Gender differences and the development of L2 English learners' L2 motivational self system and international posture in China

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GENDER DIFFERENCES AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF L2 ENGLISH LEARNERS' L2 MOTIVATIONAL SELF SYSTEM AND INTERNATIONAL POSTURE IN CHINA

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ABSTRACT

The study is based on Dörnyei's (2009a) L2 Motivational Self System and Yashima's (2009) International Posture (IP) with L2 English learners in China, and focuses on gender issues with regards to L2 motivation. A longitudinal research design with a mixed methods approach was used. The statistical analysis from the quantitative data of 240 participants (F = 178; M = 62) showed significant gender differences for ten motivational variables (*criterion measures, ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, instrumentality A(promotion), instrumentality B (prevention), travel orientation, attitude to learning English, integrativeness, cultural interest* and *attitudes to the L2 community*) within the L2 Motivational Self System and three variables within IP (*intergroup approach avoidance tendency*, *interest in international news* and *having things to communicate to the world*). Over a 12-month period, the repeated measure analysis revealed that female learners had more significant changes in motivational variables than male learners: eight variables for female learners (*ought-to L2 Self, family influence, instrumentality A, instrumentality B, integrativeness, attitudes to the L2 community, fear of assimilation* and *English anxiety)* and one variable for male learners (*English anxiety)*. Both female and male learners had significant decrease in two IP variables: *intergroup approach avoidance tendency* and *interest in international vocation/activities*. The interactive relationships, over the 12-month period, between *ideal L2 self* and *ought-to L2 self*, and between *ideal/ought-to L2 self* and other motivational/IP variables were also different between female and male learners.

Embedding the participants in their social values and L2 English learning contexts, we highlighted the influences of collectivism and social factors on the gender issues of the learners' L2 motivation. Within the L2 Motivational Self System, the social perception of gender bias in language learning and the dominant number of female L2 English learners positively affected female learners but negatively affected male learners' attitudes toward learning English. We argue that collectivistic social values enhanced female learners' *ideal L2 self* images and built a bond between the female learners' possible selves and their parents' hopes. Within IP, collective social values could prevent female learners from discussing contentious issues while the male learners' inherent interest in politics was also reflected in their L2 English learning.

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LIST OF GLOSSARY

ESL   =   English as a Second Language

EFL   =   English as a Foreign Language

FL   =   Foreign Language

L2   =   Second Language

SLA   =   Second Language Acquisition

TEM   =   (National) Test for English Major (Band 4 / Band 8)

WTC   =   Willingness to Communicate

Introduction

At her moment of success on 9 August 2012, Jade Jones, Britain's first Olympic taekwondo gold medal athlete, said: "It still doesn't feel real, it feels crazy. I've dreamt about this for ages"[1]. Like Jade, there must be many other athletes who have imagined their success some day and who work hard to realise their dream. The outstanding performances of female athletes at the 2012 summer Olympics demonstrate the increasing involvement and contribution of females in sport. The success of female champions, such as Jade Jones and Jessica Ennis, raised plenty of discussion about women in sport afterwards [2]. The BBC Breakfast correspondent, Sally Nugent, found that only 12% of 14-year-old girls do the recommended amount of physical activity and 45% of school girls say that sport is too competitive[3].

As new members of a mainstream social community, women apply different strategies in order to achieve a positive self-image, such as assimilation (comparing themselves with their peers), tokenism (comparing themselves with men), etc. (Coates, 1993). Achievement was not consistent with the female social gender role in the past, whereas today, successful women stand out in many fields worldwide. Associating the changes in the social settings of gender equality with the SLA research, will these advanced social changes be reflected in L2 learning? How do women develop their psychological characteristics in the social contexts of gender equality? The purposes of this study were to investigate, from a long-term perspective in modern China, whether there are gender differences regarding L2 English learners' motivation, how female and male learners develop their L2 selves and how their L2 selves interact with other motivational factors.

The study begins with a literature review, including the gender issues in L2 motivation and the theoretical background of the study. As the study was conducted with Chinese L2 English learners, the cultural background of gender issues and English teaching in

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[1]. http://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/0/olympics/18914952
[2]. http://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/0/sports-personality/20261924
[3]. The link on the coverage of 'How can we get more young women involved in sport? By Sally Nugent: http://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/0/20655668
The brief coverage of women in sport in BBC Breakfast: http://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/0/20662160

China will also be covered. It aims to provide general theoretical contexts which support the current research design and sets out the research questions in Chapter one. Chapter two introduces the methodologies of the research, starting with the research approach to gender studies and L2 motivational studies. It will also cover information on the participants and instruments which were used in the current research. The study on gender issues in an L2 Motivational Self System will be presented in Chapters Three and Four. Each chapter will start with a quantitative data analysis. Using subsidiary information from the qualitative data, a report on the results will be given for each motivational scale. Discussions will be developed separately in each chapter. Chapter Five will focus on the study of gender issues in International Posture (IP), including the gender differences for each IP scale and the changes of IP scales over long-term English learning. The whole study will end with a summary and conclusions, which will also discuss the limitations of the current research and advice for further research.

Chapter 1

Literature Review

This chapter consists of six sections, which will cover background knowledge and the theoretical principles which constructed the current research. Section 1.1 will introduce the gender studies in the field of SLA, mainly including research in the L2 motivational area. This section will present the findings from the existing studies and the relevant issues, including some studies based on diverse motivational theories, such as the social-educational theory (Gardner, 1979), expectancy-value theory (Eccles, Adler and Meece, 1984; Eccles and Wigfield, 1995), and the achievement goal theory (Dweck and Leggett, 1988). Sections 1.2 and 1.3 will introduce the major theoretical frames of the current study and the relevant research on gender issues, presenting the pertinence for applying these approaches to the current research. Section 1.4 will describe the relevant national policies and social changes on gender issues in China. Section 1.5 will introduce the social contexts of L2 English teaching in Chinese tertiary education and the relevant studies on Chinese L2 English learners. Section 1.6 will review the research method in the L2 motivational studies and gender studies. Finally, the research questions and the significance of the current study will be presented in Section 1.7.

1.1 Existing gender issues in the field of applied linguistics

The gender issue, as an important social category, has raised some attention in the field of applied linguistics. As the background information of the current study, the following section will present a general review of the relevant research in SLA in 1.1.1 and the existing findings of gender differences in L2 motivational research in 1.1.2 below.

1.1.1 Gender issues in SLA

Gender issues have been studied broadly in the field of SLA, such as performance in exams (Farhady, 1982), interactions among L2 learners (Gass and Varonis, 1986), L2 proficiency and capacity in listening vocabulary (Boyle, 1987), L2 acculturation (Tran,

1988), output and interlanguage modifications (Pica, Holliday, Lewis and Morgenthaler, 1989), learning strategies (Ehrman and Oxford, 1989; Green and Oxford, 1995; Oxford and Nyikos, 1989), age and rate of L2 learning (Slavoff and Johnson, 1995), speech rate (Dewaele, 1998), vocabulary (Scarcella and Zimmerman, 1998), computer assisted language learning (CALL) (Grace, 2000), reading strategies (Brantmeier, 2003), phonology and speaking style (Major, 2004), and the effect of the lecturers' gender on L2 learners' perception (Markham, 1988). Gordon (2008) provided a general review of gender issues in L2 socialization and discussed the effect of gender identity on the community of practices, such as access to education, the influence of gender on the opportunities for interaction in a variety of classroom settings and the influence of gender ideology on L2 learning. In addition, the studies have extended to various cultures too, such as L1 English participants (Gruber and Gaebelein, 1979; Tannen, 1990), L1 Vietnamese (Tran, 1988), L1 Japanese (Gass and Varonis, 1986), L1 Swedish (Henry, 2009), L1 Thai (Koul, Roy, Kaewkuekool and Ploisawaschai, 2009). The subjects in Markham's (1988) study were from 24[4] countries.

Gender differences in L2 learning have also extended into teaching approach. Larsen-Freeman (1985) suggested that gender, as an individual factor, should be considered when the language teachers are thinking about the input which the learners are likely to receive. Shehaden (1999) argued that ESL/EFL teachers need to take gender differences into consideration when they organize class activities in order to create equal opportunities for both males and females in classroom interactions. There have been some researches focused specifically on the single-sex foreign language learning / teaching environment. Language learners have been reported as having more interest in the class, more confidence in their ability and less anxiety in class without opposite gender classmates in the same class (Barton, 1998; Chambers, 2005; Cheng, Payne and Witherspoon, 1995). Kissau, Quach and Wang (2009) studied the impact of a single-sex instructor on American students' motivation of Spanish learning and the results revealed many differences between single-sex classes and coeducational classes. Students in single-sex classes were reported to be less anxious to communicate in Spanish and more focused on their studies without the opposite sex counterparts. Females, significantly,

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[4] South Korea, China, Japan, Puerto Rico, Pakistan, Italy; Brazil, Iran, Colombia, India, Argentina, France, Chile, Lebanon, El Salvador, Haiti, Venezuela, Laos, Cuba, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Poland, Yugoslavia, and West Germany.

[5] According to the report of *The World' Women 2010:Trends and Statistics*, women generally spent much more time doing housework, community and/or volunteer work than men do.

[6] As to the development and implementation of the one-child policy, a brief introduction can be found in

showed more interested in learning Spanish for communication and career-related benefits, and it was even reported that students taught by a male teacher were more positive than students taught by a female teacher. Barton (2002) investigated the potential achievement of single-sex modern foreign language classes with five mixed comprehensive schools in England, and the results confirmed that boys and girls in single-sex classes performed better in their GCSE exams than their counterparts in mixed-sex classes. Thus, the study of gender issues not only presents the differences between men and women in learning but also directly benefits modern language teaching and learning in practice.

1.1.2 Gender issues in L2 motivation

As reviewed above, gender differences have been explored in many SLA studies, teaching and assessment, but there have only been a few studies specifically addressing gender variation in L2 motivation research. "This is partly due to the factor that sample sizes often did not allow for confident gender-based generalization" (Dörnyei and Csizér, 2002: 427). In the following chronological review of the relevant studies, gender differences were included in the investigation although it was not regarded as a major research purpose. Hence, the review in this part is aimed at generalizing the current progress and findings of gender differences in L2 motivational studies.

➢ The findings in the links between gender and motivation

Lugwig (1983) investigated gender differences of the attitudes and expectations in foreign language learning. 609 university students participated in the research and they were taking courses in French ($N = 242$), German ($N = 116$) and Spanish ($N = 251$). The author developed a *Language Learner Profile* which examined the learners' attitudes and expectations to their foreign language learning. The questions included the reasons for foreign language learning, reasons for dropping any previous foreign language studies, reasons for liking/disliking the language, the goal of the foreign language learning, and learning techniques, etc. The questionnaire consisted of 17 questions using a multiple-choice method. The results firstly displayed that females were more positively oriented toward language study than males; females favoured German and Spanish two to one over males at intermediate and advanced levels, and favoured

French at every level of the course. Most of the female learners were freshmen and sophomores while the male learners were sophomores or more advanced. Secondly, females and males provided different reasons for learning a different foreign language; females took French because of being interested while males took French because of career usefulness; both females and males took Spanish for the reason of career usefulness. Likewise, females and males also had different reasons for stopping previous language courses. Females stopped French and German because of dissatisfaction with the teaching style, methods or personality conflict while males stopped French and German because of the poor course content. Both females and males agreed that they stopped Spanish because of poor grades. Finally, as to learning skills of the foreign languages, females were consistently disappointed with their speaking ability while males reported greater difficulties in understanding. The study confirmed the existence of gender differences in foreign language learning and also strongly suggested that gender differences vary in learning different foreign languages.

The same gender differences were not found in Koul et al. (2009), who investigated Thai college students' motivational goals for L2 English learning. The study was designed based on the achievement goal theory (Dweck and Leggett, 1988), which proposes that all achievement goals are based on a general orientation or purpose for achievement. The study examined the interrelationships of multiple goal orientations, including L2 learner characteristics, motivational goal orientations and L2 anxieties. The participants ($N = 1387$) of the study were from one vocational college ($N = 368$), which mainly provided diploma programs across all kinds of vocations, and two universities ($N = 860$) which provided undergraduate courses. The study used a quantitative method with a 5/6- point Likert scale. The questionnaire was developed based on Niemivirta's (1998) achievement goal theory, Clément, Dörnyei and Noels's (1994) study of Gardner's social-cultural theory and Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) and Aida (1994) for L2 English anxiety. The questionnaire consisted of six measures: *academic goal orientation*, *superiority goal orientation*, *socio-cultural goal orientation*, *perceived anxiety*, *perceived social support for learning* and *self-rated L2 English proficiency*. The results confirmed the significant interactions between *achievement goal orientations*, gender and institutional context. Instrumental goals in L2 English learning was the first motivating factor, followed by cultural goals, and females were significantly more academically oriented, more instrumental and less social-cultural

than males toward L2 English learning. Females also had significantly higher scores in *perceived social support for learning* and *self-rated L2 English proficiency* than males. Another finding was that *perceived anxiety* had significant correlations with other measures, and females indicated a significantly higher level of anxiety than males in L2 learning. The results also showed that participants from the vocational college had significantly different orientations for L2 English learning, compared to their counterparts in university. The study provided empirical evidence on gender differences in terms of L2 learning orientations and L2 anxieties in the Asian context.

Ludwig (1983) found that females took French because they were interested, whereas males took French because of career usefulness. In addition, both females and males took Spanish for the reason of career usefulness while Koul et al. (2009) found that females were significantly more academically oriented, more instrumental and less social-cultural than males toward L2 English learning. Based on the results of the two studies, could they suggest that females' language learning orientations are different depending on which language they learn? or could there be other reasons that would lead to such diverse results, such as the different L1 and cultural backgrounds of the participants, or the different study methods (multiple choice used in Ludwig (1983), the Likert scale used in Koul et al. (2009)?

➢ Different interpretations of the motivational variables

1. *Anxiety*

Kissau (2006a) is a gender-specific study in motivational research of foreign language learning. The study was conducted with Grade 9 school children in Canada. There were 490 participants (*F* = 254; *M* = 236) and the majority of these were 14 years old. A mixed method was used in the study – questionnaires using a 7-point Likert scale and follow-up interviews from eight students and six teachers. The study was designed based on the L2 motivation model proposed by Tremblay and Gardner (1995) and the instrument consisted of 18 variables, which were adapted from Gardner, Clément, Smythe and Smythe (1979), Harter (1981) and Tremblay and Gardner (1995), were associated with social and L2 classroom-related factors: *desire to learn French, integrative orientation, motivational intensity, goal frequency, self-efficacy and anxiety, peer and teacher encouragement, luck, perceptions of French, goal specificity, parental encouragement, curiosity, instrumental orientation, effort, challenge, context, tolerance*

of ambiguity, *French class anxiety* and *mastery*. The results showed that there were significant gender differences in most variables and girls had a higher score than boys except in the variables of *tolerance of ambiguity*, *French class anxiety*, *effort* and *luck*. The interviews provided supportive information for the findings of the quantitative data on *the effect of goal setting* and *societal perceptions of French*. The negative response from boys was attributed to their lack of L2 French learning goals for the future and their social perception that French, as a feminine subject, was more suitable for females. The gender differences were discussed in detail in terms of social perceptions of the French language and the discussion extended from the macro level into the micro level – from the social perspective into classroom related effects in Kissau (2006b). The qualitative data revealed that the fear of negative social appraisal could be another possible explanation for the boys' disinterest in French learning, which was consistent with Willam, Burden and Laners (2002). Combining *ideal self* in Csizér and Dörnyei (2005a), it was suggested that "one's ideal self is not only what one would like to become, but more to the point here, what one is afraid of becoming" (Kissau, 2006b: 85). Consequently, learning French well could bring them negative association from other male peers. The research suggests that both educators and learners should take into consideration the classroom related factors and social factors in L2 teaching/learning so as to improve the negative aspects in gender differences in L2 learning.

Although both Koul et al. (2009) and Kissau (2006a) were aimed at L2 learners' foreign language learning anxiety, they presented different explanations for the same variable: *anxiety* refers to the feelings of uneasiness and self-doubt in L2 learning in Kissau (2006a) while Koul et al. (2009) associated three considerations with the variable of *anxiety*: fear of failing the English class, fear of negative evaluation and English speech anxiety. This could result in the different findings on the same variable in their studies.

2. *Integrativeness*

Dörnyei and Clément (2001) was a comprehensive study that investigated the attitude/motivation toward the learning of foreign languages with school children aged from 13-14 in Hungary. There were several major purposes in the study: 1. learners' motivation and the similarities and differences related to different target languages; 2. variations resulting from gender and regions; and 3. motivational components in L2

learning, relating to language choice and learning efforts. This large-scale research examined learning motivation toward five target foreign languages (English, German, French, Italian and Russian) and involved 4765 primary school pupils across the whole country (2377 males; 2305 females; 83 with missing gender data). The study used a quantitative method with questionnaires, which consisted of three parts: 21 five-point Likert scale questions, 8 multiple choices and 8 open questions. The questionnaire was developed in Hungarian, administered and coded by teamwork. Firstly, it was found that Hungarian school children had homogeneous motivational disposition towards four foreign languages, except Russian. As Russian was part of the historical heritage of the communist era, it was regarded as a power related and cultural related image. Secondly, significant differences between boys and girls were shown in almost all seven motivational measurements concerned with the five target languages (*Direct contact with L2 speakers*; *Instrumentality*; *Integrativeness*; *Vitality of L2 community*; *Cultural interest*; *Indirect contact with L2 speakers* and *Linguistic self-confidenc*e). Girls generally had a higher score than boys on most motivational measures, except for German. Thirdly, the results revealed that *Integrativeness* was a predictor of the learners' language choice and could represent the learners' general attitudinal / motivational disposition. Finally, it was also shown that the geographic factor was another variable affecting learners' language attitude and motivation. The research provided a comprehensive result on the foreign language motivations of Hungarian school children.

The follow-up study by Dörnyei and Csizér (2002) provided more data supporting the previous findings and also compared the differences of pupils' motivation over six years. The results showed significant changes in motivational factors on German, French, Italian and Russian, but not on the four variables that were concerned with Russian in Dörnyei and Csizér (2002). Additionally, boys had a higher score than girls on the variable of *Vitality of the USA and Russia* in Dörnyei and Clément (2001). Boys presented the same tendency on the preference of German and Russian across the two studies and began to show a preference for English in Dörnyei and Csizér (2002). The results analyzed from the sociocultural perspective, suggested the relationship between social perception of a foreign language and foreign language learners' attitudes and motivation.

Dörnyei and Clément (2001) explained *Integrativeness* as learners' general positive

outlook on the L2 language and its culture while *Integrativeness* in Mori and Gobel (2006) was explained in term of three points: attitudes toward the target group, interest in foreign languages and travel orientation.

Mori and Gobel (2006) investigated EFL Japanese students' L2 motivation and gender differences by adapting two theories: the social-educational theory (Gardner, 1979) and expectancy-value theory, which was proposed by Eccles et al. (1984) and Eccles and Wigfield (1995). It was suggested that expectancy for success in a given task and the value for success in that task could lead to achievement. The participants were 409 second-year non-English major college students. The questionnaire consisted of 30 seven-point Likert scale questions and it was developed in Japanese. The collection of the questionnaires was administered three times within six weeks. Firstly, the result confirmed the four factors in the learners' L2 English motivation: *Integrativeness* (how much the students would like to travel or live abroad), I*ntrinsic Value* (how much the students enjoyed studying English), *Amotivation* (how much the students were lacking in motivation to learn English) and *Attainment value* (how much the students evaluated the importance of learning English). Secondly, the results showed that females had a significantly higher score than males in *Integrativeness,* implying that females had a higher level of intention to travel or live abroad. Thus, the researcher suggested the consideration of gender differences in the EFL classroom.

➢ The importance of social factors in L2 motivation

Kobayashi (2002) investigated Japanese L2 English students' attitudes towards English learning with 555 high school students (male = 242; female = 313). Nine scales were used in the study: *attitudes towards long-term English learning*, *interest in culture and communication*, *perceptions about studying English in a school context*, *images associated with English*, *English learning activities*, *four self-rated English skills*, *self-reported academic English grade*, *exposure to English outside school* and *identification of English role models*. The results showed that female students had a higher score than male learners for five scales: *images associated with English*, *English learning activities*, *attitudes towards long-term English learning*, *interest in culture and communication* and *perceptions about studying English in a school context*. The researcher discussed the results from several aspects: 1. English was socially regarded as a subject for women and women were encouraged to learn English so as to obtain

professional benefits; 2. The general tendency of uncritical thinking, due to stereotypical teaching/learning among the students, made the female learners follow others when choosing English as their major; and 3. As Japanese women have a marginalized status in Japanese mainstream society, they associated English with extremely positive images of freedom, equality, openness and individualism. Therefore, the study suggested that Japanese women's positive attitudes towards English were as a result of a composition of Japanese social and educational elements.

The importance of social factors in L2 motivation and L2 learning was also raised by Kozaki and Ross (2011), who investigated the influence of learning contexts on the individual differences in language learning with Japanese L2 English learners in Japan. Six variables relating to career aspiration factors and extrinsic motives were developed: APP (*aspiration to professional pursuit*), OSM (*orientation to the social mainstream*), ILO (*intrinsic L2 learning orientations*), ELO (*extrinsic L2 learning orientations*), Normative APP and Normative OSM (*normative refers to class averages of learners' estimations of their classmates' levels of* APP *and* OSM). L2 English proficiency and gender were also considered as variables. The study used a multilevel modeling approach based on a longitudinal design. The results firstly confirmed that gender was one of the significant factors leading to individual differences in L2 English proficiency growth. In addition, the growth of female learners' L2 proficiency regressed to that of their male counterparts, although they were more advanced than male learners at the initial stage of the study. Secondly, the growth of female learners' Normative OSM also regressed during the two years of L2 learning, which was not observed among the male learners. The researcher suggested that the regressive phenomenon among female learners could result from environmental factors, which constrained them because they were in the minority in classes. Thus, the class compositional effects and the influence of peers on individual learners' growth were also suggested to be further considered and examined.

Furthermore, Powell and Batters (1985) investigated the gender differences in pupils' perceptions of foreign language learning. With a survey of 953 pupils (M = 459, F = 494) in six mixed comprehensive schools in UK, the study explored the pupils' attitudes towards their first foreign language, French or German, through five measurements (*importance of the foreign languag*e, *ethnocentricity*, *self-image in the foreign language*, *attitudes towards writing in the foreign language* and *attitudes towards oral*

work in the foreign language), which was used by Morris (1978). The quantitative data showed that the girls' overall scores were significantly higher than the boys for all five measurements. A further analysis, based on the different contexts in the six comprehensive schools, showed that the common tendency was that girls rated the importance of the foreign language much higher than boys did and girls were more likely to choose language learning as their preferred subject when ranking all school subjects. The researchers highlighted the importance of peer group identity and indicated a possible conflict for the pupils between loyalty to their own gender stereotypical choice and their true feelings about their preferences, which could be opposite to their gender stereotype.

Summary

The review above showed that some attention has been paid to gender issues but that it has not become a mainstream variable in modern motivation research. It also exposed several differences in approach which produced difficulties in comparing results. The differences reflected two aspects: the link between gender and motivation was found in some studies but not in all; and different measures of motivational variables were used.

Ushioda (2006) investigated language motivation in Europe and highlighted the importance of social contexts for shaping language learners' motivation and identities. She presented the notion of 'person-in-context' in L2 motivation research (2009), arguing that it is necessary to understand L2 learners in their particular cultural and historical contexts. Dörnyei (2009b) also, theoretically, discussed the interplay between language learners and learning environment from a general perspective. The connection between the dynamic features of L2 motivation and the social environment was discussed as one of the potential research directions in further L2 motivational studies by Dörnyei and Ushioda (2009) and Ushioda and Dörnyei (2012). Thus, social environment, as a place where L2 learning takes place and the learners' motivation is embedded, has been regarded as an influential reservoir for L2 motivational research.

In general, associated with current research purposes, gender issues, as social categories, cannot be fully understood without their cultural background. The research of gender issues in L2 motivation is in the process of seeking an applicable approach and defining advisable motivational variables. In addition, gender issues need to be explored further with integrative motivational approaches. Therefore, the current study

presents a comprehensive research of gender differences in Chinese cultural contexts, based on two popular motivational theories, *L2 Motivational Self* by Dörnyei and his team (Dörnyei and Csizér, 2002; Dörnyei, 2005) and *International Posture* by Yashima and her associates (Yashima, 2002; Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide and Shimizu, 2004; Yashima and Zenuk-Nishide, 2008). The following sections will present the applicability of these two theories to the current study.

1.2 L2 Motivational Self System

L2 motivation research began with the study by Gardner and Lambert who, in 1959, investigated L2 French learners' linguistic aptitude and motivational factors with 75 high school students in Montreal. A battery of tests with fourteen variables was used in their study: *achievement ratings*, *aptitude battery* (*number learning*, *phonetic script*, *spelling clues*, *words in sentences* and *paired associates*), *same-opposites*, *verbal analogies*, *orientation index*, *attitude scale*, *motivational intensity scale*, *California F-scale*, *sex* and *audience sensitivity scale*. The intercorrelations among the variables were computed and two independent factors were found to be related to the learners' L2 French achievements: *linguistic aptitude* and *motivation*. Later research studies discovered the importance of *integrative* and *instrumental* factors and the relevant distinctions of these two factors were gradually considered (Anisfeld and Lambert, 1961; Gardner, 1968). Integrative orientation refers to the learners' interest in L2 learning due to their demands for meeting and communicating with members of the L2 community while instrumental orientation refers to the learners' interest in L2 learning due to utilitarian values (Gardner, Smythe and Burnet, 1977). With the development of the social-educational model (Gardner, 1979), it was suggested that the learners' beliefs in the L2 community and four individual difference variables (*intelligence*, *language aptitude*, *motivation* and *situational anxiety*) were equally important and the concept of integrative motive was emphasised in the later modification of the model by Gardner (1985). As a popular approach, the discussions were continued in later research, such as Gardner and MacIntyre (1993), and Masgoret and Gardner (2003), which distinguished between the L2 motivations of motivated and unmotivated learners, conducted correlation tests between L2 achievement and motivational factors, and clarified the measures of attitude towards the learning situation, including evaluation of the course,

the teacher, learning materials, the teaching environment and classmates.

There have been many other theoretical frameworks concerning motivation/attitude with L2 learning, such as the social psychological model (Lambert, 1978), the social context model (Clément, 1980), the intergroup model (Giles and Byrne, 1982), the macroscopic model (Landry and Allard, 1992) and the WTC model (MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei and Noels, 1998). One of the recently emerging approaches is the L2 Motivational Self System by Dörnyei and his team (Dörnyei and Csizér, 2002; Dörnyei, 2005). Three aspects were considered in building up the theory: considering motivation from the perspective of the learners themselves, broadening the concept of traditional integrativeness, and validating the key L2 motivational variables (Dörnyei, 2005). This approach was originally undertaken in Hungary. Seven motivational dimensions (*integrativeness*, *instrumentality*, *attitudes towards L2 speakers/community*, *vitality of L2 community*, *cultural interest*, *milieu* and *linguistic confidence*) were investigated with thousands of Hungarian pupils for five foreign languages and the distinction of *ideal L2 self* and *ought-to L2 self* within L2 Motivational Self System was also explicitly identified (Csizér and Dörnyei, 2005; 2005b; Dörnyei and Csizér, 2002). The later research was carried out on L2 English learners in Japan, China and Iran by Taguchi, Magid and Papi (2009), Korean L2 English learners by Kim (2009), learners in the French Foreign Legion by Lyons (2009), Indonesian L2 English learners by Lamb (2009) and L2 Chinese learners by Xie (2011). It was claimed that this approach could be used in diverse learning contexts, including foreign language learning situations and different socio-cultural contexts. Therefore, this approach created a series of integrated motivational scales, which can overcome cross-cultural boundaries for L2 motivational research. As the major research theoretical basis of the current study, the following section will start with an introduction of the theoretical background of the approach, followed by a review of the existing studies.

1.2.1 Theoretical background of L2 Motivational Self System

As the fundamental theories of the L2 Motivational Self System, a detailed review will be given to self-concept from Markus and Nurius (1986) and Higgins (1987) in the first place, the introduction of *Integrativeness* secondly and the formation of the L2 Motivational Self System in the final part.

➢ *Possible selves* and gender issues

The notion of *possible selves* was suggested to pertain to individuals' thinking about their potential and their future. It generally includes the successful self, the creative self, the rich self, the thin self, the loved self and the admired self, which provide an inherent connection between these self-concepts and motivation. *Possible self* has drawn attention in a diverse way for a long time, such as 'ideal self' from Horney (1950), 'central tendencies of the self' from Gergen (1972), 'potential social me' from James (1984), the connection between self and motivation by Gollwitzer and Wicklund (1985) and the link between 'the dream and the imagined possibilities of self' from Levinson (1986). With more empirical findings, self concept began to be characterized as a complex and dynamic feature, which include the good selves, the bad selves, the hoped-for selves, the feared selves, the not-me selves, the ideal selves and the ought to selves.

Gender differences in self-concept were also investigated in recent research and females were found to develop self-views on identity and commitment in more life domains than males (Harter, 1990). Segal, Demis, Wood and Smith (2001) examined 18- and 19-year-old adults' descriptions of their future life from their 21st birthday until their death and they found there were gender differences in the tendency in participants' predictions about their future. Women were more likely to predict their career choices, marriage, children, divorce and death of their spouse than men. In addition, women also demonstrated more psychological complexity and awareness of their future life role choices and conflicts than their male counterparts. Knox, Funk, Elliott and Bush (2000) explored gender differences within adolescents' possible selves and the results showed that female adolescents had a significantly higher level of global hoped-for possible selves and feared selves than male adolescents. Greene and DeBacker (2004) gave a general review of gender studies from five theoretical orientations: *achievement motivation, future time orientation, possible selves, expectancy-value*, and *social-cognitive*. The review highlighted the fact that women are more likely to pursue goals in multiple domains, based on the findings in Eccles (1987). Fiorentine (1988), and Thomassen and Halvari (1996) also suggested that there were gender differences in possible selves but, on the other hand, indicated that the gender differences of possible selves in the academic domain need to be explored more.

Lips (2004) conducted a cross-sectional research, investigating the current and possible

academic self-views of university and high school students and exploring the links between the components of the current and possible academic selves and how these components change between men and women when they progressed through their education based on two studies. Study one involved 738 undergraduates and the results showed significant gender differences in the current and possible academic selves; female students showed a significantly higher score for their current selves in *good at artistic work* and *working with others* while male students showed a significantly higher score for their current selves in *math / computing / good at debating /arguing*; female students had a significantly higher score for possible selves in *social / behavioural sciences* while male students had a significantly higher score for possible selves in *natural science / business / math*. Study two involved 713 university students and 447 high school students. The results showed that the tendency of gender differences in the current and possible selves were different: Firstly, the current selves: female students in both high school and university had significant higher score in *good at artistic work / writing / working with others*; male students' didn't show significant higher level in any component in high school but they showed significant higher score in *math / computing / good at numbers / science / debating / arguing* in university level. Secondly, possible selves: high school female students had significant higher score in *humanities/culture* and university female students had significant higher scores in *social / behavioural sciences / humanities / culture*; High school male students had a significantly higher score in *business /math* and university male students had a significantly higher score in *natural science / business / math*. The results indicated that students developed a wider domain for their possible selves at university than at high school, as well as confirming the gender differences in possible current and possible selves. It was also suggested that students intended to formulate their possible selves according to the social gender stereotype of certain academic domains with their current selves being closely related to their possible selves in the future.

In Lips (2007), the gender issues and possible self were extended from gender differences in academic choices towards career choices, highlighting the influence of socties' gendered expectations on the development of people's possible selves, such as segregating a career choice based on social stereotype. For example, females were less likely to have a future self-view of themselves working on math or science professionally, even though they were just as capable and talented in those areas.

However, women made up to 20 to 25 percent of engineering students in the universities of New Zealand because women had become represented in many untraditional areas, such as politicans, top management positions, governors in the legal system, etc. Although the phenomenon was different depending on the levels of the universities, the research sheds light on the importance of social factors in forming female possible selves. The researcher had a further disscussion in supporting the development of new possible selves: role model and education. Role models were suggested to be an effective factor in guiding female performances in math and developing self-images based on the study by Lockwood and Kunda (1997) and Marx and Roman (2002). Education can extend one's own sense of meaning and possibilities in the process of acquiring knowledge and information, which was also suggested by Merrill (1999).

Self-concept could also vary by degree over the changing of a person's affection, cognition and behaviour, and can even change dramatically depending on the social situation. In the cognitive approach, "self-schemas are constructed creatively and selectively from an individual's past experiences in a particular domain" (Markus and Nurius, 1986: 955). In other words, past experiences reflect an individual's concerns and efforts and will also have an influence on the formulation of the person's potential self in the future. In addition, possible selves are responsive to changes in the environment and are sensitive to the emergence of new or inconsistent information about self. On the other hand, self concept, as a part of the public domain, could remain the basic stable because of invariance in social feedback or the individual's need to maintain a consistent manner. When applying self-relevant ideas to cognitive therapies, it was found that the self concept could change from being positive at one point into a different feeling in the next hour in a different context (Markus and Nurius, 1986).

Furthermore, the incentive of possible selves in relation to a person's behaviour is another important perspective of *possible selves*. Markus and Nurius (1987) reviewed the research on connecting self-concept with behaviour and suggested that possible self could control and regulate an individual's behaviour when the situation was regarded as self-relevant. "Whenever the situation is of a type that allows for flexibility in individual construction and interpretation, people will use their possible selves as blueprints for action" (p. 160). This phenomenon triggered an investigation into the nature of self concept more explicitly and precisely. For example, Markus and Ruvolo

(1989) suggested that positive self thoughts may not lead to determined behaviour if they are accompanied by negative possibilities. Ruvolo and Markus (1992) did an empirical study on possible selves and task performance. The research consisted of three studies: Study 1 showed that people who imagined themselves being successful performed best on the task of persistence; Study 2 found that positive possible selves images of future success were more accessible to people than negative possible selves images of further failure; Study 3 combined the performance measures in Study 1 and the self-description measures in Study 2, and compared four groups of participants: the people in group 1 had successful future self images because of their hard work, people in group 2 had successful future self images because of their good luck, people in group 3 had failed future self images although they worked hard and people in group 4 had failed future self image because of bad luck. The four groups of participants were tested with an effort task and a persistence task and the results showed that the people in Group 1 performed outstandingly in both the effort task and the persistence task, far more than their counterparts in Group 3. Thus, the results suggested that people's self representation of future success is important in their motivation and task performance. Therefore, *possible selves*, as a complex nature in personalities, could be a source of individual differences and this is linked to motivation and changeability.

➢ Self concept

1. 'Ideal self' and 'Ought self'

Higgins (1987) analyzed self concept from three basic domains: the actual self, the ideal self and the ought-self. The actual self is the representation of someone that you actually are; the ideal self is the representation of someone that you would like to be, reflecting your hopes, aspirations or wishes; the ought-self is the representation of someone that you should or ought to be, reflecting your duty, obligations or responsibilities. The vivid depiction of the differences between the ideal self and the ought-self is the conflict between some women's wishes to be successful / professional and their duties to be housewives/full-time mothers.

Self concepts were suggested to be explicitly identified on two standpoints: the individual's own standpoint and others' standpoints, such as families, friends, etc. Higgins extended the discussion of the four types of selves and their motivational significance: ideal/own, ideal/other, ought/own and ought/other, associating these with

his self-discrepancy theory. Higgins' self-discrepancy theory proposed that the different discrepancies between self-concept and self-guide connected with different motivational predispositions, such as the discrepancy between actual/own and ideal/own, actual/own and ideal/other, etc. and that an individual person might possess one self-discrepancy, no self-discrepancy, or any combination of the self-discrepancies. In actual fact, the investigation into the motivating function of self-guidance can be traced back to James (1984) and the follow-up studies were extended into diverse theories: for example, the control theory by Miller, Galanter and Pribram (1960), the theory of objective self-awareness by Duval and Wicklund (1972), and the control theory approach to behaviour self-regulation by Carver and Scheier (1981). All these researches had common agreement on the motivational significance of self-concept toward an individual's self-directed standards and self-discrepancy theory, especially distinguishing between different types of approaches to different self concepts toward the desired self standards (Higgins, 1998).

Higgins and Tykocinski (1992) aimed to explore whether people who had different types of self discrepancies were sensitive to different types of psychological situations. Twenty-seven university students attended the research. They were regrouped into a predominant actual ideal/own group and a predominant actual ought/own group according to the results of the self questionnaire they had previously completed. During the research, the participants were asked to complete a mood questionnaire before and after performing a task. They were then asked to read an essay, which described 20 events in a person's life during four days. In the follow-up recall task, they were asked to recount the essay word by word. With the control of the participants' pre-essay mood and post-essay mood, the results confirmed the hypothesis that the subjects with predominant actual-ideal self performed better than those with predominant actual-ought self in the tasks of retelling the stories which reflected either the presence or the absence of positive outcomes. The subjects with predominant actual-ought-to self performed better than their counterparts in telling stories which reflected either the absence or the presence of negative outcomes. Thus, the study suggested that the discrepancies between actual/own self and ideal self signified the absence of positive outcomes while the discrepancies between actual/own self and ought self signified the presence of negative outcomes. In addition, it confirmed that an active ideal self guide was more related to positive outcome orientation while an active ought self guide was

more related to negative outcome orientation.

Moreover, Higgins, Roney, Crowe and Hymes (1994) investigated the different predilections between ideal self and ought self. Based on the discrepancy theory, it was suggested that people are motivated to maintain their actual self as close as possible to their desired self and are also motivated to keep their actual self as far away as possible to their undesired self. The researchers adopted questionnaires and a recall method in three studies. By collecting data about the subjects' ideal self, ought self, their behaviour tendency and some of their anecdotes, the results showed that the subjects intended to involve approach forms to the desired outcome when their ideal self was activated, e.g. "Because I wanted to be at school for the beginning of my 8:30 psychology class, which is usually excellent, I woke up early this morning". The subjects tended to involve avoidance forms to the mismatched desired outcome when their ought self was activated, e.g. "I wanted to take a class in photography at the community centre, so I didn't register for a class in Spanish that was scheduled at the same time". The study not only suggested that different types of self-guide involve different predilections but also confirmed the motivating function of ideal self and ought self.

In general, these studies commonly agree that ideal self is closely related to someone's wish, positive outcome and approaching form while ought self relates to duty, negative outcome and avoidance form. These common points were strengthened by the further discussion by Higgins (1996; 1998) who clarified the differences between ideal self and ought-to self by introducing the notions of promotion focus and prevention focus.

2. The link between *ideal self* and promotion focus & between *ought self* and prevention focus

Promotion focus refers to the attainment of accomplishments and the fulfilment of aspirations in life while prevention focus refers to the attainment of safety and the meeting of obligations in life. It was found that promotion focus was related to the ideal self and prevention focus was related to the ought self and both would "produce specific strategic inclinations for attaining the desired end-state" (1996: 1067). Promotion focus is inclined to approach the desired goal while prevention focus is inclined to protect the desired goal from any threats. Higgins (1998) provided a general view of the different variables which have distinct relations to promotion focus and prevention focus, as

shown in Fig. 1 below.

Fig.1 Psychological variables with distinct relations to promotion focus and prevention focus

NURTURANCE NEEDS

STRONG IDEALS

GAIN / NON-GAIN SITUATIONS

PROMOTION FOCUS

SENSITIVITY TO PRESENCE OR ABSENCE OF POSITIVE OUTCOMES

APPROACH AS STRATEGIC MEANS

INSURE HITS AND INSURE AGAINST ERRORS OF OMISSION

CHEERFULNESS / DEJECTION EMOTIONS

SECURITY NEEDS

STRONG OUGHTS

NON-LOSS / LOSS SITUATIONS

PREVENTION FOCUS

SENSITIVITY TO ABSENCE OR PRESENCE OF NEGATIVE OUTCOMES

AVOIDANCE AS STRATEGIC MEANS

INSURE CORRECT REJECTIONS AND INSURE AGAINST ERRORS OF COMMISSION

QUIESCENCE / AGITATION EMOTIONS

(Higgins, 1998: 17)

Gender issues relating to instrumentalities were also investigated with other theories. For example, Gjesme (1983) investigated the interaction effects of personality characteristics, including students' achievement motives, ability, FTO (future time orientation, which is used to measure people's perceptions of the future), gender and intrinsic instrumentality. The result showed that the achievement motives were positively related to the motivation to approach success and were negatively related to the motivation to avoid failure. Additionally, gender differences were also spotted; female students had higher motivation to avoid failure than boys. Greene and Debacker (2004) reviewed gender differences in the studies of FTO and generalized that female students were more motivated by perceived instrumentality than male students. Furthermore, promoting success and preventing failure were also investigated from a cross-cultural perspective by Lockwood and Sadler (2005). The study showed that people from collectivistic cultures had stronger prevention orientation and were more motivated by negative models than people from individualistic cultures, who were more motivated by a positive model.

Based on the self concept from a psychological perspective, Dörnyei (2005) believed that *possible selves*, as the most powerful, versatile and motivational self-mechanism, reflect the individuals' ideas on their *actual selves*, *ideal selves* and *feared selves*, and *possible selves* can provoke and direct intentional behaviour. Higgins (1987) argued that the self guides of *ideal self* and *ought self* are represented by an individual's motivation and desire to reduce the distance between *actual self* and *ideal/ought self*, and that some people may possess ought self-guides while others possess ideal self-guides. Dörnyei (2009a: 213) suggested that this "dynamic and forward-pointing" view of the concept explained how the individual's self is moved from the present toward the future, highlighting "the complex interplay of current and imaginative self-identities and its impact on purposive behaviour".

➢ *Integrativeness*

Integrativeness was applied in L2 motivation in the socio-educational model (Gardner and Lambert, 1959; Gardner, 1979). The classification of *integrativeness* refers to adapting oneself to the new L2 cultural community. Gardner (1985) added two more aspects into *integrativeness*: a positive attitude towards the L2 community and a desire to affiliate with members of the L2 community. The underlying idea is that L2 learning involves adopting oneself into the L2 language community and a learner's attitude towards the target language community will influence the learner's motivation. Thus, it was suggested that *integrativeness* was assessed by three measurements: attitudes towards the language group, interest in foreign languages and an integrative orientation to language study (Gardner and MacIntyre, 1993). *Integrative orientation* refers to those learners who indicate an interest in L2 learning in order to meet and communicate with members of the L2 community; *instrumental orientation* was defined as those learners who had practical reasons for L2 learning, such as getting a good job, without an interest in getting closer, socially, with the L2 community (Gardner, Smythe and Brunet, 1977). A learner's enjoyment and satisfaction in learning and using the L2 may also increase their interest in the L2 learning and will encourage them to apply more effort in the learning process (Gardner, 1985). These positive attitudes may come from the learner's experience in using the L2 in the classroom or in other situations where the learner has a chance to learn or to use the L2. Whilst reviewing the previous studies, it was found that *integrativeness* was studied as a motivational variable in many studies (Clément and Kruidenier, 1985; Gardner, 1985; MacIntyre et al. 1998). On the other

hand, there were a total of four measurements which were categorized and used as *integrativeness*: (1) attitude towards L2 community / L2 speakers; (2) interest in L2 (Gardner, 1985); (3) integrative orientation; (Clément and Kruidenier, 1985; Gardner, 1985); and (4) L2 learners' parents' attitudes to social environments: (Gardner, 1985; MacIntyre et al. 1998). These suggested that many empirical findings in L2 motivation did not always fit Gardner's original interpretation of *integrativeness,* and thus the ambiguous disposition toward *integrativeness* unavoidably led to the consequence that studies on *integrativeness* sometimes lacked consistency. In addition, with the emerging reorganization of world English identity in globalization, the English-speaking world now coincides with most developed countries and English has become the global language connecting all the people in the world. It was, therefore, shown that the traditional content of *integrativeness* failed to be identified as successful motivational variables in L2 motivation studies with the changes in the L2 English learning situation worldwide, such as the study in Taiwan (Warden and Lin, 2000), and in Hungary (Dörnyei and Csizér, 2002). The limitations and vagueness of traditional *integrativeness* led to a conceptual re-consideration and the development of new measures. The L2 Motivational Self System and International Posture shared the agreement on this point and proposed an international community for L2 English learning in the current globalization era.

➢ L2 Motivational Self System

Integrating L2 research with self concepts of psychology, the L2 Motivational Self System opened up a new approach for L2 motivation, promoting L2 learners' motivation "by means of increasing elaborateness and vividness of self-relevant imagery" in their L2 learning and associating both the ideal self and ought-to self with L2 learning (Dörnyei, 2005). The three elements in the L2 Motivational Self System are:

> *'Ideal L2 self', referring to the L2-specific facet of the one's 'ideal self' – if the person we would like to become speaks an L2, the Ideal L2 self is a powerful motivator to learn the particular language because we would like to reduce the discrepancy between our actual and ideal selves.*

> *'Ought-to L2 self', referring to the attributes that we believe we ought to possess to avoid possible negative outcomes – this motivational dimension may therefore bear little resemblance to our own desire or wishes.*

'L2 Learning Experience', which concerns executive motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience.

(Dörnyei, Csizér and Németh, 2006: 145)

Ideal L2 Self mainly reflects the learners' own perspectives of their L2 learning images in the future while *ought-to L2 self* reflects the standpoints of both the learners themselves and other people around the learners. Compared to the traditional classification of *integrativeness*, it is a broader view to understand *integrativeness* from the self perspective. The L2 community in the original concept becomes the closest parallel to the idealized L2 speaking self. The *ideal L2 self* could be seen as an imagined L2 community and this image is partly based on the learners' real life experiences and partly on the learners' imagination. In addition, on the basis of language globalization, L2 community culture is transformed into a global culture and the *ideal L2 self* is more suitable than traditional *integrativeness* to explain the recent research in L2 motivation (Dörnyei, 2005). Also, the L2 Motivational Self System didn't conflict with traditional concepts of integrative/instrumental orientation. The *ideal L2 self* can be interpreted not only as a cognitive representation of personal pleasure in L2 achievement (*integrative orientation*) but also as career success in L2 mastery (*instrumental orientation*). *Ought-to L2 self* is the same; it satisfies individual desire (*integrative orientation*) and fulfils duties, such as fear of failure on a test (*instrumental orientation*). The third element of the L2 Motivational Self System, *L2 learning experience*, is the reflection of the impacts of the L2 learning environment, including the teacher, the curriculum, the peer group, or the experience of success (Dörnyei, 2009a). Therefore, the L2 Motivational Self System provides a new comprehensive way to understand L2 motivation and does not contradict the traditional motivation conceptualization. It presents a broader theoretical structure and adds increased explanatory capacity in L2 motivation research.

Dörnyei (2005) imported the notions of promotion focus and prevention focus based on Higgins (1998) when introducing the L2 Motivational Self System. Integrating promotion focus and prevention focus into the L2 Motivational Self System, Taguchi et al. (2009) explained that promotional focus was related to ideal L2 self, which is associated with positive outcomes, such as goals, hopes and personal expectation in L2 success. Prevention focus was related to ought-to L2 self, which is associated with negative outcomes, such as duties, obligations or responsibilities in L2 learning. In the study of Taguchi et al. (2009), one of the objectives of their study was to examine the

existence of the two types of instrumentalities (*instrumentality A* (Promotion) and *instrumentality B* (Prevention)) so as to test how the instrumentalities related to each other and how they related to the ideal/ought-to L2 self. The study confirmed the correlation between *instrumentality A* (Promotion) and *instrumentality B* (Prevention) and between *ideal/ought-to L2 selves* and two instrumentalities with Chinese L2 learners. In addition, *instrumentality A* (Promotion) was more highly correlated with ideal L2 self than *instrumentality B* (Prevention) while *instrumentality B* (Prevention) was more highly correlated with ought-to L2 self than *instrumentality A* (Promotion). Thus, the study confirmed the existence of the two instrumentalities and the link between ideal L2 self and *instrumentality A* (Promotion) and between ought-to L2 self and *instrumentality B* (Prevention). The two instrumentalities, as two validated variables in the L2 Motivational Self System, were also applied in the current research. There will be more reviews on Taguchi et al. (2009) in a later section.

With such broad research on L2 motivation, the motivational variables have been an important part in each study, but the exact relationship between the important variables in the different studies has been displayed diversely. Based on the dataset of the large-scale study in Hungary, Dörnyei and his team (Dörnyei and Csizér, 2002) applied Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), a complex statistical procedure, and revealed a consistent relationship between the important variables (such as *integrativeness*, *instrumentality*, *attitudes toward L2 speakers / community*), and the learning behaviour measures (the learners' language choice preferences and the learners' intended learning efforts) (Dörnyei, 2005). Dörnyei et al. (2006) also validated the motivational variables as well as confirmed the correlations among the variables through the SEM model for five foreign languages. Later relevant studies, such as Kormos and Csizér (2008), also provided extra findings about the links between the variables, especially between *ideal/ought-to L2 self* and other motivational variables. The relationships can disclose the interplay among the variables as well as indicate the different working mechanisms of each motivational variable. As to the detail of the all variables in the L2 Motivational Self System, the study method chapter will provide a full interpretation.

1.2.2 Studies of L2 Motivational Self System

The above review indicates that the L2 Motivational Self System, as a recent approach

with a solid theoretical frame, has been used in many empirical studies. The following paragraphs will include one study on *L2 self* research with Chinese background, one study on the factors influencing pupils' L2 selves and the findings in current gender issues in *L2 ideal self*.

➤ Taguchi et al. (2009)

The study was conducted in three Asian countries (Japan, China and Iran) and explored *L2 Self* from an Asian context. The research objective was to replicate the Hungarian study in different cultural contexts and to determine the relationship between two key variables: *integrativeness* and *ideal L2 Self*. It also aimed to examine the existence of *promotion / prevention instrumentality* and the link between *promotion / prevention instrumentality* and *ideal/ought-to L2 self*. The final objective was to validate the three components of *L2 self* in an Asian context, determining the relationship between the attitudinal and motivational factors of the construct, particularly the relationship between *ideal L2 self*, *attitudes towards learning English* and the *criterion measures*.

Almost 5,000 participants took part in the research; 1586 in Japan, 1328 in China and 2029 in Iran. The participants were unequally recruited from middle school students, college students or working professionals in the three countries. Three versions of the questionnaire were used in the three countries, separately, and the main components of the questionnaire were from Dörnyei et al. (2006), which included *criterion measures*, *ideal L2 self*, *ought-to L2 self*, *family influence*, *promotion/prevention instrumentality*, *attitudes towards learning English*, *cultural interests*, *attitudes towards the L2 community* and *integrativeness*. The correlation tests proved that *integrativeness* was positively correlated with *Ideal L2 Self* for all participants of the three countries and *ideal /ought-to L2 self* correlated with *criterion measures*. The correlation between *ideal L2 self* and *criterion measures* was higher than the correlation between *integrativeness* and *criterion measures*, except for one sub-group in China (English major students). The result also revealed that *ideal L2 self* was positively correlated with both *promotion instrumentality* and *ought-to L2 self* in the three countries, but only negatively correlated with *prevention instrumentality* only in China. *Ought-to L2 self* was positively correlated with *promotion /prevention instrumentality* for all three countries and *promotion /prevention instrumentality* were also positively correlated with each other in the three countries too.

The results of the Structure Equation Modelling analysis displayed that all paths between the variables were significant, except for *promotion / prevention instrumentality* in the Iranian group, but that the strength of the relationship among the variables appeared inconsistent across the three cultures. The impact from *attitudes towards L2 culture / community on ideal L2 Self* was almost twice as large as from *promotion / prevention instrumentality* in Japan, whereas it was displayed as being roughly equal in China and Iran; *Attitudes towards learning English* was correlated to *criterion measures* in all three countries, but the link in China was much less than in Japan and Iran. The results suggested that Chinese students' enjoyment of English and their classroom experience played a less important role in their overall motivation than in Japanese and Iranian students because Chinese students were able to control their negative attitudes in order to achieve the required English proficiency and passing mark in any exams. Therefore, the study suggested the existence of cross-cultural differences in *L2 self* and successfully validated the L2 Motivational Self System in Asian cultural contexts.

➢ Lamb (2009)

The study investigated the changes and factors which were associated with the changes in Indonesian junior high school pupils' motivation to learn English as a foreign language. This was a case study, tracking the pupils' motivation over two years. The author pointed out that the study was not specifically targeted at investigating L2 Motivational Self System, but that this approach was to be used to interpret the data, combining two social theories: the situated learning theory of Lave and Wenger (1991) and the social theory of Bourdieu (1991). Situated learning theory covers three issues: learning as a fundamental social activity; knowledge obtained through the interaction with other people; and skills that are developed with practices in changing situations with different people. The place for social activity and interaction among foreign language learners could be interpreted as the foreign language classroom in a narrow view or foreign cultural contexts in a broad view. Social theory suggests three notions: *capital*, *field* and *habitus*. Children inherit different social, economic and cultural *capital* and act in a certain way with their own view to gain an understanding of the world (i.e. a *habitus*). The combination of *capital* and *habitus* in each individual produces certain *fields* of social activity (e.g. school), and successful practice within the *field* will shape the *habitus* and endow a different form of *capital*, which will contribute

to the reproduction of social classes in the future. As the author said, these two social theories overlap with the notion of 'imagined L2 community' and 'possible selves'.

The study results revealed two categories for the reasons why English is important: *personal aspiration*, such as enabling the pupils to play computer games and studying abroad, and *requirements*. Two Indonesian pupils, Dewi and Munandar, who exemplified two different stances towards learning English, were studied. Dewi was born in the US and her parents were university lecturers. She had four years' English learning experience when she attended the study. She gave the highest possible responses for the importance of English and expressed very positive attitudes towards English. Dewi's learning goals appeared to become more and more focused during the three interviews and she imagined herself as a global professional and a responsible Indonesian citizen feeling comfortable in international settings. Munander was born in a rural area and he hadn't learnt English before he entered his current school. His father worked in forestry and sent him to the current school, so Munandar lived with family relatives (grandmother, uncle, aunt and cousins). Munandar's ambition was vague and had no international element, compared to Dewi's. He consistently referred to learning English as a *need* and he expressed a strong sense of obligation to learning English, an *ought-to L2 self*, lacking the vision of an English-using self. Dewi and Munandar performed differently on the aspects of their interaction manner in the interviews, self-regulation of English learning and learning behavior in school. In the interview, Dewi interacted with the interviewer positively and generated the chance to speak in English, joking with the interviewer and asking questions actively. Meanwhile, Munandar appeared embarrassed by his association with the interviewer and all the interviews with Munandar were conducted in Indonesian. Even though Munandar said that he had some English competence in the second interview, he only used a simple expression once in the third interview. Dewi had multi-approaches in her English learning outside of the school, such as TV, radio and computer, while Munandar only attended an English tutoring course with a focus on exam preparation outside of the school. In the classes, Dewi performed actively, following the teacher's instruction and volunteering to answer questions, but she behaved in a reverse way, sitting at the back of the classroom and appearing disengaged in some class activities when she felt disappointment with the teacher or the class. However, Munandar, as a popular boy in the class, sat with his friends at the back or far side of the classroom, never volunteering to answer questions,

but he did his homework dutifully and responded to the teacher when the teacher directly addressed him.

The study provided several important findings: Firstly, there were the contextual influences shaping L2 selves; Secondly, all the differences between Dewi and Munandar could be representations of the learners' *Ideal L2 self* and *Ought-to L2 self*; Thirdly, the self-guide function of the *Ideal/Ought-to* L2 Self made the individual behave in a different way; and Fourthly, the result of Dewi also revealed that the learner, with clear *Ideal L2 self*, demonstrated different patterns of learning behaviour in English classes. This was the first study that discussed the relationship between L2 self and the action of L2 self-realization. At the same time, the study inspired other questions: could the learners' L2 proficiency be another factor interfering with their L2 motivation/*L2 selves*? Does the learners' other individual differences affect their performance in the interview or in their L2 learning, such as their gender?

➢ Findings of gender differences in *L2 ideal self*

Henry and Apelgren (2008) investigated Swedish girls' and boys' attitudes towards their L3 language learning, including Spanish, French, German or sign language, and compared this to their attitudes toward L2 English learning. 532 pupils (F = 245, M = 287) from grades 4, 5 and 6 took part in the study. The research used a quantitative method, a questionnaire with 23 items, which was designed based on Gardner's Attitude and Motivation Test Battery (1985) and the L2 Motivational Self System from Dörnyei and his associates (Dörnyei and Csizér, 2002; Dörnyei, 2005; Csizér and Dörnyei, 2005a). The nine motivational scales were *attitudes to FLs*, *attitude to the English learning situation*, *integrative orientation to English*, *instrumental orientation to English*, *English ideal L2 self*, *foreign languages' ideal L2 self*, *attitude to FLs learning situation in Grade 6*, *importance of multilingualism* and *desire to learn other languages in future*. As there were only 1 or 2 items in the following four scales (*attitude to the learning situation (English)*, *attitude to the learning situation (foreign Languages)*, *importance of multilingualism* and *desire to learn other languages in the future)*, the Cronbach Alpha values of these four scales were not calculated. The Cronbach Alpha values of the remaining five scales ranged from .729 to .806, except .559 for *integrative orientation (English)*. The results showed that girls had higher scores than boys in four measures: *attitudes to FLs*, *instrumental orientation to English*, *ideal L2 self* in both

English and *foreign languages*. The researcher suggested that girls probably have a stronger willingness to communicate so they related self-concept to L2 usage. In addition, the results showed that the pupils' *foreign languages ideal L2 self* was higher than English *ideal L2 self*, which was not reconciled with previous research. The researcher suggested that this could be a result of the new foreign language curriculum, which aroused more interest in the pupils than long-term learning L2 English.

As a follow-up study of Henry and Apelgren (2008), Henry (2009) investigated gender differences in the development of school pupils' L2 motivation with Swedish pupils (*N* = 169). The research was aimed at examining gender-specific trends in L2 motivation over a three-year learning period. The study used the same method as in Henry and Apelgren (2008). The data collections were administered twice for Grade 6 and Grade 9. Firstly, the results revealed that, during three years of L2 English learning, the girls' scores increased significantly in *integrativeness*, *ideal L2 self* and *attitude to the learning situation* and boys' scores decreased significantly in *instrumental orientation*. Secondly, as to the gender differences, there was no significant difference at Grade 6, but there were three significant differences shown at Grade 9; *integrativeness*, *ideal L2 self* and *attitude to the learning situation*. As to other foreign languages, the results revealed quite diverse tendencies either in the development over three-year learning or in gender differences, compared to the results of L2 English. With the findings in the research, it was confirmed that boys and girls developed different L2 motivation and attitude. *Ideal L2 self* was a good predictor for L2 learning. It was suggested that FL teachers needed to encourage the pupils, especially the boys, to imagine their future L2 selves during the teaching.

Summary

The findings on gender differences in *ideal L2 self* are very revealing. Although there were only 1 to 2 items in some scales and the Cronbach Alpha value on *integrative* is not satisfactory in Henry and Apelgren (2008) and Henry (2009), the finding of the gender difference tendency on *L2 ideal self* is valuable. At the same time, the inconsistencies showed that it is difficult to obtain a universal conclusion in explorations of gender issues so far. As reviewed above, gender issues, as a social category, cannot be explored without consideration of the social context and cultural variations. The micro learning environment (classroom, after-school learning activities),

effects from family members (parents, siblings, and other relatives), the learning context from macro social interfaces or effects from social interaction (beyond family members), as the L2 learning contexts, should all be considered in the research on gender differences. Dörnyei (2007: 722) said:

> *"The majority of the norms that govern our everyday life are not so explicitly formulated, and yet they are there, implicitly. Many of these implicit norms evolve spontaneously and unconsciously during the interactions of the group members, for example, by copying certain behaviours of some influential member or the leader. These behaviours then become solidified into norms, and these "unofficial" norms can actually be more powerful than their official counterparts."*

Therefore, the current study will aim to investigate gender differences based on L2 Motivational Self System, mainly focusing on the social cultural effects on the formation of psychological characteristics, enlarging the understanding of L2 Motivational Self System from the social perspective.

1.3 International Posture (hereafter IP)

With consideration of the current global L2 English learning environment, Yashima (2002) proposed IP, which is another popular model in recent L2 motivational research. Compared to the traditional concept of *integrativeness* in previous motivational theories, IP did not propose a specific target L2 language community, but set international settings as the target community for L2 English learning. Facing globalization, English has become a world language which is used to communicate in any cross-cultural environment. Studying with Japanese L2 English learners, Yashima (2000) found that the learners perceived English as the symbol of the world around Japan, such as Asian neighbours, rather than just as the American or British community, and that the learners also showed individual differences on the level of favourable attitudes toward the representation of English. Thus, IP was devised with several considerations from the learners' perspectives, "interest in foreign or international affairs, willingness to go overseas to stay or work, readiness to interact with intercultural partners, and, one hopes, openness or a non-ethnocentric attitude toward different cultures, among others." (Yashima, 2002: 57). The following paragraphs will introduce the development of IP in 1.3.1, the relevant research from recent years in 1.3.2, International news in China and the relevant gender issues in 1.3.3.

1.3.1 The evolution of IP

Associated with WTC, IP was improved in successive investigations with Japanese L2 English learners by Yashima and her associates (Yashima, 2000, 2002; Yashima et al. 2004; Yashima and Zenuk-Nishide, 2008). The study by Yashima (2002) investigated IP and WTC based on four variables: *intercultural friendship orientation in learning English*, *interest in international vocation/activities*, *interest in foreign affairs* and *intergroup approach avoidance tendency*. The results positively confirmed the correlation between the four variables and IP, between IP and WTC, and between IP and L2 learning motivation. The researcher argued that although English, as a knowledge-based school subject, was regarded the same as other school subjects, the learners were motivated by the needs for achievement and satisfaction in their learning, the learners' attitudes towards communication partners was still an important factor in L2 English learning.

Yashima et al. (2004) made further progress by extending the research of IP with Japanese L2 learners who were from different L2 learning contexts: foreign language learning context in Japan and target language context in America. Three variables of IP were examined in the study, *interest in international vocation/activities*, *interest in foreign affairs* and *intergroup approach avoidance tendency* and the results not only confirmed the findings of the previous study but also confirmed the positive correlation between IP and communication behaviours; the experiences of interpersonal L2 communication led to learners' having more interest in L2 intercultural communication and international affairs, which motivates learners to put more effort into L2 learning.

The same three variables were investigated again in the follow-up research by Yashima and Zenuk-Nishide (2008). This study explored the development of IP with L2 proficiency by comparing the learners who had a different amount of L2 English exposure. One hundred sixty five high school students were recruited -- 73 learners in Course A which emphasized exposure to authentic English and interactive instruction in classes; 85 learners in Course B emphasized grammar-translation in classes for university entrance exams; 16 out of 165 attended the study abroad program in different English speaking countries for 4 to 10 weeks. The research was a longitudinal study and the questionnaires were administered twice within three years' of learning. The results showed that the IP of learners studying abroad was significantly increased, but not the

learners staying at the home country. The learners in Course A with more native L2 exposure had a higher IP than their counterparts in Course B and the learners who had studied abroad had a higher IP than their counterparts who had studied in the home country. However, the learners who had studied abroad didn't show a significant difference to their classmates who had studied in the home country in Course A in the third year. Combining the results of the qualitative data, the study confirmed the positive effect of foreign learning contexts on the development of IP and also suggested that the learners' IP could also be positively developed as long as L2 learners were motivated to participate in the imagined international community, even if they studied in the home country. This finding paved the way for the further improvement of IP.

Yashima (2009) extended the research of IP by linking it to the self concept and investigated the relationship between IP and ideal L2 self. Whilst reviewing the links of L2 self and IP based on theoretical backgrounds, it was argued that IP could provide an international context for the learners' possible selves. For example, L2 learners could envisage themselves in an international setting, such as attending a conference. The research was conducted with 191 Japanese high school students and the results positively presented the correlation between IP and ideal self, which confirmed the argument with solid data. In addition, the construct of IP was also revised and four variables of IP with 20 question items were formulated; *intergroup approach avoidance tendency*, *interest in international vocation/activities*, *interest in foreign affairs* and *having things to communicate to the world*. The first two variables were aimed at the learners' attitudinal/behavior propensity and the latter two variables focused on the learners' knowledge orientation. Thus, Yashima (2009) not only consolidated the structure of IP but also inspired more research on the link between IP and the L2 Motivational Self System.

1.3.2 Other relevant studies of IP

As expected, IP has provoked more interest to some scholars with its improvement in recent years. This will not only create a new path in L2 motivational research but also allow more opportunities for IP to be applied in different L2 learning contexts.

Kormos and Csizér (2008) investigated age-related differences with Hungarian L2

English learners based on the L2 Motivational Self-System and IP. The researcher developed four statements for the variable of IP, focusing on inspecting the learners' attitudes to English as an international language; for example, *Studying English will help me to understand people from all over the world*. The participants were recruited from three age-groups of learners: secondary school pupils, university students and adult language learners. The results firstly confirmed that the main factors affecting students' L2 motivation were language learning attitudes and the ideal L2 self. Secondly, it was found that L2 culture affected secondary students' motivated behavior, whereas IP appeared as the important predictive variable for adult learners. Kormos, Kiddle and Csizér (2011) used the same questionnaire and investigated Spanish L2 English learners' motivation. Three groups of participants were recruited from a secondary school, university and language institute. The results showed the interaction of L2 learning goals, attitudes, self-related beliefs and parental encouragement in shaping motivated behavior, and revealed the age-related differences in the path of the interference among motivational factors. Additionally, the results also showed that learners regarded English as a lingua franca and the wish to use English in international communication had a strong direct relationship with students' future self-guides, which indicated the link between IP and ideal self.

Xie (2011) investigated L2 Chinese learners' motivation based on the L2 Motivational Self System and IP. 197 participants, who were L2 Chinese learners at beginner level, were recruited from six universities in the United States. They studied different majors in the university and they studied Chinese as an elective course. Some of them learned Chinese as a heritage language and some of them learned Chinese as a non-heritage language. The research applied a quantitative method and the instruments were modified based on the questionnaires of Taguchi et al. (2009) and Yashima (2009). Based on 20 items of the original IP questionnaire from Yashima (2009), Xie (2011) only adopted six statements from three variables, *interest in international vocation/activities*, *intergroup approach avoidance tendency* and *having things to communicate to the world* and regrouped the six statements into one IP variable. The results positively confirmed the correlation between motivational factors, which coincided with the finding in the previous studies by Taguchi et al. (2009) and Ryan (2009). Significant differences were also shown between the heritage and non-heritage language learners in six motivational variables, *motivational strength*, *ought-to L2 self*,

family influence, *cultural interest*, *prevention* and IP. For example, non-heritage language learners presented a higher level of IP than heritage language learners because heritage language learners who studied Chinese were mostly doing so due to family backgrounds. Xie (2011) successfully applied IP in non-English L2 language learning, which extended the understanding of the IP paradigm.

However, the study by Mystkowska-Wiertelak and Pietrzykowska (2011) presented a different view of IP in Polish learning contexts. The research investigated WTC and IP with 111 Polish 1st/2nd-year university students who were intermediate and upper-intermediate L2 English learners. The same questionnaires from Yashima (2009) and Ryan (2009) were used in the study. However, the results did not reflect the findings of previous studies and the correlation between IP and WTC was not significant. Through an examination of the correlations between the four variables and WTC, the significant relationship appeared only on the variable of *intergroup approach avoidance tendency* but not on other three variables. Based on the Polish local features, the researcher analysed the results from three aspects: Firstly, Polish students didn't have frequent opportunities to meet foreigners or engage in L2 English communication; Secondly, most of the participants' L2 English learning was largely driven by instrumental motives connected with their future careers; and thirdly, the response could probably be influenced by the participants' doubts about the researchers' intention in the question items on the fourth variable, *having things to communicate with the world*. Based on the findings, the researcher suggested further investigation on IP.

The concept of IP has attracted the attention of scholars, although there were sometimes differences in the design of the scales, such as Kormos and Csizér (2008). Ryan (2008) was another example, which mainly investigated ideal L2 self with Japanese L2 English learners, including the learners' IP. The researcher devised two variables based on the IP concept in Yashima (2002): *international contact* to assess the learners' desire to make contact with speakers of the target language and *international empathy* that examined the learners' perception of connection and friendship with speakers of the target language. The study not only confirmed the correlation between these two variables and WTC but also found gender differences in the adult learners' groups for both variables. Therefore, IP, as a recent motivational approach, is still in the early stages of exploration. The general recognition of IP in recent research and its popularity reflects its true value in L2 motivational research.

Summary

Existing research has successfully formulated the variable/question items of IP, depending on their study purposes and the subjects' features, and has validated the link between IP with L2 self/motivational factors/WTC. However, the inconsistency in the results suggests the necessity for further exploration of IP.

The study by Mystkowska-Wiertelak and Pietrzykowska (2011) is the only one which adopted the original IP variables in foreign language settings outside of Japan. Besides the possible reasons, which the researcher pointed out for IP's inapplicability, social context could be another important factor. Chen, Warden and Chang (2005) and Warden and Lin (2000) discussed the inapplicability and the lack of integrative motivation among Chinese L2 English learners under Chinese cultural influences in EFL settings and suggested the motivation constructs should be reconsidered within non-Western cultural settings. Vice versa, four variables of IP were developed based on Japanese cultural contexts and its inapplicability to European contexts can be understood in respect of the different social contexts. In addition, Mystkowska-Wiertelak and Pietrzykowska (2011) extended the research's emphasis to four variables of IP: *intergroup approach avoidance tendency*, *interest in international vocation / activities*, *interest in foreign affairs* and *having things to communicate to the world*. The results presented the different linkage levels between the four variables and WTC. This result indicated the importance of each individual variable of IP and inspired the future study to give equal attention to IP and the four variables because the four variables could present a different view of L2 learning.

There has been some comparative research that has studied L2 motivation between Chinese L2 English learners and Japanese L2 English learners (Matsukawa and Tachibana, 1996; Tachibana, Matsukawa and Zhong, 1996; Miyahara, Namot, Yamanaka, Murakami, Kinoshita and Yamamoto, 1997; Okihara, 1991). Matsukawa and Tachibana (1996) investigated junior high school students' motivation towards English learning between Japan and China. The results showed that Chinese students showed more interest in English learning and intended to exert more effort in order to attain better English proficiency than the Japanese students. The Chinese students were also found to be more instrumentally motivated in their English learning, such as career driven, because Chinese students generally regarded English as a requirement to

compete in the global marketplace, especially in international work places and civil companies. Furthermore, the results also indicated that, for Chinese students, the greatest motivational factors for English learning were 'to the wish to be highly regarded by friends and to the desire to be praised by parents and teachers. This finding shed light on the social influences of English learning on China. The follow-up study by Tachibana et al. (1996) extended the research to high school students and the results revealed that Chinese high school students presented similar motivational tendencies to the junior high school students in the research by Matsukawa and Tachibana (1996). The result also showed that female students presented the highest level of interest in English relevant topics in both Japan and China while male students presented their highest interest in the topics of science and math. In addition, Chinese female students showed more interest in English learning than male students.

Although Japan was regarded as more westernized and is one of the most technologically advanced welfare democracies in the world, China has the same oriental culture as Japan and both countries share similar social values and similar ideology in their educational system, such as the exam-oriented nature of education, and English learning as a compulsory subject in the entrance exams for tertiary education. Because of globalization, the importance of English has been more emphasized in China in the last decade (Matsukawa and Tachibana, 1996; Taguchi et al. 2009). The current study hopes to investigate IP based on Chinese L2 learning contexts, extending the understanding of IP outside the Japanese context in the new era of globalization. Because of the imbalance of male and female participants in previous studies, gender issues have not been investigated so far (Kormos et al., 2011; Mystkowska-Wiertelak and Pietrzykowska, 2011; Yashima and Zunuk-Nishide, 2008; Yashima et al., 2004). This study goes deeper so as to explore IP in terms of gender differences. Finally, the study also investigates the development of IP, examining the changes in the four variables of IP and the interactive relationship between L2 self and IP from a long-term L2 English learning perspective.

1.3.3 International news in China and the relevant gender issues

With globalization, international news has become increasingly important. It is a general tendency that people are keen to know what happens in the world and

international news has become the main path to gaining global information. "A source of knowledge about other countries can be expected to have a tremendous impact on how we comprehend the world and communicate with people of different nationalities" (Wu, 1998: 493). One of the IP scales examines the extent to which English learners are interested in the international news. Thus, the context of the international news in China will be one of the major pieces of background information for the current research. The following paragraphs will introduce the international news in China, the relevant gender issues in the attitudes toward the international news and other influential factors.

There are some similarities in the topics of the international news in all countries, such as political relationships between nations, domestic politics occurring in foreign countries, etc. (Haynes, 1984). Because of the criteria of the news professionals and the individual preferences to international news in each country, the selection of international news is also affected by many factors, such as traditional newsworthiness, sociocultural structure, national traits regarding international communication, economic development, cultural affinity, etc. Trade was the leading predictor of the international news in most countries, including the countries of the Asia-Pacific area (Wu, 1998; 2000). The Chinese news media has been criticised for being the organ of the government and for bias toward certain topics. Zhang and Zhu (2006) investigated the news covered in the mass media in China, including newspapers, TV and radio. It was found that the most frequent topics were internal politics, international policies, business/commerce/industry and the economy. Lin, Lo and Wang (2011) specially investigated news bias in TV foreign news coverage in Chinese societies, including Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. By examining five TV stations (CCTV) in Mainland China, the statistical analysis based on 215 international news coverage revealed that the top three countries covered in the news report were US, Japan and UK. The top three countries involved in the news stories were US, China and UK and the top three topics covered in the news stories were international politics, the economy and internal politics. The researchers suggested that the high proportion of coverage on international politics was consistent with the fact that "China news media are the instruments of the government and international news is an extension of its foreign policy" (p. 306).

Gender issues in international news can be understood from two perspectives: (1) News source: according to the latest report of the Global Media Monitoring Project

(Gallagher, 2010), based on the relevant mass media data of more than 100 countries worldwide, the statistics showed that female reporters only accounted for 28% to 37% of foreign affairs from 1995 to 2010 and 26% to 33% on the coverage of politics and government from 2000 to 2010. Lin et al. (2011) found that there were significant gender differences in the use of news sources in Mainland China. Female news sources only accounted for 8.6% while male news sources accounted for 91.4% of all news sources. The same gender differences also existed in Hong Kong and Taiwan. (2) Attitudes towards politics: as the news coverage of politics takes up the greater proportion of international news, gender issues in *attitudes toward politics* could be a determining factor in people's attitudes toward international news. Tong (2003) investigated the gender gap in political participation in China and found that women had significantly lower scores for media attention, political knowledge, interest in politics, internal and external efficacy, and non-electoral participation. With the flourishing of news on the Internet, Gao and Martin-Kratzer (2011) examined gender differences in Chinese journalists' blogs and found that male bloggers had more preferences toward hard topics, such as politics, government and military, and science and technology, while female bloggers tended to talk about lifestyle. As journalism was historically regarded as a male-dominated industry, men's interest defined news value and shaped the professional culture (Everback, 2006).

The same gender gap was also found in other cultural contexts. For example, Campbell and Winters (2008) studied the barriers to women's participation in politics and the detrimental effects on their political interests in the UK and it was found that men and women showed preferences toward different aspects of politics; women were more interested in public services while men were more interested in formal politics, foreign affairs and partisan politics (Campbell, 2012). This finding not only reminded the research to investigate the gender gap from a new angle based on the different aspects of politics but also coincided with the common observation that, globally[5], women spent much more time doing volunteer work than men. However, the gender differences in volunteer work were changeable depending on cultural differences, age and the kind of work (Wilson, 2000). For example, women were more likely to volunteer in education, in health/disability organisations or overseas aid/disaster relief while men were more

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[5] According to the report of *The World' Women 2010:Trends and Statistics*, women generally spent much more time doing housework, community and/or volunteer work than men do.

likely to volunteer in a sport or environmental organisation in the UK (Oesterle, Johnson and Mortimer, 2004; Rochester, Paine and Howlett, 2010). Boys and girls had a similar amount of volunteer work in high school (Johnson, Beebe, Mortimer and Snyder, 1998) while adult men and women had different paths for volunteering (Wilson and Musick, 1997). It was suggested that women regarded participation in volunteer work as a channel that allowed them to be involved in the community and wider society, cultivating social networks and attaining experience and personal growth in their life (Taniguchi, 2006; Wilson, 2000).

1.4 Gender issues in modern China

Gender issues are a long-term social problem in China. For centuries, it was believed that it was only the male who could maintain the family's kinship and it was only men who constituted the social order. This included passing down the family name to the offspring, passing the family assets to the male heir, married couples residing at the husband's home, etc. These social traditions had been followed rigidly for generations. Since the Chinese government was rebuilt in 1949, the ideology of gender equality began to be advocated. Although the traditional social values still exist, where women are subordinate to men socially and economically, the awareness of the general public on this issue has been improved. The principle of equality between men and women has been widely promoted and social and economic policies have also reflected more protection to women and children's basic rights. According to Cooke (2010), with the economic transformation that began in the late 1970s, women began to enter different occupations, such as public services, management posts and positions in political leadership. Women are now considered to be present in all industrial sectors and over-represented in the fields of education, health care and services, etc. In the following sections, gender issues in modern China will be reviewed from three perspectives: the ideology of gender equality, attaching importance to gender studies, and females in education.

1.4.1 Ideology of gender equality -- The one-child policy and changes in female social roles

When people mention the ideology of gender equality, it is impossible to avoid talking about the one-child policy. From the plan to reduce the Chinese population, the Chinese government has implemented a one-child policy across China since the end of the 1970s[6]. One of the main themes of the policy is gender equality. Even today, the relevant slogans are presented in maternity and children's hospitals and on community notice boards. Although the policy has led to many potential detrimental social problems, such as jeopardizing old-age security and female infanticide (Davin, 1985; Davis-Friedmann, 1985), it has benefited females and has helped the realization of social gender equality in many aspects, such as uxorilocal[7] marriage, decomposition of the patrilineal system, and more career opportunities for females (Hong, 1987; Song, 1981). Females are now able to act as an independent social entity, being entitled to make decisions for themselves, choose the life they like and develop their career as they hope.

With the implementation of the one-child policy, the traditional big family system has changed into a core family or nuclear family (two parents and one child) (Settles and Sheng, 2002). With the existence of traditional Chinese culture and family values, parents and grandparents have the responsibilities and obligations to raise their children and grandchildren and these, in turn, have the responsibilities and obligations to support their parents when they are older, although the majority of urbanites are entitled to a pension or some form of welfare payment to support elders. However, because the single child will be the only person responsible for the support and care of elders, 77% of the interviewed primary and secondary pupils claimed that they studied because they needed to repay their parents (Li and Li, 2010; Tsui and Rich, 2002). Yu, Yu and Mansfield (1990) studied the changes in the male and female role in support of aged parents. The research found that taking care of elderly parents was not just the sons' duty; both men and women now provided financial support to their parents and marriage was not a symbolic boundary to the relationship between daughters and their

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[6] As to the development and implementation of the one-child policy, a brief introduction can be found in Settles and Sheng (2002).
"We will try to attain the goal that 95 percent of married couples in cities and 90 percent in the countryside will have only one child in due course, so that the total population of China will be controlled at about 1.2 billion by the end of the century". -- Vice-premier Chen M Uhua, Peoples' Daily, February 14, 1980 (cited in Hong, 1987)

[7] Uxorilocal marriage refers to when the groom moves to the bride's household after the marriage. Because of son-preference and patrilineal norms in China (family kinship only descends through the male line), uxorilocal marriage is not a common marital form in China (uxorilocal marriage only accounted for 2 percent between 1955-85 in China) (Li, Feldman and Li, 2001; Skinner, 1997).

parents. Zhang (2009) found that women were now free to maintain the supportive relationship with their parents after marriage and the ties between parents and daughters' were strengthened because of the one-child policy. The old thinking on patrilineal kinship had also changed because low fertility and bilateral kinship is now recognized as boys and girls share equal social values.

1.4.2 Social attention on gender studies -- national policies on females' benefits and social movement

Gender equality was regarded as an important social question in the early twentieth century in China and social movements developed at that time (Gupta, Jiang, Li, Xie, Chung and Hwa-Ok, 2003). Since the new Chinese government was introduced in 1949, special attention has been paid to gender equality and women' s legal rights, which can be reflected in the national law and regulations, including marriage (*Marriage Laws of the People's Republic of China*, 1950, 1981, 2006 revised); education (*Compulsory Education Law of the People's Republic of China*, 1986); employment (*Stipulation of Labour of Woman Staff*, 1988); social welfare (*Constitution of the People's Republic of China*, 1982; *Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Rights and Interests of Women*, 1992, 2005 revised), and property and economic interests (*Law of Succession of the People's Republic of China*, 1985)[8]. As the best tool to disseminate information about gender equality and the recognition of female social values, a mass

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[8] Items in the relevant laws and regulations (Li, 2007)
Compulsory Education Law of the People's Republic of China (1986):
Article 9: All citizens are entitled to have equal opportunities to receive education, regardless of nation, race and sex.
Marriage Laws of the People's Republic of China (1950, 1981, 2006 revised):
Article 2. A marriage system based on the free choice of partners, on monogamy and on equality between man and woman, shall be applied. The lawful rights and interests of women, children and old people shall be protected. Family planning shall be practiced.
Stipulation of Labour of Woman Staff, 1988:
Article 3. With the exception of the special types of work or posts unsuitable to women, no unit may, in employing staff and workers, refuse to employ women by reason of sex.
Constitution of the People's Republic of China (1982)
Article 49. Marriage, the family and mother and child are protected by the state.
Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Rights and Interests of Women (1992, 2005 revised):
Article 2. The country shall take necessary measures to gradually perfect its systems that safeguard women's rights and interests, and to eliminate all discrimination against women. Discrimination against, maltreatment of, abandonment of, or cruel treatment in any manner causing injury or death of women shall be prohibited.
Law of Succession of the People's Republic of China (1985):
Article 9. Males and females are equal in their right to inheritance.

media report on China's imbalanced SRB[9] and female child mortality in rural China, projected images of women who are capable of taking charge of their lives at home and at work, portrayed modern women with virtue in soap operas, and gave more emotional emphasis to the relationship between daughter and parents (Gupta, Jiang et al., 2003; Li, 2007). The publications on gender and females have also flourished and cover a wide range of themes, such as women's organizations and the relevant research (Croll, 2001; Milwertz, 2002), women in history (Wang, 2003), projecting an image of woman in religion (Dudbridge, 2004), current Chinese gender research (Leutner, 2005; Lin, 2003), and academic journals like *Nan Nü: Men, Women and Gender in China*, etc.

With the legal protection and the social attention to gender equality, women can now benefit from general education, a medical and health care system, and protection in the labour market. Women's self-awareness of their social values has been strengthened and they are encouraged to fulfil more social obligations and responsibilities. Consequently, there are more and more successful women in every walk of life, especially in traditional male dominant occupations, such as entrepreneur, politician, and diplomat (Mills, 1993). Because of social stereotypes on the perception of careers and gender discrimination in working places, the imbalance gender distribution still exists in some fields. Zhang (1998) investigated the future career choices among the secondary school students in three cities, Shanghai, Edinburgh and Hong Kong. The study found that gender is the most important factor influencing career choices in the students' future among the three cities and both boys and girls showed intention to work in a place which is dominated by the same gender peers. According to the *China Labour Statistical Yearbook* (2000, 2010), the percentage of female employment between 1999 and 2009 increased in many industries, such as from 42.6% to 50.3% in the finance industry, from 41.2 % to 46.4% in the field of culture and art, and from 24.1% to 27.0% in government organizations. The data in *The National People's Congress* (Hereafter NPC) *of the People's Republic of China Yearbook*(s) showed that the proportion of female representatives in the NPC had increased from 11.99% in the 1st NPC in 1954 to 20.2% in the 10th NPC in 2008. The society recognized the females' success and also intentionally gave prominence to females, naming and publicizing the 'Number one female' in all fields; for example, the first female empress [10], the first female

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[9] SRB refers to sex ratio at birth.
[10] Wu, Zetian (624-705) was the monarch of the Tang Dynasty (690-705) (Hu, 2011)

spokesperson[11], the first ambassador[12], and the first female astronaut was selected in 2012 (Branigan, 2010). The legal attention and social encouragement of women indicates the empowerment of women, inspiring women to realize their social values and make achievements.

1.4.3 Females' education

With the implementation of the one-child policy, parents gave the same attention, affection and expectation to their child no matter whether they were a daughter or a son. An only child was once called "little emperor" or "little princess" in the 1990s because the only child obtained too much attention and care from their parents and grandparents (Settles and Sheng, 2002; Wu, 2005). People's attitudes toward children changed dramatically under the one-child policy and most parents are now regarded as over children-centred because they usually meet their child's needs (Wang, 2007). With the traditional Chinese emphasis on education, all children are expected to complete nine years of compulsory education. Following this, children then have access to different types and levels of further education, including higher education, vocational school or technical training school depending on their performance in national examinations. Accessing good education has been competitive for the Chinese youth, so parents always encourage their children to study hard towards academic achievement and undoubtedly are willing to invest in their children's education. Family education expenditure, as the highest family consumption, has increased at an average rate of 29.3% every year since 1990s, which is faster than the increasing rate of family income (Li and Li, 2010).

With regard to female education, although there are still some social problems concerning female education (Liu, 2008), the improvements have been confirmed in the last decades (Lavely, Xiao, Li and Freedman, 1990; Wu and Zhang, 2010). In school, in order to promote gender equality, the government instructed the schools to provide settings for girls and boys in order to internalize the principle of gender equality. Students have been encouraged to read newspaper stories about modern women, and have been provided with field trips to movies and operas that depict young women

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[11] Gong, Peng (Qiao, 2008)
[12] Ding, Xuesong (Ding and Yang, 2000)

escaping from an arranged marriage. Children are taught that girls are as good as boys and women can fulfil social obligations as well as any man can. Additionally, Shu (2004) suggested that girls feel being treated equally to boys in school. At home, because there is only one child, parents downplay gender differences and give their child the same educational expectation and investment regardless of the child's gender (Tsui and Rich, 2002).

With education reforms in the 1990s, private schools have now been established in order to meet social demands (Wang, 2003). The creation of single-sex schools is another kind of evolution which has stood out in the last ten years and Lin (2006) investigated females' learning based on a single-sex school. The study showed that the schools consider girls' academic and psychological needs when designing courses, trying to integrate the students' potential in the teaching, and arousing their interests in science and technology. The schools are commonly aimed at developing females' awareness of self-respect, self-confidence, independence, pride in girls and building their own personality. According to the data in *Educational Statistics Yearbook*(s) from 2000 to 2010, the number of female enrolments in higher education increased year by year. The proportion of female students from 1999 to 2009 at undergraduate level increased from 39.66% to 50.48% and from 32.43% to 47.04% at postgraduate level. The proportion of female academic staff also was increased by almost 10% at the same time. There have also been some courses that were specially designed for females in some comprehensive universities, such as MBA course in Wu Han University, and a female college in Tong Ji University. Additionally, the Wu Han University held a forum with the theme of 'Successful women on wealth creation and management' in 2007. Yu (2010) investigated different composition of students in different types of institution in China and found that the gender distribution was imbalanced across discipline areas according to tracking the records of national college entrance exams in 2005 -- female students in studying languages accounted for 91.4% in public universities and averaged 82.1% in all types of institutions. These changes indicate that current social contexts encourage women to empower themselves psychologically and academically for realizing gender equality. Surrounded by such encouraging social contexts, female talent has shown itself in many fields. Do these social and psychological priorities affect female learning and working? Tsui and Rich (2002) suggested that the neutral-sex expectation from parents reduced the gender gap in academic achievements and

eliminated gender differences in students' own educational aspirations.

Summary

Social factors in psychology is not an unexplored area and a few studies which were based on school context have suggested that teachers' feedback, support from parents and interactions with peers will affect pupils 'emotions, motives and academic achievement (Bempechat and Drago-Severson, 1999; Elliott, Hufton, Illushin and Lauchlan, 2001; Graham, 1984; Zambo, 2008). Weiner (1994) investigated social and personal motivation, suggesting the influence of social evaluation on personal motivation. Wentzel (1999) explored the relationship between social-motivational processes and students' motivation in academic achievement, confirming the social origins of students' motivation. Dörnyei (2001) provided a brief review on social motivation. The social factors which were covered in previous studies have mainly referred to children's parents, peers, and teachers. Bempechat and Drago-Severson (1999) carried out a cross-national research and they found that cross-cultural differences in students' learning beliefs affect students' learning of math and science. In addition, Horwitz (1999) found that L2 learners from different cultural backgrounds had various motivations and expectations toward a foreign language. All the findings in these studies suggest that social factors intervene with personal psychological development at different levels. Scrutinizing the social effects on a person's psychological development will be in accordance with the nature of gender issues. Therefore, the present study will explore whether the positive social contexts affect females' approaches to their L2 learning and the gender differences and the development of females' L2 motivational factors based on L2 Motivational Self System & IP.

1.5 L2 English teaching/learning in China

Foreign language teaching and learning as a regular school subject can be traced back to the 1860s in China. Because of successive setbacks in the relationship between the Court of the Qing Dynasty and other countries, such as invasions and the dominant status of other countries in the military, political and economic fields, the Chinese sovereigns were aware of the importance of Western civilization and began to promote

foreign language learning, such as Japanese, European languages and English (Gao, 2009; Yang, 2000). The early stage of English learning in China can be generally separated into two periods: 1st period 1862 -1922 (with a transformed educational system based on the Japanese education system) and the 2nd period 1922-1949 (with the New System of Education accompanied with the introduction of British and American education) (Wang-Kun, 1981). Approximately during the same period, the global tendency of foreign language learning changed from the preference of German and French to the inclination of French and English and the ratio of English learning was almost equal to the ratio of French by 1944 (Bianco, 2009). In the following paragraphs, the author aims to present how English teaching and learning developed with the social changes and the relevant studies on Chinese L2 English learners from a social perspective in modern China. As the literature background of the current research, the following introduction will mainly focus on the evolution of English teaching and learning in tertiary education.

1.5.1 The development of English teaching

With the implementation of the Four Modernizations[13] Policy and Open Door Policy[14] in the 1980s, the Chinese leader promoted English as highly desirable for realizing national economic prosperity and raising China's position in the world (Lam, 2005; Adamson, 2007). Since then, English, as an ordinary subject, has begun to take root in the Chinese education system. The government began to invite foreign experts for academic exchange and sent Chinese scholars abroad for further learning. Three important foreign language universities were asked to compile textbooks for an English major at college level at the end of the 1970s. In addition, English relevant proposals for teaching materials, curriculum and pedagogies began to be experimented with by some institutes and Wein (1980) positively commented on the progress of English teaching in the top universities of China at that time. On the other hand, English learning in practice was generally viewed as contradictory and conflicting. The new ideas and ideology of western culture were introduced to the learners, such as freedom, democracy, but on the

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[13] The Four Modernization is a government policy to strengthen the fields of agriculture, industry, national defense, and science and technology in China. The policy marked the beginning of national reform in 1978.

[14] Open Door Policy is to promote market forces, especially in international trade and economic investment, which is another policy in the national reform in 1978.

other hand, there was also some criticism on the human rights in the United States (Scovel, 1982; Adamson, 2007). The Cultural Revolution (the civil and political turmoil from 1966-1976) made China lag far behind the developed countries in educational research (Hu, 2002) and its long-term negative influence on either individuals or social development cannot be ignored (Deng and Treiman, 1997; Hung and Chiu, 2003; Lu, 2004).

With the educational reforms[15] in 1985, it was shown, by examining the English teaching syllabus and textbooks of the English major, that topics in a popular textbook published in 1992 covered a wide range of topics compared to the old textbooks. The proportion of the knowledge in different fields was also adjusted, including 75% of topics on social and cultural issues, 10% on science and technology, 7% on geographic, historic and other fields, and 8% on political issues. However, most of the political content was aimed at introducing Western countries' political and legal systems, instead of the criticism of Western politics, society and lifestyle in earlier textbooks (Zhou, 1999). In the documents issued by the government for educational reform in 1993, English was defined as a useful tool and skill to communicate with the world and became the first important foreign language for diplomatic and economic development purposes (Hu, 2011; Zhou, 1999). There were also some popular English learning programs in TV and radio broadcasts, such as *Follow me* in the 1980s, and *Family Album U.S.A.* in the1990s, CRI (China Radio International), etc., With the increasing of young people studying abroad, especially English speaking countries, English language proficiency had more meanings to personal development. Private learning of English has been thriving and more people attend evening or weekend English classes. English learning was escalated in China and its status reached the highest level than ever before in history (Adamson, 2004). With a fast increasing economy and diplomatic demands, students were asked to possess knowledge broader than just the basic skills of the English language. It was emphasized in the objectives of English teaching that the country needed high-quality English graduates who have English language knowledge as well as extensive knowledge in other areas, such as international trade, finance or computers, and these kinds of 'composite talents' should be capable of contributing to the national economic development (Adamson and Morris, 1997; Gao, 2009: 67).

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[15] Document entitled " *The Decision to Reform the Educational System*" and "An Outline for the Reform an Development of Education in China" issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of People's Republic of China in 1985 and 1993 (cited in Zhou, 1999: 4)

Responding to the national demands, universities created various kinds of English programs in diverse fields and encouraged students to acquire other professional knowledge besides English.

With further confirmation of English's contribution to China's development, especially with the success of WTO membership and bid for the 2008 Olympics in 2001, the Chinese government's international orientation became stronger (Lam, 2007). The importance of English was escalated again in August 2001 when the threshold of compulsory English learning was moved from the 1st year of secondary school down to the 3rd year of elementary school, according to the '*Guideline for Promotion English Teaching in Elementary School*' issued by the Ministry of Education (Hu, 2007). The higher education office of the Ministry of Education in 2001, 2004 and 2005 also issued documents, which successively encouraged colleges to use authentic textbooks from abroad and even to encourage the schools to realize bilingual education in universities (using both English and Chinese as the medium of instruction in professional courses). Consequently, the top universities implemented bilingual education across dozens of courses in a short period (Pan, 2007).

On the other hand, economic development and educational reform also increased unemployment. In order to respond to the demands of entreprises with rapid economic growth, the government implemented educational reform in tertiary education, expanding the enrolment from 1999, but the number of university graduates increased faster than available jobs. According to a national survey of higher education graduates in 2003, only 31.9% of 18,722 participants confirmed they had a job contract after graduation and 38.5% had an unconfirmed situation after graduation (Li, Morgan et al., 2011). Unemployment among college graduates has been a severe social problem in recent years for multiple reasons, such as the quality of education, the structure of the college courses, personal preferences among the younger generation, etc. (Zhou and Lou, 2011). Although English proficiency is regarded as one of the crucial factors in employment, with the probabilities of globalization (Li, Morgan and Ding, 2009; 2011), the graduates with an English major still face challenges. As English has become a compulsory subject for all students in higher education, the graduates with an English major do not have much advantage over non-English major students in English learning and they also do not have an equal chance to take other speciality-related subjects, such as business, management, computer science, etc. Su (2010) investigated the English

major curriculum in relation to graduate employment. By studying 290 English major students in college, the results suggested that the choices of employment for English graduates were narrowed down within four years of L2 learning and that the curriculum of an English major cannot help the students to prepare any better to meet the social needs. As the curriculum lacked the variety of extended courses, most of the graduates chose to work in institutions while there were many demands for English graduates who had a good command of English as well as competency in other related specialisms, such as law, economy, and international trade. The gap between the graduates' competence and the social requirements leads to unemployment and new challenges for the students. The study revealed the conflict between the English major curriculum and the social needs for English graduates and suggested how to adjust the English curriculum to suit the students' needs.

English teaching is currently paid much more attention to than ever, but Chinese scholars[16] have raised concerns with the English programs of the English major and the general development of foreign language education: 1. Contemporary English teaching was labelled as 'instrument making' rather than educating people as economic orientation is explicitly indicated in teaching objectives while humanistic education is somewhat ignored; 2. If English is much emphasized as a tool or skill for communication, that will block the development of the linguistic profession (Gao, 2009; Hu, 2011); 3. English is the only compulsory foreign language subject in primary and secondary schools, which will lead to many realistic difficulties when implementing other foreign language courses in higher education. It is difficult to optimistically foresee the future of the development of other foreign languages in China.

Furthermore, there are also more concerns with English teaching in practice. Scovel (1982) and Yu (2001) put forward several points which were considered as the factors slowing down the development of English teaching and learning in China and these phenomena still exist today: 1. Bureaucracy; the central government controls education, including the syllabus, textbooks, curriculum, etc. and the English curriculum was heavily influenced by social needs and economic development; through examining the 1989 English curriculum of the English major in tertiary education, Lu (1995) identified the influence of Chinese educational traditions on English teaching; 2. Relying on

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[16] Hu, Zhuanglin, previous Dean of the English Department at Peking University, and Zhang, Zhongzai, a senior scholar in Beijing University of Foreign Studies, challenged English reform (Gao, 2009).

textbooks (English learning and teaching at each level only concentrates on one textbook). Wang (2006) showed that English teachers usually taught within certain boundaries and had less autonomy in teaching because they needed to demonstrate their fidelity to national policies and were expected to adhere to the curriculum; and 3. Traditional teaching methods: reading and memorizing are still the most common methods for learning a foreign language. Although communicative competence is more emphasized than before, there are many practical constraints on English learning, such as the exam system, and assessments for linguistic competence (Huang, 2005).

Although there have been reforms and improvements in the English curriculum and teaching approaches during the last decade, there are also external factors affecting curriculum implementation: these are the testing system, the usage of textbooks, teacher training, etc. (Wang, 2006). According to Alderson and Wall (1993), the impact of tests on teaching and learning could be both positive and negative. Tests could encourage teachers and students to undertake more speaking performances and practices but, on the other hand, tests could also make teachers narrow down the curriculum because teachers feared unpleasant results, and they teach according to the requirements of the tests. Additionally, the usage of a certain textbook could be another restriction to language learning/teaching although it comes with a number of advantages, such as providing guides in teaching, giving direction to the lessons, and saving time when preparing the class. However, based on textbook teaching, it is unavoidable that teachers' teaching, students' L2 learning and the tests for L2 performance are all designed, based on or focused on by the textbooks. The textbooks could also be used as curriculum (Wang, 2006).

Furthermore, the English proficiency test, as a requirement of all kinds of entrance exams in the Chinese educational system, plays an indispensable role. Students take English exams from the time of their primary school entrance to their college graduation. Because language learning has traditionally focused on vocabulary and accuracy, most of the exams focus on English capabilities in writing, reading comprehension and listening. The English in China is called 'deaf and dumb' English because students were not competent enough to speak in English or cope with real situations using English although they had learned English for many years (Gao, 2009). Since the communicative approach and communicative competence were highlighted in the new educational reforms, the curriculum and course design have been adjusted.

Even so, there are still many difficulties and constraints in the implementation of the advanced teaching approaches, such as the teacher training, teacher resources, etc. (Ryan, 2011). One of the efforts attempted by the universities to improve the situation is to employ English native speakers as foreign English teachers, providing students with the opportunities to practice their English. When Stanley (2011) investigated the foreign English teachers in China, it was suggested that foreign English teachers, as the first non-Chinese people to whom the students were exposed to, not only provided language practice but also impressed "the foreign others" on the students. There are also other issues in the teaching of English in China by foreign English teachers, including cultural challenges, differences in pedagogy or teaching approaches, etc. (Boyle, 2000). The debate on foreign English teachers and Chinese English teachers is still continuing. He and Miller (2011) mentioned that some foreign English teachers were usually fresh graduates in their own countries and that they travelled to China for further study. They were recruited by the college just because they spoke English as their mother tongue. He and Miller (2011) investigated the Chinese students' preferences between native English teachers and Chinese English teachers. By studying 795 college students and 189 teachers, it was revealed that foreign English teachers brought a lot of valuable features to the Chinese English language classroom, but their professional teaching knowledge and teaching experience were the most important factors of concern for college students in China.

1.5.2 Relevant issues on Chinese L2 English learners

There have been a wide range of studies on Chinese L2 English learners in SLA, such as L2 English communication strategies by Chen (1990), L2 English writing by Silva (1993) and Wang, Koda and Perfetti (2003), the use of the L2 English article system by Robertson (2000), L2 English syntax development by Su (2001), L2 phonological processing by Gottardo, Yan, Siegel and Wade-Woolley (2001), L2 English vocabulary acquisition by Gu (2003) and Tang and Nesi (2003), L2 syntactic transfer by Chan (2004), WTC in the Chinese EFL classroom by Peng and Woodrow (2010), and L2 English learner autonomy by Wang (2008) and Huang (2011), etc. In addition, Wang and Gao (2008) reviewed 14 papers focusing on Chinese L2 English learners' learning experiences, including language production by Ellis and Yuan (2004), L2 identity by

Gao, Cheng, Zhao and Zhou (2005), etc. There have also been some studies in L2 motivation research, such as the effect of learners' variables (including belief, learning strategies, efforts, etc.) on L2 English proficiency by Wen and Johnson (1997), the effect of classroom environment on learners' intrinsic motivation by Wu (2003), the different interplay of internal cognition, external incentives and social context between successful and unsuccessful L2 English learners by Gan, Humphreys and Hamp-Lyons (2004), Confucian featured L2 English learning motivators by Chen et al. (2005) and the relationship between integrative motivation and L2 English WTC by Peng (2007), etc. The general features, such as passive learning in the classroom, lack of confidence and proficiency, and exam orientation, have been investigated in some studies either with agreement or disagreement (Cheng, 2000; Clark and Gieve, 2006; Cortazzi and Jin, 1996; Huang, 2005; Lee, 1996; Watkins and Biggs, 2001). Among the studies of the learners' levels of anxiety, Liu (2006) found that Chinese students had different level of anxieties depending on the their English proficiency and different classroom activities; Yan and Horwitz (2008) suggested that gender was an important factor among the learners' anxiety -- it was generally believed that female learners were better language learners than male learners and they were talented, more expressive and harder working.

Collectivism, as a cultural specific feature, was also spotted among Chinese L2 English learners in some studies. For example, Flowerdew and Miller (1995) found that collectivism led to Hong Kong students' propensity of helping each other when taking lectures. Wen and Clément (2003) argued that collectivism could hold back Chinese L2 English learners' involvement in L2 classroom communication. Chen et al. (2005) suggested that individual success in academic performance is regarded as a kind of positive reflection of the family or clans in Chinese ideology of collectivism. Nelson and Carson (2006) found that students from collectivistic cultural backgrounds worked effectively in L2 peer responses and they could maintain a harmonious atmosphere and improve their writing, although they didn't show enthusiasm for criticizing other students. Based on the historical view, Chinese collectivism can be traced back to Confucianism, which is the source for peoples' moral and philosophical basis in Asian countries (Kim, 1997). All individuals in the universe are considered to be linked to each other; the family is regarded as the prototype for all relationships and society is regarded as an extension of the family, so Confucianism prioritizes general beliefs and social harmony and individuals are expected to take responsibility and fulfil the

obligations of their own social position (Kim, 1997). Undertaking obligations to each other secures being part of the social network and the stability of mutual obligation is the product of collectivism, but, on the other hand, individuals' needs and desires could be suppressed (Arnett, 2005). The studies reviewed so far point to the importance of gaining a better understanding of collectivism will unfold a new layer and help to understand Chinese L2 English learners' from a social perspective in the current investigation.

Summary

The inherent collectivistic social contexts and the authoritative controlled learning contexts for English teaching in China provide an appropriate setting for the current study's purposes. The investigation will explicitly reveal the social influences on gender differences and the development of L2 English learners' motivation. Besides, since English teaching and learning in China has been undertaken for economic and political purposes, it is in the process of being transformed with the social economic development. English is now portrayed as playing a critical role in the country's international development and also relating to the learners' opportunities to access human resource markets of the new social economy. Will the L2 English learners' IP be influenced by such a macro environment? However, at the same time, as the balance of social collectivism is mostly based on economics, people growing up in different cultural backgrounds and in different eras learn a different balance of collectivism (Arnett, 2005). It was found that the ideology of collectivism in Chinese youth had appeared to decline because of cultural changes and globalization (Kim, 1997; Stevenson and Zusho, 2002). Therefore, the current study is aimed at finding out whether the collectivistic value will be reflected among the current Chinese L2 English learners, especially when examining the gender differences and the development of L2 motivational factors based on L2 Self Motivation System and IP in Chinese collectivistic learning contexts.

1.6 Study method in the L2 motivational research and gender studies

As the major research purposes involve L2 motivation and gender issues, this section will focus on a review of study method used for the L2 motivational research and the

gender research.

1.6.1 Study method used in the L2 motivational research

L2 motivation is best known as originating from the social-psychological perspective because of its pioneering scholars, the Canadian social psychologists Gardner and Lambert (1959). With the development of research theories in the recent decades, research methods have been expanded and refined (Chen, 2010). The review in this section will only focus on some relevant issues which are related to the current research design. Thus, the following paragraphs will include a brief review of traditional methods in L2 motivation, mixed method, longitudinal research design and the research methods in L2 Motivational Self System and IP. The main sources will be Dörnyei (2007b) and Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011), two highly influential books on research methodology in applied linguistics and L2 motivation.

➢ **Traditional methods in L2 motivation**

L2 motivational research has been commonly categorized as large-scale quantitative research. According to Dörnyei (2007b), there are some major characteristics attached to the quantitative research, such as using numbers, a priori categorization, variables, statistics, standardized procedures to assess objective reality and the quest for generalizability. These features of the quantitative approach have contributed to many important findings and the development of theoretical frameworks in previous studies on L2 motivation in recent decades; for example, the Socio-educational model from Gardner and Lambert (1959), Social Psychological model (Lambert, 1978), the Socio-educational model (Gardner, 1979), Social context model (Clément, 1980), the Intergroup model (Giles and Byrne, 1982), the Attitude / Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) from Gardner (1985), Macroscopic model (Landry and Allard, 1992) and the WTC model (MacIntyre et al. 1998). Most of the later relevant studies also developed their models through a quantitative method, using statistics and categorizing the universal features of a certain group of L2 language learners, such as Francophone students in Canada by Clément and Kruidenier (1985), investigating motivational variables (Gardner and MacIntyre, 1993) and their links to L2 proficiency (Masgoret and Gardner, 2003).

Considering previous studies in L2 motivation, Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) highlight the three most frequent types of quantitative analyses: 1. Correlation studies, which are used to examine the relationships between existing variables, including motivational measures and various criterion variables, such as language learning achievement. However, the major disadvantage is that it cannot identify the *cause and effect* between the computed variables (p. 217); 2. Factor analytical studies and Structural Equation modelling, which are correlation-based techniques used to detect higher-order patterns among computed variables. These are regarded as the key techniques for investigating motivational variables in L2 motivation research (p. 221; 226); 3. Experimental studies, which were used to establish cause-effect relationship with intervention design (p. 230). The quantitative approach as a whole has been commonly criticized as lacking the subjective variety of an individual's life and is heavily dependent on instruments (Dörnyei, 2007b).

Consequently, the qualitative approach became a popular method since the mid 1990s in the field of applied linguistics and Ushioda (1994, 1996) is regarded as one of the earliest scholars to use a qualitative approach in L2 motivational research. The major qualitative approach used in L2 motivation is the interview and four kinds of interview format have been mainly used in previous studies, according to Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011: 1). The structured interview which uses a pre-prepared guide for the questions in the process of the interview; 2. The unstructured interview which uses open questions to elicit the interviewee's story; 3. The semi-structured interview which uses a pre-prepared guide with open questions in the process of the interview (open-ended question format and guided questions) and 4. The focus group interview which focuses on the collective experience with group discussions on the same topic. The qualitative method is more focused on discovering how the complex interactions of social, cultural and psychological factors are reflected in an individual learner's life (p. 236). Dörnyei (2007b: 39) summarized several strong points for this approach, including its exploratory nature, especially for new and uncharted areas, making sense of complexity, answering 'why' questions, broadening our understanding, and rich material for the research report, etc. On the other hand, it was generally criticized for several reasons: 1. It was unrepresentative because of the small size of samples; 2. Being influenced by the researchers' personal bias and competence in data analysis; 3. Lack of methodological rigour, compared to the quantitative method; 4. Too complex theories from the intensive

use of rich data or too narrow theories from individual case studies and; 5. Too time-consuming and labour-intensive (p. 41).

➢ **Mixed method of L2 motivation**

Although the debate on the quantitative and qualitative approaches continues, a mixed method has been suggested as an advanced approach for L2 motivational research. A mixed method can compensate for the weaknesses of both the quantitative and qualitative methods, obtain the data from individuals and a group context, allow the researchers to make multi-level analyses and increase the validity and generalisability of the results. There are six specific types of mixed methods suggested for further L2 motivation research, quoted in Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011): 1. Questionnaire survey with follow-up interview: A questionnaire is used to collect a large amount of data and a follow-up interview is used to remedy the weakness of the data in the questionnaire, such as inferences and complex meanings in the results, and further interpretation of the data; 2. Questionnaire survey with preceding interview: This method is routinely used to develop a new instrument, a questionnaire followed by a small-scale focus group interview; 3. Interview study with follow-up questionnaire: The interview is a qualitative approach for exploring new insights and formulating new theories and a questionnaire can help to explore universal law in the wider population; 4. Interview study with preceding questionnaire: This approach is used for small sample sizes. Interviews are usually conducted using extreme or typical cases to highlight the individuals and the questionnaire is used to narrow down the participants; 5. Observational studies: This approach is used to observe the motivated behavior in the language classroom and it is usually used combined with a questionnaire or interview; 6. Practitioner research: This approach is usually used for pedagogical concerns in order to improve the quality of language teaching/learning. Multiple research methods can be used, such as questionnaire, interview, learners' journal, etc. so as to conduct a richly-grounded study of L2 motivation in certain contexts (p. 241).

➢ **Longitudinal studies**

Longitudinal studies are used to examine the changes and patterns of participants' development over a certain period of time. According to Dörnyei (2007b), there are three general features in a longitudinal design: 1. Data are collected at least twice during the research period; 2. The data collection has to be conducted from the same

participants or comparable participants; 3. The data analysis has to involve a comparison of the data between periods. This approach is traditionally used and associated with the quantitative approach, and is aimed at providing a statistical overview of changing tendencies in terms of a wide social scope (p. 79).

Dörnyei (2007b) reviewed four main types of longitudinal studies: 1. Panel studies: This is also called prospective longitudinal studies. This approach requests successive measures being taken at different points and also requires a committed research team that is maintained over several years. This kind of feature has two potential problems: The decrease of participants in successive data collections and the effect of the researcher on the participants' behaviour or responses due to frequent contact between the researcher and the participants; 2. Trend studies: These are also known as repeated cross-sectional studies. This method is used to obtain information by conducting a repeated survey with different samples of respondents who are regarded as the representatives of the same population. This approach can also be used for exploring the differences between subsample groups, such as male and female groups, ethnic groups, etc.; 3. Retrospective longitudinal studies: This approach is used to gather the information for a single investigation and the participants are asked to think back and provide information about their past. The most serious problem of this method is reliability so it is more appropriate to use over a short period rather than a long-term design; 4. Simultaneous cross-sectional studies: This design is used to collect the data from different age groups and age is the key sampling variable. Although it can be used to examine developmental issues, the observed changes may be only due to age differences (p. 82).

➢ **Research method for the study on L2 Self Motivation System and International posture**

Studies on the L2 Self Motivation System and *IP* have adopted various approach designs depending on their research questions. The quantitative method was mainly used when the study was aimed at L2 learners' motivation and attitudes from a general scope, and the relationship among motivation factors. For example, Dörnyei et al. (2006) investigated Hungarian students' motivation and attitudes toward five foreign languages. Taguchi et al. (2009) investigated the differences of the L2 motivational self system among Japanese, Chinese and Iranian L2 English learners, and Yashima (2009)

investigated the links between ideal L2 self and IP. The qualitative method was mainly used when the study was aimed at L2 learners' individual differences in certain learning contexts. For example, Lamb (2009) investigated Indonesian school pupils' L2 selves based on a case study of two learners, and Kim (2009) explored ideal L2 Self and Ought-to L2 self from the perspective of socio-cultural theory through a case study of two Korean ESL learners. A mixed method was used when the study was aimed at the general pattern of L2 motivation among the learners as well as a deeper exploration of the reasons for the results. For example, Yashima and Zenuk-Nishide (2008) investigated the impact of learning contexts on L2 proficiency and L2 attitudes, and Magid (2011) conducted a validation study of the L2 Motivational Self System with Chinese L2 English learners, as well as proving that the learners' ideal L2 self can be enhanced by applying an intervention programme for L2 learning.

Ushioda and Chen (2011) highlighted the importance of a mixed method in L2 motivation research and suggested the necessity for combining quantitative and qualitative methods in research on motivation and possible selves based on the research by Chen (2010), who investigated L2 motivation and possible selves with senior high school students in an ELT setting in Taiwan. Chen (2010) found a discrepancy between the qualitative and quantitative findings in relation to the ought-to L2 self and external pressures. A re-analysis of the qualitative data, based on the local social context, provided indications on why the quantitative data presented less ought-to L2 self and external pressures than the qualitative data did.

Summary

Both quantitative and qualitative approaches have become important in L2 motivational research. It has been suggested that mixed methods are used in order to associate the strong points between the two approaches and minimize the weakness of each approach when used separately. A mixed method approach has especially been encouraged for use in recent research on the L2 Motivational Self System and IP. This provided solid support for the current design based on a mixed method.

1.6.2 Methods in gender research

Although gender issues have been explored in various disciplines, such as psychology,

sociology, medicine, biology, anthropology, etc. and are regarded as one of the most controversial areas in science and social studies, all approaches were developed based on traditional scientific methods (Brannon, 2005). The necessity of a scientific method in gender research in psychology was advocated as early as the 1910s by Leta Hollingworth[17], who was described as the "scientific pillar" in the early wave of gender research by feminists (Shields, 1975). With the flourishing of gender research in the 1970s, the relevant theories and methodology have been developed using empirical studies (Eckes and Trautner, 2000). Reviewing the research methods of gender studies in psychology and social psychology books, such as Brannon (2005), Helgeson, (2005) and Chrisler and McCreary (2010), the methods are usually categorized as quantitative and qualitative approaches according to the questions that the two approaches aim to solve. Additionally, some scholars have also generalized study approaches based on the progress of gender studies during different periods, such as Deaux (1984), Eagly (1995), and Marecek (2001), and these approaches have reflected the features of the extant gender studies during that time. The following review will present some of the main approaches, and it will be followed by the introduction of some other issues that arise when applying a scientific method in gender research, such as subject recruitment, and the avoidance of bias, etc.

➢ **Quantitative approaches in gender studies**

The quantitative method follows the traditional scientific procedure of empiricism, observation and data collection, and the observed phenomenon is then quantified. In other words, the observation will be transformed into numbers, which are the data used in the quantitative method. Although the quantified data are not the same as observations, they are considered to be a representation of the phenomenon which the research believed important. Experimental research and ex post facto studies are regarded as the methods which concentrate on comparisons and differences between genders in quantitative approaches (Brannon, 2005; Murnen and Smolak, 2010).

Experimental research has been successfully applied to explore gender-related behaviour. For example, Madson (2000) conducted three studies to investigate the

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[17] It seems appropriate and desirable that women should investigate these matters experimentally, now that the opportunity for training and research is open to them. Thus, in time, a psychology of women may be written based on truth, not on opinion; on precise, not on anecdotal evidence; on accurate data rather than on remnants of magic (Hollingworth, 1914, cited by Murnen and Smolak, 2010).

influence of physical appearance in a judgement on people's sexual orientation of male, female, personality, gender-role behaviour and occupation; Experimental research is also suited to investigate stereotypes, attitudes or other gender-related issues; for example, Spence, Steele and Quinn (1999) investigated the influence of stereotype on the females' performance in math.

Ex post facto research is one type of quasi-experimental research (Brannon, 2005). It shares some features with experimental research but is not a real experiment. The similarities include a contrast of two or more groups and the measurement of a dependent variable. This approach has a long history of investigating gender-related differences and similarities in gender research (p. 26). Gender or the gender orientation of the participants, as a characteristic of the participants, is used as a subjective variable and the condition for separating the participants into contrasting groups in the study. For example, Berg and Lien (2002) investigated the income differences between heterosexual and non-heterosexual individuals. Based on the data of the General Social Survey 1991-1996, the respondents were divided into groups according to their gender and their sexual orientation. By controlling other variables, such as education and living area, the results found that homosexual men earn 22% less than heterosexual men, but homosexual women earn 30% more than heterosexual women. Using statistical techniques, the study rejected the popular social perception that homosexuals are more affluent than heterosexuals and confirmed that sexual orientation is a factor in income levels. As shown, the ex post facto approach disclosed the differences but could not provide the results in terms of cause and effect.

Generally, different quantitative methods produce different types of information. Experimental research allows researchers to explain the reason for the relationship between independent variables and dependent variables, while the ex post facto study allows researchers to confirm the existence of differences or similarities. As the most popular approach in gender research, Murnen and Smolak (2010) found that a quantitative method was used in more than 85% of studies in the articles of three gender-related journals in 2007, *The Psychology of Men and Masculinity*, *The Psychology of Women Quarterly* and *Sex Roles*.

➢ **Qualitative approaches in gender studies**

Hesse-Biber (2007) edited a handbook from a feminist research perspective. The book

included extensive approaches and theories and, in particular, introduced qualitative methods in feminist research, such as ethnography in Pillow and Mayo (2007), and interviews in DeVault and Gross (2007). Consequently, the qualitative approach has become an important and popular method in gender studies. Gergen (2010: 103) said that qualitative methods brought gender researchers "the richest and most rewarding exploration of their careers" and allowed scholars "space for creative inquiry, societal critique, and political activism, as well as opportunities for literary, artistic, and dramatic expressions".

A qualitative approach can be conducted through several means, including case study, interviews, focus groups, narratives and ethnography (Brannon, 2005; Gergen, 2010). While the interview has been extensively used both in women's and men's studies, focus groups have also become an inquiry method in gender research (Leavy, 2007). Compared to individual interviews, focus groups encourage the participants to discuss certain issues that they are reluctant to talk about in one-to-one interviews, and also allow opportunities to find new perspectives on common problems. For example, Lee (2002) investigated sexual orientation issues in high school through the focus group approach, studying a group of seven students, including gay, lesbian, bisexual and straight students, who were members of the Gay / Straight Alliance at their high school.

The above paragraph not only exemplifies the usage of each means of the qualitative approach separately in the research but also indicates how possible combinations of several means together can achieve different purposes for the research. For example, McHugh, Kowalski, Mack, Crocker, Junkin, Lejbak and Martin (2008) investigated young women's experiences of their social physique anxiety through case studies. Four young women (age 15) attended the research. Each participant and the group of four participants together could be used as a case study. Multiple methods were applied in the research, including focus group, and one-to-one interviews etc. In the focus group, the researcher built a balanced relationship with the participants and got to know the participants' general experience of their bodies by using an art elicitation technique. In the one-to-one interview, the researcher developed semi-structured open-ended questions based on the Social Physique Anxiety Scale. In general, the qualitative approach has become a popular method in gender research and, in an informal survey, Gergen (2010) mentioned that it is especially of interest to female researchers.

➢ **Approaches in different periods; Deaux (1984), Eagly (1995) and Marecek (2001)**

Analyzing gender studies in terms of individual differences and social categories, Deaux (1984) propounded three major approaches in gender research: Firstly, gender is used as a subjective variable, which is regarded as the traditional approach in the studies of gender comparisons, such as investigating differences in the social behaviour between women and men, and gender differences in task performances, etc. Maccoby and Jacklin (1974) was regarded as the classic review for this kind of research. They used gender as a subjective variable to investigate the gender differences in the psychological area. This approach has been applied to thousands of studies on gender related differences and similarities. Secondly, gender is studied from psychological differences and the subject variable is the social category of gender roles; for example, to develop an instrument to assess masculinity and femininity as continuous variables and investigate whether females are associated with helping behaviour (Helgeson, 2005). Thirdly, gender is used as a stimulus or target variable. This approach examines peoples' responses to the categories of male and female, such as asking college students' judgment on the qualification of the candidate, a male or a female, who would be considered for studying abroad, or to investigate peoples' different ideas on an infant in the picture when the infant was thought to be a girl or a boy (Helgeson, 2005). The studies using this approach indicated the existence of social gender stereotypes and the influence of gender stereotypes on peoples' judgments and evaluations of males and females.

Eagly (1995) mainly discussed quantitative methods in gender studies based on four claims from the existing findings: the gender related differences are small, unstable, artifactual and inconsistent. When reviewing the quantitative method used in the studies of gender differences for cognitive abilities, social behaviour and personality, and in the development of theories about gender differences, Eagly confirmed the contribution of quantitative methods to the research on gender issues and the progress of quantitative methods with social changes. Subsequently, when feminist empiricists (who argued there were no gender differences) and feminist psychologists (who argued the existence of gender-related differences) claimed their contrasting ideas, the research on gender differences progressed to a new level because the arguments by feminist empiricists had a lack of supporting empirical evidence. However, with the increase in gender studies,

there were some inconsistencies in the existing results because of statistical techniques used. Thus, Eagly generally showed the stages that the research on gender differences had experienced from narrative to quantitative methods, and confirmed the positive development of gender research in a scientific way by solving the problems using statistical techniques.

Marecek (2001) proposed three approaches by reviewing the research of feminist psychologists over the last three decades. The study started with the criticism on gender bias in psychology by Woolley (1914), Weisstein (1971) to Kimmel and Crawford (1999) and generalized three approaches in gender issues: 1. Gender differences: Assessing the attributes and characteristics of men and women. The author especially introduced the method of meta-analysis, confirming the merits of meta-analysis in producing results with statistical techniques, and raised possible factors which would affect the study results, such as the representativeness of the samples' selection, social bias on the results, exclusiveness of qualitative study, and the retrospective nature of meta-analysis, etc. Becker (1996) and Feingold (1995) discussed practical bias in the statistical assessment of gender differences in terms of the effect sizes. 2. Gender in contextual terms: Focusing on the social relations, interactive processes and linguistic practices which produce gender. This approach was introduced using a qualitative inquiry, which was regarded as the method that "embeds psychology in rich contexts of history, society and culture" (p. 259). Although a qualitative method has its own limitations, such as the lack of objectivity, the author suggested the association of qualitative inquiry with gender issues in conventional psychology, such as the discursive approach in Magnusson (1998), and the discourse analysis in Gavery (1989). 3. Feminist scepticism: The influence of cultural ideology, social forces or historical events on psychological knowledge in gender issues and the discipline. The author generally exemplified several areas investigated by feminist sceptics, such as psychology's gender imagination, and biological foundationalism, etc. and presented their arguments and findings, respectively.

➢ Bias in gender research

Following the increase in the application of scientific methods to gender research, researchers have pointed to its limitations and difficulties. Brannon (2005) listed several limitations of both quantitative and qualitative methods. For example, quantitative

methods rely on self-reporting in a survey rather than direct observation, whereas qualitative methods cannot yield standard sets of answers and only involve limited numbers of participants. Helgeson (2005) generalized the difficulties of conducting gender research at each stage, from question design to reporting results, with bias regarded as the most noticeable problem in gender investigations. For example, as early as 1978, Eagle reviewed the influences on dozens of studies on gender differences from the 1950s - 1970s and found that researchers tended to choose experimental materials that were biased against the interests and expertise of women. Consequently, the laboratory produced biased settings which lacked the natural gender differences in daily life. Bias could happen in research at many levels, even in theory itself (Brannon, 2005). If the researcher holds bias, their values could influence the investigation as early as the planning stage of the study, leading to distorted results, such as choosing biased topics, conducting the research in biased settings, interpreting the results with social bias, etc. (Caplan and Caplan, 1994; Helgeson, 2005).

Furthermore, Bowen, Halbert, Robinson and Boehmer (2010) mainly discussed the recruitment of participants in gender research. Based on the viewpoint of social justice, everyone is equitable to participate in research and the participants should be representative of the general population according to the generalizability of the scientific research. Three approaches for recruitment were introduced: 1. Population-based recruitment: Partcipants are likely to be most representative of the population and they are selected at random and without bias. This approach generally starts by making a decision about the target population and carrying out diverse recruitment through certain resources, such as national registries. 2. Purposive recruitment: A certain demographic or social category of person are targeted for recruitment in this approach. Because this approach is not random and the bias is inherent, the samples cannot represent the general population but, on the other hand, focuses on a certain group of people. 3. Convenience sampling: Participants are recruited because it is convenient or easy to recruit. This approach is quicker and easier than other methods. Although this approach cannot represent the general population or a specific group of people, it can still be used properly by managing the demographic diversity of the samples. Each recruitment method has its strengths and weakness. Therefore, the researcher could adopt a combination of these methods with consideration to the available resources and the purpose of the study in order to meet the aim of the recruitment.

To decrease bias in gender research, Brannon (2005) suggested some considerations during the research procedure: 1. It is necessary to include females and males in the research on gender comparisons; 2. Researchers should try to avoid unintentional bias, such as using neutral gender labels in the survey; 3. When the gender of the participants is the subject variable, it is not necessary to mention it because the experimenter's gender could become a factor affecting the participants' behaviour.

Summary

With academic attention on gender studies, the approaches used in the research on gender issues have flourished. As one of the scientific social subjects, the sensitivity and historical background of gender issues has brought out some special issues in its research, such as bias. The current research will take the above review as a guideline when measuring the relevant design of gender issues. Chapter two will mainly discuss how the current research design realizes its research purpose, and how it coincides with the approaches in both L2 motivational research and gender issues.

1.7 Research questions and the significance of the study

As reviewed above, the research purposes have been addressed in the summary of each section. In general, the study will investigate social influences on L2 English learners' motivational factors. The study will be conducted based on two recent motivational approaches, L2 Motivational Self System and IP, with Chinese L2 English learners and the results will reveal how L2 learners' motivational factors are influenced by macro and micro social contexts. The following sections will list the rationale of the study, the research questions and the significance of the study.

1.7.1 Rationale and research questions

L2 Motivational Self System, as an advanced integrated motivational approach, overcomes the limits of cross-cultural and foreign language learning settings in its application. IP, as another recent approach, needs more investigation in different cultural contexts. The current study will aim to scrutinise the gender issues in these two approaches, extending the IP investigation to Chinese contexts. In addition, the social

status of women has experienced tremendous change in the last few decades in China. With the implementation of the policies on gender equality and the social encouragement of female success, it will be worthwhile to investigate the changes, in reality, from the female viewpoint, aimed at the gender differences in L2 motivation from the social perspectives (Kissau, 2006a,b; Williams et al., 2002). The following research questions will be addressed in chapters 3-5:

Questions 1-3 in Chapters 3:

1. Are there gender differences in *ideal/ought-to L2 self* and other motivational variables?

2. What are the potential factors producing the gender differences in the learners' *ideal/ought-to L2 self* and L2 motivation?

3. How can these differences be understood, based on the changes of gender issues in the current social contexts?

Research questions 4-6 in Chapter 4:

4. How do female and male learners develop their *ideal/ought-to L2 self* and other motivational variables in long-term L2 English learning?

5. How do the interactive relationships between i*deal/ought-to L2 self* and other motivational factors changes within female and male learners in long-term L2 English learning?

6. How can the gender differences in the development of their L2 motivation be explained from social perspectives?

Research questions 7-10 in Chapter 5:

7. Are there gender differences in IP?

8. How do the female and male learners develop their IP in long-term L2 English learning?

9. How does female and male learners' IP interact with their *ideal L2 self*?

10. How can these gender differences in IP be explained from social perspectives?

1.7.2 The significance of the study

The current study aims to fill in the gap in gender-specific investigations from a macro and social perspective in L2 motivational research. Gender issues, as social categories, have a close connection with social changes, as reviewed in 1.1. In order to understand

gender issues in L2 motivation, it is important to take into consideration the developing social perception of female learners and the general changes in their life, education and social status in L2 learning contexts.

The second aim is to extend the understanding of the L2 Motivational Self System under certain cultural circumstances. As reviewed in 1.2, the previous studies found that L2 learners presented different L2 selves when they learn different foreign languages in different learning contexts. However, the debate on the effect of cultural settings is still on-going. The current research will describe L2 motivational features based on the L2 Motivational Self System, especially in collectivistic social contexts. The current study will attempt to suggest new ways to understand how the L2 Motivational Self System functions in the Chinese context. In addition, the current study will also attempt to present a comprehensive view on gender differences based on the L2 Motivational Self System, covering more motivational variables than previous investigations.

The third aim is to extend the understanding of IP outside of the Japanese context. Facing the globalization and macro international-orientational encouragement in China, the study will analyze the social influences on the development of L2 learners' IP, broadening the understanding of the IP paradigm.

Finally, Chinese people are commonly regarded as more collectivistic in cross-cultural studies (Triandis, Chen and Chan, 1998; Oyserman et al. 2002). The findings of the current study will not only contribute to L2 English learners with Chinese cultural backgrounds but also offer suggestions for further research on the L2 English learners living in Asian countries who share Confucian cultural values and live with collectivistic social norms.

Chapter 2
Study Method

This chapter will present the methods, which were used with Chinese L2 English learners in the current research. As the major research purposes involve L2 motivation and gender issues, the research methods were designed whilst taking into consideration the study approach from both areas. The following sections will start with the introduction of combined research design used in the current study in Section 2.1 and the detailed information about participants in 2.2, quantitative data collection and analysis in 2.3, qualitative data collection and analysis in 2.4, pilot study in 2.5 and procedure in sections 2.6.

2.1 Research design in current study

Combining the research approaches in L2 motivation and gender studies, the main study is based on a repeated longitudinal design with mixed methods, in order to answer the current research questions. The focus of the research was to explore gender differences among L2 learners' motivation and the development of L2 motivational factors during one year of L2 learning. The study consisted of repeated surveys, semi-structured follow-up interviews and class observations. The following paragraphs will explain the research design and point to the theoretical basis.

Firstly, although the major theories of L2 Self Motivation System and IP were developed based on quantitative methods, Dörnyei (2007b) encouraged the use of mixed methods for L2 motivational research. The importance of the social context when investigating the individuals' motivation has also been highlighted in recent research by Ushioda (2008, 2009). Thus, the mixed method of questionnaire surveys with follow-up interviews was considered as an appropriate choice for the current research. Quantitative data was used to find out the general tendency for gender differences and the changing pattern in L2 motivation, while qualitative data remedied the weakness of the questionnaires and rooted out rich information used to interpret the quantitative results. The mixed method was strongly recommended in future L2 motivational

research (Dewaele, 2009; Murray, 2011). Additionally, the mixed method was used to minimize the problems and doubts of gender related research using the quantitative method, as discussed in Eagly (1995) and Marecek (2001). The qualitative data provided more information on local Chinese social contexts, which embedded gender issues in the interactive process between society and language learning. Mixed method was highly suggested in L2 motivational research.

Secondly, the questionnaire surveys coincided with the general approach to L2 motivational research and the quantitative results presented the learners' motivation and attitude within the given variables. The repeated measure design was used to discover the changes in L2 learners' motivation. There were three rounds of data collection within 12 months with the same L2 motivational questionnaire and the same participants. Knowing the possible loss of participants in the successive rounds of data collection, the researcher recruited as many participants as possible in the first round and sincerely encouraged the participants to attend subsequent surveys. In order to avoid bias because of the researcher's gender, gender-related questions were not asked in the interview until the participants had finished the third survey. Additionally, the researcher did not extend any discussion about L2 motivation with participants in contact with other participants except in the interview. Based on the review of the research methods in gender studies, the analysis of gender differences coincided with the ex post facto approach, in which gender is regarded as a dependent variable in the analysis and the results are focused on the differences in L2 motivation between female and male learners. This research design was consistent with the previous studies on gender differences, as reviewed in Deaux (1984).

Thirdly, the interview was used as the major method for the qualitative approach, as suggested in Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011). As the qualitative method is designed to provide subsidiary information for the quantitative results, the interview questions were designed based on the variables in the L2 motivational questionnaire. A semi-structured interview was used so that the interviewees' responses were not limited by the interview questions. Although the one-to-one interview was the major format, focus group interviews were also used because of the sensitive nature of gender issues in order to explore the general phenomena and new opinions on gender differences in English learning among the learners. In addition, the researcher conducted observations based on the ESL learning activities in the classroom. Lamb (2007a) suggested that

observation is an ideal companion to interviews and questionnaires. Observation can reveal the students' behaviour when learning or even the teaching approaches in the L2 English classroom, which would help the researcher to understand the results of the questionnaires and interpret the relevant comments of learners in the interview (Verschuren, 2003).

Furthermore, the whole research design paid special attention to avoiding gender-related bias. Either the questionnaire instrument or the follow-up interview questions were designed starting from the L2 motivational research. Gender-related issues were not involved in any statement in the questionnaire or the related questions in the interview. The researcher was keen to explore gender differences through the data, rather than testing gender differences in the given contexts. The researcher adopted purposive recruitment, targeting universities and sampling the participants. All the students accepted as participants were provided with equal opportunities to attend the survey. Additionally, some exceptional data were filtered afterwards according to the demographic information the participants provided in the questionnaire. However, the participants with exceptional data were not prevented in taking part in the subsequent surveys, although their data were not used in the analysis.

Finally, because of the dominant proportion of female learners studying an English major, the researcher paid more attention to the recruitment of male learners in order to meet the quantity requirement for the quantitative analysis on gender differences. The tips for gender-neutral writing, suggested by Miller and Swift (1980), were used to check the instrument and interview questions, such as replacing pronouns (he, his, him) with "he or she" in order to avoid any unintentional bias in the writing.

Generally, the longitudinal mixed method design met the research purposes of the current study. The application of diverse approaches coincided with the approach in both L2 motivational and the gender issues' area. The qualitative method was designed to remedy the weaknesses of the quantitative method and to provide rich information with which to interpret the results. Detailed information about the participants, questionnaires and interview questions will be introduced in the following sections.

2.2 Participants

➢ **Participants' recruitment**

Some studies (Li, 2007; Mak, 2003) suggested that Chinese L2 English learners' motivation and L2 anxieties could be affected by the teacher's behaviour and tasks based on the classroom learning contexts. To keep as many variables as possible constant, the participants were all recruited from English major programmes of three universities in Beijing. All three universities are affiliated to the national central government (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China) and are located in the centre of Beijing. They offer a wide range of courses at undergraduate level and certain courses at postgraduate level. As to other foreign language courses besides English, they also offer undergraduate level courses in Japanese, Russian, French and German. With regards to English courses, they share some features in common: Firstly, they set similar English subjects for English major students, including English grammar, English writing, translation, intensive/extensive reading, English listening classes. Oral English classes were given by foreign teachers from Year 1 onwards, together with the history and culture of English speaking countries (mainly UK and USA). In general, the participants generally took 14 -18 hours of English classes per week. Secondly, they used similar series of textbooks for the main subjects, including intensive reading and listening classes. Thirdly, they had a similar level of teaching resources: most of their teachers had Master's degree in education, English literature, English translation or applied linguistics. Fourthly, they used self-adapted teaching materials for some subjects, such as original English from certain works for the Extensive Reading class. Finally, they set similar English scores as a criterion for the students' entrance to college. The three universities had implemented an allied assessment system for their enrolment exams since 2006. Therefore, participants recruited from these three universities had similar levels of L2 English competence and they had learned L2 English in similar learning contexts. Additionally, as the research was conducted on campus and the majority of students in the English major were females, the recruitment of male participants was given special encouragement and attention, especially with the consideration of recruitment bias in gender studies, suggested by Bowen et al. (2010).

➢ **Common features of the participants' English learning**

The university subjects generally taken by the participants consisted of three categories:

Public compulsory courses, which had to be taken by all the students; public optional courses, which were supposed to be open to all students; and compulsory professional courses, which had to be taken by the students in the relevant major. However, the reality is slightly different. After the students entered the university, they were given a list of the subjects in the coming academic term/year which they needed to take. The students were not actually given choice to select their courses except the top students or students with special reasons. The category of compulsory and optional is meaningful to the students only because the compulsory courses usually account for more credits than the optional courses. All the students in the same year used the same textbooks for the same subject and there were only several typical subjects which were taught using adapted teaching materials, depending on the teachers. For example, the Oral English class was given by a foreign English teacher from year 1 to the first term of year 4 and the teaching materials were developed by the teacher themself; Academic Writing and Extensive Reading used adapted teaching materials, which were decided according to the syllabus of the department.

There are two academic terms each year and students are usually required to take final exams in each term. The scores for each subject are subsequently recorded in a student's profile as a record of their academic performance. Most of the exams are designed based on 60% - 80% of the textbooks. Therefore, 90% of learning activities within the classroom focus on the textbook. In addition to the final exams, the students are also required to attend a national English proficiency exam, which is known as TEM Band 4 in the middle of the second term before they are upgraded into Year 3, and TEM Band 8 by the end of the 4th year. The failure of the TEM 4 exam won't affect their upgrade, but it is a requirement for obtaining their BA degree, unless they pass TEM 8 in the final year. The students who fail are given a second chance to take the exam. Thus, TEM 4 and 8 are regarded as an important learning goal for students and they are socially perceived as the authoritative record for the learners' English proficiency, especially in job-hunting. As all teaching and learning are mainly carried out based on textbooks, there are certain requirements for students to reach at each level. For example, according to the TEM guidelines, the range of vocabulary, speaking capabilities, listening skills, writing capabilities, etc. differ from one level to another. Band 4 requires that students have acquired 5,500-6,500 words in total, of which students need to have a good command of 4,000-5,000 words. To some extent, English learning at

each stage is quantified and these quantified requirements are sometimes used as measures in English learning.

➢ Participants' background information

Two hunderd and forty students (Males = 62, Females = 178) participated in the study, ranging from Years 1 to 4 (Year 1 = 88, Year 2 = 36, Year 3 = 71 and Year 4 = 45). According to the background information given by the participants, they were from cities or towns throughout China and their average age was 19.81. The first onset of English learning ranged from 5 to 14 years old and 62% started with English learning at 8-12 years old. A very small number of them had travelled abroad but none of them had lived in an English speaking country for more than one month. Sixty one percent of the participants reported that they did not speak English with their families, 26% occasionally spoke English with their families and 70% occasionally spoke English with their classmates/friends outside of English classes. According to the school curriculum, most of the students in Years 3 and 4 were taking another foreign language course, including Japanese, Korean, German, French and Spanish, and the average classroom learning time was 90 minutes per week. However, all learning was at the beginner level. According to the school records, 171 participants were the only child in their family, 57 had siblings and 12 didn't provide information.

2.3 Quantitative data collection and analysis

➢ Instrument

The main components of the questionnaire were based on Taguchi et al. (2009), Magid (2011) and Yashima (2009). According to Magid (2011), the scales were selected from Dörnyei et al. (2006), Neuliep and McCrosky (1997) and Yashima et al. (2004). The questionnaire consisted of four parts. The first two parts had items measuring the learners' attitudes and motivation toward their English learning, the third part had items measuring the learners' IP levels and the final part contained questions about the learners' background information, such as gender, age, the age of their L2 English onset, etc. The questionnaire was not translated into Chinese, based on three reasons: 1. The questionnaire was originally designed for L2 English learners and had been used with Chinese or Japanese L2 English learners; 2. All the participants in the current study

were English major students and their English proficiency should have been good enough to understand the content of the questionnaire, independently. In addition, a pilot study was used to measure that the participants did not have difficulties in understanding the questionnaire; 3. Students in college were usually asked to complete a questionnaire by the school once or twice a year and those questionnaires were given in Chinese. Some students had a negative attitude toward completing a questionnaire as they thought that no one really paid attention to their feedback and they were treated unfairly. A questionnaire in English could give students fresh hope and get them involved with something that was specifically based on their English learning.

There were 87 items in total in the final version of the questionnaire: 49 items were measured on a six-point Likert scale statement-type (from 1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree) and 38 items were measured on a six-point rating scale (from 1 = not at all to 6 = very much). Although there are debates on the application of means as a measure of central tendency and the use of parametric statistics (t-tests) with ordinal data from Likert scales (Kuzon, Urbanchek and McCabe, 1996), Likert scales, as a general measure, have been widely used in L2 motivational research, especially in previous studies on the L2 Motivational Self System and IP, as reviewed in Sections 1.2 and 1.3.

There were 18 factors in total measured in the current study and a copy of the questionnaire is in Appendix A.

Fourteen variables of L2 Motivational Self System:

1. *Criterion measures* (6 items, $\alpha = .729$): to examine the learners' intended efforts toward English learning, e.g. "I think that I am doing my best to learn English".
2. *Ideal L2 self* (5 items, $\alpha = .784$): e.g. "I can imagine myself living abroad and having a discussion in English".
3. *Ought-to L2 self* (7 items, $\alpha = .723$): e.g. "I study English because close friends of mine think it is important".
4. *Family influence* (5 items, $\alpha = .707$): to measure parents' roles in the learners' English learning, e.g. "My parents believe that I must study English to be an educated person".

5. *Instrumentality A (promotion)* (8 items, $\alpha = .811$): to measure the learners' personal English learning purposes, e.g. "Studying English is important to me in order to attain higher social respect".

6. *Instrumentality B (prevention)* (5 items, $\alpha = .789$): to measure the learners' obligation or responsibility for their English learning, e.g. "I have to study English because I don't want to fail the English course".

7. *Travel orientation* (3 items, $\alpha = .745$): to measure whether the learners' intentions to travel affected their English learning, e.g. "I study English because with English I can enjoy travelling abroad".

8. *Fear of assimilation* (5 items, $\alpha = .724$): e.g. "I think the cultural and artistic values of English are going at the expense of Chinese values".

9. *Ethnocentrism* (5 items, $\alpha = .581$): to measure the learners' ethnocentric level, e.g. "I would be happy if other cultures were more similar to Chinese".

10. *Attitude to learn English* (4 items, $\alpha = .771$): to investigate the learners' evaluation of their current L2 learning environment and learning experiences, e.g. "Do you like the atmosphere in your English classes?"

11. *English anxiety* (4 items, $\alpha = .729$): to measure the learners' anxiety level when using English, e.g. "How tense would you get if a foreigner asked you for directions in English?"

12. *Integrativeness* (3 items, $\alpha = .644$): to examine the learners' attitude toward English, English culture and English native speakers, e.g. "How much would you like to become similar to the people who speak English?"

13. *Cultural interest* (3 items, $\alpha = .797$): to examine whether the learners like English music, movies, TV programmes, e.g. "Do you like English films?"

14. *Attitudes to L2 community* (4 items, $\alpha = .807$): to investigate the learners' attitudes towards the English community, e.g. "Do you like the people who live in English-speaking countries?

Four IP variables:

15. *Intergroup approach-avoidance tendency* (6 items, $\alpha = .657$): to assess the learners' tendency to approach non-Chinese within China, e.g. "I would talk to an international student if there was one at my school."

16. *Interest in international vocation or activities* (6 items, α = .701): to index how interested an individual was in an international career and living overseas, e.g. "I want to work in a foreign country".

17. *Interest in international news* (4 items, α = .712): to reflect learners' interest in international issues, e.g. "I often read and watch the news about foreign countries".

18. *Having things to communicate to the world* (4 items, α = .647): to measure learners' willingness to share information with others, e.g. "I have issues to address with people in the world".

According to Dörnyei (2007b), the alpha values of short scales of 3-4 items should aim at reliability coefficients in excess of 0.70 and any Cronbach's alpha below 0.60 should be avoided. Among the eighteen variables, the alpha values of fourteen of the variables are higher than .07 and three of the variables are lower than .07 but above .06. There is only one variable, *Ethnocentrism* (Cronbach's alpha = .581), that does not meet the criteria and could not be improved with the deletion of any item. What caused this to occur? Firstly, participants didn't report any difficulties in understanding the question items in the pilot study, so it was not caused by any faults in the participants' English proficiency. Secondly, our low alpha value for *Ethnocentrism* is not unique. Ryan (2008) found that secondary school students had a much lower reliability value for *Ethnocentrism* than the university students in his study and he suggested that *Ethnocentrism* could be a difficult concept for people who had limited experience or contact with people from other cultures. This exactly coincides with English learning contexts in China. None of the participants had stayed abroad for more than one month and some of them hadn't had any contact with non-Chinese people except in their oral English classes. Therefore, limited experience and contact with people from other cultures could be an explanation for the low reliability figure on this scale in this study. The participants' contact with people from other cultures will be analysed in greater detail in the chapter of IP. As the alpha value of *Ethnocentrism* did not reach an acceptable level, only 17 factors were analyzed and discussed in the current study.

➢ **Quantitative data analysis**

All of the quantitative data were analysed with SPSS version 17.0. Before proceeding to the analysis, the data were prepared, including checking outliners, handling missing data and recoding the negative worded values, in accordance with Dörnyei (2007b). As

there were a few missing values scattered throughout the cases and variables, series' means were used to replace these missing values and the internal consistencies of all scales were measured by Cronbach's alpha values as shown above. An independent-sample *t*-test (2-tailed), Anova repeated measure and correlation test will be used in the current research. The detailed analysis and results will be presented with qualitative data, respectively, in order to answering the research questions in chapter 3 to 5.

2.4 Qualitative data collection and analysis

➢ **Interview**

The qualitative data consisted of follow-up interviews and class observations, which were aimed at providing subsidiary and supportive data to the quantitative data. The interviews were semi-structured and conducted separately after the participants had finished the questionnaire. Some questions were equivalent to the motivational factors in the quantitative data, e.g. *Do you speak English outside the classroom?* (to explore the participants' learning efforts outside of the classroom), and *Why did you choose an English major?* (to explore the participants' learning orientation for English learning.) Some questions were about gender differences in the learners' English learning, e.g. *What is the difference between boys and girls in your English class?* and *Who do you think performed better in the English exams, boys or girls?* (to explore the participants' subjective insight into the research questions and obtain their in-depth views on gender issues in English learning). As with the sensitivities of gender issues, the gender questions were only covered at the final stage of the whole data collection so that the participants had no hesitation or any bias when completing the questionnaires. Most of the formal interviews were conducted in English and recorded with a Sony digital recorder. Some interviews conducted outside of the classroom were in Chinese or English and were not recorded. Field notes were taken during the talk and completed according to memory afterwards.

The choice of using English as the major language in the interview was carefully considered in the light of several considerations: 1. As the interview was conducted after the students had finished their questionnaire, using English in the interview was a logical choice; 2. As most of the interview questions related to the students' English

learning and all participants were from English major, interviews in English could be an incentive to get students' involved as much as possible; 3. Although students completed social surveys about their study and life on campus, which were given by the school, none of the surveys asked them for a recording. However, students were used to being recorded when they spoke English in the language lab. Interviews in English made the students feel more at ease than in Chinese when they faced the recorder. Finally, some informal interviews were conducted in Chinese and were not recorded because of resource limitations or an inconvenient environment, such as in the school canteen. Field notes were taken afterwards depending on memories. One hundred and sixty two participants attended the interviews in total and all the data were transcribed and, if the interviews were conducted in Chinese, translated into English.

> **Observation**

Observation provides the researcher with information on the participants' learning practice in natural learning contexts but from a holistic perspective (Verschuren, 2003). The researcher conducted the observation in different settings:

1. Preliminary observations of the selected universities' English classes in general: These helped to accommodate the researcher at the research site and to explore the differences and similarities in the students' English learning contexts, including teaching resources, comparison of English syllabus, learning atmosphere and general information on gender-related issues in the English major, such as the ratio of female to male learners in an English major, and the ratio of female English teachers to male English teachers.
2. Observation of the participants' learning practices in different English classes (such as *Intensive Reading* for Years 1, *Translation* for Years 3, *Writing* or Year 4, etc.): to explore the students' English learning activities and performance in different courses, gaining information on the students' English language proficiency, gender differences of learning involvement and other gender-related issues within the classroom, such as class attendance and seat distribution.
3. The observation of after-class learning activities in the self-study classroom: General information about the participants' learning involvement outside of the classroom, gender differences in self-study activities and other gender-related

learning activities, such as the ratio of female students to male students in the self-study room, and self-study strategies.

4. Attendance and observation beyond L2 learning activities, such as lunch breaks, activities in the students' union and casual chat in the dormitory: to gain more comprehensive information to understand the participants' culture and opinions on gender issues and the holistic gender-related school culture in natural contexts. The researcher usually attended the chat and discussion on their topics. The gender-related question was inserted occasionally when the students discussed their study so that the students would not realize the researcher's purpose.

The information within the classroom learning contexts were recorded based on the observation sheet, which was developed based on Lamb (2007a) and Guilloteaux and Dörnyei (2008). An example of an observation sheet is in the Appendix B. The field notes were used to record the information in other contexts. As the focus of the research was mainly on the learners' side, data collection from the teachers was not recorded because of time and resource limits. Field notes were taken to record the gender-related information provided by teachers so as to discover the teachers' opinions of gender issues in English learning and whether the teacher had an impact on students' gender-related intentions.

➢ **Qualitative data analysis**

As to the interview data, in accordance with Dörnyei (2007b), the transcribed data were then encoded twice and were also marked with certain labels according to the main ideas of the content and some common themes emerged (see details in Appendix B). Those, which were the closest to the motivational factors of the quantitative data, were chosen and clustered together in specific motivational categories in preparation for use later as the support information to the quantitative results. Additionally, the interview data shed light on an unexpected finding with regard to the motivational role of the family and the important part of Chinese culture related to L2 motivation in the Chinese contexts in Magid (2011). I will present key excerpts from the interview data, mainly to provide rich information to interpret the quantitative results and also to focus on unexpected findings, such as the learners' anxiety with exams in section 3.2.5, so as to produce a full picture of gender issues for each motivational factor. Therefore, the completed qualitative data not only provided subsidiary information for quantitative

results but also provided contextual data enriching the findings and deepening the investigation of the research questions.

2.5 Pilot study

The pilot study was undertaken in October 2010 and the purposes were to check: 1. Whether there could be language difficulties for the students in the questionnaire because the motivational questionnaire was in English; 2. In addition, how long it would take to fill in the questionnaire in one attempt and; 3. Whether the interview questions were easy to follow and whether the questions would lead the interviewees to provide enough information.

The pilot study was conducted with eight students from Years 1 and 3 (Female = 6; Male =2). One of the comments was related to the variable of *Ideal L2 Self*. They felt the questions were exotic and there was a little bit of hesitation because they had never answered such questions before. They also said that there was no difficulty in providing answers. The second comment was that some questions were repeated and the questionnaire was longer than they thought. The participants felt they could lose patience when answering the questions in the later part. It took 17 to 25 minutes to finish the questionnaire, depending on the students' English language competence and their previous experiences of completing questionnaires. The researcher was also advised to highlight the instructions before completion of the questionnaire, which was important to students at the junior level. Some students might not know how to complete the questionnaire, especially if they did not have experience of filling in a questionnaire before.

As to the interview questions, nobody reported that they had difficulty in understanding the questions. However, a male student reported that he hoped the researcher would distribute the questions and provide enough preparation time before recording. The student also indicated that they felt nervous when they were told their speech would be recorded because they did not want to be recorded if they spoke incorrectly. In answering the questions, the researcher felt that the students had no problem in dealing with simple questions but showed reluctance and hesitation when answering open questions. This suggested the researcher should carefully arrange the sequence of the

questions in the semi-structured interview. Additionally, according to the students' tutor, the students might feel shyness toward expressing what they thought because they had just met the researcher for the first time and they doubted the purpose of the recording. As to answering the questions relevant to gender issues, male interviewees appeared to be more uneasy than female interviewees, and one interviewee even misunderstood the question in a sensitive way by claiming: "I support gender equality but not gender discrimination". This reminded the researcher to reconsider the sensibility of gender issues and minimize the interviewees' doubts in answering the questions.

The pilot study brought up many potential problems which could influence the reliability and validity of the research. Bearing all the feedback in mind, the questionnaire administration was arranged under the researcher's supervision by a small group (3 to 8 each group), especially students in Year 1. The small group allowed the researcher to provide assistance to the participants and also reduce the chance of obtaining an uncompleted questionnaire. Additionally, the participants were grouped based on their year-group in college so as to make sure the participants in each group had a similar level of English competence, and they could finish the questionnaire within a similar time frame. In order to reduce the distance between the researcher and the students and to maximize the interests and involvement of the students, the researcher attended to the participants' English classes, and became involved in their discussion in the classes, organizing after-school learning activities and creating the opportunities to meet each other on campus. Frequent contact could minimize the feeling of strangeness and allow the student to become used to the presence of the researcher in their learning contexts. The sensitive misunderstanding of the questions on gender differences in English learning confirmed the right choice of English as the major language used for the interview. Dewaele (2008) and Dewaele and Nakano (2013) suggested that multilinguals feel less serious and less emotional when using and perusing the L2, L3 and L4 than the L1. Questions on gender differences in Chinese could make students feel more cautious and reluctant to give their opinions. Interviews in English could moderate the students' caution on the topic and integrate their opinions with English learning and usage.

Furthermore, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2003) suggested that the researcher' gender and social identity could play an essential role in data collection. The researcher tried to impress on the students that she did not belong to their school; she would not refuse to

help with their English learning when asked; and she would not judge their English proficiency or treat them differently because of their academic scores, gender or family backgrounds as she is a language tutor as well as a friend. However, the researcher still felt that the female students interacted with the researcher more freely than the male students on all occasions, probably because of the gender of the researcher. In order to demonstrate the equal opportunities between female learners and male learners, the researcher applied an appropriate control to balance the dominant position of the female learner in group activities. The male learners' were provided with more chances to be involved on general occasions and were given more encouragement and dedicated invitation to overcome the male learners' hesitation and reluctance when she invited the students to attend the sessions. Finally, as the gender issue is a sensitive social topic, the researcher was prepared to use multiple methods when collecting the qualitative data when necessary, such as note taking, group interviews or informal interviews.

2.6 Procedure

The researcher was introduced to students as an independent researcher, doing her PhD degree at the University of London and who hoped to investigate current L2 English teaching/learning within Chinese higher education. Accompanied by the schoolteacher, the researcher announced the recruitment of participants for the research in each class and also provided relevant information about the time and the location. As there were 10 classes involved in the survey and their timetables were quite different, the arrangements for each class were dedicated to the timetable of the participants. All arrangements were made in the afternoon between 2:00 to 8:00 pm. The self-study room or a certain classroom on campus was especially arranged for the data collection.

After the participants entered the classroom, the researcher distributed the questionnaire and a pen. The participants were allowed to keep the pen as a reward after they finished the questionnaire. When the participants settled down, the researcher began to introduce the questionnaires, including the structure of the questionnaire, the item number in each part and going through the examples. After the participants had indicated they were clear about all instructions, they were given 25 minutes to fill out the questionnaire and they were allowed to ask for help anytime. They were also invited to attend the follow-up interview after they had finished the questionnaire. The whole procedure took around

40 minutes depending on how long it took for them to settle down and how many questions the participants asked. The interview was conducted in the same room and the general interview time took 5 to 10 minutes. Depending on the interviewers' language proficiency, interviewees from Year 1 were provided with a question list and given three minutes for preparation before the interview. The participants from senior year groups attended the interview directly. Their schoolteachers were not involved or present during the survey. The same procedure was used three times throughout the whole survey of questionnaire administration and interviews.

Class observations were mainly conducted with five classes in their main English courses; *Intensive reading and listening* in Years 1 and 2, *Translation, listening* and *Essay Writing* in Years 3 and 4. It was clarified that the researcher's attendance and observation in the class had no connection with any school records related to the students' learning behaviour, their class attendance or their English language performances. The researcher began to take notes of the observations after attending the class two or three times in order to avoid any unnatural phenomena because of the presence of the researcher in their class. The observation with each class lasted a full session each time (90 minutes with 5-10 minutes break). The researcher usually took a seat at the back of the class and took notes based on an observation sheet. As the main purpose of the class observation was to observe the learners' behaviour and learning activities in the class, the observation sheet consisted of three parts: 1. Students' behaviour: comments on male and female students' learning behaviour and responses during the classes in separate columns; 2. Teaching approach: a narrative account of the teaching methods, teachers' supervision and the progress of the lessons; 3. Other information: comments on the students' general level of motivation, cooperation or reaction in the class.

The whole data collection was carried out between October 2010 and November 2011 and the questionnaires were administered three times; in October/November 2010, May/June 2011 and October/November 2011. The interviews were usually done on the same day that the questionnaires were completed. The researcher was able to begin the class observations by collecting the first round questionnaire. The collection of the questionnaires in each round was finished within five weeks.

Chapter 3

Gender Differences in the L2 Motivational Self System

This chapter will focus on the study of gender differences in the L2 Motivational Self System. The data analysis and the results of each motivational variable will be reported separately with discussion. Section 3.1 will provide a general overview of the principal findings of the research based on the quantitative data, followed by a substantial interpretation of the results. There will be an analysis of the qualitative data and discussion in 3.2. Section 3.3 will focus on gender differences in L2 English proficiency and its links to the L2 Motivational Self System.

3.1 Quantitative data analysis

An independent-sample t test (2-tailed) was performed with gender as a grouping variable. The Levine Test was used to test the assumption of the homogeneity of variance and the two variances were shown to be approximately equal. The effect size for each t test used Cohen's d and the guidelines for interpreting the value were $0.2 =$ small, $0.5 =$ medium, $0.8 =$ large (Cohen, 1988). Cohen's d is a common value for reporting the effect size in the field of SLA, such as L2 fluency by Derwing, Rossiter, Munro and Thomson (2004), L2 motivational study by Lamb (2007b), gender related research by Kissau, Kolano and Wang (2010) and the studies on possible selves by Oyserman, Bybee and Terry (2006), etc.

Graph 1 showed the different mean scores of all 13 variables between male and female groups and the detailed t test results are given in Table 1. As can be seen, female learners had a significantly higher score than male learners in 10 variables out of 13 (p < .05): *criterion measures, ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, instrumentality A, instrumentality B, travel orientation, attitude to learn English, integrativeness, cultural interest, attitudes to the L2 community* and one marginal significance on *English anxiety* (p = .054). These results were consistent with the frequent observation in the L2 motivation literature that female L2 learners had a higher score than male L2 learners. There will be more detailed analysis on each variable in the following sections,

combining qualitative data.

Graph 1: Gender differences in L2 Motivational Self System
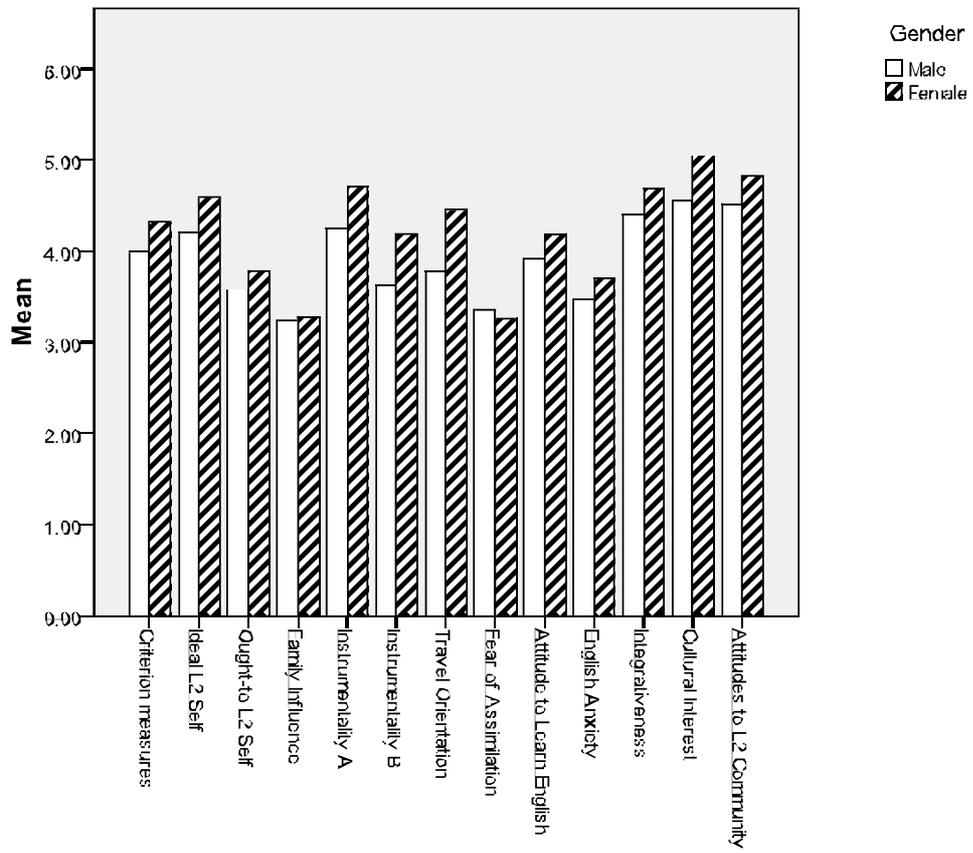
Table 1: T-Test Results on the gender differences on L2 Motivational Self System

Variables	N = 240 (F = 178; M = 62)		Cohen's *d*
	t(238) =	*p* value (2-tailed)	
Criterion measures	3.027**	.003	.45
Ideal L2 self	3.311**	.001	.49
Ought-to L2 self	1.975*	.049	.29
Family influence		Not sig.	
Instrumentality A	4.637***	.000	.64
Instrumentality B	4.307***	.000	.61
Travel orientation	4.744 ***	.000	.65
Fear of assimilation		Not sig.	
Attitude to learn English	2.047*	.042	.32
English anxiety	1.939*	.054	.28
Integrativeness	2.211*	.028	.32
Cultural interest	3.759***	.000	.55
Attitudes to L2 community	2.517*	.013	.37

* Significance at the .05 level (2-tailed)
** Significance at the .01 level (2-tailed)
*** Significance at the .001 level (2-tailed)

3.2 Qualitative data analysis, results and discussion

In this section, the detailed reports of gender differences for each variable will be given in seven sub-sections below: *ideal L2 self & instrumentality A* in 3.2.1, *ought-to L2 self & instrumentality B* in 3.2.2, *attitude to learn English & L2 learning experiences* in 3.2.3, *criterion measures* in 3.2.4, *English anxiety* in 3.2.5, *cultural interests* in 3.2.6 and *travel orientation, integrativeness & attitudes to the L2 community* in 3.2.7.

3.2.1 *Ideal L2 self & instrumentality A (promotion)*

As suggested in Taguchi et al. (2009), *ideal L2 self & instrumentality A* are highly linked. A strong positive correlation (Pearson) emerged between *ideal L2 self* and *instrumentality A*, $r = .690$, $p = .000$ (two-tailed) in the current study. Separate correlation tests on the male and female groups, respectively, showed strong positive links between *ideal L2 self* and *instrumentality A* in both the female group $r = .652$, $p = .000$ (two-tailed) and the male group, $r = .721$, $p = .000$ (two-tailed). The link in the male group was higher than in the female group. The following paragraphs will present the gender differences on *ideal L2 self* and *instrumentality A* separately and then develop a relevant discussion, including the link between the two variables based on the results.

➤ **Ideal L2 self**

The results showed that female learners ($M = 4.60$, $SD = .74$) had a significantly higher level of *ideal L2 self* than male learners ($M = 4.22$, $SD = .83$) and the magnitude of the differences was medium ($t(238) = 3.31$, $p = .001$, Cohen's $d = .49$). This suggests that female learners had more expectation about their future with English than male learners. In the interviews, the participants provided more information about their ideal self images when they were asked about their future career. Scrutinizing the responses from male and female learners, different features appeared in each group.

Male students provided a certain range of possible careers for their future, such as English language teacher, translator and interpreter. Some interviewees indicated their intentions to work in the field of international trade/business/finance and several interviewees mentioned that they wanted to go abroad. Three typical replies are presented below, which reflected the general features of similar answers from the male interviewees of different year groups.

> *M94 (from Year 3): I can be a (English) teacher, or translator. My major is English, not like the students in other majors, such as economics, engineering. But I think I can be a good teacher. (Interviewer: there are many graduates from English major finding job in other area.) Yes, our English is probably better*

than non-English major students. But professional knowledge is more important than English when you look for jobs. You cannot find a good job if you only know English. Many of my classmates are doing a second degree.

M187 (from Year 2): Yes, go abroad. I want to be an editor, journalist, or social scientist in a foreign country. Or I can teach Chinese in foreign countries. I don't know what I can do.

M131 (from Year 1): Yes, I want to devote myself to international business. English is just a tool. I am interested in business, and international trade is popular in my hometown. I hope I can do international business professionally.

M94 wanted to be an English teacher, but his replies indicated hesitation and objective limitations of his self-image as 'an English teacher'. He felt his future career was limited by his major in English and he was less competitive than the students in other majors in the job market. M187 knew he wanted to go abroad but did not have a clear idea for his future self image. He was one of the typical male learners, who had a very positive attitude towards their English learning but did not consider their future seriously. M131 had a plan for his future and he regarded English learning as the acquisition of a tool/skill which would help him work in international contexts in the future. He did not purely rely on English to develop his future but had expectations with his English.

As for female learners, some of them had similar career choices to the male learners, such as being a teacher, a translator or an interpreter, working in international trade/business/finance, or working/studying abroad. However, they also presented further possibilities for their future, such as working in the field of mass media or human recourses, becoming an international lawyer, diplomat, administrator, etc. Besides the wider range of career choices, female students also presented clearer and more certain thoughts about themselves than male learners did, such as working in top foreign companies, to be a leader, etc.

F51 (from Year 3): I have thought a lot about my career. I think I will do

something relevant to English. After I graduate, I can be a high school (English) teacher, or office lady in the department of the government. If I choose, I want to work for the UN, or national geography, or WWF (World Wildlife Fund). I think I can learn more if I work in a foreign company or in a foreign organization, and it will be interesting.

F144 (from Year 2): After graduation, maybe I go abroad. My parents want to send me to America for study. I think I will study and also get a job there.

F128 (from Year 1): Yes, relevant to English. I want to work in a foreign company. I want to be a leader in the company, a CEO in (one of) the top 500 companies in the world. Learning English well can bring me a good future.

F51 demonstrated a clear plan of her future. She produced several possibilities; in connection with her college graduation, she chose being an English teacher in a high school or working in an office as her first self image, and then she presented other possibilities, working in international contexts. Her responses suggested she had more than one self-image for her future at the same time. Secondly, when she used '*if I choose*' to express her real intention, it implied that the first self-image of a high school teacher was not her real choice of a future career.

F144 indicated she had developed her self-image as living abroad because she knew her parents planned to send her abroad after she finished her current studies. Based on Higgins (1987), a person's self concept could be identified from the individual's own standpoint as well as others' standpoints, such as families, peers, etc. F144 built her self-images from her parents' views, which exactly reflected the feature of self-concept from multi-standpoints. We will come back to this later.

F128 provided a typical response as some of the other participants in the Year 1 group did. She was full of hope and expectations for her future and she thought her learning experience in her English major would bring her a good career and good life. As her opinion was related to *instrumentality A*, more analysis will be given in the following

section, which will mainly analyze female students' promotional instrumentality in English learning.

Generally, the results suggested that female learners had a higher level of *ideal L2 self* than male learners based on two aspects: a wider range of possible careers in the future and multiple-L2 self views at the same time. In addition, the feature of building a self-concept from others' standpoints was reflected more strongly among female learners than among male learners.

➢ *Instrumentality A (Promotion)*

The results showed that female learners (*M* = 4.71, *SD* = .75) had significantly higher scores than male learners (*M* = 4.26, *SD* = .63) in *instrumentality A,* and the magnitude of the differences was medium (*t*(238) = 4.64, *p* = .000, Cohen's *d* = .64). This means that female learners have stronger personal reasons for learning English than male learners. This is consistent with the findings of previous studies, which suggested that female learners had more positive orientation for language learning and higher instrumentality than male learners in L2 English learning (Dörnyei and Clément, 2001; Dörnyei and Csizér, 2002; Ludwig, 1983; Koul et al. 2009). The interviewees provided extensive reasons for their English learning in the interview, including personal interests in L2 culture, personal preferences to English subjects, the influences from families, travelling orientation, etc. The replies, in terms of personal reasons for English learning, were only selected and analyzed in the current section and more information will be presented in the analysis of other motivational factors. F9 and M21 were Year 4 students and they presented their personal reasons for English learning from different aspects.

> *F9: Because I think in the trend of globalization, English is very important. If I can learn English well, I can get a good job. Most of the good jobs need people to have a good command of English. I think English will ensure I have a better job. I want to have a prosperous future.*

> *M21: English is a kind of tool with which I can exchange thoughts with foreigners. And it is useful because English proficiency will be necessary for my promotion in the future.*

F9's reply demonstrated her clear and strong personal reasons for English learning; she

regarded English as important in the context of globalization and connected English learning with good career opportunities in her future. Although M21 showed similar personal reasons, his response did not show the same strong intentions as F9's did. He defined English as a tool for communication, although he believed that English would be useful for his future career. Comparing F9's responses to M21's, it was shown that the former's personal reasons for English learning were stronger compared to the latter's reasons. Although the personal reasons in English learning for both were at a higher than average level, they showed a different understanding of English and a different level of promotional instrumentalities in English.

➢ **Discussion**

Both quantitative and qualitative data confirmed that female students had a higher level of *ideal L2 self* and *instrumentality A* than male learners. Based on these results, the following discussion will be developed from several perspectives: self-concept from a psychological perspective, collectivistic social values, influences of macro social contexts on individual' self-images and other factors.

The findings of female students' higher level of *ideal L2 self* and *instrumentality A* than male learners was in accordance with the result of Henry and Apelgren (2008), who suggested that Swedish primary school girls presented stronger WTC than boys so that they related L2 English usage with their *ideal L2 self* and produced a higher level of *ideal L2 self*. The qualitative data from the current study also provided support for this argument. One of the female interviewees, F51, demonstrated her clear intention of using English in her future career and expressed her positive attitude towards working in English-related areas. In addition, females' positive thinking about the use of English can be directly reflected from their high level of promotional instrumentality. F9 believed English learning had a closer connection to her career, which implied the high possibility of using English in her future. Although both female and male interviewees agreed on the importance of English, the female interviewees showed a stronger intention to use English as a part of their future, rather than just meeting a requirement for her job, as the male interviewee indicated. Kobayashi (2002) suggested that Japanese women had more positive attitudes towards L2 English learning than men because of the social perception of women obtaining professional benefits through English learning. This reflected the importance of the connection between English

learning and further use among female learners from another perspective.

The findings of the gender differences on *ideal L2 self* is another reflection of gender features in self-conception from a psychological perspective. It is commonly agreed that women develop more self-views on their future identity in their life than men do and women also differ to men when choosing their future roles (Harter, 1990; Knox et al. 2000; Segal et al. 2001). In the present research, female learners listed more possibilities for their future careers than male learners did. Comparing the individual learners, the female student, F51, expressed more than one choice and possibility for her future career. Her replies indicated that she produced each ideal self depending on the level of her English attainment and her study progress. Her first working intention, '*high school teacher*' or '*office lady*', is the kind of career which is socially regarded as the closest possible career to a college graduate and she put this self-image in first place. Her later intention, working in an international context, could be her real personal expectation for her future, as indicated in her replies, and she also actively provided further information to explain why she wanted to work in an international environment. As to the male counterpart, M94 conservatively presented the best possible career to him and did not extend into other possibilities. His further reply indicated that he did not regard his English learning as a positive factor in developing his career, which could be the reason preventing him from developing multiple views about his future with English. Although both F51 and M94 had higher scores of the *ideal L2 self* than the average level, they presented their *ideal L2 self* as different envisaged scopes.

Thirdly, developing ideal L2 selves based on ones' own standpoint as well as others' standpoints is consistent with Higgins (1987). The results showed that female learners indicated they were more likely to develop L2 self-images based on others' views than male learners did. When Markus and Kitayama (1991) discussed gender differences on self-concepts, they suggested that the social context could foster a person's self-concept. People with collectivistic values intend to develop self-concept from interdependent views, developing a self-concept with interference from others, such as families, friends, peers, etc. It was agreed in Markus and Oyserman (1989) and Triandis et al. (1988) that women have more collectivistic values than men do in collectivistic social contexts, so women could formulate their self-concept with more consideration of others than men do. Therefore, based on this, the result of the current study could be interpreted better. F51's first future self-image of a 'high school teacher' could be

developed with interference from her parents' hopes, peers' choice or social perception. F144 developed her ideal L2 self-image based on her parents' plan and expectations. These phenomena vividly reflected the interdependent features they had in building their ideal L2 self-images.

On the other hand, Chinese students are always supported in their education by their parents and it is reasonable to understand why students took advice from their parents and followed their parents' arrangements for their future (Taguchi et al. 2009). Although the male interviewee, M187, did not indicate that his plan for going abroad was based on his parents' advice, it won't be possible for him to realize this plan without his parents' permission and support. Thus, both female and male learners could develop L2 ideal selves following the influence of others' viewpoints, but female learners showed more outstanding interdependent features in formulating their L2 self-images with others' viewpoints than male learners did.

The influence of social perception of the gender equality on women's self-concept could be another important incentive on the gender differences in their *ideal L2 self* and promotional instrumentality. Lips (2007) suggested that the social improvement of women's status in New Zealand increased the number of female students studying and working in the fields of engineering or science, which was traditionally dominated by male students. In China, gender equality has been implemented for the past six decades. By building legal protection for women and women's rights, the propaganda of women's social values and achievements has been highlighted in all areas. Modern young women are living with the surroundings of encouragement for female personal capabilities and success. Women are no longer regarded as inferior to men and girls have the same chance for education as boys do. Girls put more emphasis on developing their personal interests and study skills in single-sex schools (Lin, 2006; Tsui and Rich, 2002). The existence of the traditional emphasis on education, the increasing enrolment of women in higher education and good academic performances by female students in school have strengthened the social perception of women's intelligence and competence. If female students develop a self-view in the area of engineering and science because of the social improvement of women's status in New Zealand, then women in China would also be more likely to create self-images for their future beyond traditional self-images and this feature could possibly be reflected in their ideal L2 selves, having more ideal L2 images beyond the traditional working areas. As F9

indicated, female learners connected English learning with international contexts and they believed in the cohesion between English learning and their future career. Female learners integrated English, globalization and future careers and developed a broad vision of their future career with English. The results strongly suggested the influence of social encouragement on promoting female learners to develop multi-domains of their ideal selves with English.

Finally, the results showed that the link between *ideal L2 self* and *Instrumentality* were stronger among male learners than among female learners. In the qualitative data, it can be seen that female learners actively connected English with diverse ideal self-images while male learners commonly regarded English as a tool. This suggested that the imbalance of expectations could produce gender differences for their L2 self-image with English. This also highlighted that male learners generally shared equal opinions of their current English learning and the importance of English in their future life. This explained the stronger correlation between L2 self and instrumentality among male learners than female learners.

Summary

The results confirmed the gender differences for *ideal L2 self & instrumentality A*. The results were interpreted by linking gender differences in self-concept and in Chinese collective social values. Besides, gender differences on *ideal L2 self & instrumentality A* were also suggested to be based on female learners' positive intention of L2 usage in their future and the influence of social encouragement on women's non-traditional L2 self-images.

3.2.2 *Ought-to L2 self & instrumentality B (prevention)*

Ought-to L2 self & instrumentality B were suggested as another two correlated variables in Taguchi et al. (2009). The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient found a strong positive correlation between the two variables, $r = .633$, $p = .000$ (two-tailed) in the current research. Separate correlation tests showed strong positive links between *ought-to L2 self* and *instrumentality B* in the female group $r = .640$, $p = .000$ (two-tailed) and male groups, $r = .594$, $p = .000$ (two-tailed) respectively. The links in the female group were stronger than among the male group.

> *Ought-to L2 self*

The results show that female learners (*M* = 3.99, *SD* = .71) had a significantly higher score than male learners (*M* = 3.58, *SD* = .73) in *ought-to L2 self* and the magnitude of the differences was medium (*t*(238) = 1.98, *p* = .05, Cohen's *d* = .29). The qualitative data from interviews and class observations suggested that both female learners and male learners had high levels of responsibilities and obligations in their learning, but female learners presented more *ought-to L2 self* features than male learners. F225 and M227 were from the same class in the Year 2 group and they gave interesting comments on gender differences in English learning and revealed in which instances female students differed to male students in ought-to L2 selves.

> F225: *Girls can calm down to study something (deeper). And girls are also more careful and diligent than boys.*
>
> M227: *How do you know we don't study hard?*
>
> F225: *OK, but the truth is there are always more girls than boys at the after-school English course, no matter what course it is. All the courses I attended, there were always more girls than boys.*
>
> M227: *Girls like to take classes, or girls are not confident enough.*
>
> F225: *No, girls just want to make sure of something and want to do our best. Think about yourself why you took intensive course (for English grammar). Nobody wants to be the last one in the class. Everyone wants high scores.*
>
> M227: *Yes, girls are more serious, especially diligent in note taking.*

The conversation between F225 and M227 provided an important explanation for the results of the quantitative data. The content of the conversation started with gender differences in English learning, but it changed into an argument on whether boys or girls studied harder, which led to the explanation that female learners were more intent at avoiding a negative outcome than male learners. In the latter part of the conversation, M227 indirectly agreed with F227 after she indicated that the students were concerned with their scores and hoped to avoid obtaining low scores by attending more courses. This suggested that both female and male learners were concerned with their academic performances but female students showed more intention to prevent a negative outcome than male learners, which resulted in a higher level of *ought-to L2 self*.

In addition, the observations of the students' learning activities during the pre-class time

support this point. Before the class began, it was quite common to see female students undertaking English speaking practice, reading activities based on their textbooks, asking about homework or exchanging study notes. There were many previews of learning activities among female learners. These phenomena can be interpreted from many aspects but they can also be understood based on the features of *ought-to L2 self*. Because text reading and speaking drills were the most common learning activities in their English classes, female students did pre-class practice possibly because they wanted to avoid any potential negative performance in the class. They checked their study notes and homework to make sure they had finished the assignments and had consistent answers to the questions so as to avoid leaving a negative impression on their teacher or a bad record in their study. Furthermore, both quantitative and qualitative data in *instrumentality B* confirmed that female students had more intention of avoiding a negative outcome than male learners.

➤ *Instrumentality B (prevention)*

The results showed that the female group (*M* = 4.20, *SD* = .86) scored significantly higher than the male group (*M* = 3.64, *SD* = .96) in *instrumentality B* and the magnitude of the differences was medium (*t*(238) = 4.31, *p* = .000, Cohen's *d* = .61). The results demonstrated that female learners had more intention to avoid negative consequences than the male learners in English learning, such as bad marks, failure in exams, etc. F140 was a 1st year student and she provided very representative information on this point. Her reply revealed many possible reasons for her learning behaviour, such as following others, modelling someone and avoiding being the bottom student in her class. A male interviewee presented his different opinions about learning in college and felt more open-minded on scores than female learners.

> *F140: Everybody worked hard. Not only me. All my roommates went off to self-study after dinner and didn't go back to the dormitory until 11 o'clock. There is one girl in our building. She studies in the corridor after curfew. I think everyone is under pressure with the studying. To me, my English was not very good in high school but I am an English major now, so I have to study hard. Besides, my English is probably the worst in our class because my score was lower than most of my classmates when we were enrolled.*

> *M158: Marks do not represent everything. When you look for a job, nobody ask for your marks at school. They only ask whether you have a certificate. However, if you continue to do postgraduate study, good marks could be competitive. I am not sure. I haven't thought about it that far. Actually, we also can work very hard but not always. Before the exams, I will definitely go to the library or don't even sleep. I don't want to be the last one because it is too shameful but I just need a pass for each subject. Everyone said that we should have more experience in college rather than just study. I think that is right.*

It was revealed that students faced different levels of study pressure after they entered college. Both F140 and M158 agreed that they worked hard to avoid negative performances for their studies and they did not want low marks, but they showed different levels of concern. F140 showed more concern about her marks and she tried to improve her academic grades within her class while M158 presented less concern for his marks because he had more expectations beyond just knowledge learning in his life at college.

The observations from their language instructor, Ms Wang, were interesting. Ms Wang said that the female students were more obedient in following instructions than male students. They never confronted their teachers or went against regulations/requests from the school as individuals. For example, when they had different opinions on something in the class, they usually talked to each other and then raised the question together. Female students were more intent at protecting themselves from trouble and keeping sound records about their study in the school while male students sometimes showed a little bit of carelessness about their records. They sometimes skipped classes. However, all of them took their studies seriously. This observation provided a general view of gender differences from a teacher's perspective. It confirmed that female learners had the general intention of avoiding trouble in school learning contexts. All of this could suggest that female learners' intention of avoiding negative consequences could be reflected in their L2 learning.

➢ **Discussion**

As shown above, female learners had a significantly higher level of *ought-to L2 self & instrumentality B* and revealed more *ought-to L2 self* features for preventing negative

outcomes than male learners. The results in *instrumentality B* also echoed the findings in *ought-to L2 self*. The following discussion will be developed based on three perspectives: *ought-to self* from a psychological view, interdependent features between women and learners' obligations in L2 English learning.

The finding of female learners' intention to avoid negative outcomes in L2 English was consistent with the general features of the *ought-to self* concept that the learners believed they should have in order to avoid possible negative outcomes (Higgins, 1987; 1998). This was also consistent with Gjesme (1983), who found that girls had a higher motivation to avoid failure than boys in school. In the conversation between F225 and M158, F225 thought that female students worked hard in order to avoid possible bad academic performances based on her observation of the dominant numbers of female students in after-school English training courses. Her opinion can be supported from the replies from F140, who highlighted this intention again by telling her worries about her academic performance in the class; she kept working hard and hoped to stay away from attaining the worst academic grades within her class. On the other hand, male students showed fewer worries about their academic performance. M158 presented the conflicting thinking between scores and his personal expectations, which was not indicated among female learners. Therefore, both male students and female students fulfiled their learning duties for good academic performance but female learners' intentions were stronger than male learners.

Female learners presented more interdependent features than male learners in their learning behaviour. When F140 explained her situation with her English studies, she mentioned other female peers before expressing her personal reasons, which indicated her intention of being connected with others. This phenomenon not only suggested her intention to build interdependent relationships among female learners but also indicated her intention to build an interdependent view of herself; as other female peers worked hard, she did the same in order to be one of them, or at least she thought she ought to do the same as others did. Cross and Madson (1997) suggested that women have more intention of developing interdependent self-construals. The female students modelled each other in their L2 learning and developed interdependent views of *ought-to L2 self*, which could be a reflection of the interdependent feature. The learning activities before the class could also be a reflection of learning behaviour with the modelling of each other under the influence of peers. Besides, the observation from their language

instructor agreed that female students were generally more intent on building interdependent connections when solving problems. The more teamwork they were engaged in, the more they learned to think about others and become collectivistic (Triandis, 1995: 66). F140 confirmed the existence of the collectivistic feature among female learners in their L2 learning.

Since the ideology of learning and obtaining academic achievements have been traditionally regarded as the honour of a family and the path to a higher social status in China, parents invest as much as they can in their children's education, both economically and spiritually. The children from one-child families have drawn attention from their parents as well as enduring excessive expectations from their families because of the one-child policy. Li and Li (2010) indicated that a national survey on primary and secondary school students revealed that 77% of children from a one-child family reported that they studied to repay their parents. Both the female and male interviewees indicated their worries about their academic performances and agreed on working hard for good scores. Thus, it is reasonable to connect the students' concerns about their scores with family honour or repaying their parents. Tsui and Rich (2002) found that parents of female only-children spent more money on education than parents of male only-children. This could lead female students to bear a greater sense of responsibility and repayment to their parents. At the same time, national propaganda for promoting gender equality encouraged women to lead an independent life, take responsibilities, develop more personal abilities and achieve in all the areas that men do. On the other hand, Kim (1997) and Stevenson and Zusho (2002) found that young people in modern China from a one-child family appeared to place less emphasis on other people or social contributions than before due to a variety of reasons, such as exposure to Western culture, and over-attention from their family, etc. Thus, such circumstances implied that society is building a different atmosphere for men and women. Women are encouraged to take responsibility for themselves, for people around them, and for what they are doing while the implications for men's social values are not emphasized as much as women's. Therefore, the sense of social responsibility could also be mirrored in their English learning. Female learners developed a higher level of *ought-to L2 self* while male learners showed less engagement in their L2 learning because they did not receive similar social encouragement.

Summary

The results confirmed the gender differences on *ought-to L2 self* and *instrumentality B*. The qualitative data from the *instrumentality B* positively supported the findings in *ought-to L2 self*; female learners were more concerned about negative consequences than male learners. Females' tendency to build an interdependent relationship and social encouragement could also be the factors needed to promote female learners' higher responsibilities in their learning than male learners.

3.2.3 *Attitude to learn English & L2 learning experiences*

The results showed that female learners ($M = 4.19$, $SD = .94$) had a significantly higher score than male learners ($M = 3.92$, $SD = .76$) in *attitude to learn English* and the magnitude of the differences was small ($t(238) = 2.05$, $p = .04$, Cohen's $d = .32$). The qualitative data revealed that both female and male learners shared some common opinions about their current learning environment, such as expecting more opportunities for L2 use, hoping to learn more about the culture in English speaking countries, and hoping to have more options for school subjects, etc. The gender differences can be spotted in terms of two aspects: the internal balance required to cope with dissatisfactory English subjects and their opinions of their English teachers. As the quantitative measurements only covered the learners' evaluation of their English classes, the learners' opinions were limited and it resulted in a small magnitude of gender differences in the quantitative analysis.

F46 and M47 were Year 3 students and their comments were given based on the translation classes, which were the major subjects for year 3 students. F46 showed a passive attitude towards the subjects, but described them as 'necessary' and 'useful' for her future. She questioned the arrangements of the subjects but at the same time, indicated her inability to change the situation because she was concerned about her scores. She presented her interior balance between her dissatisfaction and the necessity in her learning. The male interviewee, M47, showed stronger dissatisfaction with the subjects and gave more negative evaluations than F46. He thought the subjects were not useful to his future and the school subjects were only set for exam purposes.

> *F46: I think it is boring, but necessary. Some of us will work as a translator or*
> *interpreter, so it (these subjects) is quite useful for the future. But not all*

students will work as a translator or interpreter. But we have to study these
subjects in order to get shining marks.

M47: It is boring, difficult and not overloading. I hope we can have more
practice, instead of exams. We need some subjects which will be useful for the
future. Although English skills are important, other knowledge is important
too. I prefer to take economic classes, management, or international business.

Moreover, both male and female students showed some intention to attribute their
English learning to their teachers. Some male students mentioned the gender of their
teachers and indicated they were not treated equally in the class. M111 thought male
students were ignored in his class because the dominant numbers of female students
drew more attention from the female teacher. Female students did not show concern for
the gender of the teacher, but they had other expectations from their teachers. F129
thought that the current teachers were less "*careful, patient and responsible*" than her
high school teachers.

M111: I want to have more male teachers. Since the first year, no, since my
secondary school, I have only had two male teachers. (Interviewer: Is
there a difference between male teachers and female teachers?) Of course.
A female teacher likes to talk to the girls. There were only 5, no 6 boys in
our class. The girls talked a lot. In our class, you always heard the girls
talking. You even don't know there were men here.

F129: I need more careful, patient and responsible teachers to practice with. My
teacher in my high school was very nice and kind. She was very patient. I
didn't like English when I was in junior school and my grade was not
good too. But I began to like English when I was in high school because
of my teacher.

Both interviewees were from Year 1 groups and their comments on the teachers were
produced based on a comparison between their high school teachers and current
teachers. Students in the senior year group did not show similar tendencies. Thus, these
opinions could represent general freshman's ideas. They were faced with different
learning contexts when transferring from high school to college.

F12 and M22 were from senior year groups and they were studying in the same classes, sharing the experiences of the same English teachers. F12's detailed description about her three foreign English teachers revealed the distance between her expectations of foreign English teachers and the real teaching situation. She firstly presented her own opinion about a professional teacher by categorising three features, 'enthusiasm', 'rich in knowledge' and teaching skills. She then evaluated her three foreign teachers on their personality, teaching capabilities and knowledge of English. She also indicated the nationality of each teacher in her comments. She presented clear pictures of her three foreign teachers with an objective description of their English class situation as well as her personal feelings about the teachers.

> *F12: I want to say something about English foreign teachers. Since I came to the university, I have met three foreign English teachers. One is Josh, one is Nick, and another one is Roger. Through the three teachers, I have some ideas about English foreign teachers. I think, as a foreign English teacher, the teacher first should have enthusiasm to teach students, then he or she should be rich in knowledge, and thirdly they should have the skills and should know how to teach students and transfer his or her knowledge to the students. Through the three points, I will give my impression of the three teachers. The first one is Josh. I think Josh is very enthusiastic. He is like a brother, or a friend, but he is not a major in English, so he is not rich in English knowledge and he is not good at teaching English. He is from America. As a foreign English teacher, I don't like him every much. Nick is from Britain. I think, as a British man, he maybe thinks we are inferior to him, somewhat like that. When he is teaching a class, he is very serious and strict. I like strict teachers but not as strict as him. When he is teaching, he is not communicative, he is very serious and I don't like his style. He doesn't get his language and knowledge to us. So I don't like him either. And then the third one, I like Roger very much. He is a good teacher and he is a good friend. First, He is very enthusiastic. When we have class, he talks a lot to us and asks us a lot of questions. And I think he is very rich in knowledge, he talked a lot of the current topics in America to us and discussed with us. Thirdly, it is very important to a foreign English teacher. He should let us know, basically, how native English is different from Chinese thinking*

English. He let us know it. Basically I know this from his teaching. So I like him very much. I wish I can come across more teachers like him in my future.

M22 gave his opinions on the same foreign teachers, based on comparing foreign English teachers to Chinese English teachers. He mainly commented on their teaching styles and personalities. He grouped the teachers according to their nationalities and also showed his intention to categorise the personal characteristics of his foreign English teachers into the general features of the communities which his foreign English teachers belonged to. Comparatively, F12 was more focused on the teachers' professional skills and knowledge while M22 was more focused on the teachers' general personality features.

> *M22: Compared to our Chinese English teachers, American people are more open-minded, you can talk any topic with them, such as some forbidden topics in our China, like politics. You just feel very free to talk about it and they also like to express their minds ... ... About the British people, I don't have a good opinion about them. When I was a freshman in our university, the oral English teacher was a British man. He was so arrogant and his attitudes cannot be accepted. When we made some mistakes, he always says you are so stupid. He is not friendly ... ... we hope to have more chance to practice English, but if I have more good English teachers, that will be better.*

➢ **Discussion**

The quantitative data showed significant gender differences on the learners' attitudes towards their English classes and the qualitative data revealed the multiple layers of the gender differences regarding the learners' dissatisfaction with their learning contexts, including the gender of their teachers and their opinions about foreign teachers. The results showed that both female and male students had negative attitudes and evaluation towards the English subjects in the school and towards their foreign English teachers. This phenomenon was consistent with Su (2010) on the deficiencies of the current English major curriculum in China, and He and Miller (2011) on the issues about foreign English teachers in China. However, the female and male students presented different emphases and concerns about their courses in their comments. The discussion will be developed based on local stereotypes in English learning/teaching practice.

As with all other school subjects, English teaching/learning is mainly based on textbooks and periodical assessments from primary school to higher education. The data clearly showed that students were seriously 'bored' by the school subjects. Because of the traditional emphasis on academic performance through exams, a female interviewee showed her concern about her scores in her learning, although she negatively evaluated the subjects. The responses from the male interviewee revealed worry about the situation of the English learning, such as less practical value, limited choices available in the subjects and students' concerns about their future. These implied the existence of a gap between the English curriculum and the learners' needs. The students presented their incapability to change the situation and all these deficiencies were related to the curriculum design and course management, which were not controlled by the students. The course curriculum was designed according to the guidelines distributed by central government and students did not have much space to choose the subjects which they wanted to take. Although the teaching materials are more flexible and diverse than before, the students' learning has not changed much because the requirement for obtaining degrees or the requirement for proficiency assessments has not changed and the students' learning is still constrained.

Looking into the negative evaluation from the female and male interviewees, F46 connected the subject with relevant careers, although she did not completely agree with it. M47 did not show a direct intention to connect the current subjects with a possible career in his future, although he agreed with the importance of English. M47 also thought the subjects were 'boring and 'difficult', which highlighted the fact that the English subjects were not tailored to the learners' interest and language competence. As the students need to pass the national exams for their English proficiency, such as TEM Band 4 or Band 8, the course curriculum was set mostly to help the students to prepare for their exams, as M47 indicated. Therefore, in the same passive learning contexts, male students presented stronger negative attitudes than female students, while female students indicated more compatible and flexible attitudes to cope with the problems. Additionally, Ludwig (1983) found that male learners reported more difficulties in taking their foreign language classes and had less positive orientation in foreign language learning than female learners. Thus, the sense of the difficulties in L2 learning could be a potential reason for male learners having negative attitudes toward L2 English classes.

Another interesting difference between female and male students was the concerns about the teachers' gender from the male students. Gender of the language instructor was studied based on single-sex language learning contexts and the study showed that female and male teachers had different strengths and a positive impact on the students' language learning (Kissau et al. 2009). The responses from M111 indicated that female teachers tended to interact with female students more than male students. Although neither female learners nor teachers mentioned this, it is possible that male learners felt they were ignored based on the general features in the class between teachers and students. Firstly, female students appeared to be more actively involved in the learning activities than male students, such as taking the front seats, answering the questions voluntarily, previewing the lessons, etc. while male students always took the seats at the back of the classroom and mostly kept silent in the classes. Secondly, due to the traditional ideology on gender differences between women and men, it is a general tendency that female students feel it is easier to talk with female teachers and male students feel it is easier to talk with male teachers. Thirdly, students with an excellent academic performance usually get involved in more learning/teaching activities with teachers than other students did. Female students generally outscored male students in English exams and this could lead to more interaction between the teacher and the female students. Thus, all these points suggested that there could be multiple reasons why male learners felt they were not treated equally because of the female teachers. The influence of dominant numbers of female students will be separately discussed in the next section.

M22 showed his general upset about the dominant numbers of female students in his class and the minority of male English teachers. Kissau (2006a, 2006b) and William et al. (2002) suggested the social perception of French negatively impacted on boys' French learning because French was regarded as a feminine subject and hence only suitable for women. Being afraid of negative social appraisal and negative association with other male peers, boys had a lower level of motivation than girls in French learning. As to English learning in China, Zhao (2011) suggested that the gender codes and the formulation of gender identity were embedded in the curriculum. English is, therefore, rated as 'feminine' and a proper subject for girls and this means that female learners outnumber male learners in all types of higher education institute. Koul et al. (2009) also found the Thai female L2 learners percieved more social support for their

English learning than male learners. Students tend to enrol on a course that their peers choose and they avoid attending any subject which would make them look different from others (Zhao, 2011). This not only affects the enrolment of male students in an English major but also leads to gender imbalances among the language teachers. Therefore, the social perception of gender in English learning negatively affects the gender balance among English learners either from a short-term or a long-term view. Thus, the imbalanced gender distribution among English learners and English teachers is another reason affecting the male learners' attitudes towards English. There will be more discussion in section 3.2.4.

With regards to the evaluation of foreign teachers, female students presented more particular expectations about their foreign English teachers than male students. All these expectations demonstrated the students' learning orientations, such as interests in L2 native English and English speakers, caring about teachers' attitudes and motivation in their teaching, the importance of using communicative teaching approaches in language classes and their eagerness for knowledge. Female students' comments on teachers were mainly focused on learning issues and these were consistent with the general evaluation of the native English speakers in China (He and Miller, 2011). Male students' evaluations of the teachers were more from a social perspective, such as the topics the foreign teachers covered and the manner in which they spoke. However, the male interviewee used the general marker of 'American' and 'British people' to represent his teachers instead of using the teachers' names and he made stereotypical inferences about a social group based on his foreign teachers' personality characteristics. This feature was consistent with Stanley (2010), who suggested that language learners based their impression of 'foreign others' according to their first foreign teacher, and regarded the individual foreign teacher's personal characteristics as the general characteristics of the community to which the foreign teacher belonged. In addition, collectivistic values could be another reason for drawing stereotypical inferences, according to Spencer-Rodgers et al. (2007), who suggested people from a collectivistic social context tend more to draw stereotypical inferences. However, this feature was not as outstanding among the female interviewees. Although the female interviewees specifically indicated the nationality of the teacher, their evaluations were mainly based on teaching and learning reasons, not on general personalities. The possible explanation could be that female students had more experience in knowing foreign and Chinese English teachers

than male students. According to Tsui and Rich (2002), female students took more language tutoring and classes beyond their school courses than male students and the female interviewees in Section 3.2.2 also mentioned that, according to their experience, female learners usually outnumbered male learners in tutoring classes. This implied that more exposure to foreign or national English teachers could make female learners provide more objective evaluations based on individual characteristics.

Summary

These results confirmed there were gender differences on *attitude to learn English* and the qualitative data provided rich explanations for the statistical results. Female and male learners demonstrated different levels of dissatisfaction with school subjects and their teachers. Female learners showed more tolerance to the school subjects than male learners because they cared more about their academic performance. In the comments on foreign teachers, female learners offered more objective comments than male learners. On the other hand, the dominant number of female learners and the gender of the teachers could discourage male learners towards English learning.

3.2.4 *Criterion measures*

The results show that the female group ($M = 4.31$, $SD = .74$) scored significantly higher than male group ($M = 3.99$, $SD = .72$) in *criterion measures* and the magnitude of the differences is almost medium ($t(238) = 3.03$, $p = .003$, Cohen's $d = .45$). This indicated that female learners tended to make a greater effort than the male learners in English learning. The same tendency was also found in the responses in their follow-up interviews about their English speaking/practice outside of the classroom. Although the replies were diverse, female learners reported that they practiced English by themselves or with their friends in their dormitory more frequently than male learners did. English practice could be generally regarded as a common learning activity among female learners.

> *F136 (from year 2): I always speak to myself. Or practice with my friends in our dormitory. We sometime go to English corner, but not often. We have a lot of exams this year.*

F147 (from year 1): I often speak English with my friends. My oral English is not good and we need practice. Practice makes perfect.

The situation among male learners was different. Most of the male learners reported that they did not speak English outside of the classroom. Some of them reported they occasionally spoke English, such as in the English Corner, and only a few of them reported they practiced English after class. The reply from M127 and M170 represents the general response from male learners:

M170 (from Year 2): Occasionally, there is no chance to speak. (Interviewer: Did you practice with your roommates?) Yes, sometimes before the class. But if the teacher asked, I will do it.

M127 (from Year 1): I spoke English a lot in high school but I never do it in college. (Interviewer: Why?) In high school, we have (language lab) and we can practice speaking there. (Interviewer: There is a language lab here too.) Yes, but they are different. Here everybody studies by themselves. I think study in college is more independent.

Comparing the responses from female and male learners, female learners demonstrated more positive attitudes and commitment to English practice than male learners. They practiced English by themselves, with roommates or friends. Although both female and male learners' responses indicated that their after-school practice activities might be influenced by the amount of class-based learning, female learners still showed an active attitude, creating a learning environment for themselves. On the contrary, male learners appeared passive and their practices were limited by the environment. M127 was a motivated learner but his speaking practice was prevented by his enrolment in college and his awareness of independent learning changed his learning behaviour.

In addition, the class observations on homework submission suggested that female learners spent more time and made more effort than male learners in this study. The phenomena were generalised, based on the observation of the *Academic writing* class in Year-3 groups. According to the course instructor, the submission of the homework differed depending on whether it was compulsory or optional. When the assignment was compulsory, both male and female learners worked hard and fulfiled the assignment on

time because students were concerned about the scores for their assignment. However, when the assignment was optional, the situation changed. Female students always submitted their homework and most of them finished the homework. Only a minority of female learners missed the deadline for the submission but they always provided reasons to the teacher or asked for an extension. With regard to male learners, the situation was reversed. Only a minority of male students fulfiled the optional assignment well, most of them submitted something occasionally and a few of them never handed in any optional homework. This observation confirmed the quantitative results, which suggested that female learners made a bigger effort than male learners in L2 English learning.

➢ **Discussion**

Comparing the responses between female and male interviewees, female learners paid more attention to their English language performance, which was consistent with Dörnyei et al. (2006). As F147 indicated, she believed her oral English would be improved through practice and female learners involved themselves in many practice activities, either by themselves individually, in pairs or in groups. Male interviewees did not show a similar tendency. Powell and Batters (1985) found that girls generally attached more importance to foreign language learning than boys did. Therefore, if female learners put more emphasis on English learning, they made more effort to improve their language capabilities and academic performances.

With regard to male interviewees, they presented a connection between their studying effort and their learning environment. According to Taguchi et al. (2009), there were strong correlations between *criteria measures* and *attitude to learn English* among Chinese L2 English learners. In the current data, M127 stopped practicing his English because the atmosphere in the current language lab differed to the one in his high school. This suggested the influence of his learning environment on the willingness to make an effort in his English learning. In addition, he highlighted that his new experiences in college led him to develop an independent learning style, which prevented him from engaging in learning activities with others. On the contrary, female interviewees presented plenty of interdependent learning activities in their English practices. There must be multiple reasons for these differences and the following discussion will be based on three aspects: the social stereotype of English, English

related careers and the influence of peers' gender identity on male learners.

In China, the dominant proportion of female learners and female teachers in language learning/teaching is striking (Yu, 2010) and this has strengthened the perception of the feministic features of English learning and English relevant careers. As Su (2010) found, more than half of the English graduates chose to work as teachers because of limited career choices when faced with a fiercely competitive employment situation. Besides, working in an educational organization was traditionally regarded as the ideal professional career for women. With the existence of social stereotyping in career choices, this will lead to dominant numbers of females working in the field of language teaching. Zhang (1998) confirmed that both boys and girls intended to work in a place with same gender peers. Based on this point, female learners are more likely to pay attention to the improvement of their language competence, spend more time and effort on their assignments and conduct extra learning activities because of their career development.

Dörnyei and Clément (2001) and Dörnyei and Csizér (2002) found that the positive social perception of German, Russian and English influenced boys' preferences toward foreign language learning. Associating this with the current findings, the social perception of the feminine features of English and the relevant careers could constrain the male learners' efforts in their English learning. Male learners regard English learning as meeting a requirement for the development of their future careers in other professional areas. Gordon (2008) suggested that the gender ideology of L2 language could influence learners' investment in and resistance to L2 learning. Paying too much attention to English could be regarded as the kind of behaviour matching feminine features. This has prevented male learners from investing too much effort in it. Kobayashi (2002) found that Japanese women presented special interest in English learning because English was regarded as a feminine language in Japan and it could offer more opportunities for travel or work in English-speaking countries. In such cases, the feminine gender perception of English promotes female learners' learning and, simultaneously, demotivates male learners' learning.

Helgeson and Sharpsteen (1987: 727) mentioned that men are more likely to "experience conflict between intimacy and masculinity" than women. The distribution of female and male students in the classes from primary school to high school is usually

even, but male learners became the absolute minority in their college class (Yu, 2010). In addition, feminine and masculine features are shaped explicitly and consciously in the colleges of China. For example, boys and girls live in separate apartment blocks and they pick their seats in the classroom by gender group (female and male learners avoid sitting together voluntarily in order to avoid any rumours about their relationships). This is because learning and living in college is the first time that the students have to live independently, develop study skills with less monitoring from teachers, achieve a kind of independence from their parents, establish relationships with others and build new social values. The independent tendency and masculinity among the male learners begins to be developed with their enrolment in college. Powell and Batters (1985) discussed the importance of peer group identity among school boys when they chose foreign languages. This was reflected by M127, who began to develop an independent learning style because of his observation of other male peers. Therefore, this suggests that the general tendency of loyalty to one's own gender stereotypical behaviour still exists in L2 English learning. When the male learners began to build masculinity, their intention to be independent could minimize the chance of involvement in mutual learning activities.

Summary

The gender differences for *criterion measures* were confirmed by both quantitative and qualitative data. The discussion was extended based on the general tendency of female learners' emphasis on language learning and the social stereotyping of English and English-relevant careers. In addition, the development of male learners' masculinity in college also prevented them from making an effort in English learning and engaging in mutual learning activities.

3.2.5 *English anxiety*

➢ **Anxiety in English speaking**

The results showed that female learners (M = 3.71, SD = .79) had a marginally higher score than male learners (M = 3.47, SD = .89) in *English anxiety* and the magnitude of the differences was small ($t(238)$ = 1.94, p = .05, Cohen's d = .28). Based on the observation of the English class in Year 2, the researcher found that female students felt

more at ease and were more active than male students in answering questions during the classes. Most male students showed their cooperation in a silent way and some of them were more active in answering open questions or expressing extended ideas beyond the content of the textbook. There were some female and male students who did not speak much, but they responded to the teachers' questions in a low voice when the question was answered by the group. The observation did not directly reflect their anxieties in speaking English in the class. The follow-up interviews provided some further information based on their individual opinions on English anxieties.

> M222: We are not anxious. We sometimes answer questions too. But normally, girls like to answer questions. If someone answered the question, we don't need to do it again. Just now, we were worried because I, actually all of us, did not do homework and we'd better keep silent. Girls like to show off. They give them a chance and cover ourselves from the teacher too.

> M307: I think girls have some talent in language, especially in speaking. Most of the girls in our class do the presentation better than us. I did the presentation last term, it was a tragedy. Everyone was laughing. I will never forget it. (Interviewer: what's the problem?) There were too many new words and I didn't know how to pronounce them. I almost spoke them all wrong. Nothing was correct. It was really funny. Our teacher laughed too. (Others nodded and giggled to agree.)

Neither M222 nor M307 indicated they were anxious in speaking English in the class, but it depended on whether they had made a full preparation for the class. According to M222, he felt worried because he did not do his homework and was not prepared well enough to answer questions. The reply for M307 implied that his anxieties were based on his speaking capabilities and English vocabulary. When he narrated the experience of his presentation, he did not show he was upset or uncomfortable with his classmates' reaction. Most of the male learners showed a very optimistic attitude to negative situations. They did not feel anxiety when speaking English in the class under any circumstances.

> F230: sometimes I am a little shy and too shy to speak out. If I learn it long enough, it will make me more confident and outgoing. I am not afraid of

speaking in my class, because we have known each other for a long time, who is good, who is bad, everybody knows. My English pronunciation is poor. When I speak, they laugh at me. (Are you unhappy about that?) No, no I am not unhappy. I mean I am not angry. But I feel a little bit embarrassed. So I just try to speak less.

F236: I am usually not anxious when I speak English. But sometimes foreigners speak so fast, I cannot follow and I don't understand what they mean. I feel upset. (Interviewer: did you try to ask them to repeat?) I tried, it works sometimes, but mostly I still don't understand. So I know if I don't understand them for the first time, I won't understand even after they repeat. I only feel anxious about this.

On the contrary, female learners presented a different type of unease in English speaking. F230 was one of the female learners who always spoke English in a low voice and seldom volunteered to answer any question. Her reply suggested that her individual personality determined her learning behaviour. Her shyness made her feel embarrassed after receiving a negative reaction by her classmates to her English accent, but she did not feel anxious based on the relationship between her and her classmates. This relationship could also be the reason that the male learner did not feel bothered at all about his mistakes in his presentation. F236 was very active in speaking and was involved in the classroom learning activities. Her unease in English derived from the deficiency of her listening skills. Her experiences of failure in understanding native speakers caused her anxiety when using English and she had still not got over the setback yet.

➢ **Anxiety on exams**

The interviews revealed that all participants had different levels of anxiety toward their exams. As shown in *instrumentality B*, both female and male learners had different levels of concerns about their marks in the exams. In order to narrow down the interviewees' opinions on exams, the Year 4 participants were chosen as the interviewees. This was because the participants in Years 1 to 3 normally needed to take exams for eight English subjects each term, and their opinions on the exams were diverse depending on their individual capability in each subject. The participants in Year

4 only needed to take exams for two main English subjects, *Advanced Translation* and *English writing*, as well as a dissertation. All four interviewees below were from the same class and they were facing their graduation.

> *F12: yes, of course. As our English competence is usually judged by the marks, we need to fully prepare for the exams and try to make it look as good as possible.*

> *F9: Not so much. Most of us will pass the exams unless you really didn't study. Our teachers are very kind and always give us a pass. I did not study hard very hard, I just need a pass.*

It appeared that F12 and F9 had different levels of anxiety toward the exams. F12 was very confirmative about her worries over the exam because she wanted to have the best results while F9 showed less worry because she had lower hopes about the results of her exams and she believed that the teacher wouldn't fail her. Both F12 and F9 showed different levels of anxiety toward their exams.

> *M22: yes, a little bit. Although many exams cannot reflect how much I grasp in English, people usually evaluate one's English level based on the exam results. That makes me concerned a lot.*

> *M25: yes, sometimes. We have taken Advanced Translation and English Writing for one year. I don't worry about those two exams and it is just a procedure. But I worry about my dissertation. Because I am doing dual-degrees, I need to write two dissertations.*

Both M22 and M25 showed minimal worry about the exams. The worry about the exams by M22 was from the general social emphasis on the exams. M25 regarded exams as a 'procedure' which indicated that he did not feel anxious at all, but the extra workload of the dissertations made him upset. Comparing their replies to the female learners, the male learners were less anxious about the results of the exams and they presented their concerns about social judgment of individual English competence from the exams.

In general, the quantitative measurement only covered the students' anxieties in class,

which may have led to the small magnitude differences. The qualitative data confirmed that the male and female learners had different levels of anxieties over their English speaking and English exams. The learning environment, based on their classroom, did not produce an anxious atmosphere because of the friendships among the students. However, male learners felt uneasy because of insufficient preparation for the lessons while some female learners felt uneasy because of their individual personalities and failure experiences. As to the anxieties over exams, female learners showed they were more anxious about the scores of the exams than male learners while male learners showed more concern from a social perspective.

➢ **Discussion**

The results showed that neither female learners nor male learners felt particularly anxious when speaking English during the class because of the friendships among the students. The follow-up interview showed that male learners were more open-minded and less worried about in facing negative reaction from their classmates over their speaking. M307's responses showed that his current English speaking was not negatively affected by the experience of failure in his presentation. The replies from M222 presented the male learners' general tendency of avoiding being questioned by the teacher when they were not well prepared for the class and their tendency to give away the chances of speaking in the class because of the dominant status of female learners in classroom learning activities. As for female learners, they appeared to be more affected by others' feedback to their English and the interaction with others. The classmates' feedback to F230's accent changed her learning activities in class and her experience of failure when communicating with a native speaker resulted in F236's current anxiety. These results are consistent with Koul et al. (2009) who found that female L2 English learners were more anxious than male learners in terms of the fear of negative evaluation and English speech anxiety.

However, with regard to the anxiety with the exams, both female and male learners showed different levels of anxiety. The results indicated that the students' anxiety of exams depended on whether the exams were useful for their future, rather than how hard the exams could be. The four interviewees were from the same Year-4 class and they were facing internship, looking for jobs, applying for postgraduate studies, etc. after their college graduation. Females showed a higher level of anxiety about the

results than male learners. F12 highlighted the importance of scores and showed her determination to obtain good results for her exams. She was also more aware of the importance of the scores probably because she was thinking about continuing her postgraduate study. With social encouragement and familial support, more and more female students have continued on to postgraduate study in recent years. With excellent academic records in school subjects, F12 would be more competitive if there were more candidates meeting the enrolment requirements. F9 showed less concern about her score as long as she passed the exams. Her lower commitment to making an effort at learning indicated that the score would not affect her job hunting or further plans after college graduation as long as she passed her exam. Thus, the exam score to F9 was not as important as it was to F12.

With regards to male learners, they did not show any high level of anxiety with their exams directly. M22 indicated that his exams anxiety was from the social over-emphasis on exam results. His replies indicated that students' anxiety over exams was mostly orientated to the social misuse of the exam results. Combining the course evaluations from the students in *attitude to learn English*, it was revealed that students' learning and the subject curriculums were set up more for exam purposes than for learning purposes. This implied the existence of a conflict and a gap between the students' language competence and exams and this could become one of the barriers in language learning among the learners. M25's concern about his dissertations could imply he was concerned about the completion of his dual-degrees. As discussed in the previous section, English is mostly regarded as a tool by most of the male learners, who would prefer to pursue a professional career or postgraduate study in other areas. Thus, M25 was anxious about the completion of his degree, instead of his English exams.

Summary

The quantitative measurements focused on the anxiety in speaking in English classes and in speaking with native speakers. The students revealed their anxieties in more detail in the qualitative data. This resulted in a few discrepancies in the findings between the quantitative and qualitative results. However, the results confirmed that both female and male learners did not feel anxious when speaking English in the class. Female learners were more anxious when using English because they were more likely to be affected by negative feedback and unsuccessful experiences. This finding was

consistent with Yan and Horwitz (2008) that gender was an important factor among the L2 learners' anxieties. With regard to the anxiety over exams, female learners generally experienced different levels of anxiety according to whether the score could be useful for their further study/work plans while male learners were more anxious about the social perception of their score as a measurement of their language competence.

3.2.6 *Cultural interests*

The results showed that female learners ($M = 5.05$, $SD = .87$) had a significantly higher score than male learners ($M = 4.56$, $SD = .90$) in *cultural interest* and the magnitude of the differences was medium ($t(238) = 3.76$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = .55$). This suggested that female learners were more interested in English movies, songs and TV programmes than male learners. The qualitative data showed that most of the female learners felt excited when they talked about English songs, movies or TV dramas. Some of them could name one or two of their favourites and also intended to recommend them to the interviewer, and some of them eagerly told the interviewer how much they liked the songs or movies. The replies from F44 and F54 were representative of most female learners, which indicated that female learners attached more personal affection to English culture.

> F44: I like music, especially English music. My favourite songs are 'a place nearby' and 'Just one last dance'. I hope if you have time, you can try it. It is very beautiful and it is very fascinating.

> F54: yes, when I am free, I always listen to English songs or watch the films. When I am at home on summer vacation, I can watch the drama series for the whole day. American episodes have been an inseparable part of my life.

Most of the male learners reported that they frequently listened to English music and watched English films. M50 and M55 had a higher level of *cultural interests* than the average scores among the male learners. Their replies indicated that they were more likely to connect English culture with their English learning than female learners. The reply from M50 showed that he believed that the better English performances of the female learners were as a result of their frequent contact with English culture. M55 also

implied that they had contact with English reading materials and broadcasts frequently, probably because they were covered by the syllabus of the English listening class. In such cases, male learners regarded their contact with English culture as another kind of classroom-based learning activity.

> *M50: I like to listen to English music and see English films because I think from that I can improve my English ability…… I didn't watch drama series. Girls like to watch drama series, such as Friends and some Korean ones (Romantic stories). I don't like series drama. But I watch Prison Break. Girls watched much more than us. I think that's why their English is better than us.*

> *M55: yes, I listen to English songs and watch English movies frequently. It is good for our oral English. I read English magazines and newspapers too, such as China Daily or21st Century, once a week. Most of our English teachers told us to do it. We listen to VOA or the BBC in our listening class every time.*

> *F145: Boys like politics, or something about sports. They maybe focus on those topics. Girls maybe like movies or novels.*

The responses from F145 provided extra information about gender differences in personal interests when she gave her opinion on gender differences in L2 English learning. According to F145, boys and girls had different topic preferences. This opinion coincided with the reply from M50, who categorised watching drama series as a preference of the girls. Thus, male learners were presented as more likely than female learners to take English culture as learning tasks rather than an appropriate entertainment activity.

Generally, the gender differences in L2 English cultural interests were confirmed through both quantitative and qualitative data. Female learners showed more enjoyment of English culture while male learners attached gender features to English culture and showed more learning reasons when connecting with English culture.

> **Discussion**

The results were consistent with Dörnyei and Clément (2001), Dörnyei and Csizér

(2002) and Dörnyei et al. (2006) in that female learners showed a significantly higher level of interest in relevant English culture than male learners. The current qualitative data confirmed that female interviewees were more active and involved in English music, movies and drama series than male learners. The responses from the male interviewees indicated that they placed more emphasis on the learning function when they had contact with English culture. Their over-emphasis on learning purposes probably constrained their personal interests and enjoyment of English music and movies, so they had less personal interest in English culture. In addition, when M55 indicated that part of these learning activities was covered in the syllabus, he seemed to naturally regard these activities as a part of the learning content in an English class. This probably reduced his enjoyment of listening to broadcasts, watching TV programmes / movies or reading newspapers. However, female learners did not show similar tendencies.

Furthermore, M55 tended to attach gender features to a drama series by categorising them as something that 'girls' liked. His intention was supported by the reply from F145, who simply generalised the different interests between boys and girls. This suggests that the learners' L2 cultural interests interfered with the general perception of gender differences. When M50 observed that watching a drama series could be feminine behaviour, he minimised the chance of doing the same thing; he did not watch the drama series which the girls watched but he watched something else. His reply also implied a kind of conflict between the consciousness of his gender identity and his learning behaviour. He intended to draw boundaries between the girls and himself in his utterances; his claim of the girls' preferences for drama series was followed by the claim that he did not have the same preference; he highlighted the girls' situation of watching drama series after he confessed he watched them too. His final utterance disclosed that he did not watch drama series as much as the girls did, although he knew they could be good for his English. This suggested his potential awareness of the connection between watching drama and English learning. This result again reflected the negative influence of the gender ideology of English on male learners' English attitudes.

Summary

Gender differences over L2 English cultural interests were confirmed through both

quantitative and qualitative data. The interviewees demonstrated that the gender differences reflected two aspects: Firstly, male learners were more likely to emphasize the connection between English culture and English learning purposes. Secondly, the gender perceptions of cultural activities influenced the learners' involvement in L2 culture.

3.2.7 *Travel orientation, integrativeness, attitudes to the L2 community*

Travel orientation revealed another important difference between the responses of female and male learners about the reasons for learning English. Some female learners clearly indicated that they learnt English because they like travelling. English is a world language and can be used for communication wherever they go. The qualitative data supported the quantitative results, which showed that female learners ($M = 4.46$, $SD = .89$) had a significantly higher score than the male learners ($M = 3.79$, $SD = .96$) in *travel orientation* and the magnitude of the differences was medium ($t(238) = 4.74$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = .65$).

The female learners, like F6 and F136, who had a high level of travel orientation for their English learning, were scattered from Year 1 to Year 4. They commonly believed that English could help to realise their expectation of travelling and extend their view of the world. F6, as a year-4 student, connected her desire for travel with her career development. Her responses clearly indicated her intention of connecting her future with English. Also, F136, as a first-year student, displayed a general expectation of what English could bring her. Her responses were more focused on learning the world through English. None of the male interviewees indicated a similar travel orientation in their responses. M50 was representative of most of the male interviewees. His interests in foreign people and culture were out of English learning reasons. He attached less personal affection than the female interviewees did in his responses.

> F6: I like English. English can help me to talk to more people and know more foreign culture. If I learn English well, I can travel around the world. I want to work in the area of international business, and I can do business and travelling together, enjoying my life with English.

> *F136: I study English because I like travelling. I want to go to different countries and know different cultures. English is an international language and I can use English to see the world. English can also help me to learn more things outside.*

> *M50: I like meeting with foreign people who live in English speaking countries. I think I can learn more about the culture of their countries and I can practice my English speaking.*

The common feature among the responses of most interviewees was that their inclination for travelling was expressed together with their interests in foreign cultures. A Pearson correlation test was used to test the relationship among these three variables. The test revealed that *travel orientation* was positively correlated with *integrativeness* ($r = .394$, $p = .000$, two-tailed) and *attitudes to the L2 community* ($r = .440$, $p = .000$, two-tailed). Additionally, there was also a strong positive correlation between *integrativeness and attitudes to the L2 community*, $r = .645$, $p = .000$ (two-tailed). Thus, the results confirmed the link between *travel orientation* and *integrativeness /attitudes to the L2 community* and between *integrativeness* and *attitudes to the L2 community* through both the qualitative and quantitative data. It was suggested that the stronger the learners' inclination for travelling, the more positive their attitude was toward English people, English culture and the English-speaking community.

The results of the quantitative data showed that female learners had significantly more positive attitudes than male learners had toward *integrativeness* ($t(238) = 2.21$, $p = .03$, Cohen's $d = .32$) and *attitudes to the L2 community* ($t(238) = 2.52$, $p = .01$, Cohen's $d = .37$), but the magnitudes of the differences were small. Separate correlation tests were conducted among the female group and male group, respectively, and the results showed that *travel orientation* was positively correlated with *integrativeness* and *attitudes to the L2 community,* both in the female group: $r = .360$, $p = .000$ (two-tailed); $r = .434$, $p = .000$ (two-tailed) and the male group: $r = .409$, $p = .001$ (two-tailed); $r = .384$, $p = .002$ (two-tailed). The correlations between *integrativeness and attitudes to the L2 community* were also significant in both the female group: $r = .434$, $p = .001$ (two-tailed) and the male group: $r = .617$, $p = .001$ (two-tailed). Thus, the results showed that the links between *travel orientation* and *integrativeness* and between *integrativeness and attitudes to the L2 community* were stronger among male learners

than among female learners, while the link between *travel orientation* and *attitudes to the L2 community* was stronger among female learners than among male learners. The responses from F6 and F136 clearly demonstrated the connection between their travelling desires and their personal interests in the cultures of other countries. Female learners were more intent on getting to know the world through English. The replies from M50 placed more emphasis on his English language learning purposes through knowing foreign people and foreign culture. This means that the male learners' intention of getting to know foreign people and foreign culture was not because of his personal desire or interests. This explained the small magnitude of gender difference on *integrativeness* and *attitudes to the L2 community*. It also supported the correlation results that male learners placed more emphasis on the connection between L2 learning and the L2 community and female learners placed more emphasis on the connection between travel orientation and the L2 community.

Both the quantitative data and qualitative data confirm the gender differences in *Travel Orientation*. With spotting the connection between the participants' travel interests and their interests in foreign countries, culture and getting to know foreign people, significant statistical links were also found between *travel orientation* and *integrativeness /attitudes to the L2 community*. Female learners and male learners placed a different emphasis on balancing the connection between the desire to travel, L2 culture and L2 learning.

➢ **Discussion**

The findings of gender differences on *travel orientation, integrativeness* and *attitudes to the L2 community* were consistent with previous studies by Dörnyei and Csizér (2002), Dörnyei et al. (2006) and Mori and Gobel (2006). Female L2 learners outscored the male L2 learners. Mori and Gobel (2006) used the variable of *Integrativeness* to measure three aspects: attitudes toward L2 community, interest in foreign languages and travel orientation, which matched two variables in the current study (*travel orientation* and *attitudes to the L2 community)*. With the increasing popularity of studying abroad in recent decades, Mori and Gobel (2006) found that Japanese L2 students presented more desire to travel or study overseas rather than integrating with an L2 community. In the current study, F136's travel desires were based on her perception of English as an international language and her curiosity about the world. With the development of

Chinese society and more contact with foreign culture than before, Zhao (2011) found that young people were more open and found it easier to accept new ideas, with female students exhibiting a more tolerant attitude towards the ways of behaving as girls. The results of *interests in English culture* also showed that the female learners had more interest and involvement in foreign cultures, movies, songs, and TV programmes than male learners. English learning presented female learners with a language as well as cultures outside of oriental and Confucian countries. This gave female learners a stronger incentive to travel and explore life in foreign countries. Female learners clearly regarded English learning as a bridge connecting them with the world and were more willing to accept new ideas brought with English learning than male learners.

In terms of the macro social influence perspective, Kobayashi (2002) found that Japanese women were especially interested in L2 English learning because English offered them the opportunities to travel or work in other countries, compared to their marginalised status in Japanese mainstream society. Although the female social status has improved in the recent decades in China, it is still at the development stage and gender inequality still exists in some areas. Based on this point, females' travelling intentions could be interpreted as their desires to have a fresh and international life beyond the Chinese community. Western countries have been portrayed as more democratic and freethinking places. The current female learners' travel orientation was developed based on the desire to improve their lives. Living in an international context can probably provide women with the chance to lead a life with more opportunities.

Furthermore, Zhao (2011) found that social stereotyping and social perceptions of female talents in language learning and the duties as art students made female students in Chinese high schools learn English better than male learners. On the other hand, the perception of the female gender features of English and the social stereotyping of English learning could also demotivate male learners to get to know English people, as well as weaken their travelling desires to English speaking countries. M50's intention of knowing foreign people was for improving his language capability purposes and enlarging his knowledge of foreign culture. This coincided with the male learners' tendencies in *interest in English culture* and their general thinking about English as a tool. They appeared to be less desirous than female learners to get to know English people and to explore foreign cultures except for learning purposes. In addition, female students in the current study outscored male learners in academic performances based

on the gender differences in their academic performance (details in Section 3.3). The better performance probably promoted female learners' to take more interest in knowing an English community and English culture, while male learners' interests in the English language and English community were negatively influenced by their inferior language scores.

Summary

Both the quantitative and qualitative results confirmed that female learners had a stronger travel orientation in their English learning than male learners. Female learners' acceptance of new ideas and expectations for realising personal success promoted their travel orientation while the social perception of English learning demotivated male learners' approach to English and English-speaking community. In addition, the results of the correlation tests supported the fact that female learners' travel orientation was more linked to their interest in the English community than for the male learners.

3.3 Gender differences on L2 English proficiency and the links to L2 motivation

3.3.1 Quantitative data analysis

There were 64 participants (Male = 21; Female = 43) in Year 3 who had attended the national English proficiency exams, TEM, when they took part in the survey[18]. An independent-sample t-test was conducted to compare the learners' TEM scores for male learners and female learners. The Levine Test was used to test the assumption of homogeneity of variance and the two variances were shown to be approximately equal. The results showed that the female learners' score ($M = 70.37$, $SD = 9.16$) was significantly higher than the male learners' score ($M = 64.62$, $SD = 6.90$; $t(62) = 2.544$, $p = .013$) and the magnitude of the differences in the means was medium (Cohen*'d* $= .71$). The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (Table 2) revealed the L2 learners' English proficiency was positively correlated to six variables: *criterion measures, ideal L2 self, attitude to learn English, integrativeness, cultural interest* and *attitudes to the L2 community*.

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[18] The survey was conducted three to six weeks later after the TEM exam.

Table 2: Overall results

Correlation between L2 English proficiency and L2 Motivational Self System (N = 64)

		Criterion measures	Ideal L2 self	Attitude to learn English	Integrative ness	Cultural interest	Attitudes to L2 community
TEM 4 Results	Pearson Correlation	.274	.258*	.363**	.252*	.380**	.285*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.028	.039	.003	.045	.002	.023

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).
** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation test among female learners and male learners was conducted separately. The results (Table 3) revealed that female learners' L2 English proficiency was positively correlated to *attitude to learn English, cultural interest*, *attitudes to the L2 community* and negatively correlated to *English anxiety*. The results suggested that female learners with a higher English proficiency had more positive attitudes towards English classes, more interest in English culture and the English community. A lower English anxiety was linked to an increase in their English proficiency. As for the male learners, there was no significant link between their English proficiency and their motivation factors but there was a marginal negative correlation on *English anxiety* ($r = -.423, p = .056$). Thus, the link between L2 English proficiency and motivational factors appeared to be clearer among female learners than among male learners. This suggested that female learners' English proficiency was more related to their motivational factors than male learners.

Table 3: Female group

Correlation between L2 English proficiency and L2 Motivational Self System (N = 43)

		Attitudes to learn English	English anxiety	Cultural interest	Attitudes to L2 community
TEM 4 Results	Pearson Correlation	.437**	-.317*	.363*	.322*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.038	.017	.035

*Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).
** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

3.3.2 Qualitative data analysis and results

Two interview questions about learners' learning goals and the expected level of their language competence focused on possible explanations for the gender differences in their English proficiency. Students in different year groups presented different learning goals, which showed a close connection with their exam orientation. Students in Year 1 and Year 2 presented diverse ideas about the language competence they expected.

Students in Year 3 and Year 4 showed more intention to measure their learning level and learning goals with their English language exams.

> *M162: Not sure what level I want to reach, but maybe higher and better.*

> *F125: Yes. To learn the basic grammar and confirm some other basics in my first year of college, read more books and current affairs and fluently communicate and express in second year. To learn all aspects of English, to acquire more words and expressions, to know more about culture, make up for my shortcomings, reach some standard in third year and finally to get a job.*

M162 and F125 were from the Year 1 group. When they attended the interview, they had only attended the college for around two months. Most of the participants in Year 1 felt uncertain about their learning goals when they were asked. The response from M162 was quite representative of most of the male learners. They had blurred expectations for their English learning when they expressed uncertainty. F125 was representative of the female learners who were very optimistic of their learning at the college. She had made a general learning plan for her four-year life in college and had a certain idea of what she could achieve each year.

> *M72: Pass the English related tests, TEM4, TEM8 or GMAT, and be able to communicate with English native speakers frequently.*

> *F44: I am an English major student and I think I need to pass TEM 8 first. I want to be a linguist or a college English teacher after the graduation. I need to master English in all areas, listening, speaking, writing and reading comprehension.*

M72 and F44 were from the Year 3 group. Both showed that they set a certain English test as the learning goal or the expected language competence which they wanted to achieve. The responses from M72 coincided with the general male learners' attitudes toward English learning, taking the exams as their learning task and learning English as a tool for communication. F44 presented her learning goals with clear explanations. Passing the TEM8 was her first learning goal and she would then extended her learning goal based on her possible future career development.

Comparing the male and female learners' responses, female learners presented their learning goals and their expected learning levels with more detailed and specific plans. They showed more determination and had a dedicated attitude toward their learning and goals. Although the male learners also presented some learning goals and set the English test as the measurement of their achievement, they did not show any effort to meet their goals as the female learners did. These results suggested that male learners had less consideration than female learners for their English learning as well as less expectation about their achievements.

3.3.3 Discussion

Based on the above analysis, the quantitative data showed that female learners significantly outscored male learners in English proficiency tests. The correlation test showed that the learners' proficiency was closely connected with their efforts in learning, their *ideal L2 self* and their attitudes towards English and English-relevant cultures. The separate correlation test confirmed the gender differences on the connections between the motivational factors and L2 English proficiency. The following discussion will be developed by combining the findings in previous research and some relevant results from Section 3.2.

The female learners' superiority over male learners in academic performance coincided with Koul et al. (2009), who found that female learners were more academically orientated in L2 English learning than male learners in terms of two aspects: instrumentality and language proficiency. These results were, respectively, supported in Section 3.2.1 and the current section. The study plan from F125 indicated that she thought about her study comprehensively and she had a very clear idea about what she needed to achieve at the end of each academic year. F44, as a senior year student, presented more considerations based on her graduation. She regarded the TEM test as a marker for English major graduates and showed her certainty that she would pass the exam in her replies. Female learners' serious attitude towards English learning and the certainty of their learning goals could be the reasons for their performance in the assessment. Associated with the results of other sections in 3.2, female learners, compared to male learners, tended to invest more effort in English learning, demonstrated more tolerant attitudes when dealing with dissatisfactory subjects,

embraced more expectations for their future career with English and were more concerned about exams. This suggests that female learners were more likely than male learners to take English learning seriously and to work hard in English learning, which led them to outperform male learners.

Based on a macro social perspective, women are facing social encouragement and propaganda on their individual success in different fields. As the new members of a mainstream social community, they consciously make an effort with what they are doing so as to prove their capability and independence. TEM is a national exam which is only available for students in English major and it has been generally regarded as a measurement of the students' language competence and academic record. Students work hard to perform well for a multitude of realistic reasons: to meet the requirement for obtaining their BA degrees, to have an authorized record of their English competence (which would be useful for job hunting or pursuing postgraduate study), and to prove or evaluate their English learning for themselves and others, including their parents. Zhao (2011) found that female students in a high school worked harder on English than the male students in order to prove their competence and this coincided with the social perception. Thus, the results in the current study could be a similar reflection of female learners' intention of proving their learning capability.

On the other hand, the dominant numbers of female learners could be a negative factor that resulted in male learners' underperformance in English learning. Kozaki and Ross (2011) found that female learners' L2 proficiency regressed during the 2-years of L2 learning in a college in Japan, although they were more advanced than the male learners at the beginning stage. The researcher put forward the consideration of class compositional effects on the learners' L2 learning. The regression among female learners could result from an overwhelming number of male learners, which marginalised the female learners' status in the class and restrained their L2 English learning progress. The distribution of female and male learners in the current research was reversed; the female learners formed the majority and the male learners were the minority. The results from the previous sections also found that the dominant numbers of female learners affected male learners' learning involvement in their English classes and there were even some male learners who felt they were marginalized in the class. Based on this point, the overwhelming numbers of female learners negatively affected male learners' English development. This could be reflected in the male learners'

underperformance in the exams.

Kobayashi (2002) suggested that curriculum-fixed and exam-driven teaching/learning prevented the development of the students' critical thinking, which resulted in the tendency to behave or make a choice, following the majorities. In Section 3.2.2, female learners showed their tendency to model each other in English learning and their interdependent personal features impelled them to follow the majority behaviour. Positive attitudes toward English learning and multiple ideas about learning goals could be the reason for acceptance of English learning generally among female learners. Peer influence is another important reason for generating gender differences in English learning, which indirectly leads to gender differences in academic performances.

The correlation results revealed that the learners' English proficiency was connected with six motivational factors: efforts in the learning process, expectations of their future L2 self, attitudes toward English, English people and English relevant cultures. Based on the findings in section 3.2, female learners outscored male learners on all six motivational factors and even on other factors. Female learners had more tolerant attitudes towards dissatisfactory subjects, and were more confirmatory about the usefulness of English in their future and had more concerns with their academic records in the school. Male learners had strong negative attitudes towards school subjects, were less concerned with the results of exams and they also mostly regarded English as a tool or a subsidiary language skill that would be helpful in their future career. This suggested that female and male learners were not taking English learning equally seriously. This observation was supported by the results of separate correlation tests, which revealed that the connection between the learners' English proficiency and motivational factors for female learners was stronger than among male learners. It is thus possible that the different level of attitudes towards English produces gender differences in English proficiency. The connection between L2 proficiency and motivational factors would be higher among the female learners who had positive attitudes towards English than among the male learners who had less positive attitudes towards English. This was consistent with Dörnyei (2002), who suggested that the learners who had more positive motives produced high situation-specific motives and tended to perform better than those who had low motives in L2 learning. The correlation between L2 performance and motivational factors was more outstanding among those with high motivation than those with low motivation.

Summary

Gender differences in L2 English proficiency and the links to motivational factors were confirmed. The study suggested that female and male learners' motives in English learning and the social perception of female learners' talent in language learning could be the encouraging factor that caused female learners to surpass male learners. On the other hand, a minority of male learners' English proficiency could be negatively affected by their marginalised status in the class. The final discussion suggested that there could be more positive attitudes towards English learning among female learners. This is caused by the gender differences on the links between L2 English proficiency and motivational factors. However, given the relatively smaller number of male learners, it is important to avoid sweeping conclusions.

Chapter 4

Gender Differences in the Development of L2 Selves

This chapter will examine the development of the learners' L2 motivation, especially the changes in L2 selves. Using repeated measure and correlation tests, the results will show the gender differences in the development of L2 selves and the interactive relationships between L2 selves and other motivational factors based on the quantitative data. With more information from qualitative data, the study will reveal how learners' L2 selves and motivations were developed under the influence of collective social values in the Chinese L2 English learning contexts. There will be four sections in this chapter: the overall quantitative data analysis in 4.1; separate data analysis of female/male learners with the qualitative data in 4.2; a comparison between the female and male groups in section 4.3; and a discussion in 4.4.

4.1 Quantitative data analysis of the overall participants' L2 motivation

A repeated measure analysis was performed using time periods within the subject factor (Time 1 vs. Time 2 vs. Time 3) and Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons were also performed to compare the differences between Time 1, Time 2 and Time 3. The effect size for each repeated measure test used Partial Eta Squared and the guidelines for interpreting the value were: .01 = small, .06 = moderate, .14 = large effect (Dörnyei, 2007b). Table 4 presents the results of the overall participants' L2 motivational changes over the 12 months period. Significant changes were found for four variables: *ought-to L2 self* and *instrumentality A* with small effect size; *family influence* with moderate effect size; and *English anxiety* with large effect size. *Ought-to L2 self* and *family influence* showed an increasing tendency while *instrumentality A* and *English anxiety* appeared to have a decreasing tendency over the 12 months.

Correlation tests were performed to examine the relationship between *ideal L2 self* and *ought-to L2 self*, and between the L2 selves and other motivational factors. Differences among the correlation results for Times 1, 2 and 3 indicated the different interactions between L2 selves and the motivational factors over the 12 months period. Tables 5-1

and 5-2 showed that the *ideal L2 self* was significantly correlated to eight variables throughout the whole year and to one variable occasionally (*fear of assimilation* in Time 2) while *ought-to L2 self* was significantly correlated to seven variables through the whole year except to *integrativeness* in Time 3 and to two variables occasionally (*attitude to learn English* and *English anxiety* in Time 2). The highest correlated variable with *ideal L2 self* over the 12 months was *instrumentality A* and the highest correlated variable with *ought-to L2* self was *Family influence* in Times 1 and 3 and *instrumentality A* in Time 2. The outstanding contrasts in the results are that *family influence* and *instrumentality B* were only positively related to *ought-to L2 self* while *cultural interests* and *attitudes to the L2 community* were only positively related to *ideal L2 self*. Both *ideal L2 self* and *ought-to L2 self* had an occasional link with *fear of assimilation* and *English anxiety,* respectively.

Comparing the correlation values, the link between *ideal L2 self* and *ought-to L2 self* dropped in Time 3 after a gradual increase from Time 1 to Time 2. With regard to their links to other motivational factors, there were three changing patterns among the correlations values between *ideal L2 self* and other motivational factors: an increasing tendency from Time 1 to Time 3 for *travel orientation* and *cultural interests*, a decreasing tendency from Time 1 to Time 3 for *attitude to learn English* and *attitudes to the L2 community*, and a fluctuation in Time 2 for *criterion measures*, *instrumentality A* and *integrativeness*. There were also three changing patterns in the links between *ought-to L2 self* and other motivational factors: an increasing tendency for *criterion measures*, a fluctuation in Time 2 for *family influence* and *instrumentality B*, and the highest correlation value was reached in Time 2 for *instrumentality A, travel orientation, attitude to learn English* and *integrativeness*.

Table 4: Overall results of repeated measures on the motivational factors

	N = 113 (M = 25; F = 88)			Pairwise Comparisons ($p \leq .05$)
	$F(2, 224) =$	P value (2-tailed)	Partial Eta Squ.	
Ought-to L2 self	5.057	.007	.043	Time 1 < Time 3
Family influence	7.921	.000	.066	Time 1 < Time 2; Time 1 < Time 3
Instrumentality A	4.703	.010	.040	Time 1 > Time 3; Time 2 > Time 3
English anxiety	71.747	.000	.390	Time 1> Time 3; Time 2 > Time 3

Table 5-1: Overall correlation tests between *Ideal L2 self* and other motivational variables in Time 1/2/3 (N = 113)

Times	Criterion Measures	Ought-to L2 Self	Family Influence	Instrumentality A	Instrumentality B	Travel Orientation	Fear of Assimilation	Attitudes to Learn English	Integrativeness	Cultural Interest	Attitudes to L2 Community
	$r =$	$r =$	$r =$	$r =$	$r =$	$r =$	$r =$	$r =$	$r =$	$r =$	$r =$
1	.553**	.317**	.125	.665**	.129	.472**	-.117	.547**	.563**	.330**	.593**
2	.438**	.335**	.076	.556**	.171	.477**	-.232*	.437**	.425**	.429**	.550**
3	.543**	.228*	-.099	.597**	.156	.493**	-.154	.425**	.584**	.498**	.517**

**. Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

Table 5-2: Overall correlation tests between *Ought-L2 self* and other motivational variables in Time 1/2/3 (N = 113)

Times	Criterion Measures	Ideal L2 Self	Family Influence	Instrumentality A	Instrumentality B	Travel Orientation	Attitudes to Learn English	English Anxiety	Integrativeness	Cultural Interest	Attitudes to L2 Community
	$r =$	$r =$	$r =$	$r =$	$r =$	$r =$	$r =$	$r =$	$r =$	$r =$	$r =$
1	.305**	.317**	.699**	.490**	.655**	.358**	.246	.151	.227*	.104	.131
2	.339**	.335**	.587**	.632**	.583**	.448**	.338**	.222*	.260**	.075	.103
3	.376**	.228*	.745**	.579**	.669**	.225*	.181	.169	.091	-.05	-.067

**. Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

4.2 Separate data analysis for female and male groups

A repeated measure analysis was performed separately on the female and male groups (See Table 6 below). The results showed that female learners had significant changes for eight variables. According to their changing tendency, the variables with an increasing tendency from Time 1 to Time 3 were *ought-to L2 Self*, *family influence*, and *instrumentality B*. The variables with a decreasing tendency were *instrumentality A*, *integrativeness, attitudes to the L2 community*, *fear of assimilation* and *English anxiety*. In the male group, only one variable showed significant changes, *English anxiety*, with a large effect size. Therefore, female learners showed more striking changes than male learners from the long-term L2 English learning perspective. A detailed report will be given with the correlation tests results in 4.2.1 for female learners and 4.2.2 for male learners.

Table 6: Separate repeated measures on female and male learners' motivational factors

	Gender	$F(2, 174) =$ $F(2, 48) =$	N = 113 (M = 25; F = 88)		Pairwise Comparisons ($p \leq .05$)
			P value (2-tailed)	Partial Eta Squ.	
Ought-to L2 Self	Male		Not sig.		
	Female	7.051***	.001	.075	Time 1 < Time 2; Time 1 < Time 3
Family Influence	Male		Not sig.		
	Female	11.157***	.000	.114	Time 1 < Time 2; Time 1 < Time 3
Instrumentality A	Male		Not sig.		
	Female	4.630*	.011	.051	Time 2 > Time 3
Instrumentality B	Male		Not. Sig.		
	Female	4.934**	.008	.054	Time 1 < Time 2
Fear of Assimilation	Male		Not sig.		
	Female	3.628*	.029	.040	
English Anxiety	Male	8.701**	.001	.226	Time 1 > Time 3; Time 2 > Time 3
	Female	66.177***	.000	.432	Time 1 > Time 3; Time 2 > Time 3
Integrativeness	Male		Not sig.		
	Female	4.573*	.012	.050	Time 1 > Time 3
Attitudes to the L2 community	Male		Not sig.		
	Female	4.211*	.016	.046	Time 1 > Time 3

*Significance at the .05 level (2-tailed);
** Significance at the .01 level (2-tailed)
*** Significance at the .001 level (2-tailed)

4.2.1 Detailed data analysis of female group

Tables 7-1 and 7-2 show that the correlations between L2 selves and other motivational factors fluctuated throughout the whole year. Firstly, *ideal L2 self* was significantly correlated with eight variables except with *ought-to L2 self* in Time 3. According to the correlation values, the highest related factor was *instrumentality A* in Time 1, *attitudes to the L2 community* in Time 2 and *integrativeness* in Time 3. Secondly, *ought-to L2 self* generally had a significant correlation with seven factors except with *ideal L2 self*, *travel orientation* and *integrativeness* in Time 3, and its link patterns were more changeable than *ideal L2 self*. According to the correlation values, the highest correlated variables were *family influence* in Time 1, *instrumentality A* in Time 2 and *family influence* in Time 3, which were more stable than *ideal L2 self*. A detailed analysis with qualitative data will be given below, in the order of the common features, for the changing tendency of motivational factors and the tracking of the interactive links between L2 selves and motivational factors over the 12 months.

➢ *L2 selves*, *family influenc*e, *instrumentality B*

    a.   Increasing tendency over the 12 months

The results showed that female learners had significant changes in their *ought-to L2 self* during the 12 months' learning and the effect size was above moderate (see Table 6). The results of the pairwise comparison tests revealed that only the levels of *ought-to L2 self* at the 6 and 12 month stages were significantly higher than at the beginning. This suggested that they developed more responsibility and *ought-to L2 self* features with their increase in L2 English learning and the increase in the first six months was more than the later six months. The same tendency appeared in *family influenc*e and *instrumentality B*, which suggested that students were influenced more and more by their families during their L2 English learning and their intentions to avoid any negative outcomes in their L2 learning also became stronger over time (see Graph 2 below).

Graph 2:
The changes of female learners' *ought-to L2 self*, *family influence*, *instrumentality B* over 12 months
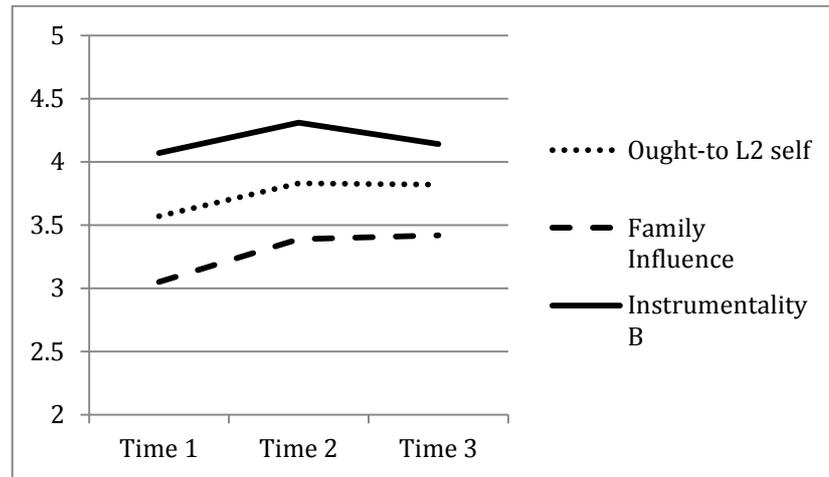
b. The changes in the relationship between *ideal L2 self* and *ought-to L2 self* over the 12 months

The results showed that the relationship between *ought-to L2 self* and *ideal L2 self* changed between Times 1 and 2 to Time 3. Although the correlation values decreased from Time 1 to Time 2, they were still positively high, which suggested that the development of learners' *ideal L2 self* and *ought-to L2 self* maintained consistency over the first six months. However, the drop in the link in Time 3 indicated that the relationship was not stable. Associated with the increasing phenomenon of *ought-to l2 self* and the stability of *ideal L2 self* over the 12 months, it was suggested that female learners developed their *ideal L2 self* and *ought-to L2 self* in different ways in their long-term L2 English learning and the differences produced an instability in their relationships.

c. The changes in the relationship between L2 selves and *family influence/ instrumentality B* over the 12 months

The results showed that *family influence* and *instrumentality B* had high correlations with *ought-to L2 self* over all three time periods but there was no link with *ideal L2 self*. Comparing the correlation values, the small decrease in Time 2 suggested that the female learners' responsibilities and their intentions to avoid negative outcomes were not constantly affected by their families at the same level, but that the influence from their families increased eventually.

Table 7-1: Female group: correlation tests between *Ideal L2 self* and other motivational variables in Time 1/2/3 (N = 88)

Times	Criterion Measures $r =$	Ought-to L2 Self $r =$	Family Influence $r =$	Instrumentality A $r =$	Instrumentality B $r =$	Travel Orientation $r =$	Attitudes to Learn English $r =$	Integrativeness $r =$	Cultural Interest $r =$	Attitudes to L2 Community $r =$
1	.524**	.317**	.103	.638**	.055	.451**	.512**	.544**	.295**	.556**
2	.433**	.276**	.049	.493**	.091	.382**	.476**	.403**	.342**	.531**
3	.496**	.167	-.18	.587**	.144	.469**	.383**	.589**	.537**	.570**

**. Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).
 *. Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

Table 7-2: Female group: correlation tests between *Ought-L2 self* and other motivational variables in Time 1/2/3 (N = 88)

Times	Criterion Measures	Ideal L2 Self	Family Influence	Instrumentality A	Instrumentality B	Travel Orientation	Attitudes to Learn English	Integrativeness	Cultural Interests	Attitudes to L2 Community
1	.299**	.317**	.684**	.585**	.654**	.382**	.178	.279**	.129	.123
2	.312**	.276**	.554**	.646**	.538**	.330**	.272*	.276**	.080	.144
3	.303**	.167	.744**	.559**	.675**	.142	.057	.076	-.052	-.073

**. Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).
 *. Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

c. Support information from qualitative data

The cross-sectional comparisons of the qualitative data from the interviewees in different year groups indicated there were some differences between their L2 selves and their families' influence. Many female interviewees indicated that they chose an English major as it was their personal favourite as well as considering their parents' advice. F138's responses supported this common feature; she chose an English major due to her mother's suggestion for her future career. She admitted her preference for English, but her unsatisfactory English competence seems to have decreased her learning intention. When she made the decision for her studies, her mother's hope became the driving power that encouraged her choice of English major. When she talked about her future plans, she did not indicate her own intentions but her parents' ideas about her future. Her reply presented a complex picture of a female learner's English learning; with limited personal learning purpose and continual influence from her families' advice at different stages, she had changed her L2 self-image from an English teacher to a non-specific social career or as a postgraduate student. She presented that she had more intention to fulfil her obligations and realize her parents' hopes rather than her own ideal L2 self. This complex picture supported the findings of the quantitative links between *ought-to L2 self* and *family influenc*e and *instrumentality B*.

> *F138 (Year 2): First I love English, but my English is so-so. I want to learn it better. Secondly, my mother wants me to become a (English) teacher. I followed her advice.*
>
> *……*
>
> *An English teacher is an ideal career for a woman but college students are facing serious unemployment. Everyone wants to work in a school. There are not that many positions. I will be happy if I can find a job. My parents hope I can do a postgraduate degree after the graduation. They want me to think about it. They said a higher academic background is necessary in the current society.*

Although the reply did not directly provide support for the increasing tendency of the learners' *ought-to L2 self*, it is reasonable to understand that the learner's learning

responsibilities could be accumulated with the transformation of her learning purpose from simple, personal learning purposes at the beginning stage to the multiple learning purposes before graduation. This includes career-driven purpose, meeting the social recognition purpose, meeting the requirement for postgraduate purpose and even the purpose of fulfiling her learning duty as a student.

d. Another aspect of *ideal L2 self* based on qualitative data

Although the quantitative data did not reveal significant changes for *ideal L2 self*, the qualitative data from female interviewees revealed another aspect of the changes to female learners' *ideal L2 self*. F43 was a Year 4 student and she provided the full scope of the development of her *ideal L2 self* from primary school to her college education. She began to develop her *ideal L2 self* in junior high school when she began to learn English and became more knowledgeable than she was in primary school. However, when entering high school and making choices for school subjects, her *ideal L2 self* as a student at a top language university was prevented in order to fit into the national exam system for college entrance. With her parents' interference, she chose to study engineering at her current college, but she was allocated an English major with her final selection. Her reply suggested that female learners' *ideal L2 self* is changeable depending on the knowledge and social contexts which surrounded them, including familial influence, social perception and the local educational system.

> *F43: When I was in primary school, as most of the students in my class, I wanted to be a scientist in the future, which is the only occupation most admirable in my heart. I also dreamed to go to university. At that time, I only knew one university, which was Tsinghua University. You know as a primary school student, I didn't have much information about this. After I became a junior / high school student, I got to know more information about other universities and other occupations. At that time, I began to learn English. I found it was very interesting. I always thought to be a student at the Beijing Foreign Language University. I studied hard in English. But after entering into senior high school, I faced having to choose between science subjects and art subjects. I don't think I am gifted at art subjects, such as history or geography so I chose to study science subjects. This changed my dream because I knew the Beijing Foreign Language University didn't accept*

students in science subjects. So I was very confused when choosing my major after attending the college entrance exams. My parents didn't want me to learn English. They wanted me to learn science and computers. But, dramatically, I entered into an English major after choosing my current university.

Lips (2007) and Mirrill (1999) suggested that education and knowledge learning could promote women's perspectives about themselves, redefining and reconstructing their self-concepts whilst acquiring extensive knowledge. The female L2 English learners could reshape their L2 self-images, expand their L2 views, and reevaluate their L2 abilities and further L2 goals when they acquired more knowledge of the English language and the relevant English culture. Lips (2004) also found that female students developed a higher level of possible self than male students when going through from high school to university. What F43 presented was consistent with this point; that her *ideal L2 self* was developed when gaining more knowledge after junior high school. Although the consistency of her *ideal L2 self* was interrupted because of other external factors, she clearly presented the changeability of her *ideal L2 self* by the change in her learning contexts.

Generally speaking, the contrasting results between *ideal L2 self* and *ought-to L2 self* can be seen in terms of two aspects: their changing tendencies and their relationships with *family influences* and *instrumentality B*. Integrating with the qualitative data, this not only suggested that the female learners' *ought-to L2 self* was closely related to their parents' advice, but also implied that there were a huge gap between their *ideal L2 self* and their parents' thoughts about their L2 learning. In addition, it even disclosed the cross purposes between the female learners' *ideal L2 self* and their English learning. Additionally, the decreasing tendencies in the links between their *ideal L2 self* and *ought-to L2 self* could be a reflection of the gradual and changing process of the learners' L2 selves under the influence of external factors from a long-term perspective, such as families, peers, and concerns about their future career. Finally, the findings, based on F43, indicated the existence of the variability in the development of female learners' *ideal L2 self* as well as highlighting the external influences on female learners' *ideal L2 self*.

➤ *Attitude to learn English, L2 learning experiences* and their links to L2 self over the 12 months

Although the quantitative results did not show significant changes in *attitude to learn English* (Mean = 4.11/4.11/4.01; SD = .82/.99/.79), the qualitative data presented a multitude of aspects on the students' evaluations of their L2 English learning environment. While there were some negative evaluations of the school courses and their English teachers, as shown in Chapter 3, some female freshmen showed the positive side of their opinions about the school subjects. F154 gave good comments on the school subjects because she thought the subjects included more English-related knowledge and she was happy to take the current subjects. F212 did not, directly, comment on her current teacher, but provided more specific requirements for their English teachers. She emphasized her need for a good teacher with extensive knowledge and unaccented pronunciation. The responses could mirror the existence of negative realities in the current English learning environment as well as present the learners' expectations for further improvement.

> *F154 (Year 1): I like the school subjects because I like English. In high school, we only had one English subject but we now have five or six English subjects and I can learn more about English culture, English people and English-speaking countries. Yes, I want to know more.*

> *F212 (Year 3): I think we need good English teachers. They speak without accent and beautiful pronunciation. They can teacher us something we don't learn from a textbook. They can give us interesting classes.*

The correlation tests showed that the female learners' attitude to their English learning context was positively linked to their *ideal L2 self* in all three time periods and there was only one positive link with *ought-to L2* in Time 2. The correlation values with *ideal L2 self* gradually decreased from Time 1 to Time 3, although they were still higher than the link with *ought-to L2 self*. Based on the information about their negative evaluations of their school subjects and English teachers, it is reasonable to assume that the distance between the students' attitude toward their L2 learning environment and their *ideal L2 self* could become larger and larger. However, their responsibilities for English learning and intention to obtain good academic scores coincided with the

settings purpose of their school subjects, which probably allowed their attitudes to link with their *ought-to L2 self* occasionally.

➢ The development of *instrumentality A* and its link with L2 self over the 12 months

The quantitative data showed that the learners' *instrumentality A* significantly decreased over the 12 months' learning and the effect size was close to moderate (see table 6). The pairwise comparison test showed that the learners' *instrumentality A* at month 6 was significantly higher than the value at month 12, which suggested that the female learners' personal reasons for learning English were diminishing during their long-term L2 learning. The correlation tests showed that L2 selves were positively correlated with *instrumentality A* throughout the whole year. This suggested that the development of the learners' personal English learning reasons positively maintained a continuous consistency with both *ought-to L2 self* and *ideal L2 self*. Comparing the correlation values, both the strongest and the weakest links were in Time 2, between *ought-to L2 self* and *instrumentality A*, and between *ideal L2 self* and *instrumentality A,* respectively. Associating this with the changes in *instrumentality A,* which reached the highest value in Time 2 (M = 4.78; SD = .54), this suggests that female learners' responsibilities in L2 learning could be closer related to their personal English learning purposes at some points.

The qualitative data showed that the learners in junior year groups were more positive in connecting their English learning with their future careers based on their personal preferences. Meanwhile, it is also possible that learners in senior groups connect their English learning with their career, based on the consideration of real life situations, such as the social demands of English competence, and the potential competition in labour markets, etc. The positive correlations between *instrumentality A* and L2 self indicated that the female learners successfully adjusted their L2 selves with changes in their promotional instrumentality in long-term English learning.

F39's reply could be representative of the typical Chinese students' ideas about their study. She regarded school learning as one of her responsibilities. She had limited ideas of what she could do, but she tried her best at each stage to fulfil her duties in her learning. Even when she talked about her future, she emphasised that she was taking extra courses to meet the demands of her future job. She did not mention anything about her personal preference or any personal intention in her English learning, but showed

that she took learning for granted and wanted to fulfil her responsibilities in realising her promotional instrumentality. Her reply supported the findings that female learners could adopt their L2 selves to their promotional instrumentality.

> *F39 (year 3): I think as a student, I need to study hard and get good marks. This is what I was told since I was a kid. I think we don't have much choice …… After graduation, I will work in an electric company in my hometown, so I began to take some courses in engineering last term. Although I know nothing about electricity, I know it is a good job and I need to keep it. So I worked at it very hard too.*

➢ The changes in *integrativeness*, *travel orientation* and *attitudes to the L2 community,* and their link to the L2 selves over the 12 months

The repeated measure tests showed that the female learners' *integrativeness* and *attitudes to the L2 community* significantly decreased during the 12 months of learning and the effect sizes were close to moderate (See Table 6). The pairwise comparison test showed that the learners' *integrativeness* and *attitudes to the L2 community* in Time 1 were significantly higher than Times 2 and 3. This suggested that the learners' interest in foreign people and English culture were much higher at the beginning stage, but their interest was gradually lost during the long-term L2 English learning.

Graph 3:
The changes of female learners' *integrativeness* and *attitudes to the L2 community* over 12 months
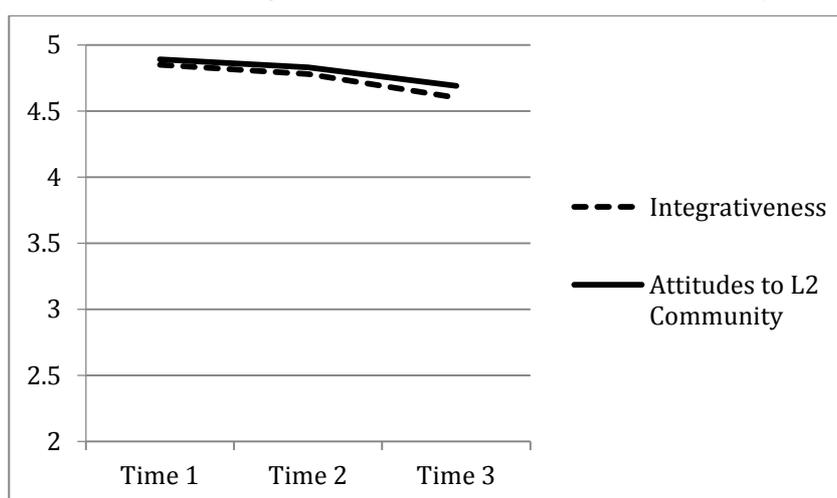
The correlation tests showed that only *ideal L2 self* was positively correlated with *attitudes to the L2 community* over all three time periods with the correlation values reaching the highest point in Time 3 after a small fluctuation in Time 2. As to

integrativeness and *travel orientation*, they were all positively correlated with L2 selves throughout the whole year except *ought-to L2 self* in Time 3. The correlation patterns were even similar: the link with *ideal L2 self* decreased from Time 1 to Time 2 and then increased to the highest point in Time 3 while the link with *ought-to L2 self* decreased from Time 1 to Time 3. Therefore, it was suggested that the learners' *ideal L2 self* was positively related to their interests in English culture and knowing foreign people; the link between the learners' *ought-to L2 self* and the interest in L2 speakers was based on the fact that the learners' responsibilities to L2 learning could not stabilise and would diminish eventually at some point.

In the interview, most of the participants presented their personal willingness and intentions to know foreign people. F71 provided information from an objective perspective because most of the foreign people known by the students were either their foreign teachers or foreign students on the same campus. The learners' *attitudes to the L2 community* were limited and could also change over time if they were offered a class by a new foreign teacher or if they knew more foreign students. These temporary changes could result in a fluctuation in the link between their L2 selves and their opinions of L2 speakers.

F71 told of her limited experience in knowing foreign people: her foreign teacher and two foreign friends on campus. She gave positive comments of her foreign teacher in terms of the teacher's relaxed teaching manner. When she talked about her foreign friends, she firstly mentioned the learning purposes in her contact with them. With more contacts afterwards, she made friends with foreign students. This implied that her learning purpose of the continuous contact with foreign students could be covered by the intention to make friends. This could explain the disappearance of the correlation between *ought-to L2 self* and *integrativeness* in Time 3.

> *F71 (Year 2): I don't know a lot of foreigners but I like my foreign teacher and my foreign friends. They come to China to learn Chinese. My foreign teacher is very funny and he told us stories and jokes every time we have class. He asked us about China and he told us about America. My foreign friends are not from America but we speak in English. One is from Africa and another one from where I cannot remember. I practice my English a lot with them and have also made friends*

> *with them. They just came here and they always ask me about*
> *something, for example, where we buy SIM card, which canteen is*
> *good and where we buy clothes, etc. I like them and I think they like*
> *me too.*

On the other hand, F66, an interviewee from the senior year group, presented her hesitation when communicating with foreign people and also provided a comprehensive view about her attitudes to foreign culture. Firstly, she believed that cultural differences between China and foreign countries have become a barrier to her communication with foreigners. Her attitude toward any contact with foreign people was mainly affected by her previous experience. Although she kept an interest in knowing foreign people, the negative impression from her previous experience had probably affected her positive attitude at some point. Secondly, she showed her expectations toward learning more knowledge beyond an English language perspective, but the setting of the school subjects did not meet her demands. It can be seen that students' interest in English speakers and their culture was connected with what they wanted to do or what they liked to be, which supported the strong link between their *ideal L2 self* and *integrativeness*. On the other hand, more contact with foreign people and more complex attitudes towards English speakers would be shaped. The accumulation of negative attitudes could result in the decreasing tendency in the female learners' *integrativeness* and *attitudes to the L2 community*.

> *F66 (Year 3): yes, I like to talk to people from other countries. But my experience*
> *told me that you have to explain Chinese culture to foreigners. One*
> *of the foreign students said she couldn't understand why Monkey*
> *King, a fairy tale, has become one of the four classic books in*
> *China. I think we are living with different cultures, we probably*
> *don't understand a lot of things until we know these cultures.*

As to *travel orientation*, none of the interviewees had been to a foreign country and some of them indicated learning purposes in their travel orientation through all year groups. F40 regarded travel as a path to improving her English competence and a bridge to knowing the world. Her reply implied that she developed her L2 self partially with the thoughts of traveling abroad at that moment; she wanted to be someone with a good command of English and to be knowledgeable about the world. Thus, this provided

some support for the findings of the quantitative link between L2 self and *travel orientation*.

> *F40 (Year 3): I would like to travel if I have money in the future. And I am sure if I can live in a foreign country for some time, it will help me to improve my English proficiency and know many foreign cultures. Traveling will broaden my view and give me the chance to see the world and let the world know Chinese people.*

➢ *Cultural interests* and the link to L2 selves over the 12 months

The quantitative data showed that the female learners maintained a high level of interest in English songs, TV programmes and films over the 12 months: all mean values for the three time periods were above 5.00. The correlation tests showed that only *ideal L2 self* was positively correlated with *cultural interests* and the correlation values gradually increased from Time 1 to Time 3, which suggested that the female learners' enjoyment of English songs, movies or TV programmes was positively developed with their *ideal L2 self*. The qualitative data from the interviews showed that the students liked English songs, TV programmes and films purely because of their personal preferences, as shown in Chapter 3. Although there were a few participants who mentioned that they were encouraged to watch English movies and listen to English songs in order to practice their English listening skills, the consistent high mean values during the three time periods suggested that most of the interviewees continued their contact with English songs and English drama mainly because of their own preferences. F194's reply was representative because she not only showed her own preference for English music but also indicated a common phenomenon of listening to English music among her peers. Although she had a learning purpose at the beginning, she developed more personal interest following her contact with English songs, which coincided with enhancing links between *cultural interests* and *ideal L2 self*.

> *F194 (Year 2): I like English music. When my high school English teacher introduced us to 'yesterday once more', I thought her voice was so beautiful. As our English teacher always played English songs in language lab and she said listening to English song is helpful to our learning, I began to listen to more songs. I listen to English music everyday and we can download it from Internet*

to our mobile or our mp3.

➢ The links between *criterion measures* and L2 selves over the 12 months

The descriptive analysis showed the female learners maintained stable *criterion measures* over the 12 months (Mean = 4.19/4.24/4.20; SD = .67/.65/.62), which suggested that learners' intentions to make an effort in their L2 English learning did not change in the long-term L2 learning. Correlation tests showed that *criterion measures* was positively correlated to both *ideal L2 self* and *ought-to L2 self*, but the correlations with *ideal L2 self* were stronger than the correlations with *ought-to L2 self* over all three time periods, according to the correlation values. This suggested that the female learners' *ideal L2 self* would be more powerful in encouraging them to make an effort in their L2 English learning than their *ought-to L2 self* in all methods of L2 learning. The correlation patterns with *ideal L2 self* appeared to fluctuate a bit in Time 2 while the correlation patterns with *ought-to L2 self* didn't change much between the three time periods. The replies from F177 and F40 clearly showed that the female learners did connect their learning efforts to their possible selves in the future: F177 presented a clear *ideal L2 self* as an 'interpreter' while F40 imagined herself in the image of a graduate in job hunting. However, the replies from F40 also highlighted a mixed picture between her *ideal L2 self* and her *ought-to L2 self* because it was difficult to say whether her aim of obtaining a language certificate was to meet her personal learning purposes, to help with her learning responsibilities for job-hunting or both. Therefore, the results suggested that a learner's *ideal L2 self* and *ought-to L2 self* could overlap and affect the learners' efforts in their L2 English learning at different levels and at different stages.

> *F177 (Year 1): I want to be an interpreter in the future. But my English is just so-so, so I need to study hard. I especially need to practice my speaking as much as I can.*

> *F40 (Year 3): I think we all studied very hard because we are facing graduation next year and we need to find a job or do something else. As an English major student, I am expected to reach TEM band 8. Otherwise, it is difficult to compete in the job market. Some of us also prepare English tests for going abroad. (Interviewer: will you*

go abroad?) no, because those tests are famous and I think it has become another measurement to evaluate our language competence. One more certificate, one more priority in job hunting.

➢ The changes in *fear of assimilation*

The decreasing tendency in *fear of assimilation* among female learners was statistically significant with a small effect size and the pairwise comparison test did not find significant changes between the three time periods. The results suggested that female learners became less and less concerned about the devaluation of Chinese culture during their long-term English learning. Associated with the findings of female learners' high personal interest in English songs/movies, female learners developed more personal preferences to English culture beyond their learning purposes. This indicated that female learners were more likely to accept foreign culture as their English learning progressed and they probably integrated English culture into their Chinese culture. Thus, their fear of assimilation was gradually reduced.

4.2.2 Detailed data analysis of male group

Table 8-1 shows that the male learners' *ideal L2 self* was positively correlated to nine variables in total. As there were fluctuations in four variables in Time 2, the correlation patterns from Times 1 to 3 appeared very changeable. Table 8-2 shows that male learners' *ought-to L2 self* was positively linked to seven variables in total and the correlation patterns appeared stable throughout the whole year except for an occasional link to *criterion measures* and a sudden drop on *travel orientation* in Time 3. As male learners did not show any significant changes in the development of their L2 self and motivational factors, except *English anxiety*, the detailed analysis below will give the common features of the correlation results in order with the subsidiary information from the qualitative data.

Table 8-1: Male group: correlation tests between *Ideal L2 self* and other motivational variables in Time 1/2/3 (N = 25)

Times	Criterion Measures $r =$	Ought-to L2 Self $r =$	Family Influence $r =$	Instrumentality A $r =$	Instrumentality B $r =$	Travel Orientation $r =$	Attitudes to Learn English $r =$	Integrativeness $r =$	Cultural Interest $r =$	Attitudes to L2 Community $r =$
1	.668**	.472*	.432*	.682**	.333	.406*	.613**	.532**	.317	.627**
2	.290	.409*	.140	.568**	.183	.504*	.238	.324	.506**	.561**
3	.659**	.551**	.503*	.540**	.258	.426*	.598**	.509**	.225	.301

**. Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).
 *. Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

Table 8-2: Male group: correlation tests between *Ought-L2 self* and other motivational variables in Time 1/2/3 (N = 25)

Times	Criterion Measures $r =$	Ideal L2 Self $r =$	Family Influence $r =$	Instrumentality A $r =$	Instrumentality B $r =$	Travel Orientation $r =$	Attitudes to Learn English $r =$	Integrativeness $r =$	Cultural Interest $r =$	Attitudes to L2 Community $r =$
1	.387	.472*	.730**	.410*	.697**	.642**	.536**	.367	.163	.366
2	.352	.409*	.714**	.546**	.677**	.679**	.583**	.065	.-083	-.092
3	.691**	.551**	.791**	.734**	.664**	.545**	.628**	.183	-.018	-.035

**. Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).
 *. Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

➤ The relationships between *ideal L2 self* and *ought-to L2 self* over the 12 months

Ideal L2 self and *ought-to L2 self* were positively correlated with each other over the 12 months. Comparing the correlation values, a minor decrease can be seen in Time 2 but the link rebounded to the highest value in Time 3. This suggested that male learners maintained the consistency of their *ideal L2 self-image*s and their L2 learning responsibilities at the same time. The qualitative data showed that most male learners clarified that they regarded English as a tool which would be useful for their future. M181 showed his personal preference to English learning, but put more emphasis on the usefulness of English, which could be his main reason for learning English at that moment. When he instantly built a self-image as a 'businessman' in his future, he certainly connected his *ideal L2 self* with his current English learning. His responses revealed that the importance of English could be transformed into a kind of responsibility to his English learning because it was closely related to his future career, or vice versa. In other words, when he began to build up his self-image as a 'businessman', he was aware that he had to learn English. Therefore, the deep-rooted understanding of English as a tool resulted in the male learners' tendency to develop their related L2 selves.

> M181 (year 2): I want to learn English. I didn't think much when I chose an
> English major. English is an important language in the world. You
> can go anywhere if you speak English. Nowadays any job needs
> English. (Interviewer: What do you want to do in the future?) I am
> not sure, but I think I will work in a company, doing some
> international trade. I think I will be a businessman.

➤ The changes in the relationships between L2 selves and *family influence /
 instrumentality B* over the12 months

The results showed that *instrumentality B* was positively correlated to *ought-to L2 self* over the 12 months but not to *ideal L2 self*. In addition, *family influence* was positively related to *ideal /ought-to L2 self* throughout the whole year except to *ideal L2 self* in Time 2. This suggested that male learners' responsibilities to English learning were consistent with their intention to avoid negative outcomes and give importance to their families' opinions about their English learning. Besides, the male interviewees did not

mention their parents' advice regarding their study as frequently as the female learners did. When they talked about their parents' opinions or hopes about their English learning, the common feature was that they thought most of their parents' advice was for guidance, rather than a specific requirement of them.

Post-graduation plans were a common topic between the students and their parents for senior year students. M52 presented his opinions about taking advice from his parents based on his own learning situation. The reply from M52 displayed the process of his decision-making; although M52 did not follow his parents' advice, even whilst understanding his parents' opinions, he still received encouragement from his parents for his own decision. This revealed that his parents left him space to create his own images with support, rather than directly interfering. Thus, the parents' advice was given based on the male learners' decision, which was close to the learners' *ideal L2 self*. This could result in a high link between family influence and their *ideal L2 self*. The fluctuation in Time 2 suggested that the parents' advice might not concur with the male learners' *ideal L2 self* all the time.

> *M52 (year 3): My parents sometimes gave me advice but they let me make my own decision. Actually, after graduation, my parents wanted me to continue the study because there are more and more people doing postgraduate study each year and it could be a crisis to me if I only have a BA degree. But I don't like to stay in school any more. I want to work, maybe in Beijing or maybe go back to my hometown. They did not disagree with me and also told me to try different jobs at an early stage and find something which I will be especially interested in. They said it is good for young people to experience as much as we can. I think parents just hope we are happy and have a good life.*

➢ The relationships between L2 selves and *criterion measures / instrumentality A*

The results showed that *instrumentality A* was positively correlated to *ideal/ought-to L2 self* throughout the whole year. Comparing the correlation values, the links to *ideal L2 self* were higher than *ought-to L2 self* in Times 1 and 2. As the correlation with *ideal L2 self* appeared to continuously decrease, and continuously increase with *ought-to L2 self* from Time 1 to Time 3, the link with *ought-to L2 self* was higher than to *ideal L2 self* in

Time 3 and it also became the strongest link throughout the whole year. As to the links to *criterion measures*, the patterns changed dramatically in both *ideal L2 self* and *ought-to L2 self*, a significant link with *ideal L2 self* in Time 1 and Time 3 and with *ought-to L2 self* in Time 3. Comparing the correlation values, the strongest link was with *ought-to L2 self* in Time 3. This suggested that both *ideal L2 self* and *ought-to L2 self* were very powerful in relating to the male learners' efforts in their L2 learning, but the relationships were not stable and the learners' responsibility to L2 learning was more related to their efforts than to their *ideal L2 self* at some point.

As a senior year student, M49 presented a general picture, one which most of the participants in senior groups were facing. Students were under a lot of pressure regarding the TEM exams. Although TEM Band 8 is optional, most university students took the opportunity to take the exam because they regarded it as a marker for an English major graduate or as a compulsory certificate to prove their English competence. As M49 showed, he spent most of his after-class time self-studying in his classroom to prepare for the TEM 8 exam. A pass in the TEM 8 exam could mean the guarantee of an internship or even a job in the future. His situation exemplified a complex picture of the students working hard for multiple purposes: exam purposes, promotional instrumentality purposes, realising their ideal L2 self purposes and L2 learning responsibility purposes. The multiple learning purposes could result in a high level of overlapping links between the learners' *ideal /ought-to L2 self* and their personal learning purposes and efforts in their L2 learning.

> *M49 (year 3): I like to do the self-study in the classroom because I can leave my books and everything here…… If we don't have class, I usually come here around 5:30 after I have supper and go back to the dormitory at 10:30 or 11:00pm. I plan to attend the TEM 8 exam next term. It is a very difficult exam but it is very important to English major students. It is the highest certificate to prove my English. I will have an internship in an economic consultancy company and one of the criteria is TEM 8. If I pass the exam and have that internship, they will probably offer me a job after I graduate. I want to work in that company because it is a joint venture. I think it is a good chance for me.*

➢ The changes in the relationship between L2 selves and *travel orientation*

The results showed that *travel orientation* was positively correlated to L2 selves throughout the whole year and the links were stable. Comparing the correlation values, the links with *ought-to L2 self* were stronger than with *ideal L2 self*, which suggested that the learners' traveling intentions were more related to their L2 learning responsibilities than to their ideal L2 self-images. The strongest links with both *ideal L2 self* and *ought-to L2 self* happened in Time 2.

In the interview, there were only a few male interviewees who connected their English learning with their traveling purposes and, generally, they did not see the necessary connection between English learning and traveling. M116 believed that traveling would be helpful for his current English learning but he clarified that the English learning was not necessary only for traveling purposes. This suggested that some male learners positively connected traveling with their *ideal L2 self-image*, such as working in international contexts, and at the same time had L2 learning purposes.

> *M116 (year 2): I like to travel and I want to find a job which can give me a lot of chances to go to other places. Traveling can broaden my views and I can see many different things. If I had money now, I would go abroad because it would be helpful to my English. But I don't think that you have to learn English because of traveling. There are many people going abroad to travel but they don't speak English. You can find a guide or translator. But if you can speak English, it is better.*

➢ The relationship between L2 selves and *attitude to learn English*

The results showed that male learners' *attitude to learn English* was positively correlated to their L2 selves, except to *ideal L2 self* in Time 2. This suggested that male learners' attitudes towards their L2 learning environment was more related to their *ought-L2 self* than to their *ideal L2 self* and the increasing patterns in *ought-to L2 self* indicated that the learners' attitudes towards English learning contexts, over time, become closely related to their responsibilities in learning English. The qualitative data showed that the male learners were very clear that the school subjects were set mainly for exam-purposes and they needed to take their school subjects seriously because they

knew the importance of maintaining a good academic record for their future.

M55 gave neutral comments on his English learning environment. He avoided clarifying his personal feelings about the school subjects because he understood that the setting of the school English subjects was good as it enabled him to obtain the certificates to prove his English competence. His attitude reflected his responsibilities in passing the exams, his hope to succeed in obtaining the relevant certificates and even his possible self-image of being a postgraduate student or job hunter. However, when he showed his preference for a foreign teacher's class, he presented a conflicting idea in his mind between L2 exam-purpose learning and L2 learning with interest. Therefore, his reply not only supported the strong links between the learners' attitudes towards their English environment and their *ideal/ought-to L2 self* but also revealed the negative aspect in their L2 English teaching/learning context. This was that the school subjects did not integrate the students' learning 'interests' with 'English language learning/teaching' purpose effectively.

> *M55 (year 3): I cannot say whether I like the school subjects or not because I think most of the subjects are set based on some criteria, such as TEM 4 or TEM 8. Although they are not interesting, we need to take the exams, so we have to work hard. Besides, all these certificates are important for us in job hunting or applying for postgraduate study. I like the oral English class and the foreign teacher is funny. But taking his class won't help me to pass the exam.*

➢ The relationships between L2 selves and *integrativeness, cultural interest & attitude to the L2 community*

The results showed that *integrativeness, cultural interest* and *attitude to the L2 community* were only correlated to *ideal L2 self,* although the correlation patterns were inconsistent. There were only significant links with *integrativeness* in Times 1 and 3, with *cultural interest* in Time 2 and with *attitude to the L2 community* in Time 1 and Time 2. This suggested that the male learners' attitude towards L2 speakers and English culture was related to their *ideal L2 self*, but the connection changed over time. The qualitative data generally showed that male learners were interested in English culture and knowing L2 speakers in order to improve their English competence and broaden

their views. Associated with the results in Chapter 3, male learners put more emphasis on learning purposes in their contact with English culture and knowing English speakers. However, male learners indicated that they did not have much chance to know foreign people.

Most of the male learners, like M56, did not know any other non-Chinese people, except their foreign teachers. The impression and attitudes towards English speakers and English culture were only from their experience of this contact with their foreign teachers or from the daily observation of foreign students on campus. Because M56 had good comments from his first foreign teacher, he had a positive attitude towards English speakers. Thus, it is suggested that the learners' limited experience of contact with English speakers could result in the instability in their attitude toward English culture and the L2 community, which leads to the fluctuation between their *ideal L2 self* and English culture and English speakers.

> *M56 (year 3): I don't know many foreigners except our foreign teachers. Our foreign teachers changed each year. I think the foreigners think in a different way and the important thing is their teaching is more interesting. I like my first year teacher. He is very young and takes our classes very seriously. When we ask questions, he always answers them carefully. He is very direct. He sometimes tells us of his experience and what is right and what is wrong. So I like him.*

4.3 Comparisons between female and male learners

Looking at the results of the female and male groups separately, the outstanding gender differences were, firstly, the motivational factors appeared more changeable in the female group than in the male group. Secondly, the correlation results between L2 selves and other motivational factors showed complex and different patterns for both groups: 1. The links between *ideal L2 self* and other motivational factors remained generally stable from Time 1 to Time 3 in the female group but fluctuated in Time 2 in the male group; 2. The links between *ought-to L2 self* and other motivational factors appeared changeable in Time 3 in the female group but were relatively stable from Time 1 to Time 3 in the male group. This suggested that female learners and male learners

developed different L2 selves' mechanisms that worked on motivational factors in each learning stage. The following comparison will present the differences (in 4.3.1) and the similarities (in 4.3.2) between female and male learners in terms of the development and the correlation patterns of L2 selves and other relevant motivational factors.

4.3.1 Gender differences in the development and the interaction between L2 selves and other motivational factors

➢ The links between *ideal L2 self* and *ought-to L2 self*

Gender differences emerged in the different interactive relationship between *ideal L2 self* and *ought-to L2 self* and in the different changing interrelationship between *ideal L2 self* and *ought-to L2 self*. Male learners' *ideal/ought-to L2 selves* were positively correlated with each other throughout the whole year. However, female learners' *ideal/ought-to L2 selves* were only correlated with each other in Times 1 and 2. Reviewing the correlation values, in the male group, it appeared to fluctuate a bit in Time 2 and then rebounded in Time 3 while showing a continuous decrease in the female group. Combined with the significant changes of female learners' *ought-to L2 self* between Time 1 and Time 3, this suggested that female learners were more likely to adapt their *ought-to L2 self* during their long-term L2 English learning so as to maintain the development of their L2 selves, while male learners' *ideal / ought-to L2 self* were maintained as stable.

Associating this with the qualitative data in 4.2, female learners presented their intention to develop their *ideal L2 self* and *ought-to L2 self* in different ways; female learners transformed their learning purposes from the dominance of personal preferences into the dominance of multiple purposes during their long-term English learning and developed diverse L2 selves at each stage. Greene and DeBecker (2004) suggested that women are more likely to pursue goals in multiple domains. When female learners developed a new English learning purpose at each stage, they adapted their learning responsibility to meet the new requirements. Male learners, however, maintained a constant emphasis on the communicative function of English and developed their L2 selves based on using English as a tool. Their consistent ideas about English learning maintained the stability in their *ideal L2 self* and their responsibilities

in English.

➢ The links between L2 selves and *criterion measures*

The results showed that there were gender differences in the interplay between L2 selves and *criterion measures*. Female learners' *ideal/ought-to L2 selves* were positively correlated to *criterion measures* over the 12 months but the male learners' *ideal / ought-to L2 selves* were only occasionally correlated to their *criterion measures* (with *ideal L2 self* in Times 1 and 2 and with *ought-to L2 self* in Time 3). As neither female learners nor male learners had significant changes in their intentional efforts in their English learning, the gender differences in the correlation patterns indicated that the influence of L2 selves on their studying efforts worked differently between the female learners and the male learners at each stage during their L2 learning. Both *ideal / ought-to L2 selves* had equal power working on the female learners' efforts while male learners' *ideal L2 self* appeared more powerful than *ought-to L2 self* because both the *ideal* and *ought-to L2 selves* only showed occasional influences on their study efforts.

Associating this with the analysis of the qualitative data, female learners were more able to connect their efforts in English learning with realising their *ideal L2 self* and meeting their *ought-to L2 self*. For example, F177 had worked hard in order to become a qualified interpreter in the future and F40 had worked hard to obtain language certificates and hoped to be more competitive in job hunting (see section 4.2.1). As to the male learners, their efforts in English learning were changeable, depending on their temporary learning purposes, so both their *ideal/ought-to L2 selves* could influence their efforts in English learning, occasionally. On the other hand, the overlap of correlations between L2 selves and the *criterion measures* indicated the co-influences of *ideal/ought-to L2 selves* on the learners' working efforts, simultaneously. For example, M49 developed a self-image as an intern or an employee in an economic consultancy company after graduation and he had worked hard to pass the TEM 8 exam. His learning behavior involved a mixed picture of realising his *ideal L2 self* as well as fulfiling his obligation of obtaining the TEM 8 certificate.

➢ The links between L2 selves and *family influence*

The data showed that *family influence* was only linked to female learners' *ought-to L2 self*. However, *family influence* was linked to male learners' *ideal/ought-to L2 selves,*

except to *ideal L2 self* in Time 2. This suggested that both female and male learners developed their *ought-to L2 selves* under the influence of their families. In other words, their families' advice or suggestions positively determined their responsibilities toward their English learning. However, the situation of *ideal L2 self* was different. The unstable links for the male learners indicated that *family influence* did not always concur with the learners' *ideal L2 self*. This suggested that the gap between the parents' advice or suggestions and the learners' *ideal L2 self* was much bigger among female learners than among male learners.

Associating this with the qualitative data, both female and male learners presented as being considerably influenced by their parents' advice in their English learning, mainly at two stages: English major selection and post-graduation planning. Female learners indicated a more obedient attitude by taking their parents' advice while male learners indicated a more subjective judgment of their parents' advice and showed more intention to make their own final decision. This suggested that female and male learners adopted different ways to face their parents' advice. The female learners' intention to follow their parents' advice resulted in a high link between their learning responsibility and their families' influence. However, this continuous obedience could lead to the distance between their *ideal L2 self* and their families' advice. As to the male learners, they used their parents' advice as a guide rather than as an order. They developed their *ideal /ought-to L2 selves* following consideration of their parents' advice, rather than changing their *ideal /ought-to L2 selves* to concur with their parents' advice.

➤ The links between L2 self and *attitude to learn English*

The data showed that there were significant differences between female and male learners in the link between L2 selves and *attitude to learn English*. The *attitude to learn English* had a positive correlation with female learners' *ideal L2 self* and with male learners' *ought-to L2 self,* respectively. This suggested that, when the learners were faced with changes in their English learning environment, both female learners and male learners, respectively, developed their *ideal L2 self* and their responsibilities toward their English learning in order to adapt to the new learning environment. In addition, there were also occasional links to female learners' *ought-to L2 self* and to *ideal L2 self* in the male group, and this highlighted the different L2 mechanisms of female and male learners in the same L2 English learning environment.

Associating this with the qualitative data, female learners had a different attitude toward their school subjects and their teachers, but their comments were mainly made due to their learning purpose and high expectations of improving their learning environment. Their positive orientations implied that they hoped to improve their English learning environment, which could lead to a continuous connection between their attitudes towards English learning with their *ideal L2 self*. The male learners developed negative and neutral attitudes towards their English learning but their clear idea about the necessity to pass exams resulted in an increasing connection between their attitude towards their learning environment and their *ought-to L2 selves*. However, because of the general phenomenon that the students were aware of the importance of obtaining good marks and had expectations of good teachers, that led to the occasional links between the female learners' *ought-to L2 self* and their attitude to English learning.

➤ The links between L2 selves and *integrativeness / attitudes to the L2 community*

Both female and male learners' *ideal L2 selves* showed more active links to *integrativeness/attitudes to the L2 community* than their *ought-to L2 sel*ves did and the gender difference patterns for these two variables were also similar, although female learners' L2 selves were more active in the correlation with these two variables than male learners. Regarding the outstanding development of *integrativeness/attitudes to the L2 community* among female learners, this suggests that female learners are more likely to maintain the consistency of their *ideal L2 self* and their attitude towards English speakers and culture. However, with the increase in their *ought-to L2 self* features, the links between their *ought-to L2 self* and *integrativeness* diminished during their long-term English learning. As for the male learners, there was no significant change between their *integrativeness/attitudes to the L2 community* and the occasional links between *ideal L2 self* and *integrativeness/attitudes to the L2 community* indicated that the male learners' *ideal L2 self* only temporarily concurred with their attitudes toward English speakers and culture.

The qualitative data showed that female learners had more contact experience with non-Chinese people and had more complex attitudes toward English speakers than male learners did. Female learners were more active in getting to know foreigners and they made friends with foreign students on campus. This pro-active attitude coincided with their positive intentions to connect their *ideal L2 self* with their *integrativeness/attitudes*

to the L2 community. Although the initial contact was, primarily, for learning purposes, the development of making friends covered their learning purpose, which resulted in a weakening of the link between their *ought-to L2 self* and *integrativeness*. The male learners had limited contact with foreign people and the dominant impression of their contact with foreign teachers could become the major resource of the stability in their *integrativeness/attitudes to the L2 community*. However, getting to know a new foreign teacher or any temporary contact with foreign students produced occasional mobility in the links between their L2 selves and their attitude towards English speakers and culture.

➢ The links between L2 selves and *cultural interest*

The data showed that gender differences only happened in the link between *ideal L2 self* and *cultural interest*. The female learners' *ideal L2 selves* showed increasing correlations with their interests in English movies/songs, while the male learners' *ideal L2 selves* only showed an occasional link to their *cultural interest*. Neither female learners nor male learners showed any link between their *ought-to L2 selves* and English songs/movies.

Analysing this qualitative data, female learners' personal preferences for English songs/movies determined the link between their *ideal L2 self* and their *cultural interest*. Although their contacts with English songs/movies involved some learning purpose, their personal interests developed and became stronger over time than learning purposes. As for the male learners, this situation was reversed. Although the male learners presented an interest in English songs/movies, their interests were accompanied with continuous learning purpose and their emphasis on these learning purposes often constrained their personal enjoyment of English songs/movies. Thus, there was only an occasional link between their *ideal L2 self* and their interest in English songs/movies. Besides, as a fact, in terms of English learning situations, an interest in English songs/movies won't directly improve a learner's English competence and aid their academic record, especially in exam-dominant learning contexts. This situation resulted in the absence of a link between the learners' *ought-to L2 self* and their *cultural interest*.

➢ The links between L2 selves and *travel orientation*

The data showed that the gender difference for L2 selves and the links to *travel*

orientation was only reflected from the *ought-to L2 self*. Female learners' *ought-to L2 selves* maintained a decreasing relationship with *travel orientation* while male learners' *ought-to L2 selves* maintained a high correlation with their travelling intentions throughout the whole year. This suggested that female learners developed their *ought-to L2 self* features gradually and were further away from their travelling intentions while male learners maintained a stable attitude towards travelling and their *ought-to L2 self*.

The qualitative data showed that female learners were more likely to connect their English learning with travelling and developed *ideal L2 self-image*s in an international context, such as working abroad. With the increase of their responsibilities in English learning, they developed more *ought-to L2 self* features, which gradually broadened the gap between their *ought-to L2 self* and their travelling intentions. However, male learners were more likely to clarify the necessary connection between English learning and travelling, although some of them indicated personal preferences to travelling or engaging in a career which involved travelling. Their stable L2 selves and attitudes toward travelling maintained a consistent correlation between their L2 selves and their *travel orientation* in their long-term English learning.

4.3.2 Gender similarities in the development and interplay between L2 selves and motivational factors

➢ The changes in *English anxiety* over the 12 months

The repeated measure tests showed that both female and male learners' *English anxiety* significantly decreased over the 12 months and the size of the effect was large (see Table 6). The pairwise comparison test revealed that the levels of all learners' *English anxiety* at the 6 and 12 month stages were significantly lower than at the beginning. This suggested that the learners felt less anxious when speaking English based on classroom learning contexts and speaking with English native speakers.

Graph 4: The changes of the learners' *English anxiety* over 12 months
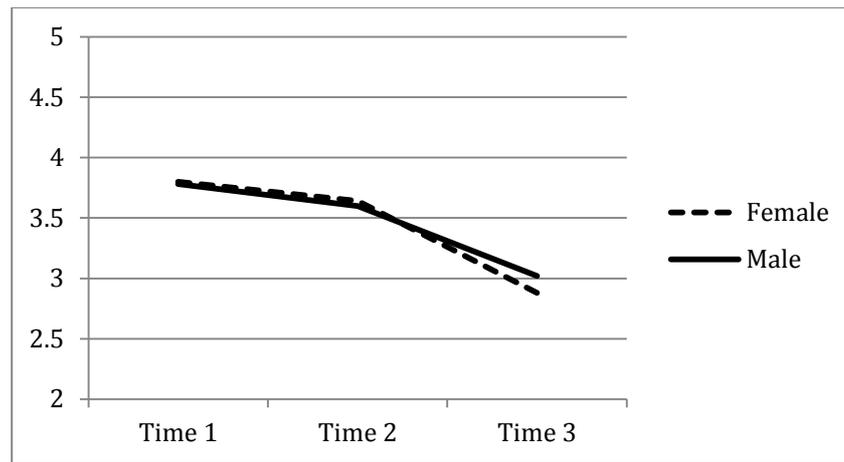
F92 provided her story about overcoming anxiousness in her L2 English speaking. Similar to other female learners, she was afraid of making mistakes and could be shy when speaking English in front of others. The daily drills in the English classes made her realise the necessity of overcoming her anxiety. Her constant practice made her feel at ease when speaking and gave her more confidence to further her learning. Her responses disclosed that a learner's anxiety when speaking English could be accompanied by many other factors, such as learning context, personal willingness, encouragement, etc.

> *F92 (year 3): yes, I feel anxious at the beginning because I am afraid of making a mistake. But since the second term of year 1, we were asked to answer questions in turn in the (English) Intensive Reading class and (English) listening class. It is useless to be afraid. Our teacher said if you are afraid of speaking English in the class, how could you speak in front of strangers? So I pushed myself to speak more in the class and I found the more I spoke, the more relaxed I felt. As long as I practice as much as I can, I will speak perfect English.*

➢ The links between L2 selves and *instrumentality A/B*

The interaction between L2 selves and *instrumentality A/B* for the female and male groups had similar patterns, showing there were high correlations between *ideal L2 self* and *instrumentality A,* and between *ought-to L2 self* and *instrumentality A/B*. This suggested that all learners not only maintained the consistency between their *ideal L2 self-image* and their personal learning purposes but also maintained the consistency

between their learning responsibility and their *instrumentality A/B*. According to the qualitative data, both the female and male interviewees indicated that they intended to develop their *ideal L2 self* according to the demands or the requirements of their future career after graduation. For example, F39 had developed an ideal L2 self-image of working in an electricity company and M49 had developed an ideal L2 self-image of working in an economic consultancy company. Their ideal L2 self-images were shaped once they had a clear idea of their learning purposes. This supported the findings of an important link between *ideal L2 self* and *instrumentality A* in both the female and male groups.

With regards to the links between *ought-to L2 self,* the learners' personal learning purposes and their intentions to avoid a negative outcome during their English learning, this phenomenon can be understood from two aspects. These are the learners' potential intentions to avoid any failure in their future career and their general concern about their academic record in school. Again, both F39 and M49 indicated their responsibilities in their current learning so as to meet the demands of their future career or, in other words, the more responsibility they had in their current learning, the more intention they had to avoid any failure in their future career. Furthermore, as a common phenomenon among the students, concerns about scores and academic records played a very important role in the students' English learning. As mentioned in Chapter 3, students felt ashamed to be the bottom student in their class. Both female and male learners tried to avoid the occurrence of that circumstance. Thus, the learners' *ought-to L2 self* feature coincided with their career-driven purposes as well as their academic learning purposes.

Summary

With the findings of the gender differences in the development of L2 selves and the motivational factors, there were also many differences between female and male learners found in the interactions between the L2 selves and various motivational factors, as shown in the above analysis. In general, the major gender issues can be summarised from the following aspects:

In terms of the development and the interaction between *ideal/ought-to L2 self*, the female learners developed more features of their *ought-to L2 self* while male learners were more likely to maintain the stability of their L2 selves. This suggests that female learners and male learners adopt different L2 self mechanisms during each learning

stage of their long-term L2 English learning. In addition, the variability of F43 disclosed other potential social influences on the development of female learners' *ideal L2 self*.

The findings with regard to gender differences and the changing patterns between L2 selves and motivational factors indicated that female learners were more likely to adjust their *ought-to L2 self* in order to pursue multiple learning purposes at each stage and the long-term pursuit of diverse learning purposes resulted in the differentiation of their *ideal L2 self* and *ought-to L2 self*. This phenomenon can be explained better with the findings regarding the external influences they received, such as parental interference in their English learning. However, their male counterparts held consistent attitudes toward English and developed their *ideal/ought-to L2 selves* based on these consistent attitudes, even when faced with familial interference.

Furthermore, gender differences were more apparent when the learners were faced with changes in their learning environment. Female learners' positive expectations to improve their learning environment maintained the continuous link between their *ideal L2 self* and their attitudes towards English learning. However, the decreasing tendency in the correlation values indicated that the English learning environment was not always improved exactly as the female learners hoped. Under the same learning contexts, male learners confirmed the exam-purposes in the setting of the school subjects and maintained a high link between their attitudes towards English learning and their *ought-to L2 self*. Their explicit learning purpose of passing exams could coincide with their over-emphasis on this learning purpose during their contact with English songs/movies and the high links between their *ought-to L2 self* and *travel orientation*. On the other hand, female learners maintained a high level of personal interest in English culture and presented a high link to their *ideal L2 self*.

Furthermore, contact with non-Chinese people could be an important resource in the interplay of L2 selves and *integrativeness/attitudes to the L2 community* and could be affected by gender. Limited contact with non-Chinese people indicated that the male learners' inconsistent opinions about English speakers and the instant changes during their contact with foreign teachers could result in temporary influences on their *ideal L2 self*. Chapter 5 will discuss further gender differences during contact with non-Chinese people. Finally, as a comprehensive study on gender issues, the similarities between

female and male learners cannot be ignored. The findings include a significant decrease in the learners' *English anxiety* and the interaction between the learners' L2 selves and their *instrumentality A/B*.

4.4 Discussion

The discussion in this section will start with the gender issues that arise in the development of L2 motivation by comparing the current findings to the previous findings in 4.4.1. This will be followed by a discussion about female and male learners' *ideal/ ought-to L2 selves* from a macro-social political perspective and individual learners' perspectives, respectively, in 4.4.2. The last two sections will discuss gender issues in the interplay between L2 selves and other motivational factors.

4.4.1 Gender differences in the development of L2 selves and motivation

The study found that the motivational changes among female learners during the 12 months were more outstanding than among the males. This feature of gender differences was generally consistent with Henry (2009) who claimed that school girls showed more changes in their motivation toward English learning than boys. However, looking through the results of each variable which was investigated in both studies, there were three inconsistencies on the motivational variables:

- *Ideal L2 self* - Henry (2009) found that school girls showed a significant increase from Year 6 to Year 9 while the female learners' *ideal L2 self* was relatively stable in the current study.
- *Integrativeness* - Henry (2009) found that school girls' *integrativeness* increased during their learning while the current research found the female learners' *integrativeness* significantly decreased with L2 learning.
- Henry (2009) found that school boys showed a significant increase in their *instrumentals*, which was not found with the male learners in the current research.

Scrutinising the details of these two studies, these inconsistencies could be explained based on three aspects. The first of these aspects is the different interpretations of the usage of motivational names. For instance, *integrativeness* in Henry (2009) was adopted

from Gardner's Attitude and Motivation Test Battery (1985), which emphasises the learners' travel orientation and L2 English cultural interests. However, *integrativeness* in the current research mainly refers to the learners' interest in English and English speakers. The different interpretation of *integrativeness* could be one of the factors resulting in the inconsistencies in the results between the two researches. Secondly, there was a different learning duration applied to each research; the research lasted 3 years in Henry (2009) while the current research applied and administered three questionnaires over 12 months. However, self-concept is a dynamic feature and can be developed with changes in the environment and personal affection. L2 language learners could present different changing tendencies of their *ideal L2 self* during the different learning periods, which could be another factor leading to the inconsistency of the results for *ideal L2 self* in these two researches. Lastly, the age factor of the participants in the study could have been important. The participants in Henry (2009) were school pupils in grades 6 to 9, while the participants in the current research were adult L2 learners. The development of self-concept among young learners, adolescents and adults learners is different depending on their contexts. Leflot, Onghena and Colpin (2010) found that school children's self-concept could be greatly influenced by the interaction with their teachers, including teacher involvement, structure, and learning autonomy support. The age differences between the participants in the two studies became another factor that resulted in the inconsistencies. Consequently, although there were inconsistencies, gender differences in the learners' development of their L2 self and motivation concurred in both studies.

4.4.2 The stability and changeability of L2 selves

Kormos and Csizér (2008) suggested that adult L2 learners' *ideal L2 self* is relatively stable because they have a fairly stable ideal self-image when they acquire L2 and they integrate their existing self-image with their L2 learning. This supports the findings in the current study that both female and male learners had stable *ideal L2 selves* over the 12 months period.

On the other hand, Eckes and Trautner (2000: 10) summarised the core ideas of the existing gendered related approaches where an "individual's gender-related thoughts, feelings and behaviours are being determined by multiple factors ranging from the

broad societal level to specific interpersonal encounters and intra-individual processes" and "the self negotiates between the social environment and an individual's behaviour" (Hannover, 2000: 178). The current study confirmed that female learners differed from male learners in the outstanding development of their *ought-to L2 selves*. Thus, the following paragraphs will concentrate on the factors which influenced the development of the female learners' *ought-to L2 selves* from broad social levels.

With continuous social attention to women's social status and more than 40 years' of implementation of the one-child policy, women have had more important social roles than ever, including working in all industrial sectors, accessing education at all levels, and sharing the same equal rights and responsibilities as the male members in the family, etc. When Chu (1985) investigated young Chinese people's self-concept, three entities were considered within Chinese social contexts: *significant others*, *materials and objects,* and *ideas*. *Significant others* refers to the individual's interaction with others in various kinds of role relations and is regarded as a crucial factor in the development of the individual's self concept. *Materials and objects* refer to the physical environment in which an individual's self concept is developed. *Ideas* refers to the ideology which has influenced an individual's perception of *significant others* and *materials and objects* and covers a wide range of thinking and ideology, which influence the development of the individual's self-concept. Embedding this into L2 English learning, the female learners had equal opportunities to engage in all types of social interaction for English learning purposes and even behaved more actively in their learning behaviour than the male learners. They lived in a positive English learning context and also created gender-typed learning environments, such as English learning activities with interpersonal features, dominant numbers of female learners in English learning classes, general social recognition of female learners' talent in language learning, etc. In such circumstances, female learners gradually perceived and internalised the ideological content of their gender-typed L2 self.

Associating this with the current results, female learners tended to adjust their learning purposes during their long-term English learning because of many external factors, such as parental advice, peer influence, contact with foreign friends, career-driving learning purpose, etc. The adjustment of learning purposes could enhance their learning responsibilities to some extent. Additionally, female learners' active contact with non-Chinese people gave them more opportunities to be a L2 user in different situations.

According to Markus and Nurius (1986), self concept is changeable when the person fills a new social role, lives in a new environment or faces a different situation. All the changes, such as an increase in learning responsibilities and a new social role as a L2 user, could become the resources that change the female learners' L2 self concept. Compared to the female learners, the male learners had stable attitudes towards their English learning with exam-learning and career-driven learning purposes. External factors, such as familial influence and contact with non-Chinese people, did not formulate new learning environments for the male learners and, as a consequence, did not change their L2 selves. Within the macro-social contexts, male learners did not experience changes in social status in the same way as the female learners did. The perception of their social roles was stable while the perception of female learners' social roles was expected to be higher. Therefore, the developments of female and male L2 selves were shaped differently by the social contexts.

On the other hand, macro-social changes promoted the development of female learners' L2 selves as well as constrained their L2 selves at some point, which was reflected in the results of the interaction between *ideal L2 self* and *ought-to L2 self* and between *ideal L2 self* and *family influence*. Women's self concepts in the modern era have emphasised the sharing of obligations and the taking of responsibility, especially in the nuclear family. This feature coincided with collective social values where the individual is expected to fulfil the obligations of their own social position so as to fit in with others in their social unit and obey their parents in accordance with self-concept in terms of family lineage (Tu, 1985). With the observation of the interdependent features of L2 learners under familial influences in their L2 English learning, female learners presented more intentions than male learners to meet their parents' expectations by taking their parents' advice or being obedient to their parents' arrangements for their future. The long-term obedience to parents' opinions increased the female learners' *ought-to L2 self* features. Knox (2006) suggested that parental expectations and the perception of girls' abilities at an early stage could make girls develop their possible selves in accordance with their parents' hopes. Female learners integrated their parents' hopes with their personal learning purposes and the interference from parents gradually enhanced the female learners' obligations to their L2 English learning. This enlarged the distance between the female learners' *ought-to L2 self* and their *ideal L2 self* and produced a gap between their *ideal L2 self* and their parental influence. At the same

time, familial influence was more active and interplayed with the female learners' *ought-to L2 self* than with their *ideal L2 self*. As men originally had less interdependent features than women and the male learners presented less obedience when taking parental advice, the positive relationships between *ideal L2 self* and *family influence* were only shown occasionally among the male learners.

4.4.3 The interaction between L2 selves and *integrativeness/criterion measures/ instrumentality A/B*

The present study found that the learners' L2 selves maintained significant correlations with *integrativenesss/criterion measures/instrumentality A/B* except for *ought-to L2 self* with *integrativeness* in Time 3 and *ideal L2 self* with *instrumentality B*. The separate correlation tests also confirmed that the interplay between the L2 selves and *integrativeness/ criterion measures* among female learners were different from those of male learners while the correlation patterns between L2 selves and *instrumentality A/B* for females and males were similar. Compared to the previous findings from Chinese L2 English learners in Taguchi et al. (2009), the consistent findings include the positive correlation between *ideal L2 self* and *integrativeness/criterion measures/instrumentality A* and between *ought-to L2 self* and *instrumentality A/B*. The current study not only confirmed the interaction relationships from the long-term L2 learning perspective but also discovered the gender issues in the interplay mechanism of the L2 selves with these motivational variables.

➢ Gender differences in the interplay between L2 selves and *integrativeness/criterion measures*

The results of the correlation tests provided strong support for the notions of L2 selves and *integrativeness* within the L2 Motivational Self System; both *ideal L2 self* and *ought-to L2 self* were closely related to *integrativeness*, and sharing integrative features. I*deal L2 self* could be seen as an imaginary individual in the L2 community (personal success in L2 learning) and *ought-to L2 self* could be seen as the path to satisfying the individual desire for a certain purpose (obligation to L2 learning) (Dörnyei, 2005).

The separate group tests found that the interplay between L2 selves and *integrativeness* were more active and stable in the female group than in the male group. Both the female

and the male learners presented their interest in knowing non-Chinese people. However, female learners were more active in creating opportunities to get to know foreign students on campus while male learners felt constrained by the situation. More interaction among female learners in English under diverse situations with non-Chinese people provided them with more opportunities to get to know foreigners and develop clearer attitudes towards English speakers and English culture than male learners. Positive L2 learning experiences promoted the female learners' positive imagination about the L2 community and increased their learning responsibilities toward achieving certain learning outcome. Dörnyei (2009a: 28) suggested that "the more positive our disposition toward these L2 speakers, the more attractive our idealised L2 self". As for the male learners, they had less experience in contacting English speakers than the female learners. Their contact with non-Chinese people and their temporary attitude toward L2 speakers were mainly from any contact with their foreign teachers, which became the major resources for their *integrativeness*. Thus, the interplay between their L2 selves and *integrativeness* appeared to be changeable but inactive, compared to female learners.

The similar interplay patterns between the female and the male learners can also be found in the links between L2 selves and *criterion measures*. Csizér and Kormos (2008) suggested that the learners' attitudes toward L2 language, culture and language speakers played important roles in affecting the learners' efforts in their L2 learning. Thus, the learners' higher *integrativeness* indirectly affected their *criterion measures*. The positive L2 learning experience and the satisfaction and enjoyment of using a L2 encouraged the female learners' to put more effort into their learning. This coincided with Markus and Nurius (1986) who stated that an individual's past experience can reflect on their effort-making and influence the formulation of the person's future self-image. Thus, female learners' positive experiences in L2 learning maintained the positive link between their L2 selves and the *criterion measures*.

In addition, Ruvolo and Markus (1992) found that people with a positive self-image performed better in effort tasks and persistent tasks. Kormos and Csizér (2008) found that clear learning goals and *ideal L2 self* among university students made their *criterion measures* higher than for middle school students. Associating this with the current results, as female learners had a higher level of ideal L2 self than male learners in terms of multiple L2 selves and high expectations about their L2 selves in the future,

they were more likely to develop positive links between their efforts and their *ideal L2 self* than male learners did. The higher level in *criterion measures for f*emale learners' than male learners coincided with a higher level in their *ideal L2 self.* This agreement could produce more stable links between L2 self and the efforts in L2 learning among female learners than among male learners.

➢ Gender similarities in the links between *Instrumentality A/B* and L2 selves

Although female and male learners developed their *instrumentality A/B* in different ways, the interactive patterns between their L2 selves and *instrumentality A/B* were similar. *Instrumentality A/B* was developed, based on the original notions of promotion and prevention foci etc. and promotional instrumentality (*Instrumentality A*) is closer to the *ideal L2 self* and preventional instrumentality (*Instrumentality B*) is closer to *ought-to L2 self.* However, the current results not only confirmed the connection between *ought-to L2 self* and preventional instrumentality but also suggested the connection between *ideal L2 self* and both promotional and preventional instrumentality. The phenomena happened in both the female and male groups. An understanding of local English learning/teaching features in China will determine this result.

In terms of macro-social political aspects, English teaching/learning in China originated for political and economic reasons. In order to meet the demands of economic development, the importance of mastering English was highlighted by the government as an element that could promote national economic prosperity. Although modern scholars had pointed out the negative influence of the over-emphasis of social needs and economic development on English teaching/learning, English education was set as a compulsory subject from the 3rd year of elementary school. Consequently, the connection between English learning and economic development has been highlighted as the objective of all English subjects, such as promoting the important role of English learning in all industrial sectors, promoting the students' responsibilities toward English learning and emphasising the contribution of English to national prosperity, etc. Therefore, the connection between economics and English learning was indicated in different forms at all levels of education.

From the individual learners' perspective, there was a general tendency among the students that English was regarded as an indispensable element required to develop a good career for both female and male learners. Taguchi et al. (2009) mentioned that, for

Chinese students, having a higher education in China is regarded as the path to reaching a higher social status and getting a good job with a handsome salary so as to repay their parents. Living within traditional Chinese family values, an individual's career development is not only the representation of personal achievement but also a guarantee of taking on responsibilities in order to support the elder members of the family. Thus, the explicit idea of the close connection between English learning and a good future together with the responsibilities in their L2 English learning had been rooted potentially in the learners' mind. On the other hand, the notion of *ideal L2 self* involved personal pleasure in L2 achievement and career success in L2 mastery. Embedding this into the current results, it is suggested that the learners effectively integrated the responsibility and personal purposes in their L2 English learning so as to develop a good career that met their own learning purposes as well as fulfiled their obligation to earn enough money to support their elderly parents in the future. The connection between *ideal L2 self* and promotional/preventional instrumentality reflected the social phenomena among young people in modern China. With over four decades of the one-child policy, female and male learners share equal responsibilities and obligations to support their families and develop their careers. Thus, it is reasonable to expect that female and male learners had similar interactive mechanisms between their L2 selves and their instrumentalities.

4.4.4 Gender issues in the interplay between L2 selves and *attitude to learn English*

The threshold of gender differences in the interaction between L2 selves and *attitude to learn English* was that the female learners' *ideal L2 selves* and the male learners' *ought-to L2 selves,* respectively, were linked to *attitude to learn English*. Boyatzis and Akrivou (2006) mentioned that the ideal self is composed of three major components: the image of a desired future (the realisation of a person's dream); hope (emotionally to promote ideal self); and the person's core identity (relative stable and enduring individual characteristics). In the current findings, when faced with the same learning contexts in school that had negative elements, such as exam-purpose school subjects and unsatisfactory teachers, female learners showed positive expectations toward improvements in their learning environment while male learners presented a neutral attitude and showed their intention to fit in with the environment for exam-purposes.

Female learners' hopes for excellent teachers and practical experience in English classes were more outstanding than for male learners. Their expectations for their *ideal L2 self* coincided with their optimistic attitudes towards their English learning. This resulted in the positive links between their *ideal L2 self* and *attitude to learn English*. As for male learners, they emphasised exam-purposes and adapted themselves to the learning environment so as to avoid obtaining a bad academic record. Their neutral attitudes towards their learning environment coincided with their intention to avoid a negative outcome. This agreement led to the positive links between their *ought-to L2 self* and *attitude to learn English*. The female learners' hopes and expectations for the English learning contexts coincided with the element of *ideal self*, which could not be found among the male learners. Therefore, female and male learners presented different levels of activation in their *ideal L2 self* and *ought-to L2 self* when faced the same L2 learning contexts.

Summary

The study found that both female and male learners' *ideal L2 selves* appeared to be relatively stable while female learners' *ought-to L2 selves* were more changeable than the male learners. The changes in other motivational factors appeared to be more active in the female group than in the male group. The different correlations between *ideal L2 self* and *ought-to L2 self,* and between L2 selves and other motivational factors, suggested that L2 selves interacted with each motivational factor differently at each stage and the interplay between L2 selves and other motivational factors for female learners was also different to the male learners. Therefore, the results confirmed that the female and male learners developed their L2 selves and motivations in different ways and with different interactive relationships between their *ideal L2 self* and *ought-to L2 self* and between their L2 selves and other motivational factors at each L2 learning stage. It was suggested that the macro-social political changes in gender issues influenced the female learners' L2 selves in both positive and negative ways and that local English teaching contexts developed the motivation for the L2 learners.

Chapter 5

Gender issues in International Posture (IP)

This chapter will examine the gender issues in IP. Using an independent-samples *t* test, repeated measures and correlation tests, the results will show the gender differences on the four IP scales, the development of the learners' IP over 12 months and the interactive relationships between *ideal L2 self* and IP at each stage. Together with further information taken from the qualitative data, the study will reveal the differences in IP between female and male learners from both individual and social perspectives. There are three sections in this chapter: data analysis and results of gender differences in IP in 5.1, the changes in female and learners' IP during the year in 5.2, and the discussion in 5.3.

5.1 Gender differences in IP

An independent-sample *t* test (2-tailed) was performed with gender as a grouping variable and the effect size for each *t* test used Cohen's *d*. The Levine Test was used to test the assumption of the homogeneity of variance and the two variances were shown to be approximately equal. Graph 5 shows the different mean scores of the four IP variables between the female and male groups. The detailed *t* test results are given in Table 9. Significant gender differences ($p < .05$) were found in three IP variables (see Graph 5): *intergroup approach avoidance tendency*, *interest in international news* and *having things to communicate to the world*. Female learners had a significantly higher score than male learners in *intergroup approach avoidance tendency*, which suggested that the female learners preferred more contact with non-Chinese people than the male learners. Male learners, however, had a significantly higher score than female learners in *interest in international news* and *having things to communicate to the world*, which suggested that the male learners were more interested in foreign affairs and had more intention to share information with people from other countries than the female learners. A detailed analysis on each variable will be given in the following sub-sections, combined with the qualitative data.

Graph 5: Gender differences between the scales in IP
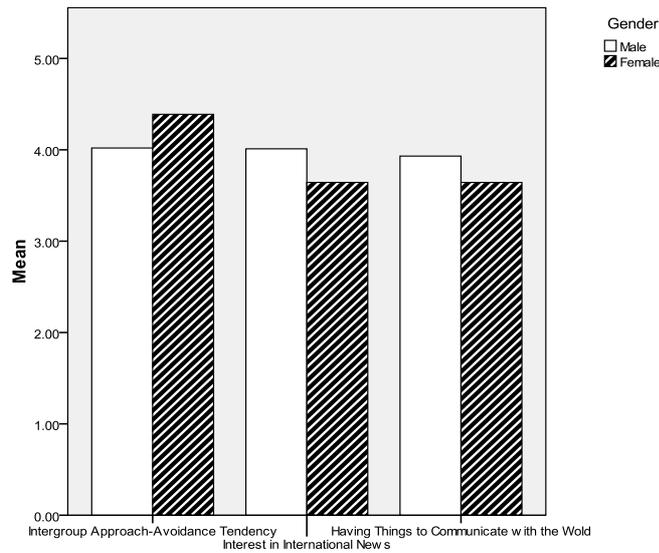
Table 9: T-Test results for the gender differences in IP

Variables	N = 240 (F = 178; M = 62)		Cohen's *d*
	t(238) =	*p* value (2-tailed)	
Intergroup approach-avoidance tendency	-3.40	.001	.49
Interest in international vocation or activities		Not sig.	
Interest in international news	2.528	.012	.37
Having things to communicate to the world	2.136	.034	.31
IP		Not sig	

5.1.1 *Intergroup approach avoidance tendency*

The results showed that the female learners' *intergroup approach avoidance tendency* (*M* = 4.39, *SD* = .73) was significantly higher than their male counterparts (*M* = 4.02, *SD* = .76) and the magnitude of the difference was almost medium (Cohen's *d* = .49). This suggested that the female learners were more willing to get to know non-Chinese people than the male learners. In the interviews, the participants held divergent opinions on knowing non-Chinese people. The common point between the female and male learners was the learning purpose of practicing their English-speaking skills during contact with non-Chinese people. However, the female learners presented a richer

experience when making foreign friends than male learners, as shown in the previous chapter where female learners were more active than male learners in getting to know non-Chinese people. The male learners had presented more personal reasons that prevented them from contact with foreign people.

M15 expressed his reluctance to converse with foreign people because of his shyness and his low level of English language competence. He also expressed his hesitation in approaching foreign people because he thought that this behaviour was not appropriate and could violate foreigners' travel orientation. This suggested that he had the intention to know foreigners but further consideration of his situation from other aspects, such as his politeness and his judgment of social behavior, produced conflict between his intention and his behavior. At the same time, his suggestion of learning English through watching movies, listening to the radio and using the Internet, revealed the major learning strategies in his English learning when he could not find the appropriate opportunity to communicate with non-Chinese people in order to meet his learning demands. M22 had foreign friends but limited contact. His responses implied that he wanted to know foreign people, but felt constrained by the limited resources. His concern about the nationality of foreign students on campus highlighted his expectation for communication with native English speakers. The situation he introduced was also a common problem that all other students currently faced, whereby Chinese students and non-Chinese students did not have a lot of chance to get to know each other because they lived in different areas and engaged in different social activities on campus. Although the reply from M22 indicated the truth, it also revealed M22's negative attitude towards the current learning contexts.

> M15: *I am too shy to speak English and it troubles me a lot to conquer my shyness. My oral English is not good. Sometime I can understand others but I cannot speak well. If we cannot talk to each other, it is difficult to make foreign friends. I think that foreigners come to China to travel or for something else; they don't come here to teach English. I know some people who just speak to foreigners in the street in order to practice their English; it is not good. I don't do the same. If you want to practice English, you can watch movies, listen to the radio and do many things on the Internet. You don't have to find a foreigner to practice English.*

> *M22: I speak some English outside the class, but only in certain international activities and my part-time job. I sometime go out with foreign friends. We knew each other when I worked together, but not often. Although we have foreign students in our school, we don't know each other. You can't go and talk to them; it is strange. And we don't live together. We live in different areas. And, as they are from all over the world, how do you know who is from America.*

The female learners were comparatively more positive than male learners. Most of the interviewees demonstrated their willingness to be involved with using English and they also had different experiences of knowing non-Chinese people, such as attending a voluntary job or having a pen pal. Both F42 and F136 presented their active involvement in English practice by themselves. As with many other female volunteers, F42 made foreign friends in her volunteer work at the Olympic Games. Although the current survey was conducted almost two years after the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008, it seemed that the experience of contact with non-Chinese speakers during the games left a deep impression among the female learners when expressing the pleasant feelings from their experiences. F42 indicated that an incapability of using English was not a determining barrier for communication in an international context and that non-language communication strategies had helped her and her friends with their communication, as well as making the experience enjoyable. F136 did not, however, have foreign friends but she intended to practice English with her peers by joining an English club at school and getting to know foreign students on campus by teaching Chinese. Her story indicated that her reasons for using English made her look for contact opportunities with non-Chinese people. The common points of both F42 and F136 are their preferences with English speaking and their positive attitude towards knowing foreign people.

> *F42: We practice English in our dormitory. When we did volunteer work at the Olympic Games, we made a lot of friends. They are from different countries and although our English is not so good, we still talk about jokes and everything. They don't care whether your English is good or not; we can understand each other, sometime not, but it's ok. Sometimes we use hands or actions, you know. It is fun.*

F136: In the English corner, you have to repeat the same thing every time, such as your name, where you are from, and what you are studying, because every time you go you meet different people. It's boring if you go there often. I now just meet some foreign students on campus and we talk sometimes. I practice English and they learn Chinese. It's a win-win situation.

Generally, female and male learners expressed their different opinions whilst approaching foreign people. Their stories showed that they had a different attitude when facing the language difficulties in English communication and their attitude somewhat influenced their intention to get to know non-Chinese people. Additionally, both female and male learners showed different levels of concern on the appropriateness of their behaviour when approaching foreigners. Male interviewees had stronger disagreement on this issue than female learners, while the female learners moderated their concerns over the mutual benefits of teaching exchanges and learning activities. Therefore, the results supported the quantitative findings and also provided further explanation for the divergence between female and male learners toward their attitudes regarding the approach and avoidance of non-Chinese people.

5.1.2 *Interest in international news*

The results showed that male learners (M = 4.01, SD = .97) had a significantly higher score on interests in foreign affairs than female learners (M = 3.64, SD = .99) and the magnitude of the differences ranged from small to medium (Cohen's d = .37). The qualitative data from the interviews showed that both female and male learners showed an interest in international news and kept checking international affairs online. However, the male learners showed more personal preferences toward the news coverage on politics and big events in other countries, while female learners presented more obligations and learning purposes.

M20 and M94 presented different aspects in their interest in international news. M20 believed that information on international affairs should be part of the knowledge acquired by college students and, as a consequence, he kept abreast of the international news every day. M94 showed more personal preferences toward the news. This was

probably because he was aware that the survey was about English learning and the interviewer was an English teacher, therefore the answer should have some connection with English. When he presented his opinions, he clearly pointed out the English language difficulties when reading the news in English. It was suggested that he separated the connection between his English language competence and his interest in current affairs at that moment and that his limited English should not affect his interest in international news. His additional reply indicated that this was a common phenomenon among the students who used their mobiles to check news updates. This exactly coincided with the findings from the class observation, which will be presented later. Although the example given by M94 was based on local news, he tried to use this example to support his opinions. This implied that he was interested in current affairs mostly because of his personal enjoyment.

> *M20: I am interested in international news. I think all college students should have this knowledge. We should be concerned with what happens around the world. I read some simple news pieces stories about western countries every day. Sometimes I read on the internet, or I read China Daily, but I prefer to read on the Internet as it is updated often.*

> *M94: I am very interested in the international news. I read the news every day. There are a lot of bad things happening in other countries, such as bombs and terrorists. However, I read about these in Chinese, not in English. It's too difficult. There is too much vocabulary. The news on the Internet is more open than before. I sometimes know of something before it is reported in TV, such as the 7.23 train accident in China. I simply checked Weibo with my mobile and there were a lot of updated pictures and reports every hour.*

There were diverse replies among the female learners. Some of them gave a generally neutral opinion on their attitude towards international news whereas some of them intended to connect it with their English learning. Although most of them reported that they acquired international news through watching TV, reading a newspaper or browsing on the Internet, most of their intensions were accompanied by English learning purposes or fulfiling this obligation. In addition, female learners used more adjectives than male learners when indicating their different levels of interest in international affairs, such as 'not very much', 'so-so', 'sometimes' or 'occasionally' in

their responses. F24 indicated her personal interest in the international news. She considered that acquiring international news was a part of general knowledge for young people. When she introduced her family's habit of watching the news during their dinner, it indicated the possible reason for her interest in the news. F62's reply highlighted the learners' obligations in acquiring information on international affairs and also clearly indicated the strong intention to connect the English news with her English learning. These results suggested that the reasons for female learners' acquirement of international affairs were mostly to improve their English language competence and to have a general knowledge about the world.

> *F24: I am interested in international news, but not very much. I surf on the Internet every day and I think I should know what happens in America or other countries. When I go home, we usually watch the news when we have dinner.*

> *F62: I am not interested in international news, but I usually get some news on the Internet. I also sometimes go to the language lab and listen to English radio to practice my listening, such as VOA.*

In comparison, the male learners demonstrated more personal preferences toward international affairs than the female learners. This gender gap could coincide with the findings on gender differences in their learning behaviour in their English classes, which was found to be based on observations of an *intensive English reading* class in Year 2. The major topic of that lesson was about the industry of tourism and the extensive reading materials were about Hong Kong. In the last ten minutes of the class, the lecturer asked the students about interesting places in Hong Kong. Most of the female students tried to give answers based on the text in the book whereas other students tried to develop a discussion by themselves. The male students began to use their mobiles to search for more answers. The discussion was developed from listing the impressive places in Hong Kong, big events in Hong Kong and finally from gossip about the politician leaders, millionaires and superstars in Hong Kong. This observation suggested that looking for information on the Internet through a mobile was a common phenomenon among the students but it was the male learners rather than the female learners who were more active in finding updated news or information by using online resources.

Furthermore, Ms. Xia, a lecturer in the English listening classes, provided more information about the students' listening activities with English radios. According to her, listening to international news was one of the listening tasks on the curriculum. As one of the listening requirements in the exam for TEM Band 4, students need to grasp important information from the news broadcasts and cultural programs of the VOA and the BBC. For TEM Band 8, the students are required to understand English TV and radio news broadcasts on politics, the economy, culture, education, science, technology and reports from many other areas. Her information confirmed the responsibility of listening to English news from a students' perspective, which could explain the female learners' obligation to listening to English radio in their responses.

> *Ms. Xia: Listening to international news is covered in our curriculum and it is also required in the students' TEM tests. Students usually begin with listening to international news from the second term of Year1 and begin to do a dictation exercise when listening to the news from Year2. I think all students undertake listening practice of international news by themselves no matter whether they are interested or not.*

Generally, female and male learners had different levels of interest in the international news for different reasons. Male learners presented more personal interest in acquiring knowledge about the world and they did not necessarily connect the international news with their English learning. Meanwhile, female learners had more learning-driven purposes in their attitude toward international news. Listening to English radio and updating their information about international affairs was generally in order to meet the requirements of their studies and acquire the information from a general sense, rather than a personal interest.

5.1.3 *Having things to communicate to the world*

The results showed that male learners ($M = 3.93$, $SD = .94$) had a significantly higher score in *having things to communicate to the world* than female learners ($M = 3.64$, $SD = .91$) and the magnitude of the differences ranged from small to medium (Cohen's $d = .31$). This suggested that male learners had more intention to share their opinions on international issues with people from other countries. The qualitative data revealed that

male and female learners had different considerations when developing discussions about international affairs with foreign people.

Both M50 and M52 demonstrated their inclination to share their opinions on international issues with non-Chinese people. M50 was eager to learn about foreign countries and he thought that communication with foreign people could enlarge his knowledge. His experience in oral English classes and his enjoyable communication with his foreign teacher positively promoted his intention to share his opinions with the world. M52 also gave his opinions based on his experience of communication with his foreign teacher. He believed that all people in the world were interested in things beyond their own country because of globalisation. Based on what his foreign teacher told him about China, he showed a strong intention to inform the world about China, which promoted his willingness to communicate with the world. The common feature among some male interviewees was their curiosity about the world and their eagerness to promote China to other countries.

> *M50: yes, I like to talk about international affairs with people in other countries. For example, our foreign teacher talked about air pollution, and the education system in America, and TV programs with us in our oral English class. That was interesting. I learned more about the world and the foreign teacher knows about our life too. I remembered the American teacher was shocked when he knew we gossiped about Chinese leaders in our classroom and he joined in with our discussion too.*

> *M52: yes, I like to share my opinions with people from other countries. I think I am interested in other countries and foreigners are also interested in China. Everybody knows about globalization and we should know each other more. Through talking with our foreign teachers, I found that foreigners don't really know China. Our foreign teacher told us that he and his wife found China to be different from what they had been told. Public transport is quite convenient and trains are usually on time. There are a lot of things different from France but they like it here. I think China is not open enough and we should do more to communicate with the world.*

Female learners presented more considerations in their communication with the world.

F67 clearly indicated that her willingness to communicate with non-Chinese people depended on the topics they talked about. She preferred to talk about something relaxed, rather than a serious topic. She felt annoyed by any topics that were related to Chinese politics, including political histories, and she was impressed by those non-Chinese people, who were knowledgeable on Chinese culture. Female learners involved more personal feelings in their communicative intentions at that point.

> *F67: It depends on what we are going to talk about. I am not interested in international news or politics. I like to talk about films and interesting places in foreign countries and I can also introduce foreigners to China, food, interesting places and our culture. But sometimes, they only seemed interested in politics. Some foreigners like to ask about Chairman Mao, communist party and even some (of the) histories. I don't like these topics at all. But some foreigners really like Chinese culture. I know an American guy. He knows about Yijing (I Ching) and has told us a lot of things about Bagua (trigram). We are Chinese but even we don't have this knowledge. He is very impressive.*

Both female and male learners presented different levels of interest when communicating with people in other countries. The replies indicated that the learners' intentions were closely related to their previous communication experience. In comparison, male learners showed more willingness to share their opinions with the world and they wanted to be involved in discussions of serious topics. They also intended to attach their communication intentions to certain social values. Female learners, however, presented more detailed considerations about communication with non-Chinese people and their opinions were based more on their personal feelings during the conversation. In addition, it was also shown that female learners' opinions were taken from their different contact experiences with foreigners, which was much richer than male learners.

Furthermore, the observations on learning behaviour between male and female learners in their English classes provided further support to the gender differences between their communication tendencies. In the class, it was very common to see that female students followed the teacher's instructions and answered the questions voluntarily. Meanwhile male students only answered the questions when they were asked to. However, male

students showed more interest and were engaged in looking for the answers as long as the questions led to open answers and if the answers were beyond the knowledge in textbooks. They also behaved more actively in interactive learning activities, such as pair work, group discussions and competitive activities. Ms. Chen, an English teacher in the intensive reading classes, agreed on this observation and her comments coincide with the researcher's observations. She confirmed that the male learners were more interested in sharing opinions with others and intended to develop discussions on big topics.

> Ms. Chen: Boys don't care about exercises and drills, but they behave well although they are absent-minded sometimes, as you see. They will answer your questions if you ask them. But if you ask some questions about history, politics, anything in the news, they just look alive again. Then you have to ask them to calm down.

Generally, male learners were more willing to communicate or develop a discussion than female learners and this tendency was also reflected in their L2 learning, sharing opinions with people from other countries and getting to know more about these foreign countries. Their willingness to communicate was related to their social values rather than their personal feelings. As female learners had more experience with L2 users, their opinions were given mostly from a personal perspective based on their experiences. The class observations and information from their teacher supported these findings and confirmed the gender differences in communication tendencies were based on classroom learning contexts.

5.2 The development of IP over the 12 months

A repeated measure was performed with periods within a subject factor (Time 1 vs. Time 2 vs. Time 3) and Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons were performed to compare the differences between Time 1, Time 2 and Time 3. The effect size for each repeated measure test used Partial Eta Squared and the guidelines for interpreting the values are: .01 = small, .06 = moderate, .14 = large effect (Dörnyei, 2007b). Table 10 and Graph 5 present the overall results of the participants' IP changes over the 12 months. The results show that the learners' IP significantly declined over the 12 months of

English learning and the magnitude of the differences was almost large. Looking at the four variables of IP separately, three variables showed a significant decline ($p < .05$): *intergroup approach avoidance tendency*, *interest in international vocation/activities*, and *having things to communicate to the world*. These results suggested that the learners' tendency of getting to know non-Chinese people and an interest in working or living abroad was significantly lost in their long-term English learning. The results of the pairwise comparison revealed that the intention of approaching non-Chinese people had continuously decreased from Time 1 to Time 3, while the decrease in the learners' interests in working or living abroad was much more gradual over the 12 months. In addition, the decrease in the learners' preferences for sharing international information with others only happened over the last 6 months.

Table 10: Overall results of repeated measures for IP development (N = 113)

Variable	$F(2, 224) =$	P value	Partial η^2	Pairwise Comparisons ($p \leq .05$)
Intergroup approach-avoidance tendency	34.183	.000	.234	Time 1 > Time 2 > Time 3
Interest in international vocation or activities	21.476	.000	.161	Time 1 > Time 3; Time 2 > Time 3
Interest in international News		Not sig.		
Having things to communicate to the world	4.005	.020	.035	Time 2 > Time 3
IP	17.048	.000	.132	Time 1 > Time 3; Time2 > Time 3

Graph 6: The overall changes of IP over the 12 months
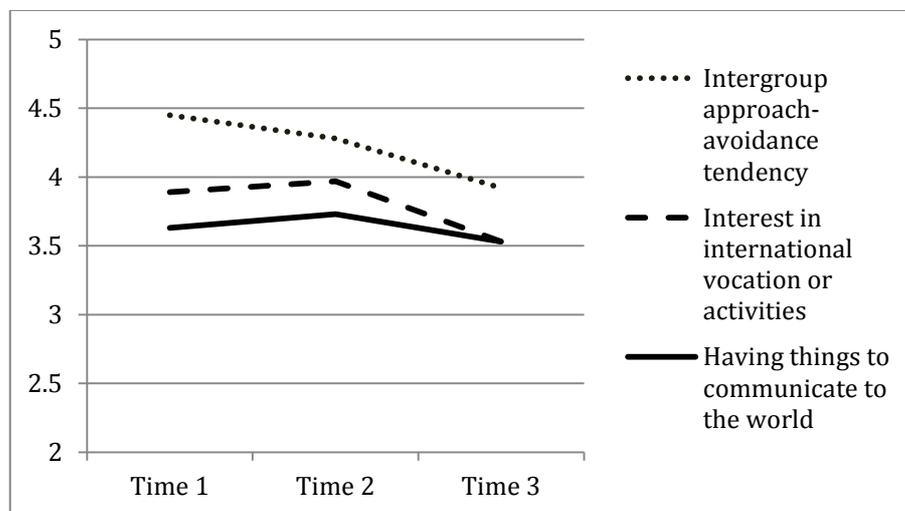
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Correlation tests were performed to examine the relationship between *ideal L2 self* and IP over the 12 months and the results showed that IP was significantly correlated to *ideal L2 self* from Time 1 to Time 3 ($r = .436/.462/.526$; $p < .000$). Separate correlation tests were also performed to examine the relationship between the four variables and *ideal L2 self,* respectively, so as to find out the different interactive relationships and changes in these interactive relationships. The results (Table 11) showed that *ideal L2 self* was significantly correlated to the four variables of IP over the 12 months. Comparing the correlation values between Time 1, Time 2 and Time 3, the relationships appeared to become gradually closer from Time 1 to Time 3 for two variables: *intergroup approach avoidance tendency* and *interest in international vocation/activities*. There was also a gradual decrease in *having things to communicate to the world* and a fluctuating tendency in *interest in international news*. The closest variable to *ideal L2 self* was *intergroup approach avoidance tendency* throughout the whole year.

Table 11: Overall correlation tests between *ideal L2 self* and IP variables in Times 1/2/3 (N = 113)

Times	Intergroup approach-avoidance tendency		Interest in international vocation or activities		Interest in international news		Having things to communicate to the world	
	$r =$	$p =$	$r =$	$p =$	$r =$	$p =$	$r =$	$p =$
1	.427[**]	.000	.278[**]	.003	.370[**]	.000	.317[**]	.001
2	.470[**]	.000	.364[**]	.000	.287[**]	.002	.311[**]	.001
3	.521[**]	.000	.504[**]	.000	.312[**]	.001	.286[**]	.002

[**] Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

Table 12 presents changes in IP for male and female learners separately during the 12 months. There were significant drops in two of the variables with a large effect size (all $\eta_p^2 \geq .14$) for both male and female learners: *intergroup approach avoidance tendency* and *interest in international vocation/activities*. The Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons revealed that the changes in female learners' attitudes towards approaching non-Chinese people were more striking than the male learners while there were no gender differences in the development of their interest in an international career. Additionally, the overall IP level of the female learners showed a significant decrease while the male learners' IP remained stable.

Table 12: Results of repeated measures on the IP development of male and female learners

Variable	Gender	$F(2, 48) =$	P value	Partial η^2	Pairwise Comparisons ($p \leq .05$)
Intergroup approach-avoidance tendency	Male	3.797	.029	.137	Time 1 > Time 3
	Female	31.587	.000	.266	Time 1 > Time 2 > Time3
Interest in international vocation or activities	Male	7.666	.001	.242	Time 1 > Time 3; Time 2 > Time 3
	Female	14.460	.000	.143	Time 1 > Time 3; Time 2 > Time 3
IP	Male		Not sig.		
	Female	11.307	.000	.115	Time 1 > Time 3; Time2 > Time 3

Graph 7 & 8: The development of female and male learners' *Intergroup approach-avoidance tendency & Interest in international vocation or activities*
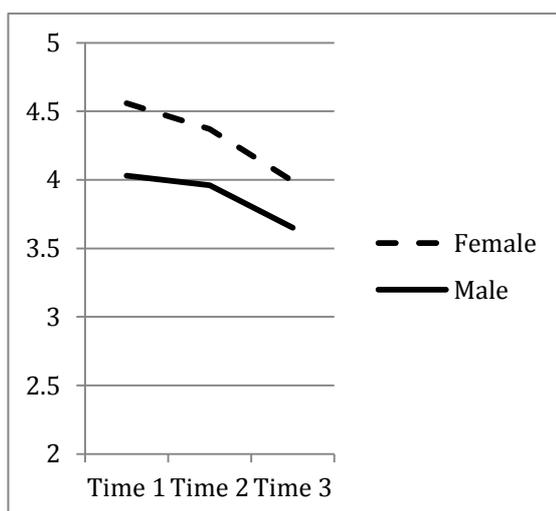
Intergroup approach-avoidance tendency   *Interest in international vocation or activities*
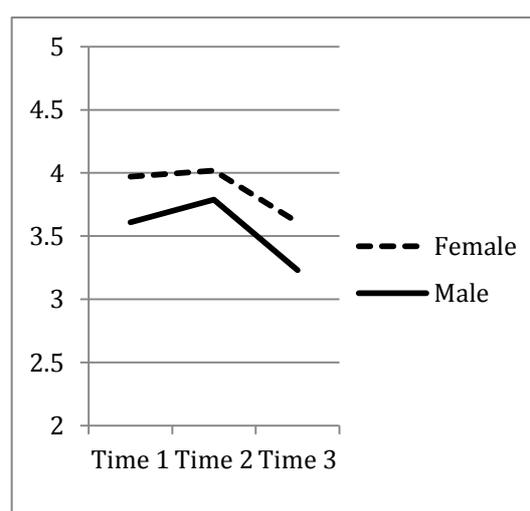
Tables 13 and 14 present the interactive relationships between *ideal L2 self* and IP for the female and male groups, respectively. Gender differences can be seen from two aspects: 1. *Ideal L2 self* was related to IP more actively among the female learners than among the male learners. The female learners' *ideal L2 self* was positively correlated to IP throughout the whole year while the male learner's *ideal L2 self* only had occasional links to three variables in Time 1 and Time 3: *intergroup approach avoidance tendency*, *interest in international news* and *having things to communicate to the world*. 2. Gender differences can also been seen in the changes between the interactive relationships over the 12 months. The closest related variable to *ideal L2 self* was the *intergroup approach avoidance tendency* in Time 1 and Time 3 among male learners, while there was more

fluctuation among female learners: *interest in international news* in Time 1, *intergroup approach avoidance tendency* in Time 2 and *interest in international vocation/activities* in Time 3. Associating these results with the development of IP, a detailed analysis will be given below with the subsidiary information from the interviews.

Table 13: Female group: correlation tests between *ideal L2 self* and IP scales in Time 1/2/3 (N = 88)

Times	Intergroup approach-avoidance tendency		Interest in international vocation or activities		Interest in international news		Having things to communicate to the world	
	r =	*p =*	*r =*	*p =*	*r =*	*p =*	*r =*	*p =*
1	.394[**]	.000	.304[**]	.004	.462[**]	.000	.387[**]	.000
2	.464[**]	.000	.404[**]	.000	.400[**]	.000	.437[**]	.000
3	.461[**]	.000	.530[**]	.000	.301[**]	.004	.319[**]	.002

**. Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

Table 14: Male group: correlation tests between *ideal L2 self* and IP variables in Time 1/2/3 (N = 25)

Times	Intergroup approach-avoidance tendency		Interest in international vocation or activities		Interest in international news		Having things to communicate to the world	
	r =	*p =*	*r =*	*p =*	*r =*	*p =*	*r =*	*p =*
1	.402[*]	.047	.076	.717	.236	.256	.192	.359
2	.334	.103	.152	.468	.086	.684	.217	.298
3	.603[**]	.001	.124	.554	.525[**]	.007	.398[*]	.049

**. Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).
* . Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

5.2.1 *Intergroup approach avoidance tendency*

The results showed that *ideal L2 self* and *intergroup approach avoidance tendency* were significantly related to each other throughout the whole year for female learners and that the links became stronger during the learning period. The link between male learners' *ideal L2 self* and *intergroup approach avoidance tendency* was less stable in Time 1 and Time 3, and the link at Time 3 was stronger than at Time 1. This suggests that female learners' attitudes towards getting to know foreign people were continuously consistent to their ideal L2 self images. However, this phenomenon did not appear for male learners although they had similar intentions at some point. Associating this result with the decreasing scores in the learners' *intergroup approach avoidance tendency* over the

12 months period, the results suggested that both male and female learners intended to adjust their willingness to know non-Chinese people so as to fit into their ideal L2 selves.

The interviews revealed that both male and female learners had a high level of intention to know non-Chinese people for clear English learning purposes, but that their intentions were prevented because they were not offered many opportunities to get to know foreigners. F120 showed that she was very clear about the learning benefits of speaking with non-Chinese speakers. However, as she did not know any English-speakers except her foreign teacher, she took advantage of oral class hours and practiced her English with the American teacher. Her subsequent replies indicated that she always looked for other opportunities to get to know non-Chinese people and that she wouldn't give up with her English learning under any circumstances. In comparison, M190 showed a lower level of certainty in knowing non-Chinese people although he understood that it was good for his English learning. He directly pointed out that the limited opportunity for getting to know non-Chinese people was a real barrier for him. His subsequent response about his oral English class indicated that his contact with non-Chinese people mainly depended on communication with his foreign teacher during class hours. Both F120 and M190 showed that they had clear learning purposes in their contact with non-Chinese people and would take advantage of class-hours to practice English with their foreign teacher. Their subsequent replies indicated that the female interviewees had more determination than the male interviewees and would make more effort in their additional learning to make up for the limited learning opportunities with native English speakers.

> F120: yes, I want to know foreigners because it is good for my English. We have an oral English class and the teacher is American. I don't know any other foreigners and we don't have much chance to know other foreigners. I just try to speak as much as I can in the oral class. I know some of my classmates attend English classes outside of our school in order to practice English speaking, but it is too expensive. Not everyone has money to do that. I believe I also can learn English well as long as I study hard.

> M190: It is difficult to say. Sometimes I want to know some foreigners because speaking with foreigners can help my English learning, listening and

speaking. The thing is where we can know foreigners. Our foreign teacher said he would separate our class into two small groups (around ten students in each group) so that everyone will have more chance to speak, but our class hours will be cut from 3 hours to 1.5 hours for each group.

Ms. Chen: The students enrolled in the English major have a similar level of English proficiency at the beginning and the differences (in academic performance) won't come out gradually until year 2. Some of them have selected an English major as their first choice (when they filled in the application form of college entrance). But some students were allocated to an English major because their scores for a certain subject didn't meet the requirements for the major they selected as their first or second choice. So if they want to develop their English speaking skills, they need to spend more time in the lab and do the drills by themselves or do an exchange study with a foreign student on campus. I know some students in senior year classes do this. But if they just want to finish their study and get a degree, they won't bother to make an effort in this.

The information from Ms Chen provided a broader view of the students' English learning. She presented the potential reasons, which could result in the individual differences in academic performance among her students, based on the enrolment system of her university. Students were allowed to have three choices for their learning major selection and most students took their first choice if their academic records met the requirements. Otherwise, they would be offered the second choice and would be enrolled in the second or third major if there were places available. This situation indicated that the students had different level of preferences toward English learning from the beginning. Although they were all English major students, the students would also make different levels of effort depending on what they wanted to achieve. In other words, the students' willingness to know foreign people could be different, depending on how much the students intended to improve their English speaking skills and whether the student had certain learning aims during their contact with non-Chinese people.

On the other hand, the reply from Ms Chen reminded the researcher to study the results

from a general perspective as well from the individual learners' perspectives. Those who had a clearer learning purpose and more preferences toward English learning would make more effort and have a more constant attitude towards their learning than those who were allocated to an English major during the long-term English learning. Although the students had a similar level of enthusiasm for English learning at the beginning stage, they gradually developed their own learning purposes and adjusted the level of their interest and effort according to their individual preferences during the learning period. Associating this with the students' intentions to know non-Chinese people, although the general level of both female and male learners' willingness to know English native speakers was decreasing, the tendency became closely related to the level of their ideal L2 self images. This means that the students adjusted their level of intention to know an English native speaker according to the needs of their *ideal L2 self*. The increasing value of the correlations through Times 1 to 3 suggested that more and more students developed an appropriate level of willingness to know non-Chinese people depending on the need of their ideal L2 self images. The gender differences implied that this tendency was more pronounced and consistent for female learners than for male learners.

5.2.2 *Interest in international vocation/activities*

The results showed that *ideal L2 self* had a significant relationship with *international vocation/activities* for the female learners throughout the whole year but had no link with the male learners. This suggested that the female learners' interests in working or living abroad were closely related to their *ideal L2 self* and that this consistency became clearer over time because the correlation values gradually increased between Time 1 and Time 3. Associating these results with the decreasing tendency of the learner' interests in working/living abroad, it was suggested that the female learners reduced their intentions to work or live abroad so as to agree with their ideal L2 self images. Although the male learners' intentions to work or live abroad were also reduced over the 12 months, the changes did not relate to their *ideal L2 self*.

Based on the qualitative data from the interview, the common opinion presented by most of the interviewees was that studying or working abroad would be helpful for the development of their future career or would offer them more chances to get a better job. This phenomenon was more outstanding for the female learners than for the male

learners. F105 and F58 showed that they had clear intentions to study, work or live abroad. F105 indicated that she had plans to study abroad. Although she had failed the college entrance exam for studying abroad, she still planned to pursue a postgraduate degree abroad after finishing her BA degree. F58, as for most of the senior year students, was facing graduation in one year and her intention to work abroad originated from the development of her career and the benefit to her job-hunting. Thus, both F105 and F58 connected going abroad with certain purposes, which could have been a part of their ideal L2 self images at that moment.

> *F105 (Year 1): yes, I want to study or live abroad. I planned to study abroad after high school, but I did not pass the SAT exam. I think I will go abroad to do a master degree.*

> *F58 (Year 3): If I am offered an opportunity to study or work abroad, I think it will take it. The experience of living abroad will help me to get a better job in the future.*

As with some male learners, M127 presented some intention to study abroad but did not present a certain plan or a strong willingness, as the female interviewees did. His reply involved some uncertainty and hesitation. M172 presented his consideration about going abroad. His intention to go abroad was prevented by negative personal feelings and he did not intend to connect going abroad with his career development or any English learning purposes at that moment. However, his subsequent reply indicated that he was still interested in foreign countries although it was only limited to travel purposes.

> *M127 (Year 1): I never think about living abroad. But I think it might be possible to study abroad for one or two years.*

> *M172 (Year 2) I don't want to go abroad. I will feel lonely. I want to live with my parents and I have friends here. But I would like to travel in other countries.*

Therefore, although both female and male learners had the same changing tendencies in their intentions to live abroad during their long-term L2 English learning, the gender differences were still reflected in the interactive relationship between their *ideal L2 self*

and their intentions to go abroad. The female learners had an outstanding tendency to connect going abroad with their personal learning purposes, which was not found among the male learners.

5.2.3 *Interest in international news*

The results showed that *ideal L2 self* had a significant relationship with *interest in international news* throughout the whole year for female learners. As the female learners' *interest in international news* (*Mean* = 3.63/3.74/3.60; *SD* = .83/.84/.75) remained stable over the 12 months (see Graph 9), this suggested that the female learners kept up a consistent level of interest in international affairs with their ideal L2 self images. The gradual decrease in the correlation values suggests that the relationship is not permanent. As for male learners, there was only one occasional link between *ideal L2 self* and *interest in international news* in Time 3. By keeping a comparatively high level of interest in international affairs (*Mean* = 3.91/3.85/3.76; *SD* = .85/.93/.82) as shown in Graph 9, the results suggested that the gradual insignificant changes in the male learners' *ideal L2 self* and their interest in international affairs could result in a final or temporary link in the long-term English learning.

Graph 9: The development of female and male learners' *interest in international news*
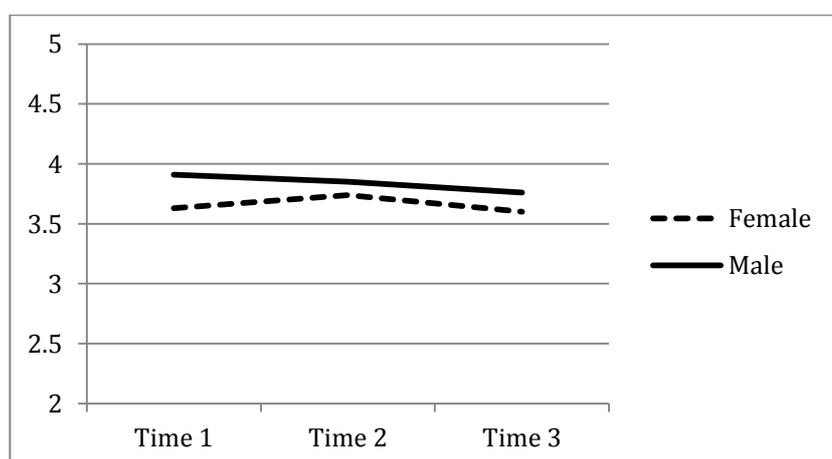
Qualitative data showed that female and male learners regarded international news in a different way. F117 indicated that she was not generally interested in international news but she still spent time acquiring such information because she wanted to be knowledgeable to some extent. This suggested that being knowledgeable could be one area of F117's *ideal L2 self*. She paid attention to international affairs so as to meet her

personal demands for the information. This could result in a link between her *ideal L2 self* and her interest in international news.

M79's reply clearly indicated his personal preference for international news and his special attention to the international affairs which were relevant to China. At the same time, he also mentioned an obligation to know international affairs, as an English major student. His reply suggested that international news was one part of his personal interests as well as one part of his English studies. Combining the findings in gender difference where male learners generally had more personal preferences to international affairs than female learners and where their interests were less linked to their English learning than female learners, M79's reply supported the findings. In addition, it suggested that the male learners could find a connection between their interest in international news and their *ideal L2 self* during their long-term English learning. This process could explain the final link between *ideal L2 self* and an interest in international affairs in Time 3.

> *F117 (year 2): I am only interested in some types of international news, but I usually take five minutes to have an overview (of the headlines). Knowing more things is always good.*

> *M79 (Year 3): I think it (international news) is necessary for English major students and I am much more interested in the news in which China is involved.*

5.2.4 *Having things to communicate to the world*

The results showed that *ideal L2 self* had a significant relationship with *having things to communicate to the world* throughout the whole year for female learners. Associated with the stable development of their intentions to communicate with the world (*Mean* = 3.58/3.66/3.49; *SD* = .84/.73/.66), the results suggested that the female learners maintained a consistent relationship between their *ideal L2 self* and their intentions to communicate with the world during their long-term L2 English learning. The fluctuation of correlation values from Time 1 to Time 3 may indicate the possibility of change in the interactive relationship between the two variables. As for the male learners, there was only one occasional link between *ideal L2 self* and *having things to*

communicate to the world in Time 3. By maintaining a comparatively high level of intention to communicate with the world (*Mean* = 3.79/3.97/3.67; *SD* = .64/.67/.52), the results suggested that minor changes in the male learners' *ideal L2 self* and the intention to communicate with the world could result in a final link to long-term English learning at some point.

Graph 10: The development of female and male learners' *having things to communicate to the world*
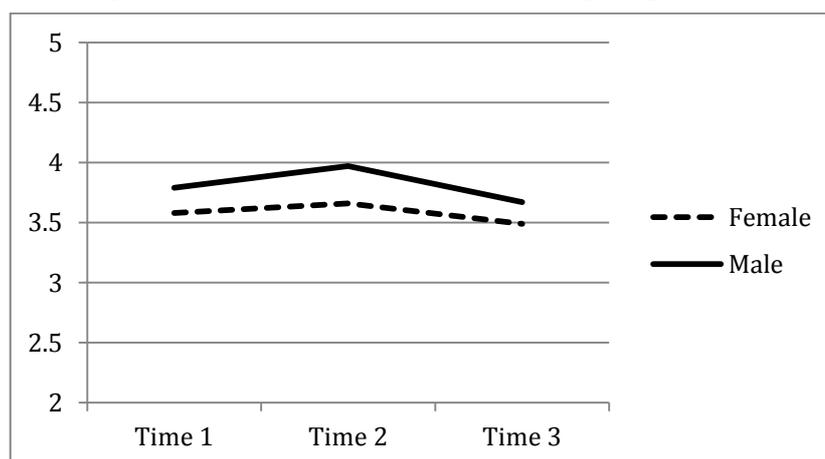
The qualitative data showed that some female learners had ambiguous and complex ideas regarding communication with people in other countries. A small group discussion between F132 and her two roommates revealed that they had different understandings about sharing information with people in other countries. F132 and RM1 generally connected communication with foreign people with global issues. They thought that the discussion of big events was not related to their lives and that an involvement in the discussions wouldn't solve any problems in a realistic situation. At the same time, they showed their hope to connect this communication with their English learning. RM2 appeared more rational and tried to give objective opinions. She believed that a basic knowledge of global issues was necessary for college students but that random chat should involve relaxed topics. Her subsequent reply emphasised her certainty about her opinions. Generally, F132 and her roommates presented inharmonious ideas about how to share opinions with people in other countries, at that moment. They were not interested in developing a discussion about global issues with people in other countries, but presented obligations to acquire the information as general knowledge.

> *F132: Actually, I am not sure what I should talk about. It seems very far away from our life. If I choose, I prefer to talk about something useful to our study, or how to make plans for our future. That is more realistic.*

> *RM1: I agree. I think it is not useful for us to talk about environment, human rights, GDP. We cannot decide anything. But sometimes it is just a topic in the oral English class.*
>
> *RM2: no, I think it depends. The college competitions always involved big topics, so we should have a basic knowledge. But if it is just chat, like we are doing now, I prefer to talk about relaxed topics or some interesting things. I think the foreigners are like us too.*

With regards to the male learners, they appeared more open-minded than the female learners on this issue. M110 was eager to know about college life abroad and his intention to communicate with people in other countries could have been aroused by his communication with his friend in America. By knowing the social life and other activities which were available to American college students, he developed a stronger intention to know foreign countries and to share information with people in other countries.

> *M110 (Year 2): I think it is very popular to have international communication. I think my college life is boring and I want to know how people in other countries manage their college life. One of my friends is studying in America and he told me there are a lot of demonstrations on their campus. I think college students should involve some social activities and that is called college.*

Summary

In the development of IP over the 12 months, gender differences emerged in the interactive relationship between the *ideal L2 self* and the four IP variables. Female learners' *ideal L2 self* was positively correlated to the four variables throughout the whole year while male learners' *ideal L2 self* finally became more active and related to the IP variables in Time 3. This suggested that the female learners clearly connected their ideal L2 self images with their IP variables from the beginning of their L2 English learning and that this idea was maintained during their long-term learning. However, the male learners only developed a possible connection between their *ideal L2 self* and some IP variables during their L2 English learning. Scrutinizing the correlation values, it showed that the female learners' *ideal L2 self* was more closely linked to their

willingness to live abroad and was in addition to their interests in international news over the time period. Finally, the separate group tests confirmed that the four IP variables developed in different ways and also interacted with *ideal L2 self* differently between female and male learners.

5.3 Discussion

The study confirmed two gender issues in IP: 1. Female learners had more personal preferences to approaching non-Chinese people and had a more enjoyable experience when making foreign friends. Meanwhile, male learners appeared to have less involvement in English usage and were more reluctant and passive in getting to know non-Chinese people. Male learners were more interested in acquiring knowledge of international affairs and had more intention to share their opinions with foreign people; 2. Female and male learners had similar changing tendencies in the development of their IP but the IP variables interacted with their *ideal L2 self* differently at each stage in their long-term L2 English learning. Based on these results, the following discussion will start with a comparison of the relevant results to the previous research in 5.3.1, an extensive discussion based on the general gender differences in the attitudes toward social affairs in 5.3.2 and other possible relevant issues in 5.3.3.

5.3.1 Comparisons to previous findings

The current study found that the overall level of IP decreased over the 12 months, but both the overall level of IP and the separate level of the four scales were strongly (positively) correlated with *ideal L2 self,* respectively. Firstly, compared to the increase in IP in the longitudinal study by Yashima and Zenuk-Nishide (2008), the current research did not provide consistent results. The different outcome could be caused by three divergences between these two studies:

- Differences in the participants: high school students at the age of 15 in Yashima and Zenuk-Nishide (2008) and college students at the average age of 21 in the current study;

- The duration of the survey administration: two time periods for the questionnaire survey over two and a half years duration in Yashima and Zenuk-Nishide (2008) and three time periods for the questionnaire survey over 12 months duration in the current study;

- L2 English learning contexts: limited English class hours (10-18 English classes per week from Year 1 to Year 3) accompanied by other school subjects in Yashima and Zenuk-Nishide (2008) and more English class hours (18-22 English classes per week from Year 1 to Year 4 except the thesis writing stage) accompanied by other school subjects in the current study.

With regard to the interactive link between IP and *ideal L2 self*, this echoes previous findings, including the general link between IP and *ideal L2 self* in Yashima (2009) and Xie (2011), and the link between *intergroup approach avoidance tendency* and *ideal L2 self* in Mystkowska-Wiertelak and Pietrzykowska (2011). Additionally, the current study also confirmed that the learners clearly perceived the important role of English, the necessity for contact with non-Chinese people and the need to acquire information on other countries in the current globalized era. This phenomena coincided with the findings in Ryan (2008) and Kormos et al. (2011), who adopted different interpretations of IP to examine the link between the learners' *ideal L2 self* and their opinions on contact with English speakers and the learners' opinions on English as an international language. As the investigation of IP is still in the early stages, the previous studies could not provide completely consistent results because of the different adoption of scales and other possible reasons, such as differences in the controlled variables. However, based on the solid data, the current results provided more understanding of the IP paradigm.

Gender issues were not covered in previous research, but the gender differences in IP in the current study coincided with previous studies. Yashima et al. (2004) found that the learners' potential intentions to approach non-Chinese people, their interest in living abroad and their interest in international news were positively affected by their willingness in L2 communication. Mystkowska-Wiertelak and Pietrzykowska (2011) also found that language learners' L2 communication experience could lead to an increase in their intention to approach L2 language speakers. In the current data, the female learners were found to be engaging in more activities of L2 usage and had more contact with L2 speakers than male learners. They used multiple methods in their

English speaking practice to meet their communication purposes and actively created opportunities to get to know foreigners for their learning purposes. However, few male learners showed similar active engagement in contacting foreign people within the same learning contexts and limited language proficiency had become one of the barriers for male learners when approaching foreign people. Thus, the female learners' rich experiences in using L2 English in different contexts promoted their further intention to know non-Chinese people, which produced gender differences with the learners' intentions to make friends with foreign people. Additionally, Yashima (2009) suggested that IP reflects the language learners' ideal self in an international community as people who had a higher level of IP and frequent usage of English tend to have a stronger visualisation of their ideal selves. When Xie (2011) investigated the IP of L2 Chinese learners in the US, it was suggested that creating a communicative environment in L2 teaching could enhance the learners' general IP level. Again, communication with L2 native speakers was highlighted as an important role for the learners' IP. All these suggestions also supported the features of gender differences in the current research.

5.3.2 Gender differences in the attitude towards politics and volunteer work

Another striking result was that male learners outscored female learners on *interest in international news* and *having things to communicate to the world*. In the interviews, male learners clearly demonstrated their personal preferences toward international news and showed more willingness to develop discussions with non-Chinese people about global issues. As M94 showed, some male students were clear about their language difficulties when reading the news in English, but their interest in acquiring knowledge of other countries prompted them to update this information through different channels in Chinese. The male learners' interests in international affairs and their intention to communicate with the world involved more curiosity about foreign countries, a longing for non-Chinese' opinions about China and raised concerns about the development of China in the global world, rather than English learning. With regards to female learners, their interest in international news was out of the responsibility of acquiring knowledge, the obligation of meeting the demands in their English learning or just a habit in their daily life. As competence in listening to the English news was a required part of the learners' curriculum, both male and female learners had a considerable obligation to

listen to English news. However, male learners' personal preferences to global issues covered their English learning purposes. Thus, the learners' attitudes towards international news resulted in a closer interactive relationship between L2 learning and the ideal L2 self for female learners rather than for male learners.

Additionally, gender issues in international news could be a potential factor. As reviewed in chapter 1, the topic of politics was regarded as one of the topics covered most frequently in the international news across all mass media (Lin et al., 2011). It is reasonable that female learners connected international news with political issues. If female students were not interested in political issues, this could lead to a limited interest in international news. In addition, with the low proportion of female news recourses, professional journalism was socially perceived as a male career and politics were socially perceived as masculine topics (Gao and Martin-Kratzer, 2011). Chinese women generally showed a lower level of interest in politics and were less knowledgeable of the politically relevant issues (Tong, 2003). Thus, these phenomena supported the results of the current research. Some female learners even regarded the discussion of global events or international issues as something irrelevant to them. They maintained their contact with international affairs for learning purposes, rather than personal preferences. As for male learners, the dominant numbers of male participants in politics and the rooted perception about the masculine features of politics could maintain the male learners' interest in international news and their involvement in communication with the rest of the world. These features were also maintained in their L2 English learning. They did not necessarily connect international news to English language learning. The limit of their English language competence did not prevent their personal interest in international news or reduce their intention to share information with people in other countries. In fact, observations from the language teacher also suggested that the male learners' inherent interest in international news was sometimes embedded in their L2 English behaviour. Therefore, the gender differences of the L2 learners' interests in international affairs could be explained better with an understanding of gender issues in international news coverage and the learners' intrinsic preferences toward different topics.

Furthermore, the qualitative data revealed that the female learners were more likely to take part in relevant English volunteer work than their male counterparts. The female learners had more intention to tell people about their pleasant experiences of volunteer

work and express their personal feelings in their work. One of the volunteer schemes which were frequently mentioned by the students was participation in the Olympic Games in 2008. As F42 mentioned, her English language difficulties neither prevented her from participating in volunteer work nor became a barrier in her communication with non-Chinese people. As for the male learners, few of them mentioned their experience of volunteer work, even though some of them did attend the Olympic Games in 2008 as their female classmates did. This could suggest that female learners were more active in their volunteer work than the male learners. Taniguchi (2006) and Wilson (2000) suggested that women were more likely to regard volunteer work as a chance for socialization and to gain experience in their life whilst men were more likely to regard volunteer work as a subsidiary support for themselves. This feature was reflected in the L2 English learning; female learners took part in English-relevant volunteer work in order to practice their English language speaking skills as well as enlarge their social networks. This feature among the male learners was not as outstanding as among the female learners.

5.3.3 Gender issues in *interest in international vocation or activities* and *having things to communicate to the world*

Although both female and male learners had similar levels of interest in working or living abroad, there were more female interviewees who indicated that they planned to study abroad. With the general increase in female numbers in higher education in China, the number[19] of Chinese students studying in the UK in the last 10 years, from 2001/02 to 2011/12, can support this phenomenon too. It showed that the ratio of female students went up from 52% in 2001/02 to 54% in 2006/07 and increased by another 3% in 2011/12. This confirmed that, today, more female L2 English learners go abroad for further education than their male counterparts. Additionally, the continuous interactive relationships between the female learners' studying abroad and their *ideal L2 self* indicated that the female learners had more intention to develop their *ideal L2 self* in international contexts than the male learners. Associated with the findings in previous

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[19]. The statistics were provided by the UK Higher Education Institutions according to HESA (Higher Education Statistics Agency) Student Records (http://www.hesa.ac.uk/). In order to coincide with the needs of the current research, the numbers of Chinese students here only refers to the students from Mainland China, who were domiciled from China and who came to the UK to study, excluding writing-up and sabbatical students.

chapters that showed the female learners' L2 selves closely interacted with their parents' influence, it also implied that parents with a female child would encourage their children to study abroad, which would gradually help their children to develop the relevant ideal L2 self images over time. To some extent, this not only explains the gender difference in the attitudes to studying abroad but also explains more about the gender differences in the learners' ideal L2 selves. Thus, it is suggested that the social improvement of female education indirectly influences the females' L2 English learning and enhances the possibilities for them to study abroad.

With regard to the learners' attitudes toward communicating with the world, both the female and male learners tended to give their opinions based on their previous experience of communication with non-Chinese people. The qualitative data revealed that the topics discussed in the communication played an important role in influencing the learners' attitudes and their further communication intentions. The male learners presented more intention to acquire information and express their own opinions on the behaviour during the communication. Combining the interactive relationships of intention to communicate with the world and the learners' *ideal L2 self*, it was confirmed that the females' communication with the world connected with their English learning purposes while the males' communication intentions were more related to their personal interests and preferences. Thus, the results again suggested that the female and male learners were interested in different topics, which had an impact on their communication intentions. On the other hand, based on a general perspective of political issues in the international context, disputes are "a regular part of international politics" (Merrills, 2005: 315). F67 indicated that she did not like to talk about politics, such as Chairman Mao in China. This could also imply that she did not like to talk about anything contentious. Based on the collective social value, harmony and solidarity are the features of intergroup relationships. The female learners' hesitation to communicate with the world could be as a result of their collective social value, avoiding contentious topics and maintaining stable interpersonal relationships within a group. Besides, Tannen (1990: 112) suggested that men usually use talk as "a means to preserve independence and negotiate", such as sharing information. This coincided with M50 and M52 who expressed their preferences to share information with their peers and with their teachers in school. They were interested in others' opinions on political or other social issues. The observation from Ms. Chen also supported the point that the

male learners tended to be more engaged in discussions or group work on serious topics. Therefore, the inherent attitudes toward sharing information and developing discussions with others cannot be ignored in the learners' L2 communicative intentions.

Summary

The study extended the understanding of IP to Chinese L2 English learners and identified the variations of the four scales in IP based on longitudinal data. The gender issues in IP were explored for the first time and gender differences for the four IP variables were confirmed separately. In addition, the findings of the interactive relationships between *ideal L2 self* and the four variables of IP over the 12 months presented a complex picture of the development of IP and the different mutual influences of IP and *ideal L2 self* between female and male learners. The discussion highlighted the importance of the learners' inherent features of their L2 English learning, including the men's interest in international news and their intention to share information with others, and the women's interest in volunteer work and their intention to avoid contentious topics. Thus, this study extended the research of IP beyond Japanese context with new perspectives.

Summary and Conclusions

In this final part of my thesis, I will present the main findings and the implications of the research. Finally, I will discuss the limitations of the present design and formulate some recommendations for further research.

➢ **Main findings**

The study explored gender differences in L2 motivation with Chinese L2 English learners using a mixed approach. Differences emerged in the quantitative and qualitative data. The major findings are summarized as follow:

Firstly, within the L2 Motivational Self System, female learners had significantly higher scores than male learners for 10 variables: *criterion measures, ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, instrumentality A (promotion), instrumentality B (prevention), travel orientation, attitude to learning English, integrativeness, cultural interest* and *attitudes to the L2 community*. Within IP, female learners had significantly higher scores than male learners for one variable, *intergroup approach avoidance tendency*, while male learners had significantly higher scores than female learners for two variables, *interest in international news* and *having things to communicate to the world*. (Research questions 1 and 7)

Secondly, within the L2 Motivational Self System, female learners had significant changes in eight variables over the 12 month period: *ought-to L2 Self*, *family influence*, *instrumentality A (promotion)*, *instrumentality B (prevention)*, *integrativeness, attitudes to the L2 community*, *fear of assimilation* and *English anxiety*, while male learners had significant change in only one variable, *English anxiety*. Within IP, female and male learners had significant decrease in two IP variables over the 12 months period: *intergroup approach avoidance tendency* and *interest in international vocation/activities*, but not on the overall IP development. (Research questions 4 and 8)

Thirdly, within the L2 Motivational Self System, the gender differences were reflected by changes in the interactive relationships over the 12 month period between *ideal L2 self* and *ought-to L2 self*, and between *ideal/ought-to L2 self* and seven variables: *criterion measures, family influence, attitude to learning English, integrativeness, attitudes to the L2 community, cultural interest, travel orientation*. The exceptions were

ideal/ought-to L2 self and *instrumentality A/B(promotion/prevention)*. Within IP, female learners' IP variables were positively correlated to their *ideal L2 self* throughout the whole year while, for male learners, the IP variables only became significant when related to their *ideal L2 self* in the later stage of the year. The exception was *interest in international vocation/activities*. (Research questions 5 and 9)

In addition, the separate group tests for female and male learners among the individual motivational variables also revealed interesting differences. Within the L2 Motivational Self System, three motivational variables gained in strength for the female learners during the year: *ought-to L2 Self, family influence*, and *instrumentality B (prevention),* while the opposite happened to five motivational variables: *instrumentality A (promotion), integrativeness, attitudes to the L2 community*, *fear of assimilation* and *English anxiety*. Within IP, gender differences were not found for the overall IP value but were found for three separate IP variables, *intergroup approach avoidance tendency*, *interest in international news* and *having things to communicate to the world*. Although the development of IP showed significant changes in IP overall value, the same patterns only emerged for *interest in international vocation/activities*. Similar changes were observed for *intergroup approach avoidance tendency* and *having things to communicate to the world* but there was no significant change for *interests in international news*. Therefore, the study confirmed the importance of gender in L2 motivation and the differentiation among the motivational scales, which enlarged and deepened the understanding of the L2 Motivational Self System and IP.

The study especially embedded L2 learners in their social values and L2 English learning contexts and discussed the influences of collectivism and other social factors on the gender issues of the learners' L2 motivation. Within the L2 Motivational Self System, collectivistic social values enhanced female learners' *ideal L2 self* images based on others' standpoints, encouraged female learners to engage with more interdependent learning behaviour, increased the female learners' obligations to English learning and built a bond between the female learners' possible selves and their parents' hope. Besides, the social encouragement promoted female learners to develop multi-domains of self image beyond the traditional female working areas, to accept new ideas and expectations for realising personal success, to make an effort in their learning so as to prove their capability and independence and to set up more L2 learning purposes with

the relevant L2 self concept. Furthermore, there are two more observations from a social perspective. One is that the social perception of gender bias in language learning and the dominant number of female L2 English learners positively affected female learners. However, it affected the numbers of male students enrolling in English learning and had a negative effect on their attitude toward learning English. The other observation is that local English teaching contexts, such as non-practical teaching materials, limited contact with native English speakers, exam-purpose curriculum, etc., demotivated the students, and this appeared to affect more male learners than female learners. (Research questions 2, 3 and 6)

Within IP, both female and male learners had a certain level of learning-purpose, responsibilities toward L2 English learning in their contact with non-Chinese people, and listening to international news. However, the female learners' IP was more related to their *ideal L2 self* than the male learners. Gender bias and the features covered in local and international news influenced the female learners' attitude toward international news. The male learners' inherent interest in politics and the female learners' active involvement in volunteer work reflected in their L2 learning. Social encouragement promoted women's attendance in higher education, which was also reflected in their intentions to study abroad. Collective social values could keep female learners away from discussing contentious issues, which was reflected in their attitude towards sharing ideas with the world. (Research question 10)

Verspoor and Van Dijk (2013) claimed that "stability and variability are indispensible aspects of human development". Embedding this claim within the current research, female learners and male learners adopted different patterns of stability and evolution in their L2 motivations so as to maintain the development of their L2 selves and other motivational factors. Coates (1993: 204) investigated gender differences in languages and suggested that the differentiation "does not exist in vacuum: it interacts in a complex way with other kinds of social differentiation." Although the current discussions were limited, the gender issues in L2 motivation were solidly confirmed.

➢ **Implications**

Theoretically, the study extended L2 motivational research by focusing on gender issues. The research confirmed the gender differences in L2 motivation from a long-term L2 English learning perspective. In addition, the study looked into the L2

Motivational Self System and IP within collectivistic social values, highlighting the consideration of social cultural factors in L2 motivational research. These provided one more possibility to explain inconsistencies in the previous studies and, at the same time, suggested a new topic to take into consideration during the application of any L2 motivational approach in a different cultural context in the future.

Empirically, the study effectively combined the approaches in gender studies with L2 motivation studies. A questionnaire survey was in accordance with the approach used in general L2 motivational research, while gender is regarded as a dependent variable, as used in the ex post facto approach in gender studies. By using mixed methods, the research design balanced the pros and cons in relation to quantitative and qualitative approaches. The general results were presented with the statistical analysis while the rich information and full interpretation of quantitative results were realised by the analysis of the qualitative data. This study exemplified the advantages of mixed methods in L2 motivational research.

Practically, while the study does not mean to overgeneralise the gender differences in L2 motivation, the study suggests that foreign language teachers should consider the existence of gender issues in foreign language teaching practice, including the different incentives in the learning activities of female and male students. Based on the accomplishments of a single-sex class in foreign language teaching, a flexible arrangement for foreign language curriculum is also recommended in order to enhance the efficiency of foreign language learning. In terms of the L2 learners, the awareness of gender differences in their L2 motivation could enable them to know the advantages of female and male learners in L2 English learning and overcome any weaknesses. For example, male learners should be more active in getting to know non-Chinese people in L2 English learning, while female learners should try to overcome their inactive attitude to the international news. Awareness of gender differences in EFL learning would improve L2 teaching/learning in practice.

➢ **Limitations**

There were some limitations in the study. Firstly, although the research design was longitudinal, the qualitative data from the interview did not track any particular participant throughout the whole year, therefore limiting the scope of the qualitative data. Secondly, the findings of the research are limited to Chinese L2 English learners

because of the particular background of the participants in the current study. Although there are many other Asian countries who share a similar Confucian culture, the current findings cannot provide comprehensive results in the community of collectivistic social norms. Thirdly, although gender differences have been considered in teaching approaches, the current research did not extend the exploration into the ESL/EFL approach and the ESL/EFL teachers. Fourthly, because of the dominant number of female students taking an English major, the high proportion of female learners forces us to be careful in our conclusion, although the sample size is adequate to investigate the gender issues. Fifthly, this study concentrated on adult L2 learners at higher education level and this meant the research only focused on the limited level of L2 learners. Sixthly, the study used an established questionnaire. Given that the questionnaire was validated by Chinese L2 English learners in previous studies and the research aim was for gender purposes in the current study, the research did not carry out further validation tests for the scales in the questionnaire. Additionally, the questionnaire was administered three times, repeatedly, and the participants could have experienced negative feelings when answering the repeated questions, although the internal consistencies of all scales were measured by Cronbach's alpha values.

➢ Further research

As one of the features of self concept, individuals tend to maintain a basic stability of their self image in order to maintain a consistent manner, although this self-concept is changeable over time (Markus and Nurius, 1986). Within the L2 Motivational Self System, female learners' *ideal L2 self* was the stable factor and their *ought-to L2 self* was the dynamic factor over the 12 month period while male learners' *ideal* and *ought-to L2 self* were stable factors. Dörnyei and Clément (2001) and Dörnyei and Csizér (2002) investigated school children's motivation to different foreign languages in Hungary and found that the boys and girls had different attitudes toward different foreign languages. This indicates that gender issues could differ in different foreign language learning contexts. Therefore, the gender issues regarding the stability of *ideal L2 self* need to be explored further with other L2 foreign language learners so as to discover additional potential factors which could lead to a more comprehensive understanding of stability and the dynamics of *ideal/ought-to L2 self* in foreign language learning.

Additionally, the findings in the current research try to imprint the gender issues in the collectivistic social community. However, collectivistic social values could be experiencing changes due to economic development and the recognition of high levels of technology in the current information-based era (Arnett, 2005; Kim, 1997; Stevenson and Zusho, 2002). Further research in different Asian countries which have collective social norms is needed so as to build an extensive view of the social influences on gender issues in L2 motivation in Confucian cultural contexts.

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Appendix A

English Learner Questionnaire

I would like to ask you to help me by participating in a survey of PhD project. This questionnaire is not a test, so there are no "right" or "wrong" answers. Your personal opinion is my interests. The results of this survey will be used only for research purpose so please give your answers sincerely to ensure the success of this project. Thank you very much for your help!

真诚邀请您参加本次调研。此调研为博士项目的一部分，目的在于更好的了解中国的英语学习者的想法和态度。此调研结果仅用于科学研究。谢谢合作！

Part I

In this part, we would like you to tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following statements by simply circling a number from 1 to 6. Please do not leave out any items.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**

(Example) If you strongly agree with the following statement, write this:

I like skiing very much.   1   2   3   4   5   ⑥

1	Learning English is important to me because I would like to travel internationally.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2	My parents/families believe that I must study English to be an educated person.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3	I think that I am doing my best to learn English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4	Studying English can be important to me because I think it will someday be useful in getting a good job.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5	I study English because close friends of mine think it is important.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6	I can imagine myself living abroad and having a discussion in English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	I have to study English because I don't want to get bad marks in it.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8	I think that there is a danger that Chinese people may forget the importance of Chinese culture, as a result of internationalisation.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9	I would be happy if other cultures were more similar to Chinese.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10	Studying English is important to me because English proficiency is necessary for promotion in the future.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11	Studying English is important to me in order to bring honours to my family.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12	I consider learning English important because the people I respect think that I should do it.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13	I would like to spend lots of time studying English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14	I imagine myself as someone who is able to speak English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15	Most other cultures are backward compared to my Chinese culture.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16	Studying English can be important to me because I think I'll need it for further studies.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17	Because of the influence of the English language, I think the Chinese language is becoming corrupt.	1	2	3	4	5	6

18	Studying English is important to me because, if I don't have knowledge of English, I'll be considered a weak learner.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19	Learning English is necessary because people surrounding me expect me to do so.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20	Studying English is important to me because without English I won't be able to travel a lot.	1	2	3	4	5	6
21	I must study English to avoid being punished by my parents/relatives.	1	2	3	4	5	6
22	Studying English is important because with a high level of English proficiency I will be able to make a lot of money.	1	2	3	4	5	6
23	I am prepared to expend a lot of effort in learning English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
24	Other cultures should learn more from my culture.	1	2	3	4	5	6
25	Studying English is necessary for me because I don't want to get a poor score or a fail mark in English proficiency tests.	1	2	3	4	5	6
26	Because of the influence of the English-speaking countries, I think the morals of Chinese people are becoming worse.	1	2	3	4	5	6
27	Studying English is important to me in order to gain the approval of my peers/teachers/family/boss.	1	2	3	4	5	6
28	The things I want to do in the future require me to use English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
29	I can imagine myself speaking English as if I were a native speaker of English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
30	Being successful in English is important to me so that I can please my parents/relatives.	1	2	3	4	5	6
31	I would like to concentrate on studying English more than any other topic.	1	2	3	4	5	6
32	I find it difficult to work together with people who have different customs and values.	1	2	3	4	5	6
33	I have to learn English because I don't want to fail the English course.	1	2	3	4	5	6
34	I think the cultural and artistic values of English are going at the expense of Chinese values.	1	2	3	4	5	6
35	Studying English is important to me because it offers a new challenge in my life.	1	2	3	4	5	6
36	It will have a negative impact on my life if I don't learn English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
37	Compared to my classmates, I think I study English relatively hard.	1	2	3	4	5	6
38	I can imagine myself speaking English with international friends or colleagues.	1	2	3	4	5	6
39	It would be a better world if everybody lived like the Chinese.	1	2	3	4	5	6
40	My family put a lot of pressure on me to study English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
41	Studying English is important to me in order to achieve a special goal (e.g., to get a degree or scholarship).	1	2	3	4	5	6
42	Studying English is important to me because an educated person is supposed to be able to speak English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
43	Studying English is important to me, because I would feel ashamed if I got bad grades in English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
44	I think that, as internationalisation advances, there is a danger of losing the Chinese identity.	1	2	3	4	5	6
45	If an English course was offered in the future, I would like to take it.	1	2	3	4	5	6
46	Whenever I think of my future career, I imagine myself using English.	1	2	3	4	5	6

47	I study English because with English, I can enjoy travelling abroad.	1 2 3 4 5 6
48	Studying English is important to me in order to attain a higher social respect.	1 2 3 4 5 6
49	Studying English is important to me because other people will respect me more if I have knowledge of English.	1 2 3 4 5 6

Part II

These are new questions but please answer them the same way as you did before.

not at all	not so much	so-so	a little	quite a lot	very much
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**

(Example) If you like "curry" very much and "green pepper" not very much, write this:

Do you like curry?	1 2 3 4 5 ⑥
How much do you like green pepper?	1 ② 3 4 5 6

50	Do you like the atmosphere of my English classes?	1 2 3 4 5 6
51	How tense would you get if a foreigner asked you for directions in English?	1 2 3 4 5 6
52	How much would you like to become similar to the people who speak English?	1 2 3 4 5 6
53	Do you like the music of English-speaking countries (e.g., pop music)?	1 2 3 4 5 6
54	Do you like the people who live in English-speaking countries?	1 2 3 4 5 6
55	Do you find learning English really interesting?	1 2 3 4 5 6
56	How uneasy would you feel speaking English with a native speaker?	1 2 3 4 5 6
57	How important do you think learning English is in order to learn more about the culture and art of its speakers?	1 2 3 4 5 6
58	Do you like English films?	1 2 3 4 5 6
59	Do you like meeting people from English-speaking countries?	1 2 3 4 5 6
60	Do you always look forward to English classes?	1 2 3 4 5 6
61	How nervous and confused do you get when you are speaking in your English class?	1 2 3 4 5 6
62	How much do you like English?	1 2 3 4 5 6
63	Do you like TV programmes made in English-speaking countries?	1 2 3 4 5 6
64	Do you like to travel to English-speaking countries?	1 2 3 4 5 6
65	Do you really enjoy learning English?	1 2 3 4 5 6
66	How afraid are you of sounding stupid in English because of the mistakes you make?	1 2 3 4 5 6
67	Would you like to know more about people from English-speaking countries?	1 2 3 4 5 6

Part III

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree		
1	2	3	4	5	6		

68	I want to make friends with international students studying in Beijing.	1	2	3	4	5	6
69	I would rather stay in China.	1	2	3	4	5	6
70	I often read and watch news about foreign countries.	1	2	3	4	5	6
71	I have thoughts that I want to share with people from other parts of the world.	1	2	3	4	5	6
72	I try to avoid talking with foreigners if I can.	1	2	3	4	5	6
73	I want to work in a foreign country.	1	2	3	4	5	6
74	I often talk about situations and events in foreign countries with my family and/or friends.	1	2	3	4	5	6
75	I have issues to address with people in the world.	1	2	3	4	5	6
76	I would talk to the international student if there was one at school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
77	I want to work in an international organization, such as the UN.	1	2	3	4	5	6
78	I have a strong interest in international affairs.	1	2	3	4	5	6
79	I have ideas about international issues, such as environmental issues and north-south issues.	1	2	3	4	5	6
80	I wouldn't mind sharing an apartment or room with an international student.	1	2	3	4	5	6
81	I'm interested in an international career.	1	2	3	4	5	6
82	I'm not much interested in overseas news.	1	2	3	4	5	6
83	I have no clear opinions about international issues.	1	2	3	4	5	6
84	I want to participate in a volunteer activity to help foreigners living in the surrounding community.	1	2	3	4	5	6
85	I don't think what's happening overseas has much to do with my daily life.	1	2	3	4	5	6
86	I would feel somewhat uncomfortable if a foreigner moved in next door.	1	2	3	4	5	6
87	I'd rather avoid the kind of work that sends me overseas frequently.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Part IV

- *Please provide the following information by ticking in the box or writing down your answers so that we can interpret your previous answers better.*

1. ***Name***（中文名字）***:***

❑ *Male*   ❑ *Female*

2. Your age: _____
Are you the only child in your family? (你是独生子女吗？)   *Yes*   *No*

3. At what age did you begin with learning English?

4. Do you speak English with your families? If yes, please specify how often do you speak?
     a. Very much   *b. Often*   *c. occasionally*   *d. Not at all*

5. Do you speak English with your friends or classmates (except in English classes)? If yes, please specify how often do you speak?
     a. Very much   *b. Often*   *c. occasionally*   *d. Not at all*

6. Have you spent a longer period (at least a total of three months) in English-speaking countries (e.g., travelling, studying)?
     ❑ Yes   ❑ No

Many thanks again for your time!

Appendix B

Classroom observation sheet (sample 1)

Class: (Year 2) Intensive reading	Date: Nov. 17, 2010 (Wednesday)		Time: 10:00 – 11:45 am
Lesson contents	Students' learning activities		Teaching approach & Teacher's behaviours
	Males	Females	
Topic: Hong Kong (The complementary material) Contents: 1. Vocabulary learning (45 minutes) 2. Comprehensive reading (45 minutes)	Before class: ➢ Coming late but most on time ➢ Took the seat by the wall in group ➢ Silent-read the textbook or worked on something else In class: ➢ Took notes ➢ Small groups discussion ➢ Followed the teachers' instruction ➢ Being distracted for something else	Before class ➢ Settled down early ➢ Took the seat in the centre area ➢ Practice English by pair ➢ Checked homework In class: ➢ Took notes ➢ Helped each other to solve the problem ➢ Followed the teachers' instruction and were cooperative ➢ Answered the questions actively	Students gave presentation under the teacher's supervision. The presentations were mainly about vocabularies. Students helped each other to answer questions. The teacher left all questions to the students. 10 minutes before the class ended, the teacher began to tell the plans of next class and confirmed the presenter of following class.
During the Break	➢ Walked around ➢ Talked each other ➢ Played the mobiles and checked news	➢ Kept staying in their seats ➢ Continued working with the presenters and tried to solve the problems	The teacher chatted with the female students who sit in the first row of the classroom.
Other information	Not motivated. Followed the progress of the class but not involved except when the teacher extended the questions beyond of the textbook.	Some were motivated. Most were very cooperative and involved.	➢ 21 students in total (M =5; F = 16). ➢ Male students were interests in anything but grammar or vocabulary drills.

Classroom observation sheet (sample 2)

Class: (Year 3) Listening class	Date: Dec. 1, 2010 (Wednesday)		Time: 10:00 – 11: 50am
Lesson contents	Students' learning activities		Teaching approach & Teachers' behaviour
	Males	Females	

Content
  1. Textbook listening
  2. Dictation drills
  3. Mock test of TEM 8
	Before class
	➢ Came on time and settled down quietly
	
	In class
	➢ Be cooperative and follow the progress of the class
	➢ Very quiet during the whole class
		Before class
		➢ Came on time and settled down quietly
		➢ Homework collection
		
		In class
		➢ Some were good followers and always gave response to the teacher's question
		➢ Some were very quiet but still followed the progress of the classes
			The teacher led the progress of the class. As they were in the language lab, the students are not allowed to answer the question anytime except had permission as a volunteer. The teacher generally asked the students to answer the questions one by one in the alphabetic order of their seats.

During the Break	➢ Chat with other classmates ➢ Paid some attention to what the teacher said	➢ Ask more questions about homework or exams to the teacher ➢ Chat in group quietly	Talked about interpretation exams and the possible difficulties. Gave some hints on how to prepare the exams.
Other information	Only gave response when the teacher asked them to.	Only a few students were involved in the class actively.	➢ 17 students in a big language lab. ➢ They sit randomly but nobody took the seats in the front two rows. ➢ As the distance and the visual block between the seats, the researcher couldn't have a clear idea about the learning behaviours of each student.
	The students felt the difficulties in the listening. Although most of them were quiet, they all tried hard in their listening exercise. According to the teacher, as the students were going to attend TEM 8 tests in 3 months, they all took every chance to practice their listening skills during that period.		

Examples of thematic coding for interview data (sample 3)

Participant's number	Gender	Interview Transcriptions	Scales	Notes
50	M	I <u>like to</u> listen to English music and see English films <u>because I</u> think from that I can improve my English ability….. <u>Girls</u> like to watch drama series, such as Friends and some Korean ones. I don't like series drama …… (excerpt on p132)	*Cultural interests*	➤ Higher score than the average level ➤ Personal interest in English music out of English learning purpose ➤ Emphasis on gender identity
138	F	Firstly I <u>love</u> English, but my English is so-so. I want to learn it better. Secondly, <u>my mother</u> wants me to become a (English) teacher …… I will be happy if I can find a job. <u>My parents</u> hope I can do a postgraduate degree after the graduation…... (excerpt on p152)	*Family influence*	➤ Higher score than the average level ➤ Personal preference for English ➤ Families' influences on the decision-making on English learning and ideal L2 self
181	M	I want to learn English. I didn't think much when I chose an English major. English is an important language in the world……Nowadays any job needs English…… I think I will work in a company, doing some <u>international trade</u>. <u>I think I will be a businessman</u>. (excerpt on p164)	*Ideal L2 self*	➤ Higher score than the average level ➤ ➤ Clear *ideal L2 self* ➤ Developed the connection between his *ideal L2 self* with English learning
42	F	We <u>practice</u> English in our dormitory. When we did <u>volunteer work</u> at the Olympic Games, we <u>made a lot of friends</u>. They are from different countries and although our English is not so good …… (Excerpt on p192)	*Intergroup approach avoidance tendency*	➤ Higher score than the average level ➤ Active in English practice ➤ Attending volunteer work ➤ Knowing non-Chinese people ➤ Overcoming the language difficulties

Appendix C

Correlation Matrice 1: The results of correlation test for 13 variables (N = 240)

	Ideal L2 Self	Ought-to L2 Self	Instrumentality A (promotion)	Instrumentality B (prevention)	Family Influence	Travel Orientation	Fear of Assimilation	Attitude to Learn English	English Anxiety	Integrative ness	Cultural Interest	Attitudes to L2 Community	Criterion Measures
Ideal L2 Self	1	.302**	.690**	.207**	.138*	.481**	-.173**	.514**	-.044	.531**	.521**	.619**	.605**
Ought-to L2 Self		1	.541**	.633**	.627**	.343**	.167**	.294**	.190**	.267**	.168**	.148*	.307**
Instrumentality A (promotion)			1	.487**	.358**	.465**	-.140*	.512**	.192**	.553**	.453**	.452**	.652**
Instrumentality B (prevention)				1	.440**	.198**	.107	.076	.245**	.125	.118	.060	.224**
Family Influence					1	.139*	.222**	.066	.247**	.010	-.032	-.031	.145*
Travel Orientation						1	-.002	.392**	.140*	.394**	.410**	.440**	.325**
Fear of Assimilation							1	-.125	.088	-.196**	-.140*	-.190**	-.134*
Attitude to Learn English								1	.026	.668**	.465**	.535**	.665**
English Anxiety									1	.026	.000	-.052	.105
Integrativeness										1	.546**	.645**	.634**
Cultural Interest											1	.690**	.360**
Attitudes to L2 Community												1	.449**
Criterion Measures													1

*Significant at the level .05 (2-tailed)   **Significant at the level .01 (2-tailed)

Correlation Matrice 2: The female group's results of correlation test for 13 variables (N = 178)

	Ideal L2 Self	Ought-to L2 Self	Instrumentality A (promotion)	Instrumentality B (prevention)	Family Influence	Travel Orientation	Fear of Assimilation	Attitude to Learn English	English Anxiety	Integrativeness	Cultural Interest	Attitudes to L2 Community	Criterion Measures
Ideal L2 Self	1	.277**	.652**	.172*	.100	.448**	-.143	.495**	-.086	.524**	.475**	.583**	.602**
Ought-to L2 Self		1	.566**	.640**	.589**	.273**	.232**	.253**	.179*	.262**	.166*	.153*	.339**
Instrumentality A (promotion)			1	.459**	.384**	.458**	-.103	.462**	.192*	.560**	.409**	.444**	.663**
Instrumentality B (prevention)				1	.465**	.060	.150*	-.021	.171*	.083	.025	.038	.208**
Family Influence					1	.050	.275**	-.022	.231**	-.042	-.003	-.051	.133
Travel Orientation						1	.034	.362**	.030	.360**	.375**	.434**	.303**
Fear of Assimilation							1	-.083	.122	-.228**	-.172*	-.200**	-.131
Attitude to Learn English								1	-.021	.701**	.497**	.571**	.648**
English Anxiety									1	.012	-.020	-.069	.099
Integrativeness										1	.540**	.645**	.650**
Cultural Interest											1	.668**	.359**
Attitudes to L2 Community												1	.424**
Criterion Measures													1

*Significant at the level .05 (2-tailed)
**Significant at the level .01 (2-tailed)

Correlation Matrice 3: The male group's results of correlation test for 13 variables (N = 62)

	Ideal L2 Self	Ought-to L2 Self	Instrumentality A (promotion)	Instrumentality B (prevention)	Family Influence	Travel Orientation	Fear of Assimilation	Attitude to Learn English	English Anxiety	Integrative ness	Cultural Interest	Attitudes to L2 Community	Criterion measures
Ideal L2 Self	1	.304*	.721**	.131	.229	.456**	-.228	.564**	-.038	.503**	.551**	.665**	.553**
Ought-to L2 Self		1	.451**	.594**	.741**	.437**	.018	.400**	.172	.231	.080	.069	.148
Instrumentality A (promotion)			1	.412**	.327**	.335**	-.203	.653**	.103	.502**	.427**	.398**	.572**
Instrumentality B (prevention)				1	.413**	.269*	.061	.251*	.338**	.111	.141	-.031	.114
Family Influence					1	.330**	.087	.374**	.284*	.150	-.134	.006	.176
Travel Orientation						1	-.036	.429**	.267*	.409**	.354**	.384**	.254*
Fear of Assimilation							1	-.242	.029	-.087	-.030	-.146	-.116
Attitude to Learn English								1	.105	.525**	.299*	.389**	.713**
English Anxiety									1	.001	-.056	-.085	.041
Integrativeness										1	.512**	.617**	.548**
Cultural Interest											1	.714**	.245
Attitudes to L2 Community												1	.452**
Criterion Measures													1

*Significant at the level .05 (2-tailed)
**Significant at the level .01 (2-tailed)