ☐5      ☐6      强烈同意

32. My family put a lot of pressure on me to study English.

我的家人在学习英语上给我很多压力。 [单选题] \*

强烈不同意      ☐1      ☐2      ☐3      ☐4      ☐5      ☐6      强烈同意

33. Studying English is important to me in order to achieve a special goal (e.g., to get a degree or scholarship).

学习英语的重要性在于它能助我达到一个既定目标，比如获得文凭或奖学金。 [单选题] \*

强烈不同意      ☐1      ☐2      ☐3      ☐4      ☐5      ☐6      强烈同意

34. Studying English is important to me because an educated person is supposed to be able to speak English.

学习英语的重要性在于它是受过良好教育的标志。 [单选题] \*

强烈不同意      ☐1      ☐2      ☐3      ☐4      ☐5      ☐6      强烈同意

35. Studying English is important to me, because I would feel ashamed if I got bad grades in English.

学习英语对我来说重要是因为考的分太低，我会感到没面子。 [单选题] \*

强烈不同意      ☐1      ☐2      ☐3      ☐4      ☐5      ☐6      强烈同意

36. If an English course was offered in the future, I would like to take it.

要是以后开设英语课，我会学习该课程。 [单选题] \*

强烈不同意      ☐1      ☐2      ☐3      ☐4      ☐5      ☐6      强烈同意

37. Whenever I think of my future career, I imagine myself using English.

无论将来的职业是什么，我可以想象用英语交流。 [单选题] \*

强烈不同意      ☐1      ☐2      ☐3      ☐4      ☐5      ☐6      强烈同意

38. I study English because with English I can enjoy travelling abroad.

我学习英语是因为我可以享受国外旅行。 [单选题] \*

强烈不同意      ☐1      ☐2      ☐3      ☐4      ☐5      ☐6      强烈同意

同意

意

39. Studying English is important to me in order to attain a higher social respect.

学习英语重要是因为我可以获得社会的尊敬。 [单选题] \*

强烈不  
同意

☐1

☐2

☐3

☐4

☐5

☐6

强烈同  
意

40. Studying English is important to me because other people will respect me more if I have a knowledge of English.

学习英语的重要性在于要是我懂英语，其他人就会更加尊敬我。 [单选题] \*

强烈不  
同意

☐1

☐2

☐3

☐4

☐5

☐6

强烈同  
意

Please answer the following questions the same way you did before.

请按照以上方式完成下列问题。

**1=not at all** 根本不

**2=not so much** 不太

**3=so-so** 一般

**4=a little** 一点

**5=quite a lot** 相当

**6=very much** 非常

41. Do you like the atmosphere of your English classes?

你喜欢你上英语课时的气氛吗? [单选题] \*

根本不

☐1

☐2

☐3

☐4

☐5

☐6

非常

42. How tense would you get if a foreigner asked you for directions in English?

要是老外用英语向你问路，你会紧张吗? [单选题] \*

根本不

☐1

☐2

☐3

☐4

☐5

☐6

非常

43. Do you like the music of English-speaking countries (e.g., pop music)?

你喜欢英语国家的音乐吗? 比如流行音乐? [单选题] \*

根本不

☐1

☐2

☐3

☐4

☐5

☐6

非常

44. Do you like the people who live in English-speaking countries?

你喜欢生活在英语国家的人吗? [单选题] \*

根本不

☐1

☐2

☐3

☐4

☐5

☐6

非常

45. Do you find learning English really interesting?

您觉得学习英语真的有趣吗? [单选题] \*

根本不

☐1

☐2

☐3

☐4

☐5

☐6

非常

46. How uneasy would you feel speaking English with a native speaker?

与一个老外说英语你会感到有多不自在? [单选题] \*

根本不    ☐1            ☐2            ☐3            ☐4            ☐5            ☐6            非常

47. How important do you think learning English is in order to learn more about the culture and art of its speakers?

你认为学习英文对于了解英语国家的人的文化和艺术重要吗? [单选题] \*

根本不    ☐1            ☐2            ☐3            ☐4            ☐5            ☐6            非常

48. Do you like English films?

你喜欢英语电影吗? [单选题] \*

根本不    ☐1            ☐2            ☐3            ☐4            ☐5            ☐6            非常

49. Do you like English films?

你喜欢英语电影吗? [单选题] \*

根本不    ☐1            ☐2            ☐3            ☐4            ☐5            ☐6            非常

50. Do you like meeting people from English-speaking countries?

你喜欢和英语国家的人打交道吗? [单选题] \*

根本不    ☐1            ☐2            ☐3            ☐4            ☐5            ☐6            非常

51. Do you always look forward to English classes?

你总是期盼英语课吗? [单选题] \*

根本不    ☐1            ☐2            ☐3            ☐4            ☐5            ☐6            非常

52. How nervous and confused do you get when you are speaking in your English class?

你在英语课上说英语时感到紧张和不知所措吗? [单选题] \*

根本不    ☐1            ☐2            ☐3            ☐4            ☐5            ☐6            非常

53. How much do you like English?

你有多喜欢英语? [单选题] \*

根本不    ☐1            ☐2            ☐3            ☐4            ☐5            ☐6            非常

54. Do you like TV programmes made in English-speaking countries?

你喜欢英语国家拍摄的电视节目吗? [单选题] \*

根本不    ☐1            ☐2            ☐3            ☐4            ☐5            ☐6            非常

55. Do you like to travel to English-speaking countries?

你愿意到英语国家旅游吗? [单选题] \*

根本不    ☐1            ☐2            ☐3            ☐4            ☐5            ☐6            非常

56. Do you really enjoy learning English?

你真的喜欢学习英语吗? [单选题] \*

根本不    ☐1            ☐2            ☐3            ☐4            ☐5            ☐6            非常

57. How afraid are you of sounding stupid in English because of the mistakes you make?

说错英语的时候你会害怕出洋相吗? [单选题] \*

根本不    ☐1            ☐2            ☐3            ☐4            ☐5            ☐6            非常

58. Would you like to know more about people from English-speaking countries?

你想更多地了解英语国家的人吗? [单选题] \*

根本不    ☐1            ☐2            ☐3            ☐4            ☐5            ☐6            非常

Please provide the following personal information in order to help further research. 为帮助进一步研究, 请提供以下信息 (本问卷内容不会被透露给任课老师, 请放心填写, 感谢配合!)

59. 您的性别: [单选题] \*

☐Male 男    ☐Female  
                    女

60. Your Student ID 您的学生号: [填空题] \*

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61. Email Address 电子邮件: [填空题]

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62. Your age 您的年龄: [填空题] \*

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## Appendix VII

### An example of a learning log of LXJ on October 18, 2017

1. 喜欢的课堂活动:上课时老师在规定的时间内要求学生完成练习,一方面提高了我们对做题时间的掌控能力,另一方面也使我们更清楚的意识到自己哪方面的不足。  
不喜欢的课堂活动:老师为了推动教学进程而忽视了对学生的提问,从而导致后半节课的学习效率下降。

2. 感兴趣的内容:通过老师的讲解逐步增强词汇量,提取自己在写作方面的话题。  
不感兴趣的内容:每次都从前(单选填空)往后讲,后面的题(阅读)基本都没时间讲了,所以学生掌握的不好。

3. 喜欢:在课堂中途与同学聊聊日常生活,促进感情,有耐心,每天都带着好心情给同学们上课。

4. 不经常做但是我喜欢的:课前让同学们利用五分钟左右的时间用英语讲自己喜欢的事儿或者人物。

5. 我学习英语的兴趣:老师标准的发音,了解中外文化的差异以及从小对英语产生浓厚的兴趣,最后考虑到自己以后可能会在银行工作,所以学好英语对我以后的发展更重要。

6. 积极:因为自己从小英语成绩优异,所以在理解方面较强,相较于抽象的专业课而言,英语能给我更大的信心和学习动力,同时也促使自己一步步去学习英文歌曲,了解国外旅游景点和美食。

消极:太注重考试形式,使原本感兴趣的学科成为一种负担。

## **Appendix VIII**

### **An Example of a Transcribed Interview**

(T for the teacher, S for the students)

*Participant MWU-MZB*

*2017-10-18*

I: I will ask you questions based on your log, try your best to recall your feelings or thoughts during the lesson, OK?

MZB: Ok.

I: Well, let's start. You mentioned you like the interactions in the lesson, why?

MZB: I like the interactions between T and S since the interactions can give us more opportunities to communicate with T, and it can also make the atmosphere of the lesson active. In addition, some students in the back (of the classroom) don't want to listen to T. If T keeps talking without interacting with us, I think it's (the lesson) really humdrum. The interactions can activate the students' participation in activities and learning.

I: So you like the interactions since the interactions could make the lesson interesting, right?

MZB: Yes, the interactions between the teacher and students can attract students' attentions in the lessons. I think they are helpful during the lessons.

I: Hmmm, the links between the texts and real life, why do you like these links?

MZB: T always links real life to the texts we learn. I think in university, in the English lessons, it is good to add some knowledge other than English. We (students) will find it's (the lesson) interesting. Linking the contents in the textbook to real life makes English learning real, I think we can have better understandings (of the texts) as we are familiar with real life. It's helpful in both living and learning....I think, we are now at university stage, we should learn more things rather than focusing on textbooks.

I: Yeah, I see, you want to learn more as a university student....the activities you dislike, dictation and translation. Can you say more about these two activities?

MZB: Er, I don't like in-class words dictation and translation very much. My teacher is responsible and careful, we have dictations in every lesson and when she explains the texts, she translates it sentence by sentence. I don't mean it's not good to do so, I just feel it's not necessary... I know my teacher tries to check our vocabulary, but we (students) can complete

this part (vocabulary check) all by ourselves after class. It takes too much learning time when T arranges these (words dictation and translation) in lessons. During the lessons, students should learn more knowledge through T's guidance, checking our vocabulary is a waste of time. This teaching mode (in-class vocabulary test) , I think , is suitable for primary school and high school, but in university, students are able to study by themselves better, T should not plan these activities in class... as I said, I am interested in real life related contents, and non-textbook topics ....

I: I see, you feel the dictation is not very useful and it is also not very interesting.

MZB: Yes, it's quite boring.

I: You also wrote that you disliked listening practice as it was too humdrum.

MZB: Yeah, I have no interest in listening practice, it's boring. When T requires us to practice listening in class, she usually prepares many materials and a whole lesson (100 minutes with 10 minutes' rest) will be used to practice listening. But in fact, we usually cannot use many materials. Because if we keep listening, we cannot focus on the practice and we also don't want to continue listening.

I: A large quantity does not work well.

MZB: Yes, that's right.

I: You like your teacher telling more extracurricular knowledge.

MZB: yeah, as I said, university students should learn more, it's good to broaden our visions with various information.

I: But I saw your thoughts about CET. You like CET-related contents during the lesson.

MZB: I think, the priority of our learning is passing CET4. T should train us more on preparing the test, more exercises. The lesson should not, not be humdrum. I hope T can give more explanations on exercises about CET4, as CET4 is quite important for us, and we all hope we can pass the exam as soon as possible. Once we pass CET4, we can have more time to learn our major related knowledge... certainly, it's also necessary to introduce off-syllabus knowledge...I also hope the College English lessons can help me broaden my view and I can accumulate more extracurricular knowledge. ...

I: Ok, you want to pass CET and broaden your vision at the same time via College English lessons...I notice you wrote "the teacher is good" under the things that can promote your



learning.

MZB: Yes, my teacher is good.

I: Can you explain what does “good” mean? Does it refer to your teacher’s personality?

MZB: Hmm...”good” is good...I mean, the personality of T promotes my English learning. Because she is a good teacher, her personality is good; she is very serious with her job as a teacher. But her teaching mode is humdrum. She can combine different sections together. For example, she might add some activities other than listening practice in listening lessons as well, not just listening practice ...T is also very humorous and we can easily communicate with her. T can join in our talks and I don’t think there is a generation gap between T and us. I have a quite large quantity of vocabulary, so it’s not difficult for me to talk with T in English sometimes. I can have better interactions with T than those who have smaller vocabulary size, I feel confident in communication, and I am willing to continuing English learning. ...

I: I saw you wrote a very special thing that negatively influenced your motivation, missing the registration of the CET. Could you say more about it? Why it has a negative influence on your motivation?

MZB: I missed the registration for CET4 this year, this is really a negative influence on my English learning recently. As I feel like my effort for preparing the exam in the vacation is a waste... I think I can pass the exam. It’s also because there are only two chances to take the exam every year, which means six months are needed for preparing. It’s quite a long time, it’s too long. So missing the registration makes me frustrated. It makes me not willing to learn English for a period of time. I am really less-motivated.

I: Ok, I can truly feel your frustration according to your telling. You just start your university life, you have enough time to pass CET. A more important thing is that you are confident with it....OK, I have no more questions about your log in this week. Thank you for your cooperation.

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