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Differences in the Motivations of Chinese Learners of English in Different (Foreign or Second Language) Contexts

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ABSTRACT

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This study employed the L2 Motivational Self-System (Dörnyei, 2005) as a framework to compare differences in the types of motivation reported by Chinese learners of English in a foreign language context (China) and a second language context (USA). It followed up on studies by Taguchi, Magid, and Papi (2009) and You and Dörnyei (2016). The participants consisted of 61 current students at an American university who come from Mainland China. This study adopted a mixed-method approach, using an internet-based questionnaire followed by an individual interview. The investigation aimed to explore what types of English learning motivation Chinese students have in different contexts, as well as to compare the shift in Chinese students' motivation when they move from an EFL (China) to an ESL (USA) context. A recent study conducted by You & Dörnyei (2016), provided a solid empirical description of the main features of language learning motivation in China. The detailed information presented in You & Dörnyei's study serves as a baseline to further explore the differences in English learner motivation in different settings. The findings of this study can be used as a reference to align English language learners' motivational self-system with their own pattern of development.

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I want to thank my mom, whose unconditional love kept me motivated throughout the whole process of my study abroad period.

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Introduction

A teenage Chinese girl once cherished a dream to communicate effectively with foreigners. The reason why she had such a dream was because her father, who often traveled abroad, told her stories of his time communicating with foreigners. The vivid stories told by her father let her imagine that someday she would be part of these moving stories. Because of this dream, she kept telling herself to study English diligently. While other classmates were focusing on completing their homework as fast as they could, she would spend time listening to the tapes that her father brought back from other countries. While other students were complaining about too much English homework, she was happy to enjoy every step of her progress. Because of all these positive and encouraging thoughts in her mind, her progress in learning English was not as painful as it was for other students. That teenage girl was me, more than ten years ago, and I carried the same dream and attitude towards learning English with me throughout all my undergraduate years as an English major.

In 2013, I was honored to have the opportunity to further my English study in the United States while earning a master's degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages at Brigham Young University. One of the great privileges within this program is to teach English to speakers who come from all over the world. As I did my teaching practicum, it was no surprise for me to find out that the Chinese students' attitudes towards learning English in a second language setting (USA) were different from the attitudes of my former classmates in China. I didn't really think about comparing the differences between contexts until one day I encountered the terms *ideal L2 self*, *ought-to L2 self*, and *L2 learning experience* (Dörnyei, 2005). To that point, I hadn't realized that my teenage dream even had a formal name, the *Ideal L2 Self*. The more I learned about motivation in language learning, the more I wanted to explore it to find

ways to make my students' language learning process more enjoyable and personalized, and also to provide helpful information for English language learners in China about integrating the L2 motivational self system into their language learning process. However, I am not the only one who could benefit from such information. Millions of English language learners in China might have a more successful, enjoyable learning experience if they adjust their motivations by creating a desirable L2 self-image for themselves. Also, as will be explained below, the English examination system in China may be changing in the near future. This shift in the weight, as well as the timing, of the English portion of the University Entrance Examination may reduce Chinese students' instrumental motivation and require a compensating increase in other types of motivation. Furthermore, hundreds of thousands of Chinese students travel abroad every year to study at English-medium universities. Little is known about how their motivation to learn English may change under their new circumstances. Most people assume that the motivations they bring with them from China remain the same, but that may not be the case. In order to make correct policy and pedagogical decisions in these areas and circumstances, more information about differences in Chinese students' motivations in different learning contexts is needed. For all these reasons, we carried out this study.

The Importance of Motivation in Language Learning

Many studies have shown that language learners' motivation for learning a language plays an important role in the process of language acquisition. As Dörnyei (2005) stated:

It is easy to see why motivation is of great importance in second language acquisition (SLA): It provides the primary impetus to initiate L2 learning and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process; indeed, all the other factors

involved in SLA presuppose motivation to some extent. Without sufficient motivation, even individuals with the most remarkable abilities cannot accomplish long-term goals, and neither are appropriate curricula and good teaching enough on their own to ensure student achievement. (p. 65)

Motivation is an inseparable part in the second or foreign language learning process, especially for EFL learners who have very limited contact with native speakers of the language and the culture since their acquisition of this language is mainly in an academic context. EFL learners' motivation toward learning the language might be different from that of ESL learners because the EFL students learn the language as a school subject and they do not have immediate contact with native English-speakers. Compared with integratively motivated ESL learners who have significant others (such as friends, coworkers, or family members) who speak the language, EFL learners' limited contact with an English community might influence their motivation toward acquiring the language. The curiosity to explore how motivation differs across such settings triggered our comparison of students' motivations for learning English in EFL and ESL contexts in this study.

Since this thesis compares students' motivations for learning English as a second language in the U.S. with their motivations for learning English as a foreign language in China, an understanding of the Chinese learning context is valuable. In the following sections, I will introduce the education and examination system in China, talk about historical reasons for the Chinese exam-oriented education system, and discuss the culture of the Chinese educational environment.

Chinese educational system and examination system

The education system in China (see Figure 1) includes pre-primary education, primary education, middle school and high school education, universities, and graduate education. Graduate education is divided into two levels: master's degree and doctor's degree. A master's degree will take the candidate two to three years and the doctor's degree will take the candidate three or more years. China has a nine-year compulsory education system, which includes education from primary school (six years) to middle school (three years).
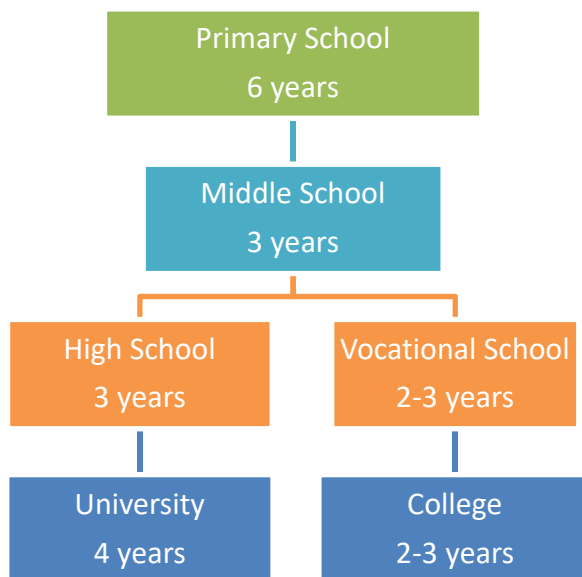
Figure 1. Chinese education system.

English as a subject is incorporated into the curriculum starting in the third grade of primary school. Vocational school students engage themselves in gaining knowledge related to specific careers instead of general subjects; however, English is still a subject they cannot neglect.

To advance from one level to another, students are expected to take very competitive school entrance examinations (Sun & Henrichsen, 2014) and pass to get into key schools. Students. The culture of high stakes testing has a long history in China. The Chinese first used standardized tests to select the highest government officials based on merit in the from Sui Dynasty (605 CE). This practice continued to the end of Qing Dynasty in 1905, and it is called *keju* (Sun & Henrichsen, 2014). Westerners first experience with this imperial examination system was through a Catholic priest, Matteo Ricci who came to China during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). He was surprised to find that the country was governed by intellectuals and philosophers, which was the optimal mode of operation in the eyes of the Europeans. Subsequently, the Chinese imperial examination system was introduced in England and became model for the British civil service selection system.

In China, the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) can be viewed as a watershed in the development of English language testing. Table 1 shows the development of English language testing in China before the Cultural Revolution while Table 2 presents the development of English language testing in China after the Cultural Revolution.

The development of English language testing in China (1862-1966) before the Cultural Revolution. As shown in Table 1, English had not been introduced into China until the establishment of Jing-Shi-Tong-Wen-Guan (Beijing Normal Language School) in 1862. The primary purpose of this language school at that time was to train foreign language translators. English was the first and the only language being taught at the beginning of school establishment. In 1903, Jing-Shi-Tong-Wen-Guan was merged into Jing-Shi-Da-Xue-Tang (Imperial University of Peking). By this time, English language study together with French, German, Russian, and Japanese languages study had been opened to the public to study as a major (5 years program).

Around the 1920s, Chinese educators advocated learning from the westerners' educational system. The New Academic Curriculum was enacted in 1923, which stated that English classes should be offered starting from Middle School. In 1964, English was viewed as the primary foreign language to learn. Chinese people's enthusiasm for learning English did not weaken until the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976).

Table 1

The Development of English teaching in China from 1862 to 1966

Years	Major Events
1862	The establishment of jing-shi-tong-wen-guan (Beijing Normal Language School). Its primary purpose was to train foreign language translators.
1903	English was officially incorporated into higher education and became a teaching subject.
1923	The New Academic Curriculum was put forward and then enacted. English classes were offered started from middle school.
1964	English was treated as a primary foreign language to learn.
1966	The Cultural Revolution started, English was abolished.

Note. Adapted from "Yingyu zai zhongguo 150 duonian de qifu mingyun (150 Years of English Language in China)" by Sohu Jiaoyu, 2014. Retrieved from Sohu Education website: http://learning.sohu.com/20140808/n403268280.shtml

The development of English language testing in China (1977-present) after the Cultural Revolution. English testing in China did not come into existence until the University Entrance Exam in China was restored in 1977. In Table 2, we can see that, compared with the Chinese imperial exams, English testing in the University Entrance Exam has a relatively short history. It was not officially included in the University Entrance Exam until 1984. Together with the major events that happened in China in the early twenty-first century, such as joining the World Trade Organization in 2001, holding the International Olympic Games in Beijing in 2008, and holding the World Exposition in Shanghai in 2010, English has become more and more important not only as a subject, but a communication tool for many Chinese citizens.

In 2013, a proposal was made to change the English test in the University Entrance Exam from a norm-referenced test to a criterion-referenced test. This proposed change would also allow students to take the English test multiple times (the English test will be held two times a year) throughout their three-year high school period. Their test score will be valid for three years, and students' highest score on this test will be included into their final profile. If it is implemented, this upcoming reform on English test of the University Entrance Exam will open a new door for Chinese students. They will be able to decide how to approach the language and the test according to their own preferences. This approach to learning English will also vary depending on whether they decide to study abroad. If the students' plan is to study abroad as undergraduates to pursue undergraduate study, they will spend time preparing for the TOEFL or IELTS test rather than taking the UEE English test. But for others who want to get into a Chinese university, the UEE English test would become unavoidable.

Table 2

The Development of English in China from 1977 to Present

Years	Major Events
1977	Restored the Chinese University Entrance Exam. Objective questions such as multiple choice questions were the focus in this exam; there were no listening comprehension questions.
1983	English test was first included in the Senior High School Entrance Exam.
1984	English was officially included in the University Entrance Exam
1987	The College English Test—Band Four was enacted
1989	The College English Test—Band Six was enacted
1992	English became one of the three main subjects in University Entrance Exam
2007	Listening comprehension questions became part of the English test in order to diversify the test mode of the English exam.
2013	English reform was first proposed. Changing the English test in University Entrance Exam from a norm-referenced test to a criterion-referenced test was proposed.

Note. Translated and adapted from "Waiyu ni tuichu quanguo gaokao shijian (Proposal of English Reform in the University Entrance Examination)" by Sohu Jiaoyu, No. 122. Retrieved from Sohu Education website: http://learning.sohu.com/s2013/reform/

The University Entrance Exam (UEE), known commonly as *Gaokao*, is called "the

Footslog Bridge" by Chinese parents together with their children. It is offered once a year for

senior high-school students (third year in high school) to take. Successfully passing the exam is

the only way for students who want to pursue a higher education in China to enter a university.

"This exam is seen as the gatekeeper for formal higher education, it is undoubtedly the most

visible and significant entrance examination in China" (Sun & Henrichsen, 2014, p. 5). The

Gaokao's structure is described as a '3+X model'. Three is the mandatory part, which consists of

Chinese Literature, mathematics, and English. X represents another subject area chosen by test

takers depending on whether they want to pursue science (physics, chemistry, and biology) or

arts (political education, history, geography) in their university studies.
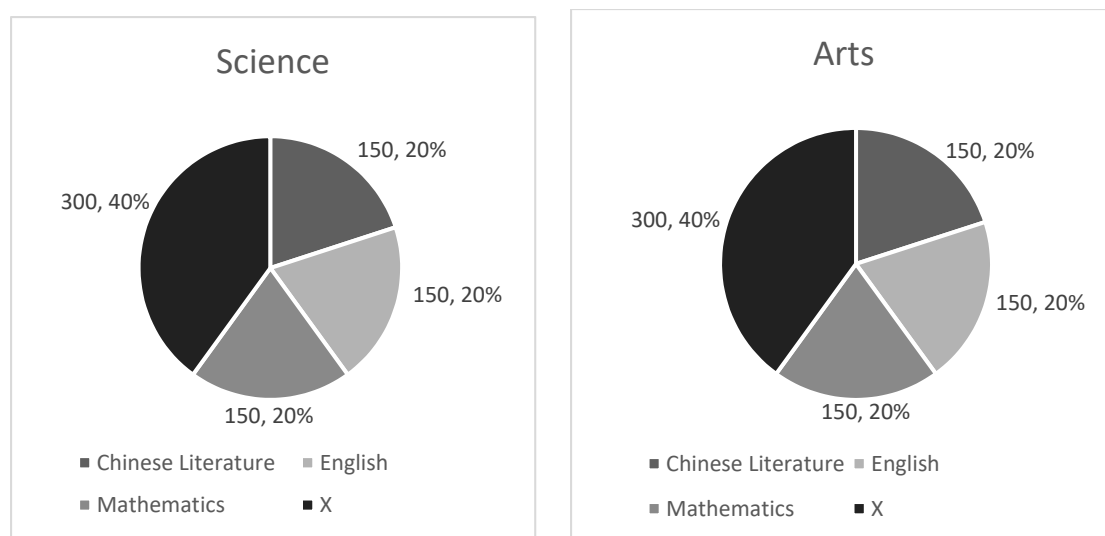
Figure 2. The '3+X' model in University Entrance Exams in China.

As can be seen from Figure 2, Chinese Literature, English, and Mathematics have the same weight of 150 in the UEE. They have been treated as the general subjects for all high school students to take throughout their three-year high school life. As for the 'X' part, junior high school students (second year in high school) are expected to choose either Science or Arts as their future major in universities. From then on, the classes they have to take will be physics, chemistry, and biology for Science and political education, history, and geography for Arts. These three subjects will be bound together in the UEE as one test. High school students need to get a high grade in each subject to get accepted at their dream university. The high-stakes nature of the University Entrance Exam makes many educational activities in China very exam-oriented (Kirkpatrick & Zhang, 2011).

This very different culture background leads to different understandings of academic achievement, as suggested by Tao and Hong (2000):

Academic achievement may take on different meanings depending on the socio-cultural contexts of different societies. In Western culture, academic achievement is largely seen as an individual endeavor. People are encouraged to formulate goals that focus on their own needs, interests, and preferences. In Chinese culture, by striking contrast, academic achievement is seen as a social endeavor. Individual academic achievement is not only a person's own quest for knowledge, but also a means to bring wealth, power, fame, and honor to the family. Therefore, learning and getting high grades on examinations are two goals that go hand in hand in Chinese culture, thereby giving rise to the commonly found positive correlations between learning and performance goals (p. 111).

This section has talked about the importance of motivation on language learning and has introduced the Chinese educational and examination system and the development of English language learning in China. The next section will discuss the L2 motivational theories related with the current study.

Literature Review

This section will describe and discuss Dörnyei's L2 motivational self system (Dörnyei, 2005), the Hungarian study (Dörnyei, Csizer, and Nemeth, 2006), Taguchi, Magid, and Papi's study (2009), and You and Dörnyei's (2016) research.

The L2 Motivational Self System

The proposal of Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System (2005) was under the combined influence of theoretical advances in the L2 motivation research and in the mainstream psychology. Let us turn to the contribution of L2 motivation research on Dörnyei's L2 motivational-self system. The concept of *integrativeness/integrative motivation* which was first introduced by Gardner and Lambert (1959) had dominated the L2 motivation research for several decades. Gardner (2001) characterized the concept as follows:

> Integrativeness reflects a genuine interest in learning the second language in order to come closer to the other language community. At one level, this implies an openness to, and respect for other cultural groups and ways of life. In the extreme, this might involve complete identification with community (and possibly even withdrawal from one's original group), but more commonly it might well involve integration within both communities. (p. 5)

One key issue with respect to Gardner's concept of *integrativeness/integrative motivation* stated by Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) was as follows:

> The notion was originally conceptualized in relation to contact and identification with members of a specific L2 group, whereas subsequent research found that this was not fundamental to the motivational process in general but only in specific sociocultural

contexts. This problem was amplified by the worldwide globalization process and the growing dominance of Global/World English as an international language. (p. 85)

The limitation of its application to other L2 motivation research contexts, especially for language learners in a foreign language context (such as China) whose learning English as a required school subject without any direct contact with the English community, stimulated the proposal of Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System. Let us now turn to the second contribution, which is related with the theoretical developments in the mainstream psychology research about the *self*. The two key components of self theory (*ideal self* and the *ought self*) put forward by Higgins (1998) are motivationally distinct from each other:

The *ideal self* has a *promotion* focus concerned with hopes, aspirations, advancements, growth and accomplishments, whereas the *ought self* has a *prevention* focus that regulates the absence or presence of negative outcomes associated with failing to live up to various responsibilities and obligations. (p.18)

Higgin's (1998) self theory provided two key components, the ideal L2 self and the ought-to L2 self, for the reconceptualization of Dörnyei's L2 motivational self system. Thus, in 2005 Dörnyei proposed that the 'L2 Motivational Self System' was made up of the following three components:

(1) *Ideal L2 self*, which is the L2-specific facet of 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 L2 because of the desire to reduce the discrepancy between our actual and ideal selves. Traditional integrative and internalized instrumental motives would typically belong to this component.

(2) *Ought-to L2 self*, which concerns the attributes that one believes one ought to possess to meet expectations and to avoid possible negative outcomes. This dimension corresponds to Higgin's ought self and thus to the more extrinsic (i.e. less internalized) types of instrumental motives.

(3) *L2 Learning Experience*, which concerns situated, 'executive' motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience (e.g. the impact of the teacher, the curriculum, the peer group, the experience of success). (p.29)

In the framework of L2 motivational self system, the ideal L2 self plays an important role as a guidance on language learners' motivation, which means there should exsit an observable gap between their current self-image and the desired self-image. Otherwise, it would be not necessary to put extra effort to reach their desired L2 self. This ideal L2 self should provide some fuel on motivating language learners toward reaching their goals intrinsically. Language learners within their own realm filled only with the ideal L2 self will not construct an effective motivation framework, the avoidance of negative outcomes (such as don't want to get a poor grade on a subject, don't want to bring shame to the family by presenting them an unexpected result) will also provide some fuel to keep their motivation grow. Successful previous language learning experience will definitely help language learners generate a positive L2 self-image. As stated by Dörnyei (2005), "for some language learners the initial motivation to learn a language does not come from internally or externally generated self-images but rather from successful engagement with the actual language learning process because they discover that they are good at it" (p. 29). These three components provided a framework not only for language teachers to help their students generate and sustain the language learning motivation but also for students to effectively motivate themselves throughout the language learning process.

The researcher in the following part will talk about some of the studies in various contexts which were related with (The Hungarian Study) or designed to validate (The Taguchi, Magid, and Papi's and You and Dörnyei's studies) the framework of Dörnyei's L2 motivational self system.

The Hungarian Study

The main findings derived from Dörnyei, Csizer, and Nemeth's Hungarian Study (2006) can be summarized as follows: (a) For a fully-fledged Ideal L2 self, language learners need to integrate both aspects of personally agreeable and professionally successful. (b) Learners' attitudes towards the particular language were enhanced through the engagement in the study of an L2. (c) Because of the globalization of English, this language is likely to be the preferred foreign language for all students who do not speak English as their first language.

This study was initiated in 1992/1993. At that time, the researchers did not know that their study would grow into the largest L2 motivational study ever. Nor did they anticipate their results. The main study followed a repeated cross-sectional design that consisted of three national surveys conducted in the spring of 1993, towards the end of 1999 and in early 2004. The three rounds of data collection intended to gauge the changes in the population's international orientation targeted the same population and the sampling of the participating schools was almost identical. The repeated stratified survey targeted 13,391 teenage language learners' (middle school students) attitudes towards five targeted languages: English, German, French, Italian and Russian.

The data obtained in the three different phases of the Hungarian study were submitted to structural equation modeling (SEM), as stated by Dörnyei et al. (2006):

In this model the criterion measures (Language Choice and Intended Effort) were effected directly by Integrativeness only, which in turn subsumed and mediated the effects of all the other attitudinal variables. We argued that this component should be reinterpreted as the Ideal L2 Self. (p. 146)

As we have discussed in the section about Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System, the proposal of this framework was triggered by relabeling *integrativeness* as the *ideal L2 self*, since the concept of *integrativeness* is quite limited and cannot be applied to a foreign country if language learners do not have contact with the language community.

Taguchi, Magid, and Papi's Study

Because of the above mentioned significant findings from the Hungarian study, one of the main objectives in Taguchi, Magid, and Papi's (2009) comparative motivational study of learners of English in Japan, China, and Iran was to validate Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System in three important Asian contexts. Their findings confirmed that the results of L2 motivation research in Hungary were not country-specific since they found a similar pattern in three countries that differ greatly from Hungary and from each other (Taguchi, Magid, and Papi, 2009, p. 88). The participants' age range in Taguchi et al.'s (2009) study was from 11-53 with a mean age of 21.1, the total number of participants in their study was 1,328 with 214 middle school students, 940 university students (182 English major and 758 non-English major), and 173 working professionals. A questionnaire was adapted for use in three different contexts (Japan, China, and Iran) for their study. The format and measurements of their questionnaire, as well as the study results will be detailed and discussed in the method section of the current study.

You and Dörnyei's Study

The findings from Taguchi, Magid and Papi's (2009) study revealed that L2 motivation is not country-specific, You & Dörnyei (2016) conducted a large-scale stratified survey about language learning motivation in China. It aimed to present a balanced overview of the general level of L2 motivation in China through the lens of the L2 Motivational Self System and to obtain a systematic and comprehensive overview of the motivational characteristics of learning English in China. The total sample involved over 10,000 students and was stratified according to geographical region and teaching contexts, selecting participants both from urban and rural locations (p. 495). One of the most important findings of this study was the fact that the motivational set-up of the world's largest L2-learning community (China) turned out to be broadly compatible with results obtained from other countries. This finding presented a picture that is significantly different from the widely held belief that Chinese learners are primarily instrumentally motivated. Even though instrumental factors including both promotion and prevention do play an important role in motivating learning, language learning motivation is a joint operation determined by many factors (p. 516).

Research Questions

Like Taguchi, Magid, and Papi (2009), the current study sought to validate Dörnyei's L2 motivational self system in a second language context. The instrument was based on Dörnyei's L2 motivational self system as a theoretical framework, but with some practical modifications, which had been described previously.

In proposing his L2 Motivational Self System, Dörnyei (2005) suggested that integrativeness can actually be tapped into a broader dimension—which was the learner's ideal

L2 self. This idea was based on the results derived from the Hungarian study, in which the researchers found that a variable that was initially identified as integrativeness played a principle role in determining the extent of a learner's overall motivational disposition (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011, p. 85). Based on Taguchi et al.'s (2009) results about the relationship between integrativeness and ideal L2 self, they found that there was a positive correlation between these two variables. The mean value of correlation coefficient within four groups (middle school students, university students with English majors and non-English majors, and adult learners) was 0.51. On that basis, they concluded that these two variables (ideal L2 self and integrativeness) were tapping into the same construct domain and could therefore be equated (p. 77). The conclusions from all these studies showed that a strong relationship between integrativeness and ideal L2 self exists. Following up on this conclusion, the current study was designed to explore the relationship between integrativeness and ideal L2 self in an ESL (the United States) context. Therefore, the first objective of the current study was to explore the relationship between the ideal L2 self and integrativeness of Chinese students in an ESL context.

One of Taguchi, Magid, and Papi's (2009) research objectives was to partially replicate the Hungarian study in three key Asian countries: Japan, China and Iran. Their purpose was to explore the role of integrativeness in contexts that were vastly different from the Hungarian one (p. 67). The age of Chinese participants in Taguchi, Magid and Papi's study ranged from 11 to 53 with a mean age of 21.1. There also existed a great diversity in participants' exposure to native English teachers, their overseas experiences, and their self-assessed English levels. Taguchi, Magid, and Papi proved that results of the Hungarian study of L2 motivation were not country-specific since the researchers found a similar pattern in three countries that differed greatly from Hungary and from each other. Nevertheless, one study does not provide definitive

proof of a concept, the exploration of features of L2 motivation in other contexts is still worthwhile. Therefore, the current study aims to explore the motivation of learners in a different, more specific context to explore any variations in motivation particular to learners of English in a foreign language context (China) and in a second language context (USA). The second objective of this current study was to find out what motivational characteristics Chinese students in different contexts (EFL and ESL) had for learning English by partially replicating Taguchi, Magid, and Papi's study (2009) and You and Dörnyei's study (2016).

Even though the Hungarian study did not divide the distinct types of instrumentality into these two categories, for the current study we decided to investigate both types of instrumentality (promotional and preventional) because of the particular role that family plays regarding Chinese students' ought-to L2 self. For this reason, we assumed that there would be differences in Chinese students' instrumentality types in the two different before (EFL) and after (ESL) contexts. Therefore, the second objective of this study was to test the relationship between instrumentality types in these two contexts. In other words, this objective asks the question of how the motivation of Chinese students changes when they move from an EFL (China) to an ESL (USA) context.

All of these studies attempting to validate Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System (2005) were designed to better facilitate language learners' motivation for learning English. For this reason, the current study not only examined the system in a more specific context but also sought to discover pedagogical implications that can be derived from Dörnyei's (2005) L2 Motivational Self System.

All of the above mentioned objectives are reflected in the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between ideal L2 self and integrativeness of Chinese students in an

   ESL (USA) context?

2. What motivational characteristics do Chinese students in the United States recall having

   when they were in China?

3. How does the motivation of Chinese students change when they move from an EFL (China)

   to an ESL (USA) context?

Methodology

Participants

The participants in this research were 61 mainland Chinese students attending a large

American university. All participants' native language was Mandarin Chinese. The

questionnaires were sent out through the university International Student Office (ISO) because it

had a database of the current Chinese students' email addresses. A consent form was distributed

along with the online survey. Those who were interested in participating in the follow-up

interviews were asked to leave their contact information at the end of the questionnaire.

Participant overview. Since the current data collection procedure involved a

questionnaire and a follow-up interview, participants were divided into two categories according

to their participation in each part. Those who filled out a questionnaire were labelled *peripheral*

participants, while those who not only completed the online questionnaire but also took part in

the follow-up interview were called *focal participants*.

Peripheral participants in the current study (*n*=50) were students enrolled at this American university. There were 18 males and 32 females. The age range of these participants was 19 to 37 with a mean age of 25.4. There were 25 undergraduate students (3 freshmen, 2 sophomores, 8 juniors, and 12 seniors), 12 masters degree students, and 13 Ph.D. students. These participants came from a wide variety of disciplinary backgrounds, which included accounting, analytical chemistry, applied mathematics, biology, chemistry, chemical engineering, civil engineering, computer science, communication disorders, educational leadership, exercise and wellness, electronic engineering, finance, genetics and biotech, information systems, mathematics, MBA, public relations, sociology, statistics, and TESOL. Only 40 participants in the current study had had the experience of being taught by a native English-speaking teacher in China.

Focal participants' profile. The focal participants (n=11) in the current study were assigned letters of the alphabet in order to protect their privacy. A summary of the key characteristics of these focal participants is presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Summary of Focal Participants' Academic Characteristics

	Major at school	*Year in school*	*Years in the U.S.*	*Gender*	*NETE in China*
A	Biology	Ph.D 4th year	4	Female	Yes
B	TESOL	Master 2nd year	5	Female	Yes
C	Educational Inquiry, Measurement and evaluation	Ph.D 1st year	5	Female	Yes
D	Educational leadership	Ph.D 4th year	5	Female	No
E	MBA	2nd year	5	Male	No
F	Accounting	Master 2nd year	6	Female	Yes
G	Mathematics	Ph.D 4th year	4	Male	No
H	TESOL	Master 2nd year	4	Female	Yes
I	Chemistry	Senior undergraduate	5	Female	Yes
J	Art history	Senior undergraduate	10	Female	Yes
K	Information systems management	Master 2nd year	6	Female	Yes

Note: NETE stands for native English-speaking teacher experience in China.

As can be seen from Table 3, there was a great diversity in the major of these focal participants, most of them were seeking a master or a Ph.D. degree at this American university, and only two participants were senior undergraduate students. All of these focal participants had been lived in the USA for at least four years. Eight out of eleven focal participants had had the experience of being taught by a native English-speaking teacher in China.

Instruments

  Questionnaire. The questionnaire developed by You and Dörnyei (2016) was adapted for this research. The original questionnaire had two major parts: the first consisted of items measuring the learners' attitudes and motivation concerning English learning, and the second consisted of questions about the learners' background (e.g. gender, age, exposure to a native English teacher experience, study abroad experience, and self-rated English proficiency levels).

  The questionnaire used for the current study also consisted of the same two major parts but in reverse order. The first part asked questions about the participants' background (e.g. gender, age, current major at this American university, and exposure to a native English-speaking teacher). The second part consisted of statement-type items (written in both Chinese and English) that measured these Chinese students' attitudes and motivations towards learning English, using six-point Likert scales, with 'strongly disagree' anchoring the left and 'strongly agree' anchoring the right end. It took the participants 10-15 minutes to fill out the survey in Qualtrics®.

  These existing studies about Dörnyei's L2 motivational self-system laid a solid foundation for the current study. Comparisons of the measured motivational variables among (1) the current study, (2) Taguchi, Magid and Papi's (2009) study, and (3) You and Dörnyei's (2016) study are presented in Table 4. The rationale for the modifications made on motivational variables will be discussed later.

Table 4

Comparisons of 11 Measured Motivational Variables among Three Studies

Motivational Variables	Number of items in Taguchi, Magid and Papi's study (2009)	Number of items in You and Dörnyei's study (2014)	Number of items in the current study
a. Criterion measures / Intended effort	6	5	0
b. Ideal L2 self	5	5	3
c. Ought-to L2 self	7	6	4
d. Family influence / Parental expectations	5	5	5
e. Instrumentality-promotion	8	6	5
f. Instrumentality-prevention	5	5	3
g. Attitudes to learning English / Language learning experience	4	5	3
h. Cultural interest	3	5	4
i. Attitudes toward L2 community	4	0	3
j. Integrativeness	3	0	3
k. Travelling	0	5	0

As can be seen in Table 4, nine motivational variables were adopted in this current study. These variables and their corresponding explanations are listed below; rationales for the modification of these motivational variables will be discussed later.

(a) Ideal L2 self, which refers to the L2-specific facet of one's ideal self.

(b) Ought-to L2 self, which measures "the attributes that one believes one ought to possess (i.e. various duties, obligations, or responsibilities) in order to avoid possible negative outcomes" (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 106).

(c) Language learning experience, attitudes to L2 learning measuring situation-specific motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience.

(d) Instrumentality-promotion measuring the regulation of personal goals to become successful such as attaining high proficiency in English in order to make more money or find a better job.

(e) Instrumentality-prevention measuring the regulation of duties and obligations such as studying English in order to pass an examination.

(f) Cultural interest measuring the learner's interest in the cultural products of the L2 culture, such as TV, magazines, music and movies.

(g) Parental expectations/Family influence examining active and passive parental roles.

(h) Attitudes toward L2 community investigating the learner's attitudes toward the community of the target language.

(i) Integrativeness, which entails having a positive attitude toward the second language, its culture and the native speakers of that language. (Taguchi et al., 2009, pp. 74-75)

Rationale for the Modifications to Motivational Variables. Since the context of the current study was different from Taguchi et al.'s (2009) and You and Dörnyei's (2016), the researcher made the following modifications to the motivational variables.

a. Criterion Measures/Intended Effort: The current study did not include any items measuring the variable named criterion measures/intended effort, as Taguchi *et al.* and You and Dörnyei did. The items in their questionnaire included things such as *Compared to my classmates, I think I study English relatively hard* and *I would like to concentrate on studying English more than any other topic*. These topics did not fit the context of the current study because the participants had already studied at and lived in the target language setting. In brief, English for the students was a way to communicate. Their majors varied from each other, but one common thing was that most of their classmates all spoke English as their native language. Therefore, asking an ESL speaker if they study English relatively hard in comparison with native speakers would not be a valuable item that would contribute to this study.

b. Ideal L2 self: For this study, the number of items dealing with the ideal L2 self variable became three instead of five because several items with similar ideas were rephrased as one item in the questionnaire in order to make it more clear and concise.

c. Ought-to L2 self: This variable measured in Taguchi et al.'s and You and Dörnyei's studies including questions such as *Studying English is important to me in order to gain the approval of my teachers*, *Studying English is important to me in order to gain the approval of my peers*, and *Studying English is important to me in order to gain the approval of the society*, which all asked about the importance of others' influences on their language learning. To be more concise, the current study combined these items into one question *Studying English is important to me in order to gain the approval of others (e.g., teachers, peers, the society)*.

d. Instrumentality-promotion: This variable measured in Taguchi et al.'s study including items such as *Studying English can be important to me because I think it will some day be useful*

in getting a good job, Studying English is important because with a high level of English proficiency I will be able to make a lot of money, Studying English is important to me because English proficiency is necessary for promotion in the future, and Studying English is important to me because it offers a new challenge in my life, which all measured about participants' future life, the researcher adjusted these items and merged into one *Studying English is important to me because my life will change if I acquire good command of English.*

e. Instrumentality-prevention: This variable measured in Taguchi et al.'s and You and Dörnyei's studies including questions such as *I have to learn English because I don't want to fail the English course* and *Studying English is important to me because, if I don't have knowledge of English, I'll be considered a weak student* were changed into one item in the current study which was *When thinking of not becoming a successful user of English in the future, I feel scared.* The reason to make this change was because the original two items were all measuring about participants' ability on English learning. Questions like *I have to study English because I don't want to get bad marks in it* and *Studying English is necessary for me because I don't want to get a poor score or a fail mark in English proficiency tests* were changed into one item *Studying English is necessary for me because I don't want to get a poor score mark in English proficiency tests (e.g., TOEFL, IELTS,...).* The original two statements all measured about participants' avoidance emotion on English courses and tests, so they were merged into one.

f. Attitudes toward learning English/Language learning experience: This variable in Taguchi et al.'s (2009) study was named Attitudes to Learning English, but the survey items for this variable all measured about participants' language learning experience toward English learning, the researcher adopted the variable's name – Language Learning Experience from You and Dörnyei's study to make it clear. Taguchi et al.'s (2009) study adopted four question-type

six-point Likert scale items to measure the attitudes to learning English variable, in which the scales were: 1 (*not at all*), 2 (*not so much*), 3 (*so-so*), 4 (*a little*), 5 (*quite a lot*), and 6 (*very much*). Survey questions such as *Do you like the atmosphere of your English class? Do you always look forward to English classes? Do you really enjoy learning English? and Do you find learning English really interesting?* were changed into statement-type items such as *I really like the actual process of learning English, I always look forward to English classes,* and *I think time passes faster while studying English* to make the items' format of this variable in accordance with other variables.

g: Cultural interest: In addition to the items measuring this variable in Taguchi et al.'s study, the current study added one more item which was *I like English-language magazines, newspapers, and books* to make the coverage of this variable more comprehensive.

h: Attitudes to L2 community: This variable was not measured in You and Dörnyei's study was because the participants were all Chinese students learning English in China, so the item like *Do you like the people who live in English-speaking countries* would not fit into their research context. The two items used in Taguchi et al.'s study *Do you like meeting people from English-speaking countries* and *Would you like to know more about people from English-speaking countries* were changed and merged into one statement-type item *I like to know more about people from English-speaking countries.*

For reasons explained in the previous paragraphs, nine motivational variables were selected based on Taguchi et al.'s study (2009) and You and Dörnyei's study (2016). In the current study, the total number of questionnaire items was 33. A summary of these motivational

variables and their corresponding sample items for the main survey is presented in Table 5. A

complete list can be found in Appendix A.

Table 5

Nine Variables and Corresponding Sample Items for the Main Survey

Variables	No. of Items	Sample Items
Ideal L2 Self	3	I can imagine myself speaking English in the future in formal and informal situations.
Ought-to L2 Self	4	I consider learning English important because the people I respect think that I should do it.
Language Learning Experience (Attitudes to L2 learning)	3	I really like the actual process of learning English.
Instrumentality-Promotion	5	Studying English is important to me in order to achieve a personally important goal (e.g., to get a degree or scholarship).
Instrumentality-Prevention	3	Studying English is important to me, because I would feel ashamed if I got bad grades in English.
Cultural Interest	4	I like English-language magazines, newspapers, and books.
Parental Expectations / Family Influence	5	Studying English is important to me in order to gain the approval of my family.
Attitudes toward L2 community	3	I like the people who live in English-speaking countries.
Integrativeness	3	I think it is important to learn more about the culture and art of its speakers in order to learn English.

Interview. The qualitative interview part of our study employed a semi-structured protocol that contained two major parts similar to the questionnaire. The first part asked about participants' basic demographic information (e.g. which city in China they came from, their major in China, and how long they had been in the U.S.). The second part contained questions concerning participants' previous L2 learning experience, their ideal L2 self, and their ought-to L2 self (a full list of interview questions can be found in Appendix C). Although these interview questions focused on many of the same points that the questionnaire did, they were open-ended and allowed for a free response that could be as long as many sentences or as short as a single word. Because these responses were qualitative in nature they required a qualitative analysis.

Data Collection Procedure

Since the target participants of this study were students from mainland China enrolled in an American university, the researcher contacted the university's International Student Office (ISO) which controlled access to a database of international students' names and email addresses, concerning the possibility of sending out the online Qualtrics® survey to these students. The ISO advisor agreed to forward the questionnaire to all students from China after the researcher sent her the proposal and explained the purpose of this study. After this was done, the ISO distributed the link to the online survey together with a cover letter (in English and later in Chinese) and the informed consent form of this study to these potential participants by email on four different dates in 2016: August 8, August 24, September 15, and October 14. A total number of 111 online surveys were sent out to potential participants, and we got 61 participants in total. The participants' response rate of the current study was 55%.

After the participants had responded to the online survey, the researcher contacted those participants who had indicated an interest in participating in a follow-up interview to arrange a time and place for that interview. The interview locations were study rooms in the university's library and the interviewee's campus offices (many worked as research assistants). The researcher audio recorded all the interviews using Voice Memo on an iPhone 6s, with the full knowledge and consent of these nine research participants. Each interview took about 10-15 minutes.

Data Analysis

The data gathered through the online survey using Qualtrics® were exported into a Word® document with tables and figures format. The first portion contained information such as the participant's age, gender, major and exposure to a native English-speaking teacher in China, as was discussed in the participant overview section above.

The other portion of the data contained participants' responses to the 33 Likert-scale items that consisted of numbers associated with each participant response: 1 = *Strongly disagree*, 2 = *Disagree*, 3 = *Slightly disagree*, 4 = *Slightly agree*, 5 = *Agree*, 6 = *Strongly agree*. The Qualtrics® report generated a table that contained descriptive statistical information for each variable. To visualize the trend of participants' choices, the researcher also added a bar chart which showed the percentage and frequency of responses for each item within each variable.

As for the data obtained from the follow-up interviews, the researcher transcribed each interview and saved it in a Word® document. Because the focal participants in the current study were only 11, the researcher categorized their responses based on the topics. Related quotations for each research question had been marked with different colored markers for further analysis.

Results

In this section, we will first present the quantitative results from the questionnaire and then the qualitative results from the interview. The quantitative results produce answers to our research question 1: *What is the relationship between ideal L2 self and integrativeness of Chinese students in an ESL (USA) context?* The qualitative results produce answers to research questions 2: *What motivational characteristics do Chinese students in the United States recall having when they were in China?* and 3: *How does the motivation of Chinese students change when they move from an EFL (China) to an ESL (USA) context?*

Quantitative Results

Research Question 1: *What is the relationship between ideal L2 self and integrativeness of Chinese students in an ESL (USA) context?* This section will report on the correlation coefficients between several selected motivational variables.

Ideal L2 self and integrativeness. The correlation coefficient between ideal L2 self and integrativeness of the current study will be compared with Taguchi et al.'s study. Table 6 presents the correlation coefficient between the *ideal L2 self* and *integrativeness* in the current study. It also displays correlation coefficients obtained in Taguchi *et al.*'s study among their four different participation groups. The correlation coefficient of the current study is 0.41, which is very close to the 0.46 correlation coefficient of Taguchi et al.'s study on the University students part (both English majors and non-English majors), both coefficients are positive and fairly strong. The histogram (see Figure 3) shows the response frequency patterns about *ideal L2 self* (the figure above) is very similar to that of *integrativeness* (the figure below). The *ideal L2 self* and *integrativeness* were both constituted by three items in the survey (see Appendix A).

Table 6

The Correlation Coefficient between Ideal L2 Self and Integrativeness

Current study	Taguchi et al.'s study			
Chinese English learners	Middle school students	University students (English majors)	University students (non-English majors)	Adult learners
0.41	0.66	0.46	**0.46**	0.53

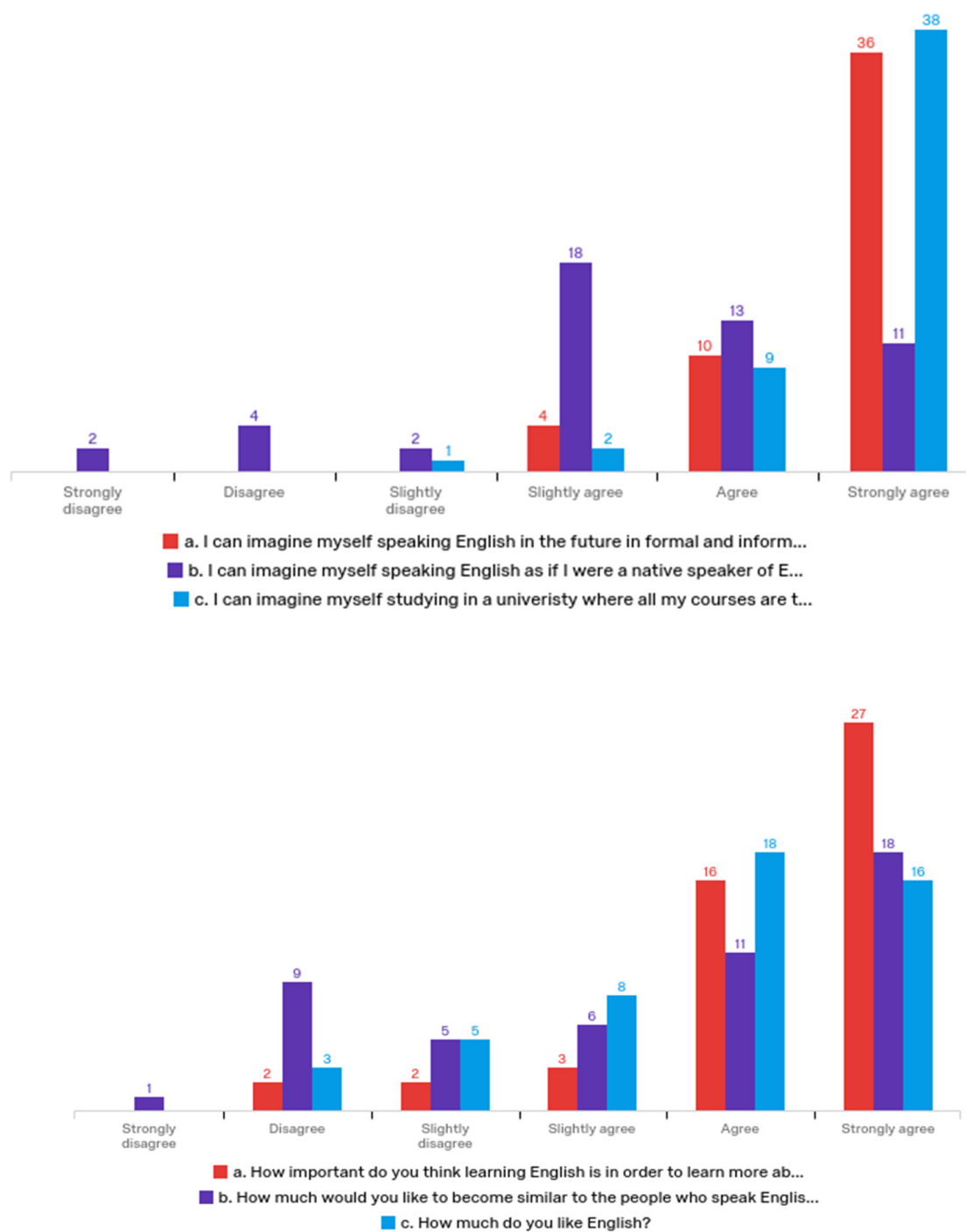*Note: All correlations are significant at the p<0.01 level.*

Figure 3. Histogram of response frequency patterns for ideal L2 self and integrativeness.

Through the analyses and comparisons of these numbers, Taguchi et al.'s finding that the two variables are tapping into the same construct domain and can therefore be equated (p. 77) is supported by our data.

Ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self with instrumentality promotion and instrumentality prevention. Table 7 shows the correlation of *ideal* and *ought-to L2 self* with *instrumentality-promotion* and *instrumentality-prevention*. The numbers generated from Taguchi et al.'s (2009) study were also presented in Table 7.

Table 7

The Correlation Coefficient between Ideal L2 Self, Ought-to L2 Self, and Instrumentality

	Ideal L2 self	Taguchi et al.'s study	Ought-to L2 self	Taguchi et al.'s study
Ought-to L2 self	*0.00	0.14	___	___
Instrumentality (promotion)	0.37	0.46	0.53	0.46
Instrumentality (prevention)	-0.15	-0.13	0.65	0.68

*Note: when correct out to four decimal places the number is *-0.0027. All correlations are significant at the p<0.01 level.*

These correlation coefficients from our study are similar to Taguchi et al.'s. Taguchi et al. found that *instrumentality-promotion* correlates more highly with the *ideal L2 self* than *instrumentality-prevention* does whereas *instrumentality-prevention* correlates more highly with the *ought-to L2 self* than *instrumentality-promotion* does (p 78). Although the correlation coefficient between *ideal L2 self* and *instrumentality-promotion* (0.37) in the current study is not as strong as it was in Taguchi et al.'s study (0.46), the bar chart generated from these two variables showed us that participants' selection trends on each item were very similar. If we take a closer look at the specific items that make up the *ideal L2 self* variable and the *instrumentality-*

promotion variable in the survey, we can comprehend the results more easily. The three items that were used for *ideal L2 self* variable were: *a. I can imagine myself speaking English in the future in formal and informal situations, b. I can imagine myself speaking English as if I were a native speaker of English,* and c. *I can imagine myself studying in a university where all my courses are taught in English.* The mean for items *a* and *c* were 5.64 and 5.68 with a standard deviation of 0.62 and 0.65. In contrast, the mean for item *b* was 4.38 with a standard deviation of 1.31. Based on these numbers, we can tell that although participants were not confident about their English-speaking proficiency, they still had clear self -images about their future, which can be seen from *speaking English in formal and informal situations*. This clear self-image can also be considered as their *ideal L2 self*. As for the items that make up the *integrativeness-promotion* variable, we have item *a. Studying English is important to me because I think I will need it for further studies*, with a mean of 5.66 (SD=0.65) and item *b. Studying English is important to me in order to achieve a personally important goal*, with a mean of 5.44 (SD=0.90), which were both related with participants' future goals. The participants' selection about their future goals (*integrativeness*) and self-image (*ideal L2 self*) had a very similar pattern, which can also support the conclusion that the correlation between these two variables was strong.

Six motivational variables. One of the research questions examining the relationships among six motivational variables provides an answer to *what motivational characteristics for learning English do Chinese students in an ESL (USA) context have?* As shown in Table 8, the correlation coefficient between *ideal L2 self* and *family influence* is -0.17, this weak negative correlation between these two variables tells us that students who are currently pursuing their further education in a foreign country are influenced relatively little by their family. Far from home, they have the full authority to create a clear L2 self-image about their future without

worrying about the influence from their family. If we take a closer look at the histogram of participants' response frequency patterns (see Figure 4), it is not hard to see that participants' response frequency on the variable *ideal L2 self* is strongly skewed toward *strongly agree* end of the scale, while their response frequency on the variable *family influence* is skewed toward *strongly disagree*. This minimal, negative relationship between *ideal L2 self* and *family influence* appears to be one of the characteristics of the motivation of Chinese students who study English in an ESL (USA) context.

Table 8

The Relationship between Six Motivational Variables

	Ideal L2 self	Ought-to L2 self	Language Learning Experience
Cultural interest	0.05	0.35	0.32
Family Influence	**-0.17**	**0.56**	0.27
Attitudes to L2 Community	0.27	0.38	**0.59**

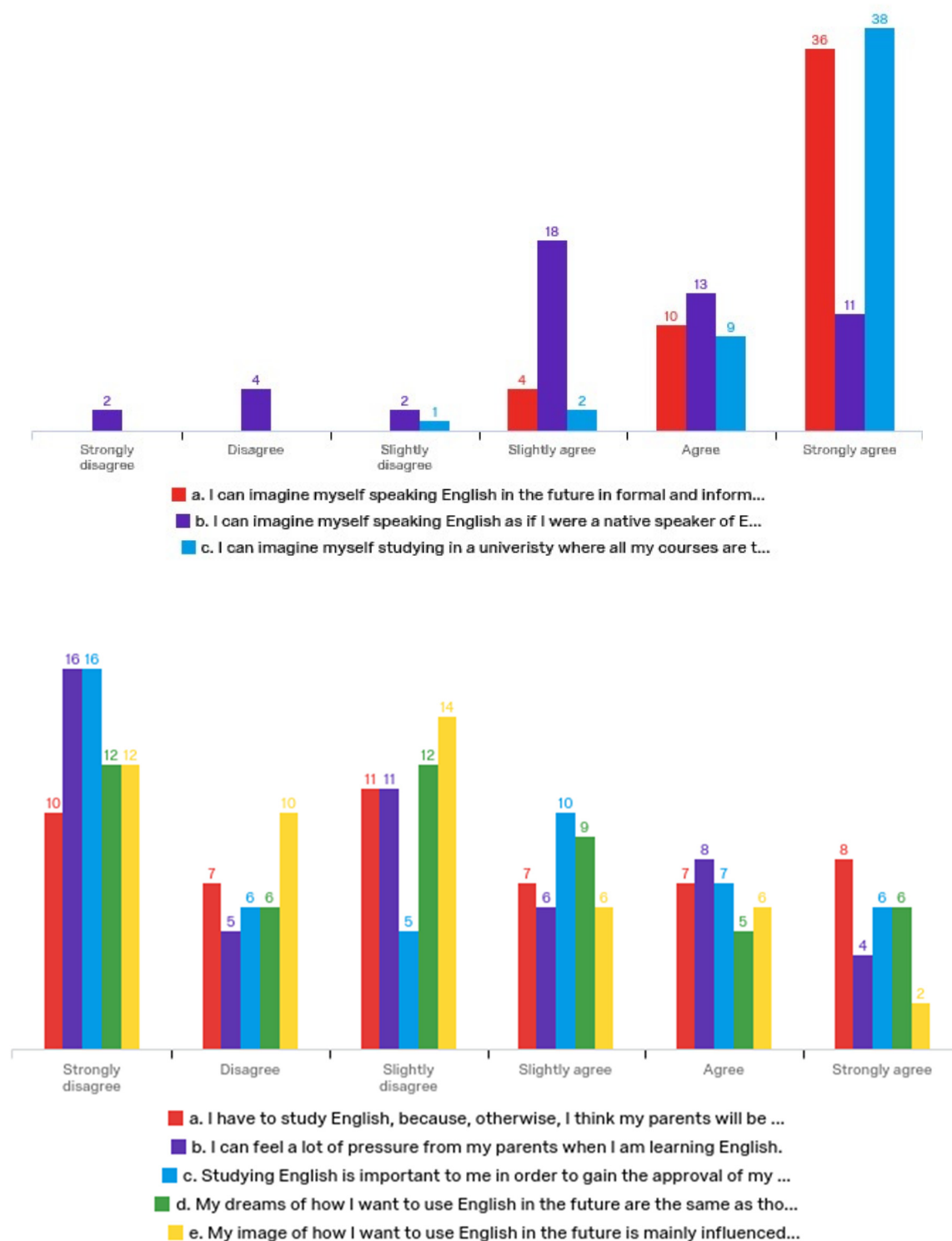*Note: All correlations are significant at the p<0.01 level.*

Figure 4. Histogram of response frequency patterns for ideal L2 self and family influence.

The correlation coefficient between *ought-to L2 self* and *family influence* as shown in Table 8 is 0.56, which shows us that a positive correlation exists between these two variables. As we mentioned above, the participants' response frequency on the *family influence* variable tends toward *strongly disagree*, which suggests that the response frequency of the *ought-to L2 self* should also tend toward the *strongly disagree* end. Figure 5 visually displays the tendency of participants' responses for these two variables. The top bar chart in Figure 5 shows participants' response frequency on the *ought-to L2 self*. It shows that participants' responses tend to gather near the center of the scale, between *slightly disagree* and *slightly agree*, with one exception which is item *a. Studying English is important to me in order to gain the approval of others (e.g., teachers, peers, the society)*. However, this exception does not conflict with participants' response pattern about items with the *family influence* variable. Based on the correlation coefficient between these two variables and the participants' response frequency patterns, anther motivational characteristic generalization can be derived, which is that influence from others does not play a big part of these Chinese students who study English in an ESL (USA) context.
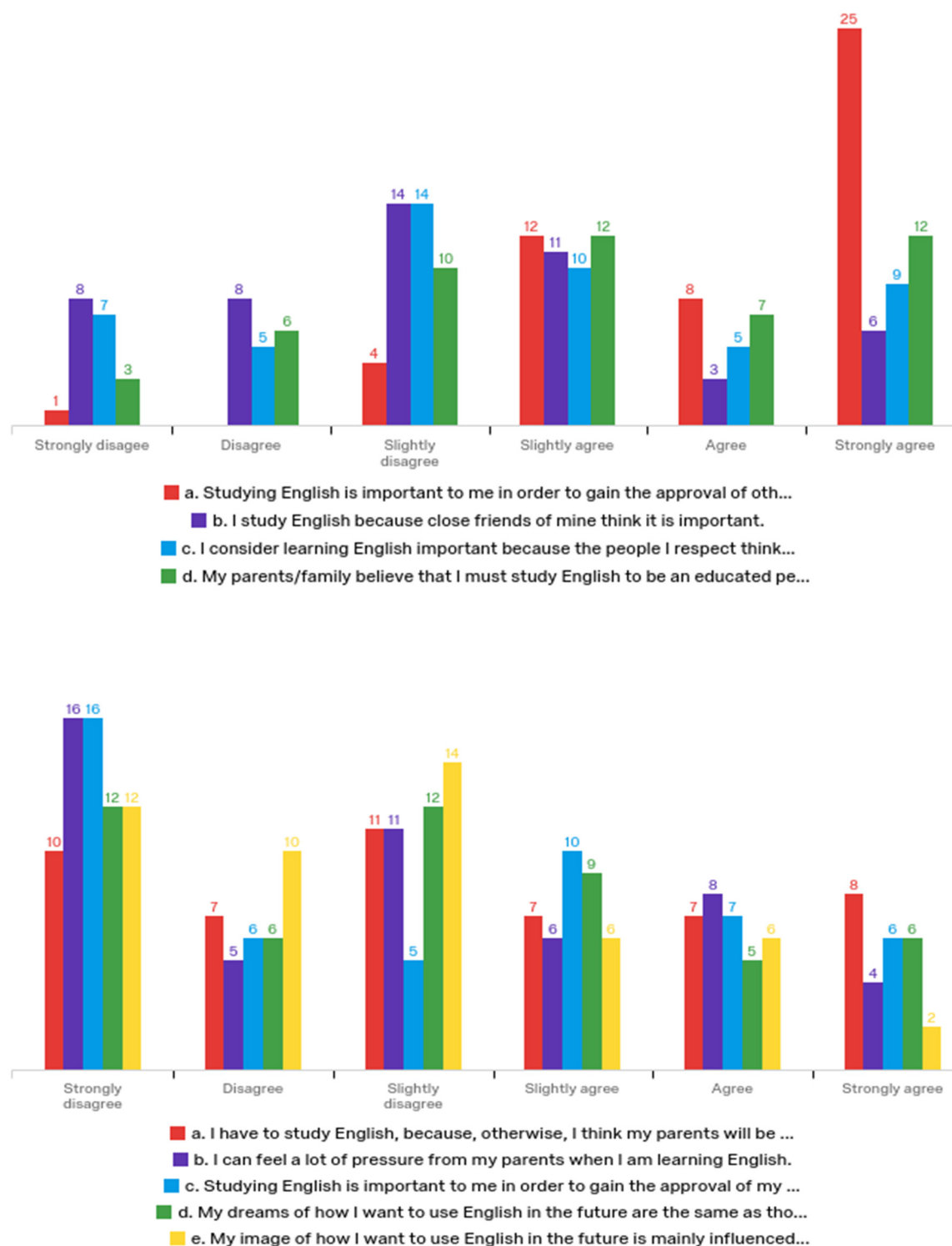
Figure 5. Histogram of response frequency patterns for ought-to L2 self and family influence.

The correlation coefficient between *language learning experience* and *attitudes to L2 community* as shown in Table 8 is 0.59, which is a reasonably strong correlation between these two variables. The histograms in Figure 6 show us the participants' response frequency on these two variables separately. Participants' response frequency on item *a. I really like the actual process of learning English* of *language learning experience* variable is in harmony with their response frequency on item *b* and *c* of *attitudes to L2 community* variable. Item *a* expressed participants' pleasant English learning experience in the past while item *b* and *c* specified participants' willingness to explore English-speaking countries. Based on the statistical numbers and the response frequency of bar charts, the motivational characteristic which can be derived from this one will be language learners' pleasant experience in the past will contribute a positive influence on their attitudes to L2 community in the future.
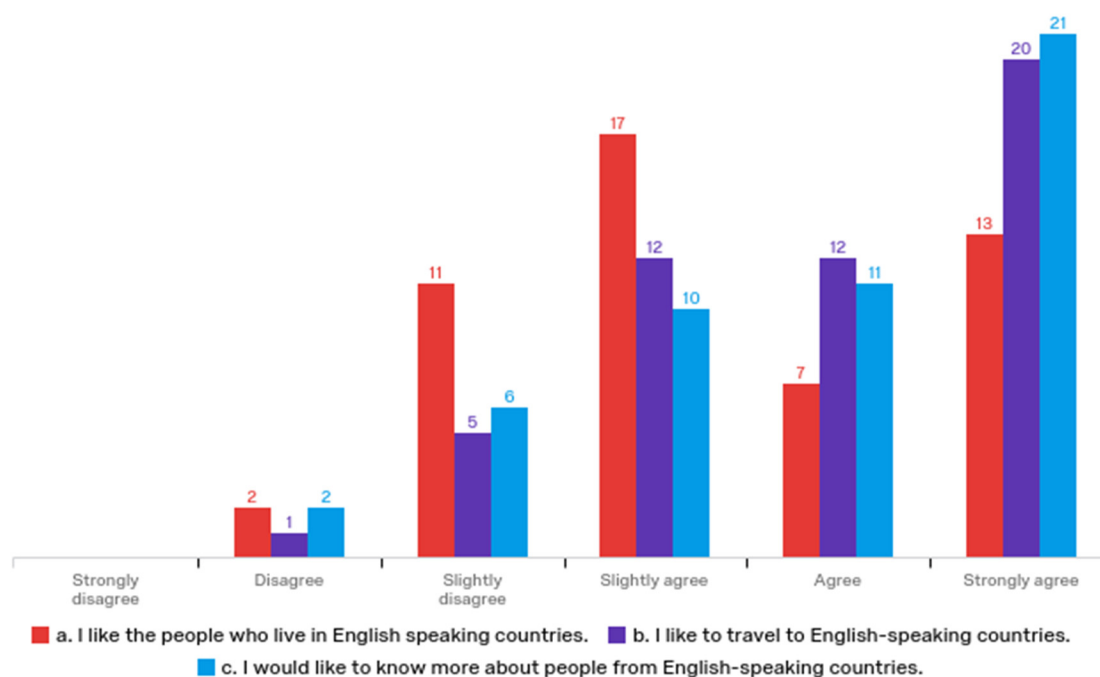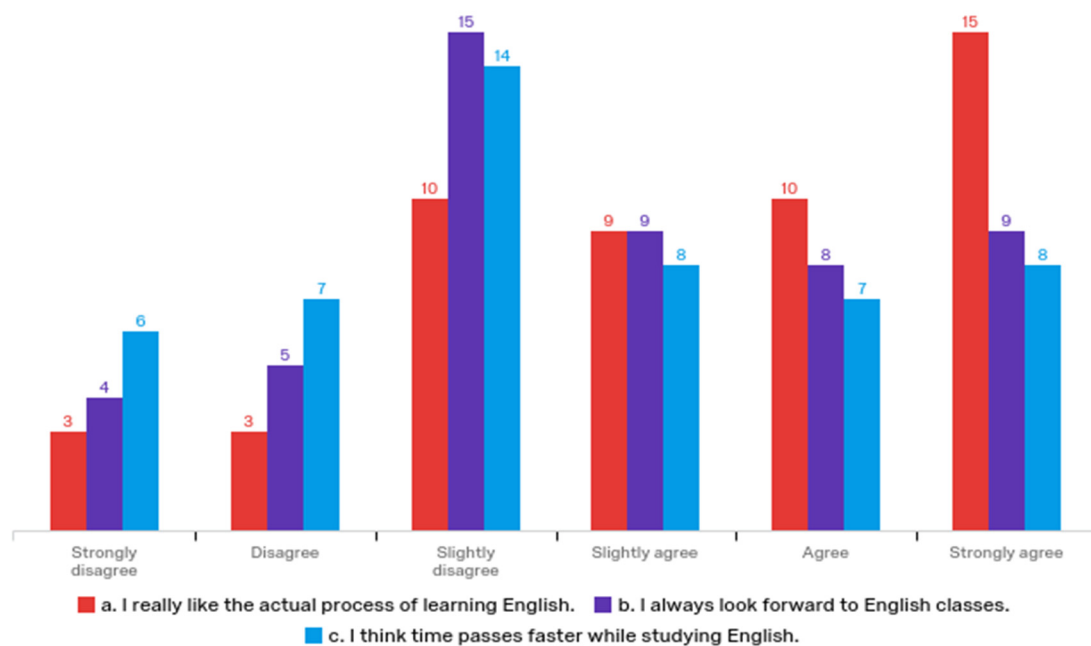
Figure 6. Histogram of response frequency patterns for language learning experience and attitudes to L2 community.

Qualitative Results

This section reports and analyze the qualitative data from the interviews with the 11 focal participants. The quantitative analysis above answered our first research question, what is the relationship between ideal L2 self and integrativeness of Chinese students in an ESL (USA) context? This qualitative analysis is organized according to the two other research questions that guided the study.

Research question 2: *What motivational characteristics do Chinese students in the United States recall having when they were in China?*

As noted above, participants were asked to recall what motivated them to learn English when they were still in China. We recognize that such self-report data relies heavily on memory, which may be clouded by the passage of time. Nevertheless, this approach was the only practical way we had of getting this information, so we used it and interpreted the results cautiously.

Focal participants' responses were categorized according to motivational characteristics. We read all the transcriptions and highlighted responses addressed different topics with different color markers. In this section, we will first present the motivational characteristic and then list supporting evidence from all the interview excerpts that addressed that characteristic. These topics emerged from the data and corresponded to the aspects of Dörnyei's (2005) L2 motivational self system.

1. Very few negative influence from parents. Six focal participants expressed that they received a lot encouragement rather than pressure derived from their parents.

A: My father is a big fan of Shakespeare, he encouraged me to learn English together with him when I was very young. But I was not interested at that time. So, he doesn't give me a lot pressure about learning the language, he would rather influence me by learning English himself and told me interesting stories he encountered from different books.

B: Parents think it's very important to learn English. But they won't blame me for having any unsatisfied scores in tests.

C: My family thinks English is very important. They will always encourage me.

E: They don't care about if I study or not. They didn't force me to do what they expected.

F: My parents are very open-minded and supportive.

G: They are supportive to all the subjects I am learning, not limited to English. I have the total dominance on which subjects I would like to study.

H: They will always praise my promotion on my study. Sometimes even though it is a small progress, they still encourage me by saying good words.

This group of participants expressed that their language learning process was influenced by their parents to a very small degree, and this kind of influence had nothing to do with pressure. It can be seen from the words they adopted to describe their parents' attitude toward learning English, such as open-minded, supportive, and encouragement.

2. Language learning motivation was stimulated by a pleasant language learning experience in the past. Four focal participants expressed their pleasant experiences of learning the language in the past that contributed a lot on their positive motivation about learning the language in the future.

C: I got good grades in my English class, it helped me. I think it's very interesting to learn about the culture.

G: When I just started learning English, my English teacher appreciated my pronunciation and made me be the English class representative, this small encouragement stimulated me throughout my English learning progress.

H: I still remember when I studied English during my undergraduate degree in China, there was one English teacher who taught us about English Literature. She will always pick me to read several paragraphs and ask me if I have any comments to share with the class. And then, she will always praise my pronunciation and motivate me by saying good words like "very nice", "I really like what you've shared". I felt excited to be praised in front of the whole class, and I look forward to attend her class every single time.

I: Being the head of English class and knowing the fact that I was going to study abroad are the two main motivations of learning English when I was in China.

This group of participants' motivation toward learning English was triggered and sustained by a pleasant language learning experience in the past. They expressed and recalled their successful and unforgettable language learning moments, such as getting a good grade, being praised in class, and being appreciated by others.

3. A clear ideal L2 self-image. This idea was mentioned by two focal participants. Although students' language learning process was often the starting point of family influence (e.g. the major was chosen by the focal participant's father), a positive attitude toward learning the language was then triggered by a cultural difference (e.g. a scene from a movie in English).

C: I remember when I was a little girl, I watched a clip of a movie, I still remember the scene from that movie. It talked about a girl taking her dog to an elementary school. I was very impressed by taking pets to school. I thought it was really cool. I just want to see what it really looks like in English speaking countries. In China, it's not possible.

This focal participant's clear self-image about the future was developed gradually based on interest in exploring cultural differences.

J: I came to the U.S. as an exchange student when I was eleven years old, I lived with a host family, they commented about how good my English pronunciation was. That's why I want to keep it up and continue the learning of the language.

This focal participant expressed that her ideal L2 self-image began developing when she was eleven years old. She and the previous participant expressed that their ideal L2 self-images motivated them as they continued their language learning process.

4. A transition from ought-to L2 self to instrumentality (promotion). This idea was mentioned by two focal participants The motivation toward learning the language was out of the obligation to take tests at the beginning, however, the interest on learning the language increased as the focal participant started to do research in law school, which was out of the necessity to read in English.

E: At the very beginning, we are forced to learn English because we have to take tests, to get admission into the university. When I studied in law school, I did a lot research on United States' law and constitution. I read a lot of judgement from the supreme court. That was when I started to have interest in learning English. It opened me another window to access a different world.

For me, English is not just a language, it's a way of helping you learn about the other countries and think in another way.

K: *Since my parents travel a lot, go to a boarding school would be the best choice for me at that time. That's why I went to a Canadian high school in China, which means everything is in English, so I have no choice but to speak English every day. Because I need to use the language in the future, I told myself to cherish the time in high school and study harder to better accommodate the culture that I will experience while I am studying abroad.*

For this group of focal participants, there was a gradual change about their language learning motivation, which shifted from the ought-to L2 self (passing exams and accommodating parents' travel schedule) to the instrumentality-promotion (language as a tool to open the door of a new world).

5. A balanced combination of ideal L2 self and instrumentality-promotion. One focal participant expressed her intrinsic motivation for learning a foreign language by stating that *the primary motivation is the interest in learning the foreign language and I always want to explore the world.*

D: *The primary motivation is the interest in learning this foreign language. Additionally, when I was a student in high school, English started to become very popular which guarantees that you'll have good opportunities in the future. That's one of the reasons why I changed my major from another subject to English in college. I think basically it's because I see English will be used very extensively in the future at that time. I also think if I don't learn English in college where provides a variety of resources, I'll probably have no chance to study this language intensively and extensively. That's one of the major reasons. Another one is because I'm*

outgoing, so I always want to explore the world. The key issue is job opportunity and what kind of promising future I can be provided by learning this universal language.

She had a very clear and positive L2 self-image about English learning motivation. Along with it, she also pointed out the promising future she can enjoy by learning this language, which can be considered as the instrumentality-promotion.

Research question 3: How does the motivation of Chinese students change when they move from an EFL (China) to an ESL (USA) context?

A strong pattern of increase on instrumentality-promotion. The practical part of this language tool (communication, necessity) was mentioned by all of these focal participants when they expressed their motivation toward learning the language after they moved from an EFL (China) to an ESL (USA) context.

K: I learn English mainly to communicate with others which is still the case right now.

B: When I was back in China, it was mainly an intrinsic motivation. I was interested in it. When I got some English newspaper from my teachers, I would read it thoroughly even though they didn't require me to do it. When I first came here, I was bombarded by all the information, there were so many things I didn't know. I felt like my motivation went down. But later, I felt like I needed to learn it and to interact. So it went up again.

C: When I came here, I was supposed to be an English teacher. But then I realize I have to take the oral proficiency interview, I was commented my word choice, pronunciation and the structure of my language, I was so frustrated. I knew that I wanted to be an English teacher, but since my English is not as good in daily conversation or in the interview, I just decided to work

harder. And I wanted to take it again. I think communicating with native American peers made me want to put more effort and time into it. Not just for the purpose of exam.

H: As for me, learning a foreign language in china at that time firstly is for college education, and secondly is because of my occupation. After I came here to study about educational leadership, English became secondly. Learning English is not as important as completing my courses in education and finishing my dissertation. I guess learning the language itself is no longer the priority. My focus transferred/switched from learning a language like how the language is used by native speakers to using this language as a tool to complete my degree here.

E: I think there's one more motivation. Because I have to communicate better to get a job or to get my business done. This motivation is more practical.

F: It's still out of necessity. Because if you are here, you need the language to communicate. And you want a good grade in school, you need the language to get what to do stuff.

I: After I came to the US, the main motivation for learning English is to communicate with people more easily.

G: Yes, when I was in the elementary and middle school, I was motivated by teachers' encouragement and stimulated because I could feel the fulfillment during the process. However, the above two motivation were gone after I came to US. I kept learning English because I had to. I had to communicate with American professors and colleagues, I had to read and write research papers in English. Learning English became a necessity instead of luxury.

J: Most of my motivation came from doing well in school, reading textbooks, and being able to participate in class, but most importantly was to be able to pass the exams.

This group of participants expressed that study in the U.S. made English became the carrier of a different culture and way of life, which was unlimited, infinity, and boundless. Their primary focus became using the language to get a good grade and to pass exams in the U.S. This shift in their language learning motivation was different from the widely-held belief that Chinese students are primarily instrumentally motivated. In contrast, these Chinese students became instrumentally motivation after they came to an ESL (the U.S.) context.

Discussion

In response to our research questions, it is our ultimate hope to derive some pedagogical implications based on our comparisons of Chinese students' motivation in different language settings. This section will talk about the pedagogical implications derived from the current study, in company with Dörnyei's motivational self system, which can be utilized to align Chinese English learners' motivation with their own pattern of development. We recognize, of course, that language learning is very context specific and different research contexts may produce different results. The implications of our study are based on a small sample in one U.S. location. Although we make a number of recommendations based on our research, we also recognize the need for caution in generalizing these results to additional or broader contexts.

Dörnyei summarized the practical implications that can be derived from the L2 motivational self system (2005) as the following:

The Ideal L2 Self is an effective motivator if (1) the learner has a desired future self-image, (2) which is elaborate and vivid, (3) which is perceived as plausible and is in harmony–or at least does not clash–with the expectations of the learner's family, peers,

and other elements of the social environment, (4) which is regularly activated in the learner's working self-concept, (5) which is accompanied by relevant and effective procedural strategies that act as a roadmap towards the goal, and finally (6) which also contains elaborate information about the negative consequences of not achieving the desired end-state. (p. 32)

Based on Dörnyei's summarization about the Ideal L2 Self, it would seem to be valuable for language learners to create a desired future self-image that is vivid, plausible, and realistic. We visualized Dörnyei's strategic implications of these six points about generating the Ideal L2 Self into a flow chart (see Figure 9).
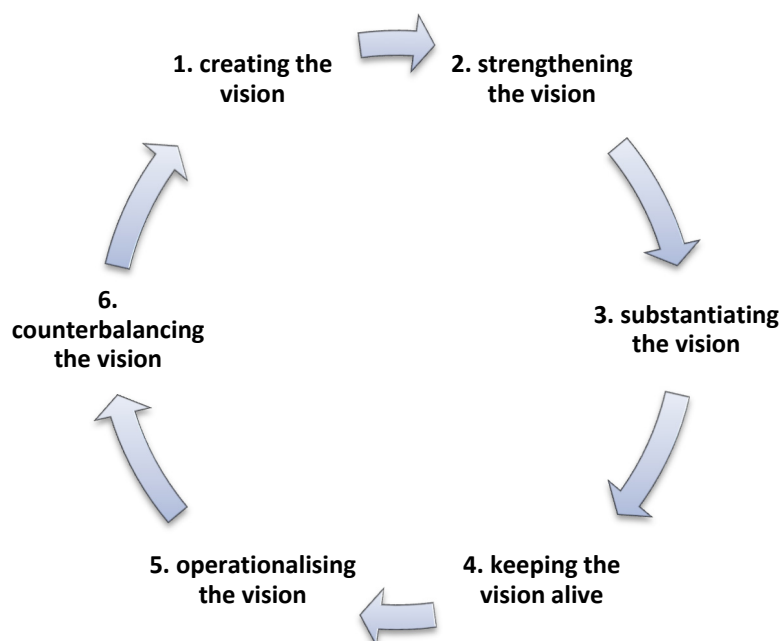

Figure 7. Dörnyei's strategic implications for generating the Ideal L2 Self.

This six-stage cycle for generating the Ideal L2 Self provides instructional implications for language teachers and learners. It is based on Dörnyei's (2005) motivation cycle and the results of our study.

1. Construction of the Ideal L2 Self: Creating the Vision.

  For students. If you create a plausible and practical ideal L2 self, it will add more fuel to the fire of your language learning process. Try to recall the aspirations, dreams, and desires you have experienced in the past, which provided you with a lot of encouragement to move forward. That will help you construct your ideal L2 self.

  For teachers. As a supportive resource for language learners, you may ask some awareness-raising and thought-provoking questions raised by students in the past during class time. This will help the students visualize and construct their ideal L2 self.

  Direct quote from interviews of our study. Five participants mentioned the existence of their ideal L2 self.

  This participant's ideal L2 self was triggered by her willingness to understand authentic American movies introduced by her teacher. '*I had really good English teachers, she introduced a lot Disney animation movies for us to watch during the class time. I really enjoyed watching the authentic American movies without Chinese subtitles, you know, it would be too tired to read the subtitles and to catch the scene of the movie. So, it raised my motivation on learning English. because I want to be able to understand everything happened in the movie and I want to speak beautiful English like them*'.

  This participant was attracted by American culture, her willingness to express herself in a conversation helped her to create the ideal L2 self. She said, "*I was attracted by the culture. So I told myself I should have more confident. If I want to have a conversation them, I should start by speaking good English.*"

These two participants were attracted by the pronunciation of English and the culture of American.

"Learning the accent, some new expressions, and the in-depth knowledge of the language became my goal while I was learning English. I would like to become a person who can speak fluently in English." '*I was attracted by different accents and beautiful pronunciations of the language*'.

This participant was attracted by experiencing the culture rather than learning the language itself. '*The language itself is the carrier of a different culture and way of life. The English knowledge seems to be unlimited and I have to switch my innate idea to get used to the English speaking environment. What attracts me to it is not the language itself. Indeed, it is the story and culture behind it. Once I can read books in English, I will be able to open the door leading to a brand new world. This will be a great satisfaction to my curiosity*'.

2. Imagery enhancement: Strengthening the vision.

For students. Having a desired L2 self-image about your future will not guarantee a sufficient degree of motivation unless you engage in imagery enhancement. According to Dörnyei (2005), "methods of imagery enhancement have been explored in several areas of psychological, educational, and sport research in the past to be effective" (p. 34).

For teachers. You can provide students some imagery training inside or outside of classroom to strengthen students' L2 self-image. You can also assist your students on enhancing their L2-related values and attitudes (e.g. If your students are attracted by the authentic movies, you can watch a movie together with them in class and explain some grammar points which can

be summarized from a scene of the movie), and let them know that how this class can contribute their progress on achieving their goals.

3. Making the Ideal L2 Self plausible: Substantiating the vision.

For students. The L2 self-image you created about the future should be achievable within your particular language learning context. Find the balance between what you want to become and what you can actually become will benefit you a lot more than creating an unrealistic self-image.

For teachers. You can assist students' with making their self-images more personally relevant and attainable. You can make the teaching materials more relevant and attractive for students according to their future needs, through which your students have more authority to adjust their ideal L2 self to a plausible degree. For example, if your students plan to study abroad, they will appreciate it if you provide them with some information about culture differences between these two countries.

4. Activating the Ideal L2 Self: Keeping the vision alive.

For students. You should regularly revisit and re-activate your L2 self-image to keep your enthusiasm alive. You can keep track of your progress by creating a checklist about your achievement on activating the ideal L2 self.

For teachers. You can engage your students in various situations (such as letting students have a conversation with their partners to talk about what did they do in the past weeks to keep their vision alive, or having a mini-presentation about their successful stories on activating the ideal L2 self).

5. Developing an action plan: Operationalizing the vision.

For students. If you do not put your plan into practice, you will never know whether the plan is effective or not. If you have the plan to study abroad, you should go to an 'English corner' where it has foreigners for you to practice English with. Engage yourself in an authentic situation will help you find your weakness and strengths more easily.

For teachers. You can help students creating their own self-regulated learning package (such as a task completion checklist), contains study goals, study plans, and strategies, that can be applied and operationalized for themselves within each learning period.

6. Considering failure: Counterbalancing the vision. As Dörnyei (2005) stated, "future self-guides are most potent if they utilize the cumulative impact of both approach and avoid tendencies" (p. 37).

For students. A reasonable balance between ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self will help you utilize your L2 self-image to achieve your goals. The fear of failure will let you put more effort on making a big success. Let's imagine a situation in which you have a clear goal which is to enter into a prominent university in China. You know that you are going to repeat the senior year of high school if you fail the University Entrance Exam. If order to avoid this miserable experience of repeating one more time, you tell yourself to study harder to get the offer by a university.

For teachers. You can share stories about how inconvenient and embarrassing it will be to not knowing the language. It might also be a good idea to highlight students' obligations and duties brought up by their ought-to L2 self.

All of the above mentioned strategic implications based on our results, as well as Dörnyei's (2005) L2 motivational self system, have provided language learners as well as language teachers methods and implications about motivation. A successful application of these methods and strategies will benefit both teachers and students.

Limitations and suggestions

Although our study produced several promising findings, the small sample and the lack of diversity in participants' majors (no English-major participants) within one American university limited our research. It would be beneficial to repeat this research at other universities, or in other cultures (e.g. South Korea, Latin America), and make comparisons among other variables (e.g. single vs. married participants, English major vs. non-English major participants).

<div align="center">

Conclusion

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The current study employed Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System (2005) as a framework to explore differences in the types of motivation of Chinese English language learners in different (China and the U.S.) contexts. The results generated from the current study not only further validated Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System (2005) in a different context, but also provided insights generated from the research findings.

The quantitative results supported Taguchi et al.'s conclusion that the *ideal L2 self* and *integrativeness* were measuring about the same thing. In addition, our study found that the relationship between *ought-to L2 self* and *family influence* also indicated that these students who successfully achieved their dream to study abroad were influenced by their family to a very small

degree. In contrast, their parents did not give them much pressure during their language learning process both in the United States and in China. Their ought-to L2 self was not under the negative influence generated from others either.

The qualitative results collected through the interviews with focal participants indicated that motivation is a situated phenomenon. The focal participants all mentioned their shift in language learning motivation after they came to the U.S. The biggest challenges after they came to the U.S. were to adapt to the culture, to be an effective communicator with others, and to pass the exams. These obstacles language learners are currently facing should raise the awareness of English educators. For Chinese high school students who decided to study abroad after their high school period, it would be beneficial for them to get familiar with the culture (e.g. how do people communicate in a casual talk) and to learn more about the American educational system of universities (e.g. team project and presentations), which will lower the degree of culture shock they experience.

We hope that our research will add to the growing body of studies that address the motivation of L2 learners. Further pedagogical application derived from our study findings will benefit both teachers and students in their language teaching and learning process. Finally, we hope that our research will stimulate more investigations in the future dealing with the motivations of the growing number of English learners in China.

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Appendix A

Scales for statement-type items:

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

Ideal L2 Self

Item	Mean	SD
a. I can imagine myself speaking English in the future in formal and informal situations,	5.64	0.62
b. I can imagine myself speaking English as if I were a native speaker of English,	4.38	1.31
c. I can imagine myself studying in a university where all my courses are taught in English.	5.68	0.65

Ought-to L2 Self

Item	Mean	SD
a. Studying English is important to me in order to gain the approval of others (e.g., teachers, peers, society),	5.02	1.17
b. I study English because close friends of mine think it is important,	3.22	1.51
c. I consider learning English important because the people I respect think that I should do it,	3.56	1.60
d. My parents/family believe that I must study English to be an educated person.	4.00	1.52

Language Learning Experience

Item	Mean	SD
a. I really like the actual process of learning English,	4.30	1.51
b. I always look forward to English classes,	3.78	1.50
c. I think time passes faster while studying English.	3.54	1.58

Instrumentality-Promotion

Item	Mean	SD
a. Studying English can be important to me because I think I'll need it for further studies,	5.66	0.65
b. Studying English is important to me in order to achieve a personally important goal (e.g., to get a degree or scholarship),	5.44	0.90
c. Studying English is important to me because other people will respect me more if I have a knowledge of English,	4.06	1.39
d. Studying English is important to me because an educated person is supposed to be able to speak English,	4.14	1.46
e. Studying English is important to me because my life will change if I acquire good command of English.	4.66	1.29

Instrumentality-Prevention

Item	Mean	SD
a. Studying English is necessary for me because I don't want to get a poor score mark in English proficiency tests (e.g., TOEFL, IELTS,…),	4.58	1.46
b. Studying English is important to me, because I would feel ashamed if I got bad grades in English,	3.50	1.59
c. When thinking of not becoming a successful user of English in the future, I feel scared.	3.80	1.55

Cultural Interest

Item	Mean	SD
a. I really like the music of English-speaking countries (e.g., pop music),	4.40	1.36
b. I like English films,	5.06	1.26
c. I like TV programs made in English-speaking countries,	4.56	1.39
d. I like English-language magazines, newspapers, and books.	4.32	1.30

Family Influence

Item	Mean	SD
a. I have to study English, because, otherwise, I think my parents will be disappointed with me,	3.36	1.72
b. I can feel a lot of pressure from my parents when I am learning English,	2.94	1.69
c. Studying English is important to me in order to gain the approval of my family,	3.08	1.80
d. My dreams of how I want to use English in the future are the same as those of my parents,	3.14	1.65
e. My image of how I want to use English in the future is mainly influenced by my parents.	2.80	1.44

Attitudes to L2 Community

Item	Mean	SD
a. I like the people who live in English-speaking countries,	4.36	1.20
b. I like to travel to English-speaking countries,	4.90	1.10
c. I would like to know more about people from English-speaking countries.	4.86	1.20

Integrativeness

Item	Mean	SD
a. I think it is important to learn more about the culture and art of its speakers in order to learn English,	5.28	1.02
b. I would like to become similar to the people who speak English very much,	4.42	1.58
c. I like English very much.	4.78	1.17

Appendix B

Histograms of participants' response frequencies on nine variables
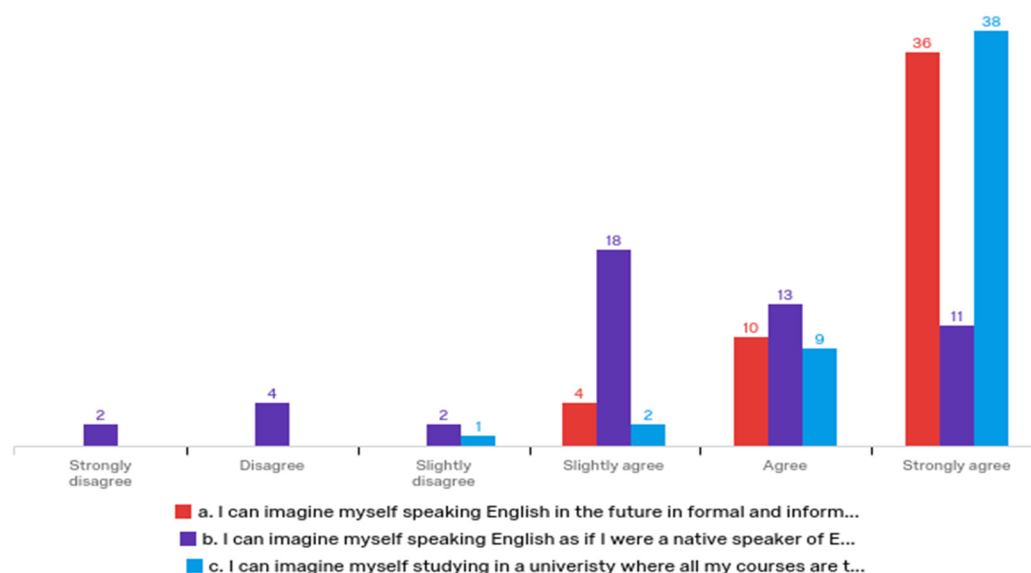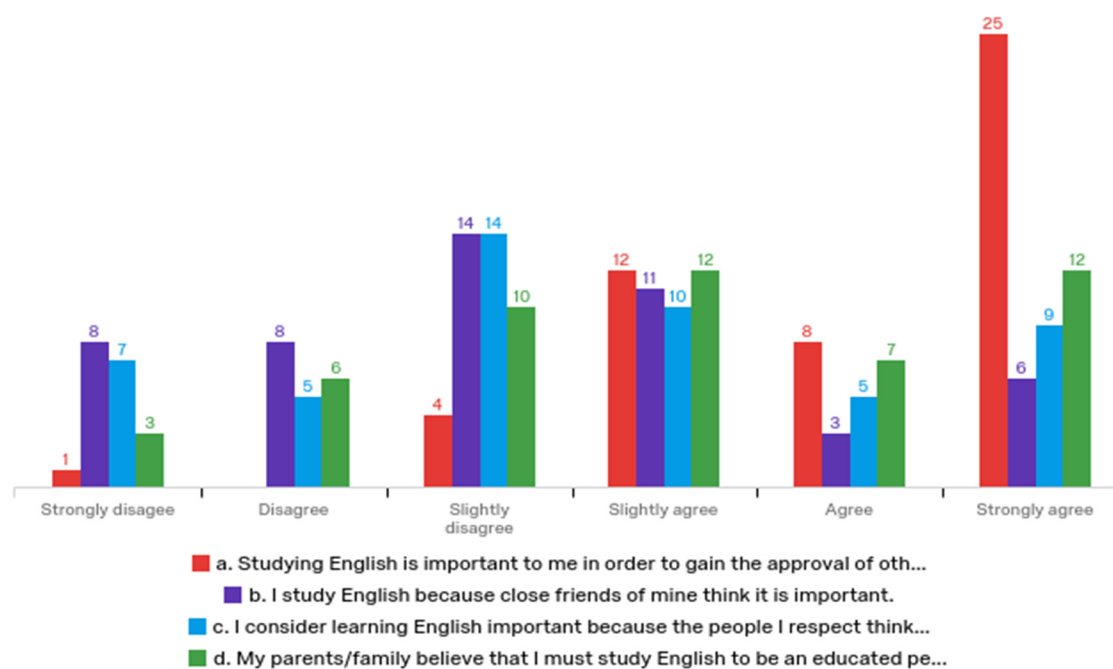

Figure 8. Ideal L2 self.
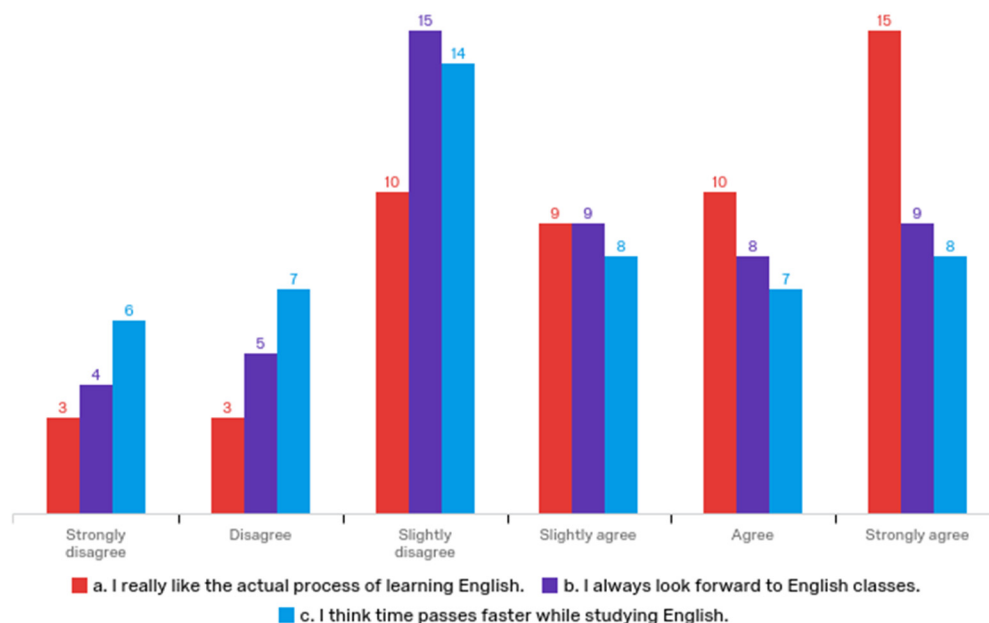

Figure 9. Ought-to L2 self.

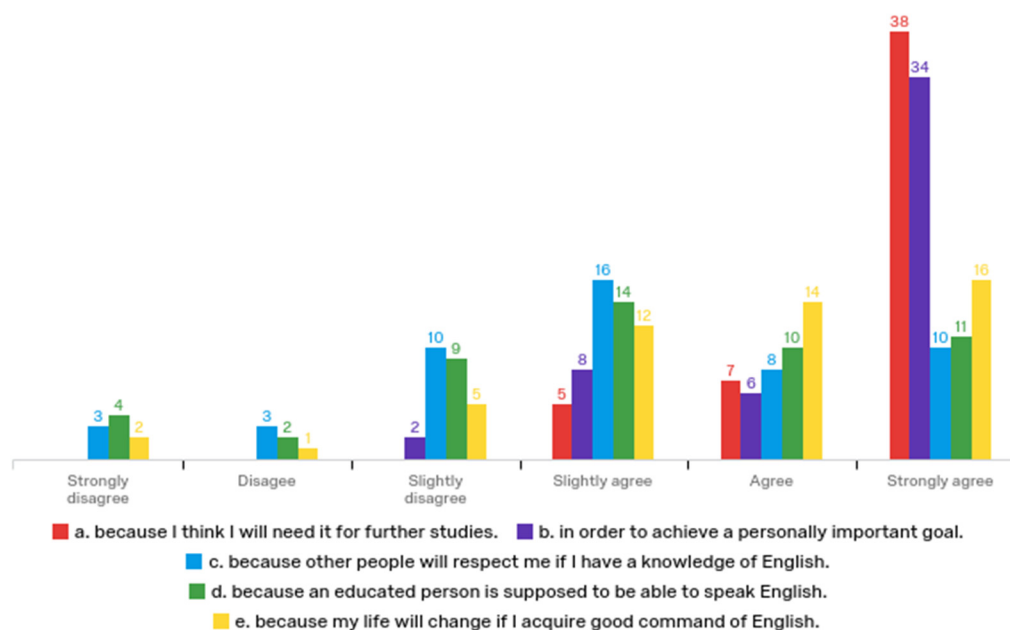*Figure 10.* Language learning experience.
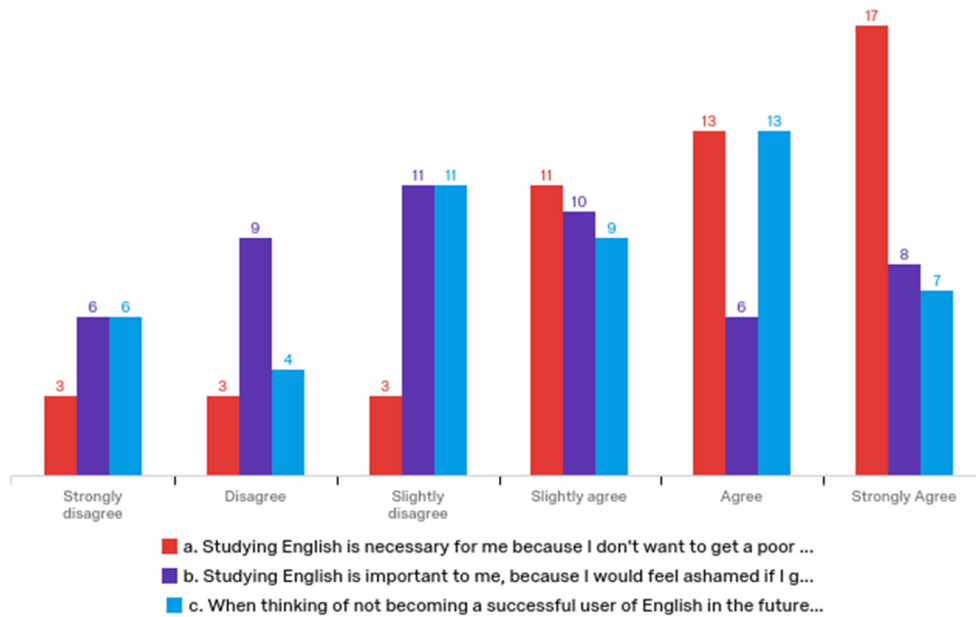

Figure 11. Instrumentality-promotion.
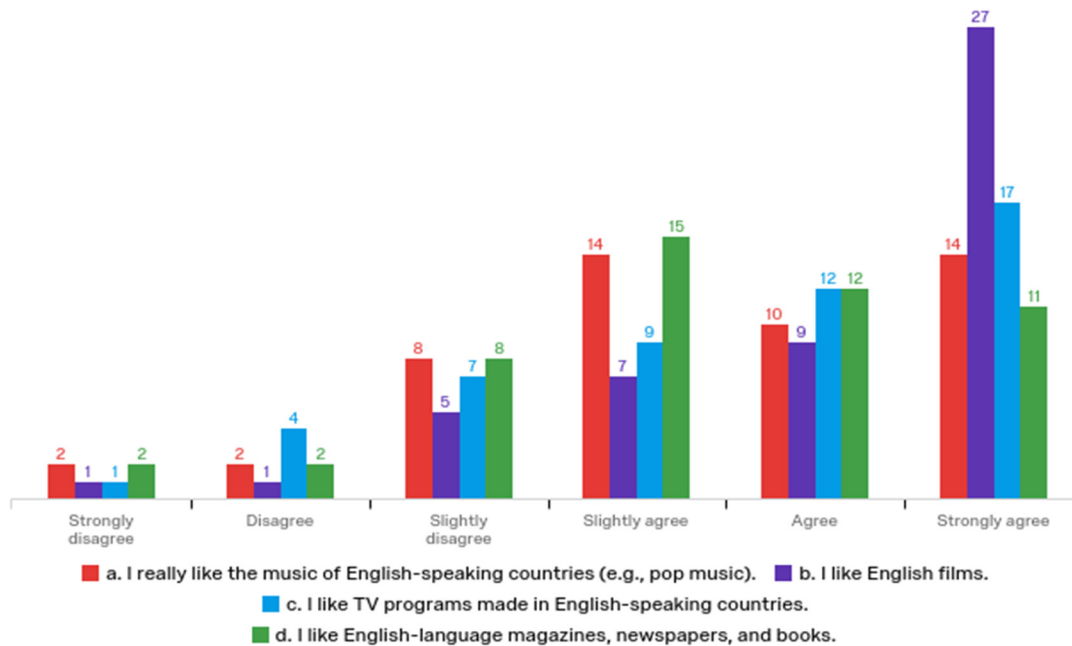
Figure 12. Instrumentality-prevention.
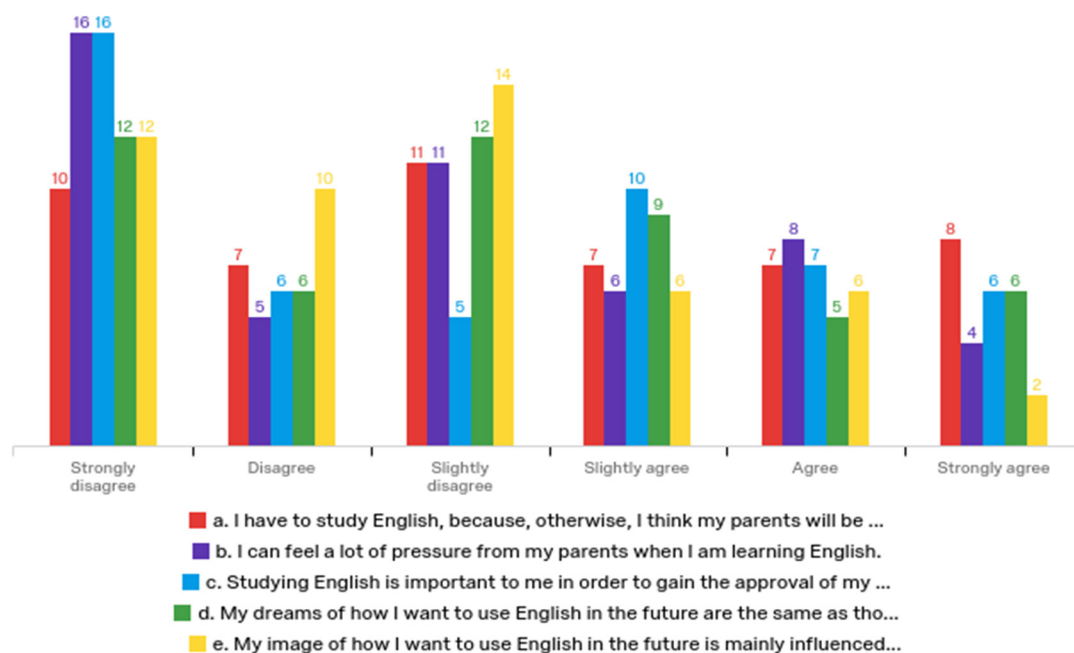

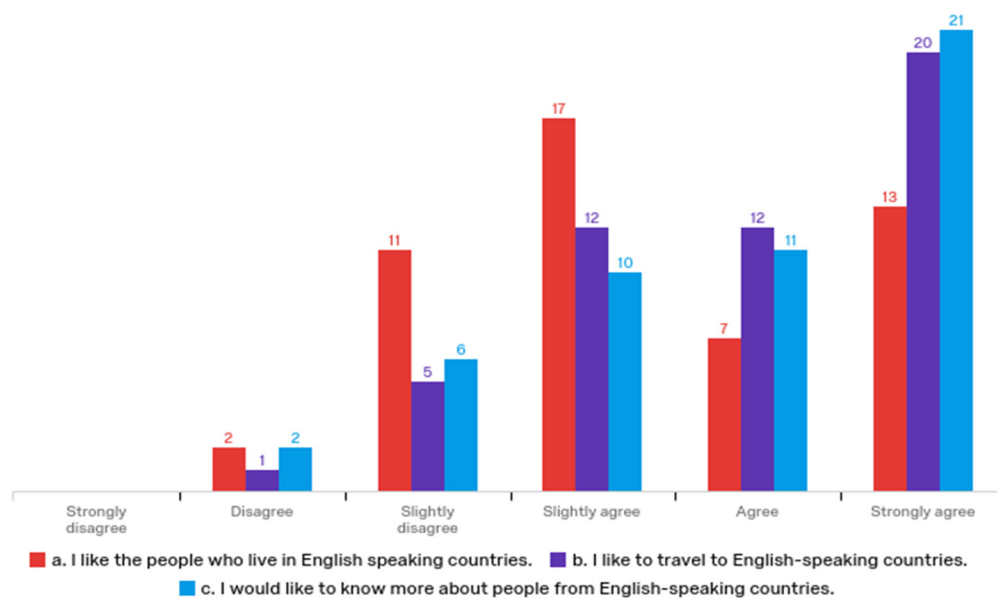*Figure 13.* Cultural interest.

Figure 14. Family influence.

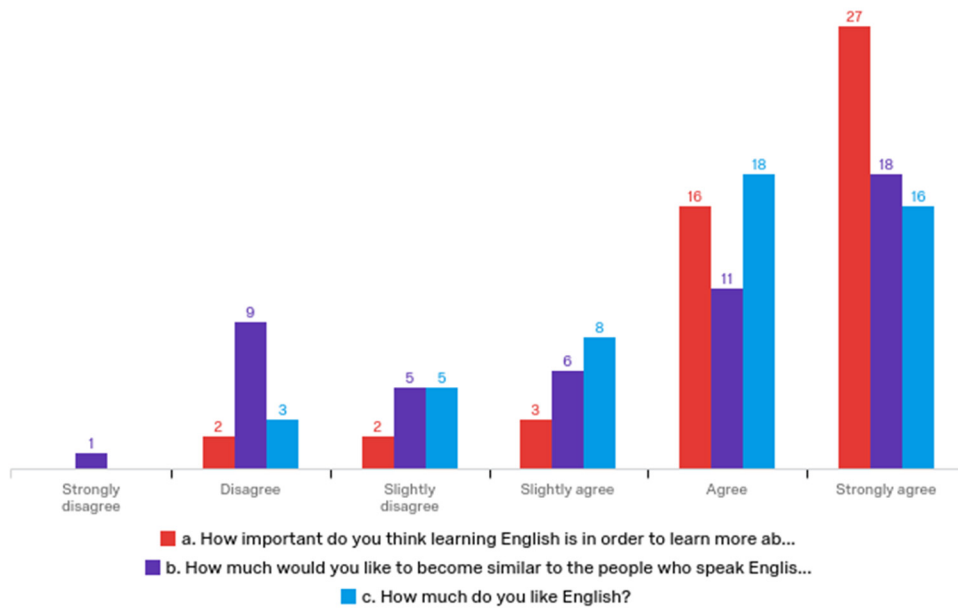*Figure 15.* Attitudes toward L2 community.

Figure 16. Integrativeness.

Appendix C

Interview Questions

Part 1. Demographic Information

a. Gender

b. Major at school in the US

c. Years lived in the US.

d. Native English-speaking teacher experience in China

e. City lived in/studied at in China

Part 2. Interview Questions

a. How would you describe your previous experience of studying English/taking English classes in China?

b. Do you find studying English easy/difficult? What attracts you to the language?

c. How would you describe your experience of studing English so far? (e.g. enjoyable or suffering)

d. Do you have any native English-speaking teachers in China? How would you describe this experience?

e. Do you believe or think that you will lose future opportunities if you don't study English?

f. What are your parents and close friends views on these matters?

g. What factors have contributed to your making these plans of studying abroad in this country?

h. Would you say that your parents are supportive for your English study? Why/Why not?

i. Are there any others reasons why you study English?

j. How English learning is related to your long-term goals for your study and your life?

k. Where does the main source of language learning motivation come from when you were in China.

l. Do you notice any shift on your language learning motivation?