

Motivations, Beliefs, and Chinese Language Learning: A Phenomenological Study
in a Canadian University

by

Xuping Sun

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies

of

The University of Manitoba

in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree

of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning

University of Manitoba

Winnipeg

Copyright © 2011 by Xuping Sun

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	ii
Abstract	v
Acknowledgments	vi
Chapter One: Introduction	1
Rationale	2
Statement of Topic	6
Topic Significance	7
Research Purpose	9
Chapter Two: Literature Review	10
Learning Motivation	10
Definitions of Motivation	10
Research on Learning Motivation	13
Language Beliefs	20
Importance of Language Belief	20
Research on Language Beliefs	22
Research Questions	24
Chapter Three: Methodology	25
Phenomenology	25
What is Phenomenology?	25
Rationale for this Methodology	26
Study Context	27
Participants	29
Procedures of the Study	30
Research Instruments	31
Chapter Four: Introduction of Interview Participants	35
Sarah: A Talented First-Year Student	35
Angela: A Beautiful First-Year Student	36
Kori: A Japanese Second-Year Student	37
Travis: A Serious Second-Year Student	38

Susan: A Shy Third-Year Student	39
Amber: A Smart Third-Year Student	40
Chapter Five: Findings	42
Motivations	42
Theme One: Motivations for Chinese Language Learning	42
Theme Two: Stories behind Chinese Language Learning	46
Theme Three: Motivations and Chinese Economic Growth	50
Beliefs	51
Theme One: Difficulty of the Chinese Language.....	52
Theme Two: Speaking Versus Writing.....	56
Theme Three: Learning Strategies.....	57
Theme Four: Language use Opportunities.....	60
Theme Five: Learning Goals.....	62
Chapter Six: Discussion	65
Motivation.....	66
Integrative and Instrumental Motivation	66
Dynamics of Motivation	67
Heritage Student Motivation.....	68
International Chinese Students' Influence on Motivation.....	69
Language Belief	70
Dynamics of Language Beliefs.....	70
Speaking Versus Writing.....	71
Learning Strategies.....	72
The Use of Chinese	73
Chapter Seven: Conclusion and Implications.....	74
Limitations of the Study	76
Implications	77
Conclusion	80
References.....	82
Appendices.....	89
Appendix A.....	89

MOTIVATIONS, BELIEFS, AND CHINESE LANGUAGE LEARNING iv

Appendix B.....	94
Appendix C.....	97
Appendix D.....	100
Appendix E.....	103

Abstract

Internationally, more and more people are learning Chinese as a second or foreign language. Many studies (Gardner, 1958; Spolsky, 1969; Dörnyei, 1994; Oxford & Shearin, 1996; Williams & Burden, 1997) have shown that learning motivation plays an important role in language learning, while language belief (Horwitz, 1988) determines the strategies and efforts learners are going to put into language learning. Both motivation and belief are key factors in successful language learning. This research carried out an investigation of the phenomenon of Chinese language learning in the Canadian context. Through in-depth, open-ended individual interviews with six students who were learning Chinese in a Canadian university, the researcher intended to listen to their actual experiences of Chinese language learning in order to examine their motivations for learning this language and to describe their beliefs about this language. The results showed Chinese language learners had a variety of motivations to learn the Chinese language, from cultural interest, communication with native Chinese speakers, travel, friendship, to job opportunities. These motivations came from their real life experiences with the Chinese people around them. As for the Chinese language, not all students thought it was difficult. All participants in this study believed listening and speaking was more important than reading and writing. They adopted many learning strategies to learn Chinese. The implications for Chinese language instructors as to how to motivate students and for the Chinese language students motivating themselves were also discussed.

Acknowledgments

Dr. Sandra Kouritzin has been an exceptional professor and advisor to me. I would like to extend my most profound gratitude to her, as her invaluable knowledge, constant support, sincere trust, kind understanding and warm-hearted encouragement has accompanied me throughout my graduate studies and my overseas life in Canada. A big thank you goes to Dr. Charlotte Enns and Dr. Yi Li for serving on the committee. Dr. Enns was the first person to show a great interest in my pilot study on this research, which inspired me to further explore this topic. Dr. Li answered my many questions and shared her experiences of living and studying in Canada, which kept me focused and confident. Thanks to all of them for their incredible insight and determination to support me through the long journey of the whole process of research study.

I want to express my full-hearted thank you to Dr. Terry Russell, Dr. Hua Li and Professor Shu Zhu, who gave me the opportunity to teach the introductory and intermediate Chinese classes at the Asian Studies Centre. This allowed me to know the students who voluntarily participated in my research. Thank you, professors; thank you, my lovely students. You are part of my thesis and part of my life in Canada during the past three years.

I am very grateful to my parents, my father Honglin Sun and my mother Naizhen Li. They raised six of us children and offered us the greatest care and love. As the youngest child, I especially thank my parents for breaking through

traditional stereotypical thoughts and encouraged me to pursue my dream in Canada. Their pride in me motivated me to complete my thesis.

My eldest sister Yuqin Sun is an important person in my life. She is the guiding star in my life. Under her wise advice, I made many important decisions at every turning point in my life and became who I am today. A thank you here cannot express my gratitude. It is beyond words. Thanks are also extended to my second sister Yuying, third sister Yuxiang, little sister Yufeng and dearest brother Xiaoping. They have always been supportive.

Thank you to my husband Xuan Li for the deepest love. Thank you to my daughter Zihan for the first new-Mom happiness.

Chapter One: Introduction

Internationally, more and more people are learning Chinese as a second or foreign language. Many studies (Gardner, 1958; Spolsky, 1969; Dörnyei, 1994; Oxford & Shearin, 1996; Williams & Burden, 1997) have shown that learning motivation plays an important role in language learning. Language belief (Horwitz, 1988) also determines the strategies and efforts learners put into language learning. Both motivation and belief are key factors in successful language learning.

In this study, learning motivation and language belief are defined as follows. Learning motivation is why you chose to learn Chinese as a second language and what kind of experience motivated you to learn Chinese language. Language belief is what your opinions about Chinese language are, such as the difficulty of Chinese language, the importance of Chinese speaking and reading, the learning strategies to learn Chinese, and when and where Chinese language is used in Canada.

Some of the literature studied asked why people are learning Chinese as a second or foreign language (Wen, 1997; Yang, 2003). However, little literature explored the motivation and beliefs about Chinese language learning in a Canadian context. Research about language beliefs has been conducted almost exclusively with students of French, German and Spanish background, while the beliefs of learners of other languages - such as Arabic, Chinese, Japanese and

MOTIVATIONS, BELIEFS, AND CHINESE LANGUAGE LEARNING 2

Russian - have not been the object of any published investigation, as claimed by Rifkin (2000). So why do students in a Canadian university choose to learn the Chinese language and what are their language beliefs about Chinese? These questions are crucial to successfully teach the Chinese language learner. Taking the opportunity of doing a Master's degree in Canada, I would like to find out about Canadian university students' motivations and beliefs about Chinese language learning.

I would like to emphasize that Chinese language learning in this study mainly focused on Mandarin learning, not Cantonese language learning. Mandarin and Cantonese are quite different in many ways such as pronunciations and writing systems. Mandarin uses simplified characters while Cantonese uses traditional characters.

Rationale

This study comes from my own experience of learning English as a foreign language in China for seven years, and then learning English as a second language in Canada for more than three years. The long learning process showed me how important the motivation was for me. I believe real research comes from my understanding of my own life, and a good research project touches my heart first. What is important to me could be meaningful for others.

I would like to tell my story of learning English in China. In 1998 I went to Beijing for my university studies. Choosing a major became a turning point in my

MOTIVATIONS, BELIEFS, AND CHINESE LANGUAGE LEARNING 3

life. I was born in a small town about 1,000 kilometers away from Beijing and thus had never been to such a big city before. Among 3,000 of my new fellow undergraduate students from all over the country, I was just an ordinary girl with a strong accent for even standard Mandarin, my first language. In spite of the inferiority complex inside of me, I chose English as my major. At that time I thought I had made my own decision independently. However, the motivation behind this decision was formed within the social-political context I lived in. English was the most popular foreign language at that time, and having a strong command of English guaranteed a good job and high social status after graduation. My parents, just like other Chinese parents, wanted me to go to a top university and study a popular major so I could find a decent job. Learning English seemed to meet all my parents' expectations.

After choosing my major, I set off on the long and hard journey of learning English, a journey I had never thought about before. To understand my native English-speaking teachers, I got up early every morning to listen to an English radio program. To speak like a native English-speaker, which I thought was perfect English, I recited vocabulary and read aloud from English texts in a quiet corner on campus. I learned the language with all my heart, ears and minds. When the first year ended, one of my foreign teachers made a comment on my final English test: "You did a good job. I can see an eager learning eye from you." Confidence came back to me and her words sustained me throughout all my subsequent university years.

MOTIVATIONS, BELIEFS, AND CHINESE LANGUAGE LEARNING 4

In 2005 I began applying to English-speaking universities in North America. At the beginning of 2006, I landed in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. My eagerness to learn English has never diminished. But my dilemma of learning English can be found in my diary. In January 2007, after one year in Canada, I wrote this:

Time is going little by little like the day and night which never stops. I feel regretful for myself and for my English. I didn't make big progress as I expected. Am I lost in my way of learning English? I can handle the daily conversation and many Canadian people praised my good English. I feel proud. Failure comes after proud. I didn't study English as hard as in China. I lost my motivation.

In China I could see all the advantages of learning English: job opportunities and a high social status. I could not see the advantages in Canada. I did not know what to do. I hesitated until I finished the courses and started writing my thesis. I found my English was not good enough for academic writing even though I wanted to write at that level. My motivation for learning came back to me. In my diary for March 2008, I wrote:

I always think writing thesis is a process of learning English. I read, I remember, I learn. But the process is long and needs my efforts and my persistence.

Sunlight comes out after the raining. Do believe I can see a rainbow after a storm. Keep reading! Keep writing!

Sometimes I wonder where this drive came from and what kept me interested in learning English.

Another inspiration came from my pilot project conducted in January 2007 when I took the course “Qualitative Research Methods in Education”. To partially fulfill my course requirement and partly to quench my thirst for knowing the reasons why people in Canada chose to learn my first language of Chinese, I conducted my pilot project on why undergraduate students at the University of Manitoba enrolled in introductory courses in the Chinese language. My curiosity came from being able to study in Canada and getting to know some Canadians, especially those university students learning Chinese at the Asian Studies Centre. Their professor, who I met at a conference about overseas Chinese language teaching, invited me to join them at lunch to practice Chinese with them. My interest in their motivation to learn Chinese swelled as I participated in many of their after-class activities. And then came the chance to conduct my initial research. Since it was course work and I only interviewed three students, I did not have enough knowledge about doing research. Thus the results were very limited and simplistic. I found that cultural interest, career opportunities and heritage language maintenance were the three motivations to learn Chinese for those three students.

Last but not least, inspiration came from my experience of teaching Chinese at the University of Manitoba’s Asian Studies Centre in January 2008. The professor was on leave and I substituted for him, teaching the intermediate class of Chinese language. Surprisingly, two of the three participants I had interviewed in January 2007 (when they were in their first year of learning Chinese) were in this

class. Since I already knew of their motivations to learn this language, I taught them to meet their expectations, and their interest and motivation to learn Chinese increased. Both students went onto the advanced level class which had only five students. Looking at the youthful faces of my undergraduate students, the days when I was learning English at my Chinese university vividly came back to my mind. Why do they choose to learn Chinese? Do they have their Chinese dreams as I have my English dream? Will their lives be changed because of this language? What does China look like to them? Did they know anything about China before they decided to learn the language? Do they hold different opinions about China and its language after learning it? There were so many questions that needed further research.

Statement of Topic

This research comes from my own experiences of learning English as a foreign language in China for seven years and as a second language in Canada for over three years. My experience of teaching Chinese in Canada also contributes to this research. Motivation is such a complicated thing. It cannot be explained in one single way. What I can do is listen to other people's stories, get to know them and their experiences of learning another language, and then form my own perspective about being motivated to learn another language. This is why I chose to research Canadian university students' motivations for learning the Chinese language. Also, as I had the opportunity of studying in Canada and have contact with students learning Chinese, I would like to know their beliefs about

Chinese language learning. What are their perceptions about the Chinese language? How competent do they think their Chinese language skills are? How does the Chinese language fit in with their future plans?

Topic Significance

The practical significance of this study is that there is no longer the need to argue for the importance of Asia in the real world of today – be that of economics, politics or culture. Universities in Canada can no longer afford not to offer basic language courses in major Asian languages or not provide the opportunity to future political and business leaders to learn about Asian societies, Asian culture, Asian politics, Asian history and Asian thoughts. The Chinese language program in Canada is a mix of students having a Chinese background and those of other ethnicities. I think it is important to know their motivation and language beliefs about the Chinese language. What are the motivations? Is the language too difficult to learn? Understanding their language motivations and beliefs and teaching them effectively will help them achieve their goal in learning Chinese. In order to develop an appropriate curriculum, instruction strategies and teaching materials, understanding the characteristics of learners in terms of their language learning motivations and language beliefs is necessary.

This research has social significance for Chinese language learning or teaching. The fact is that China is rising up on a global scale and more people are learning Chinese. Thirty years ago China opened its doors to the world. A big change has happened since then. Today 30 million people around the world are

learning Chinese as a foreign language (Reports from Ministry of Education of P.R. China, 2008). That number is expected to multiply in the coming years. I believe my research will benefit those students who plan to learn this language and the teachers who teach Chinese as another language. Based on the context in Canada, my research will inform Chinese people of the real situation of learning Chinese in Canada.

Second, I think this topic is closely connected to Canada. Language is the best way to get to know each other. As globalization is developing in all corners of the world, it is important for both countries to learn from each other and for Canada to build its language capacity. In Canada, the orientation to learning English and French, the two official languages, would be different than learning an ethnic minority language such as Chinese. As more Chinese people immigrate to Canada, I feel it is more important to know about Canadians' beliefs about this language and the factors related to it. Thus a better way to communicate for both the Canadian and Chinese communities will benefit the entire Canadian society.

Finally, my research will contribute to the second-language acquisition field of expertise. Most theories in second-language acquisition are based on English and conducted by English-speaking researchers. Compared to English, I am more capable with my first language - Chinese. Combined with my own experiences of learning English as a foreign and second language, I can clearly see the differences between learning English and learning Chinese. Thus my research, from the view of a non-native English speaker, will provide a different perspective on learning another language.

Research Purpose

My research has two objectives. The first is to examine the motivations of those learning Chinese in a Canadian university. The second is to describe what their language beliefs are about the Chinese language; for example, how difficult they think the Chinese language is, and what part is more important - speaking or writing.

In this chapter, I shared my experiences of learning English as another language and explained why I became interested in the phenomenon of learning Chinese in a Canadian university. I also illustrated the importance of this research from practical and social perspectives. My research purpose was found in this chapter as well.

From this chapter, you could see my interest in learning English and doing research about learning Chinese. Both are related to learning another language. My educational background and life experiences enable me to carry out this research. However, it is important to see what past researchers have done on these similar topics and in the same area, as they could provide me with more thoughts and understanding of this area. Thus the next chapter is a literature review.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

For the purpose of the proposed research, in the literature review section I will go through two areas: 1) learning motivation, and 2) language belief. In learning motivation area, I will review the definitions of motivation and research on learning motivation. In language belief area, I will review the importance of language belief and research on language belief.

Learning Motivation

Definitions of Motivation

Before I review the research on learning motivation, I will introduce four theories of motivation to give a clear idea of what motivation is.

People know that motivation is a word used to describe and explain why people think and behave as they do. Different theories have different explanations. Here are four theories: the drive reduction theory, cognitive theory, social theory and humanistic theory.

From the drive reduction theory perspective, Sigmund Freud (1949) regarded motivation as being determined by basic human instincts. He held that the primary goal of behaviour was to have one's biological needs met. His theory related behaviour to the primary drives that are necessary for biological survival. Thus all motivation could be reduced to biological drive and instinct. To Freud, an instinct

was a stimulus to the mind, derived from biological needs and activating behaviour (p. 5). Biological drive is regarded as being too crass for mankind. Judson S. Brown (1953) believed important human motives were produced by learning during the process of socialization and acculturation (p. 37). The learned reaction acted as a determinant of behaviour. The process of learning was the formation of a new association between the designated response and some particular environmental event. Although the drive deduction theory was popular in 1900s, it may not be directly applied to language learning. It seems too simple to explain language learning that is affected by many complicated factors, in particular, the sociocultural environment.

Cognitive theories emphasize that what people think, believe and imagine affects their motivational choices. The individual strives toward consistency within himself or herself. His or her opinions and attitudes tend to exist in clusters that are internally consistent. There is the same consistency between what a person knows or believes and what he or she does (Festinger, 1957). Cognition refers to the things a person knows about himself or herself, his or her behaviour and surroundings. It represents knowledge about oneself: what one does, feels, wants or desires, who one is, and so on (p. 165). Cognitive theories assume that the prior knowledge plays an important role in learning and look beyond behaviour to explain brain-based learning. However, it ignores the emotional influences and may underestimate human being's abilities in learning language.

Social theories of motivation are concerned with the motivation of people via others. Festinger (1957) dealt with the drive of people to socially judge the validity

of their opinions and abilities to provide standards for self-evaluation. Individuals have a drive to evaluate their opinions and abilities (p. 238), and the opinion and abilities are compared with others. Peer pressure in second language learning may come from this theory. People learn a second or foreign language because other people are learning it.

A humanistic approach to motivation, such as Abraham Maslow (1970), proposed that motivation is the desire to achieve personal growth. According to Maslow, there is a hierarchy of motives with physiological and survival needs being basic. Only after these basic needs are met can other needs occur. These other needs (in ranking order) are safety, belonging and love, esteem and self-actualization. A hungry person's motivation would mostly be about food rather than esteem or love. This theory combines needs from inside and outside together and better explains a person's behaviour in some sense. It appears true that sometime a person's learning a language is to satisfy one's esteem, to gain respects or to make one feel safe in a competitive society. However, the biggest criticism of humanistic thought is believed to be strongly selfish and self-centred. The lack of concrete learning approaches will adversely affect the language learning.

In my research motivation will be the effort to achieve the goal, the desire to achieve the goal, and the positive effect towards the goal. This is similar to what Gardner (1972) asserted, that motivation is composed of four elements: a goal, the desire to attain the goal, a positive attitude toward learning the language and effortful behaviours.

According to the different definitions of motivation, there are different understandings of language learning motivation.

Research on Learning Motivation

There has been substantial research conducted on language learning motivation (Gardner, 1958; Dörnyei, 1994; Spolsky, 1969). As Van Lier (1996) stated, motivation is a very important, if not the most important factor, in language learning (p. 98). Motivation has been shown to have a significant impact not only on learning strategies, interaction with native speakers, how input is received, and the perseverance and maintenance of language learning, but also on ultimate proficiency attainment (Dörnyei, 1994; Ely, 1986; Gardner, 1985; Oxford & Shearin, 1996; Williams & Burden, 1997). That is, language learners with higher levels of motivation will be higher language achievers.

Research on second language (L2) learning motivation between the 1960s and 1990s were dominated by Gardner and Lambert (1959), who were the originators in this area. They first suggested that variables other than language aptitude were involved (p. 266). They used attitudes as a motivational construct and argued that attitudes towards a cultural group would at least partly determine one's success in learning a new language (p. 267). After 12 years of research interest, their book "Attitudes and Motivation in Second Language Learning" (1972) answered the question of why some people can learn a foreign language quickly from a socio-psychological perspective. They think that a learner's motivation is determined by his attitudes toward the target language group and his orientation

toward the learning task. The orientation could be instrumental if the purpose of language study reflected the more utilitarian value of linguistic achievement (p. 3), such as getting ahead in one's occupation. In contrast, the orientation could be integrative if the student wanted to learn more about the cultural community because he was interested in it in an open-minded way, to the point of eventually being accepted as a member of that other group (p. 3). Gardner and Lambert suggested that individuals with an integrative orientation would demonstrate greater motivational effort in learning an L2, thus achieving greater L2 competence.

Some studies (Lukmani, 1972; Spolsky, 1969; Oller, 1977; Svanes, 1987; Pierson, Fu, & Lee, 1980; Laine, 1984) upheld the relative importance of the integrative orientation. Spolsky (1969) reaffirmed the importance of attitude as one factor explaining the degree of proficiency a student achieved in learning a second language. A person learns a language better when he wants to be a member of the group speaking that language (p. 281). Among the supporters, researcher Schumann's (1978) Acculturation Model shared the view of integration motivation with Gardner. He predicted that learners acquired a second language (SL) only when they acculturated to the L2 community. Later he said acculturation was a remote cause in a chain of factors; it brought the learner into contact with target language speakers and provided some verbal interaction input which was the immediate cause of language acquisition. Dörnyei (1994) also suggested that integrative motivation might be necessary to go beyond the intermediate level in foreign language learning. Hernandez (2006) identified integrative motivation as a

significant predictor of oral proficiency after a survey of 130 students completing their fourth-semester Spanish course.

Other studies (Clement & Kruidenier, 1983; Ely, 1986; Strong, 1984) did not support the superiority of the integrative motivation. Warden & Lin (2000) found that ESL students in Taiwan were less motivated to learn English for the integrative orientation; instead, the instrumental orientation was more relevant for these students. In the same Chinese cultural setting, Chen, Warden & Chang (2005) explored language learning motivation constructs and found that the integrative motivation played no significant role for English language learner. Also, Clement and Kruidenier (1983) suggested the dichotomy of integrative and instrumental orientations failed to consider the influence of the linguistic milieu and the definition of orientations are ambiguous. Ely (1986) pointed out it was not easy to distinguish between the two orientations as they did not capture the full spectrum of student motivation. Strong (1984) indicated that integrative motivation was not a cause but a result of successful language acquisition.

Although the theory of integrative and instrumental orientation proposed by Gardner and Lambert (1972) was the first one on motivation and it is still of paramount importance to language learners, there are some criticisms about it. One of the major criticisms is that this theory failed to account for the specific contexts of different language learners. Integrative orientation is, to some extent, effective because language learners are perceived to attain language skills by participation in the social groups that speak the target language. However, this may be the case only in specific sociocultural contexts. For example, learners of

French in Montreal have more opportunities to get access to native speakers of French. Some language learners may not have the access to the target language group, such as people who are learning French in China. Dörnyei (1994) shared the same concerns after investigating English language learners in Hungary. In addition to the integrative and instrumental orientation, there are other orientations among language learners. Warden and Lin (2000) found what they called *required motivation*. In their study, English language learners in Taiwan appeared to be motivated by requirements rather than either an interest in integration or any instrumental purposes.

In the 1990s, researchers Dörnyei (1994), Crooks and Schmidt (1991), and Oxford and Shearin (1994) began searching for a broader, more pragmatic, education-centred approach to motivation study. They argued there was much emphasis placed on attitudes and social psychological aspects. When teachers said a student was motivated, they were not usually concerning themselves with the student's reasons for studying, but were observing that the student did study, or at least engaged in teacher–desired behaviour in the classroom and possibly outside it. Most teachers wish to motivate students and attempted to do so in a variety of ways. The emphasis in Gardner's model was grounded in the social milieu rather than in the foreign language classroom (Dörnyei, 1992), which “does not do full justice to the way SL teachers have used the term motivation” (Crooks & Schmidt, 1991). Oxford and Shearin reopened the research agenda and expanded the theoretical framework on motivation to foster further understanding of L2 motivation from an educational perspective. They did not intend to overturn the

ideas nor denigrate the major contributions of researchers such as Gardner, Lambert, Lalonde and others who powerfully brought motivational issues to the attention of those in the second-language field. They wanted to maintain the best of the existing second-language learning motivation theory and push its parameters outward. Therefore, they offered motivation material that was well known in the fields of general, educational and cognitive developmental psychology but had not yet been directly applied to the L2 field.

Dörnyei (1992) was one of the researchers who proposed different angles in the learning motivation field. He looked at motivation from both educational psychology and social psychology. He developed the concept of instrumental-integrative motivation to the instrumental motivational and integrative motivational subsystems. He indicated instrumental-integrative duality was derived from second-language acquisition contexts, which may not be applied in foreign language learning situations. The instrumental motivational subsystem was “conceived as a set of motives organized by the individual’s future career striving” (p. 64), while the integrative motivational subsystem was “composed of attitudes, orientation and affective predisposition” (p. 65). By surveying 134 young adult learners of English in the Hungarian context, he concluded that the integrative motivational subsystem in foreign language learning (FLL) contexts was determined by more general attitudes and beliefs in foreign language and people, since learners did not have enough contact with the target language community which was associated with a higher level of language attainment. On the other hand, the instrumental motivational subsystem involved a number of extrinsic

motives and played a significant role in the FLL context and intermediate language proficiency.

We know that classroom language learning is so limited by time, and students need more work and practice outside the classroom. Even if one is in a target language environment, personal motivation still plays an important role. Some students try to find more chances to associate with the target language community, while others stay in their first-language social circles. So it is more important to raise people's interest and curiosity about language learning, which are the main points of learning motivation. As Swanes (1987) suggested, although motivation is an important factor in the acquisition of a second language, the type of motivation is of less importance for people who are all well motivated (p. 23).

Recent theoretical models of L2 motivation have proposed that different motivational constructs may be relevant at different stages of the long language learning process (Dörnyei & Otto, 1998; Williams & Burden, 1997). Less research has been done on analyzing the dynamics of second-language motivational change. New approaches to researching motivation have also emphasized its fluctuating, highly context-sensitive nature (p. 758).

From the above review we can see that motivations vary depending on the L2 learning context. There are a whole range of orientations in a world language like English, so what about orientations in learning a language like Chinese in the Canadian context? There are a larger scale Chinese –speaking immigrants in Canada. For some learners of Chinese in Canada, Chinese language learning is

heritage language learning. Heritage language learning is quite different from foreign language learning. Heritage language learners may have different knowledge of the language, different motivations towards it, and different goals they wish to attain. Their background knowledge and familiarity with the culture make them special language learners. In heritage language learning context, two orientations proposed by Gardner (1985), the integrative orientation and instrumental orientation, were also found among heritage language learners. Heritage language learners may have the same motivation as foreign language learners. For example, they learn the language to gain linguistic skills, to enhance career opportunities and to fulfil academic requirements. Mandell (2002) concluded after his study in university-level Spanish learners that the majority of the beginning Spanish learners were enrolled in the language classes to satisfy the institutional requirement.

On the other hand, motivation for heritage language learners differs from motivation for foreign language learners. There are some articles about the motivation to learn heritage languages. Haseinali (2006) investigated the initial motivation of Arabic language learners at a major university in the United States and found three major types of orientations, namely instrumental orientations, identification orientations, and travel and culture orientations. In "Orientations to Learning German" (Noels, 2005), the results showed that heritage language learners were more likely than non-heritage learners to learn German because it was an important aspect of their self-concept. Wen's (1997) research, where she investigated the motivational factors of students who were from Asian and

Asian-American backgrounds and learning Chinese at American universities, indicated that an interest in Chinese culture and the desire to know one's own heritage and culture prompted students to learn Chinese.

The exact nature of the social and pragmatic dimensions of L2 motivation is always dependent on who learns what languages and where (Dörnyei, 1992). Chinese is commonly perceived as one of the hardest languages and it is difficult to learn for many English speakers. What are Canadian students' opinions about this language? How do they learn this language? What is the proficiency they wish to reach? I want to find out about their language beliefs.

Language Beliefs

Belief is usually defined as something believed or accepted as true by a person, or an opinion held by a person.

Importance of Language Belief

Language beliefs are born within a culture. Different students have different backgrounds and thus bring different language beliefs into the classroom. Foreign language teachers should notice the different or similar beliefs they hold with their students. Horwitz (1988, p. 283) wrote:

Americans appear to hold strong beliefs about how languages are learned. Definite viewpoints on the best techniques for learning a language, the "right" age to begin language study, and the nature of the language learning process are the

subject of airline magazine articles, Sunday supplement advertisements, and cocktail party small-talk . . . If beliefs about language learning are prevalent in the culture at-large, then foreign language teachers must consider that students bring these beliefs with them into the classroom.

Davis (2003) also indicated there are similarities and differences between teachers' and students' beliefs about language learning. Differences included: "(1) teachers should present grammatical rules one at a time and students should practise examples of each one before going onto another; (2) students' errors should be corrected as soon as they are made in order to prevent the formation of bad habits; and (3) teachers should use materials that expose students only to those language structures that they have already been taught" (p. 207). There are some Chinese language instructors or professors in Canadian universities who were born and raised in China. When thinking about how to learn Chinese – their mother language, they may have different beliefs from those Canadian students who were born and raised in the Canadian culture. Oxford et. al (1991) concluded that when learners' beliefs about language learning are at odds with those of their instructors, the results can be disastrous. What are the Chinese language beliefs - including beliefs about the difficulty of Chinese or how to learn Chinese language - that Canadian university students may hold? We must understand what those beliefs are.

Language beliefs also result in different language learning strategies. Wenden (1987) explored the connection between language beliefs and self-reports of learning strategies. She found students were using learning strategies that were

consistent with their professed beliefs about language learning. Fan (2003) found that the Cantonese-speaking English students in her study made only infrequent use of memory strategies, indicating they thought such strategies were of little value in learning English words. Gu and Johnson (1996) conducted another large-scale study of Chinese students learning English and found students believed guessing strategies, dictionary strategies, note-taking strategies, rehearsal strategies and encoding strategies (e.g., imagery and association) were more effective. Most Chinese learn their language through recitation. What are Canadian students' different learning strategies? What resources are they accessing to learn in completely different ways?

Research on Language Beliefs

Elaine Horwitz (1988) developed the Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI), and many researchers use it to solicit student opinions on issues of language learning. I also used it for my guiding questions, but I changed parts of it to fit my research issues on Chinese language learning.

BALLI examines student beliefs in five areas: "1) difficulty of language learning; 2) foreign language aptitude; 3) the nature of language learning; 4) learning and communication strategies; 5) motivations and expectations" (p. 284). Each area has a different number of items. Regarding the difficulty of language learning, there are comments like "I believe I will ultimately learn to speak this language very well" and "it is easier to read and write this language than to speak and understand it". For foreign language aptitude, there are questions such as: is it easier for children

or adults to learn a foreign language, and are women better than men at learning a foreign language?

In the study, Horwitz (1988) investigated students who were learning German, Spanish and French at the University of Texas. These three languages belong to the same linguistic system. However, Chinese is orthographic and is usually believed to be one of the most difficult languages to learn. Students who are learning Chinese may hold different beliefs once they are actually studying this language. Rifkin (2000) indicated that researching language belief has been conducted almost exclusively with students of French, German and Spanish; the beliefs of learners and instructors of other languages - such as Arabic, Chinese, Japanese and Russian - have not been the object of any published investigation. Therefore, he claimed it cannot be assumed that learners of less commonly taught languages have beliefs similar to those held by learners of French, German and Spanish (p. 395). Less commonly taught languages here include Chinese.

Also, language beliefs changed over time as students made progress or were at different levels. Horwitz (1988) examined only first-semester language students and thus gave a static view of students' beliefs. It is important to distinguish between different beliefs students held at various levels of study and during different ages/stages. Rifkin (2000) also indicated that "none of the published studies on learner beliefs about foreign language learning has examined the beliefs of learners not in the first year of instruction. Learners change by virtue of the instruction they receive and we can only hope that the beliefs of students in intermediate, advanced, or even graduate level classes are different from the

beliefs held by their peers in the introductory courses” (p. 395). Therefore, I chose participants in this study from different levels. There were not only participants from the first year of the Chinese class, but also ones from the second and third years. By doing so, I hope I can get different beliefs from different levels.

Research Questions

People all agree that motivation is an impetus in language learning. From my experiences, you can see that motivation plays an important role in my learning English as a foreign and second language. I think it is the same for most foreign language learners. Language belief also plays an important role in language learning. My research questions are: 1) Why do students in a Canadian university choose to learn Chinese and what experiences have encouraged them to do so? 2) What are their beliefs about this language (for example, the difficulty of this language, learning strategies used and ultimate learning goals)?

In this literature review, I reviewed definitions of motivation, past and recent research on learning motivation, and language beliefs. And finally, I brought up my two research questions.

Chapter Three: Methodology

In this chapter, I will present my research methodology – phenomenology – and describe the study context, research participants and procedures of the study.

Phenomenology

Learning a second or foreign language is a phenomenon. I tried to find out what causes this phenomenon and what are the beliefs of learners toward this phenomenon. So my theoretical perspective is phenomenological.

What is Phenomenology?

Phenomenology is an approach to philosophy that examines the basic conditions of subjective experience (McDuffie, 1996). The German philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) is the founder of phenomenology. The basic subject matter is the lived experience. A lived experience is the origin of our access to the world, and the origin of the meaning of the world as we experience it (p. 454). Phenomenology inquiry seeks to explore the course of experience as it is experienced. Here experience is defined as an “open and continuing awareness of the self and world” (p. 451). Phenomenology investigates this awareness through given appearances termed “phenomena”. Experience is the progress of subjective awareness, alive to a world already familiar in its established meanings. The chief purpose of the phenomenological method is to bring the course of the experience to the foreground.

Phenomenological study describes and interprets the experiences of participants in order to understand the essence of the experience as perceived by the participants (McMillan, 2004). A phenomenologist attempts to understand the meaning of events from the experience of the participants and see things from that person's point of view. To do this requires the researcher to understand the feelings, motives and thoughts behind the actions of others.

Rationale for this Methodology

I would like to indicate a few points of possible contact between phenomenology and the research I conducted.

First, it offered a method for descriptive analysis in my research. Learning a language is an experience and the phenomenological method could be adopted for investigating this experience.

Second, the phenomenological method combines the empirical and the critical. It is empirical because when it focuses on the phenomenon, it has to return to a primitive date of experience to discover how the world exists for us. And it is critical because it tries to formulate one's judgment about these experiences and the phenomenon (McMillan, 2004). From this definition, it very much matches my research philosophy. I tried to listen to my participants' experiences of learning Chinese as a second language, and according to my own experience, I provide an interpretation and understanding of why they are studying Chinese and their perceptions about the language.

Third, there are multiple ways of interpreting the same experience, and the meaning of that experience for each participant is what constitutes reality. There is a search for essential or invariant structure in the meaning given by the participants. The research needs to suspend or bracket any preconceived ideas about the phenomenon to elicit and better understand the meanings given by the participants. The research problem for a phenomenological study is focused on what is essential for the meaning of the event, episode or interaction (McMillan, 2004). It is also focused on understanding the participants' voices. I have had the same experiences as the participants. I tried to interpret the event by listening to the participants' voices, attempting to discover the common reasons and beliefs of Chinese language learning, and thus discover ways of how to learn another language well.

During the coursework requirement for my Master's of Education degree, I completed a pilot study investigating Canadian university students' reasons for choosing to learn the Chinese language. During this pilot study, I decided I wanted to know more about the research methodology that would soundly carry my research. As I explored the field of phenomenology, I came to believe it would provide an insightful way to interpret how people came to know and articulate their lived experiences.

Study Context

This research aimed at exploring the learning motivations and language beliefs among Chinese language learners in a Canadian university. The university

in this research is the University of Manitoba, a large mid-western university in Canada. It has a student population of 25,000. For the academic year of 2008-2009, the university had 971 students from China (Office of Institutional Analysis, University of Manitoba, 2009), accounting for 2.3% of the total international Chinese student population in Canada and 45.5% of the total international students at the University of Manitoba (almost one out of two international students was from China). I conducted my research at the Asian Studies Centre on campus that was established in 1990. It offers instruction in the languages and cultures of Asian countries, such as China, Japan and India. It has Chinese and Japanese language programs. There are about 60 students in the Chinese program in three levels (introductory, intermediate and advanced) in the year of 2010.

The Asian Studies Centre points out the importance of studying an Asian language. It says:

Combining an Asian Studies minor or major with a major or minor in other areas will be advantageous for Canadians since so much of Canada's future economic development depends on its links with Asia. It can also be a significant asset within Canada due to the increasing numbers of people moving to Canada from Asian countries.

Also, a brochure to recruit new students says:

There is an enormous amount to be done in orienting Canada's young people to the Asian Pacific. All young Canadians should have a general knowledge of the area. Moreover, they should be made aware of the tremendous career advantages of combining professional skills with the knowledge of one or more of the Asian languages, some of which are as yet hardly taught in Canada.

--- Max Bell Foundation

Participants

I interviewed six Canadian university students selected from the Asian Studies Centre at the University of Manitoba, a mid-west Canadian university. With three levels of classes, I chose two participants from each level. It was assumed the different levels provide different perceptions. Participation was voluntary. Informed consent (See Appendix A) including an explanation of what the research was about, why I wished to interview them, what would be involved, and what would be done with the information obtained was sent beforehand so my participants had an opportunity to ask about the meaning and implications of any statement. It was my goal to listen carefully to their lived experiences. I did not seek a representative sample from the language program, but wanted to gain a range of perspective experiences. Among these six participants, there were two Canadian female students who were born and raised in Canada, two heritage students with Chinese family backgrounds, one female student from Japan and one male student with a Jamaican origin. In the next chapter, I have provided detailed information about my

six participants to give readers a vivid picture of these students and thus a better understanding of their motivation and beliefs about the Chinese language.

Procedures of the Study

The recruitment of the participants took a long time as I worked as a sessional instructor and TA at the university. This provided conflict between the participants and myself as a researcher. After I finished my teaching at the beginning of April, I started my recruiting job. First, I wrote a permission letter (See Appendix D) with my proposed research outline to the Head of Chinese language program. After permission to interview the students was obtained, I visited the instructor's office and briefly explained my research, asking her to invite her students to participate in my study (See Appendix B). I asked interested students to sign and leave contact information on a volunteer sheet that was sealed in an envelope by the last student in the class and handed to the instructor. I went to pick up the sealed envelope from the instructor after the class. I emailed all students individually, gave them a few more details about the time, and invited them to respond with suggested dates and times for the first interview (See Appendix C). In my email I stated that volunteers would be selected on a "first-come-first-served" basis, so the first students to respond would become the participants of my study.

Six students were interviewed with the same set of 15 open-ended questions. (See Appendix E) The interviews were tape-recorded and lasted no longer than 60 minutes. At the beginning of each interview, all participants was offered the

opportunity to select a pseudonym to protect their identities in the following transcripts and written documentation.

After each of the first set of interviews was completed, I transcribed the tapes. Through email, I sent each participant a copy of the first interview draft plus a draft of my interpretation. The participants was invited to member-check their interview and draft to ensure they were correctly quoted. Also, the member-check of my transcript helped me understand how and if each participant accepted my notes as an accurate description of their interview.

Research Instruments

The data collection was through personal, in-depth, semi-structured interviews. The interviews lasted about one hour and were tape-recorded. The analysis began with a description of the researcher's experience with the phenomenon. Next, the participants identified how they experience the phenomenon. I as the researcher did reflect on my own experiences and integrated them with those of the participants. Finally, an overall description of the meaning of the experience was constructed. Individual as well as composite descriptions were written to show how the experiences fit with the meaning derived.

In my research questions, there were two parts. One was motivation part and the other was language belief part. There are five questions in motivation part. My first question was, "How long have you been learning the Chinese language?" Actually I almost knew the answers to these questions since I have already known

these students. This question was to make sure if these students learned Chinese somewhere before I knew them. And this question was also an ice-breaker question to lead students emotionally ready to go into my interview. That was, to tell the students that I was not your teaching assistant or instructor, I was a researcher and was asking your questions formally. In this way, I intended to lessen the influence of my role as their teaching assistant or instructor. However, the familiarity between us still interfered with my interviews. It seemed I already knew their answers and they were giving the answers I wanted. The interviews lasted not as long as I expected. I planned one hour, but some interviews lasted only 45 minutes. The second question was, "Why did you choose to learn Chinese?" The third one was, "When you decided to learn Chinese, were there any advantages in doing so?" I was seeking their motivations by asking these two questions. The fourth question was, "Is there any event or media that affects your choice to learn Chinese?" And the fifth one, "What are you experiencing in this study that encourages you to study Chinese?" I was finding out if there were any motivators that motivated them to learn Chinese and their positive experiences of learning Chinese.

If I had not interviewed these students, I would never know that these students had their very different reasons to learn Chinese. I knew them as my students in classroom, but I never knew their stories after class. After the interviews, my previous opinions of them changed. They are individuals and have different life stories. They came to learn the same foreign language of Chinese, but they brought different motivations into the classrooms of Chinese language learning.

Most of the questions in language belief part were selected from BALLI questionnaire designed by Horwitz (1988). I modified some of her questions to the Chinese language situation. For example, BALLI asked, “the language I am trying to learn is 1) a very difficult language, 2) a difficult language, 3) a language of medium difficulty, 4) an easy language, and 5) a very easy language. I changed it to Question 1 in my questionnaire. It reads “How difficult do you think the Chinese language is? How much do you put yourself into learning this language?” I am interested in not only an “easy or difficult” answer, but the efforts they were learning Chinese language.

My question 2, “Which do you think is important, speaking Chinese or reading Chinese? Where did that belief come from?” was from one of the BALLI questions “it is easier to read and write this language than to speak and understand it 1) strongly agree, 2) agree, 3) neither agree nor disagree, 4) disagree, and 5) strongly disagree”. My question was designed to find out the reasons in details instead of a simple “agree or disagree” statement when I conduct face-to-face interviews with students. Other questions like “What are the good ways do you think to learn this language in class and after class?”, “What opportunities do you think you have to use Chinese in Canada?”, “What is your current level of your Chinese? In the future what is the proficiency level do you think you could reach?” and “What is your ultimate goal for learning Chinese? Do you want to go to China?” look into students’ beliefs about learning Chinese in other aspects. These questions were adopted from different sections of BALLI, the nature of language learning and learning and communication strategies.

I designed the last two questions “Do you think Chinese will be the most influential language in next decades?” and “Could you name three Chinese people and cities in China?” I encouraged my participants to answer these questions in Chinese. If they did not know the answers, I taught them some city names in Chinese.

The whole interview process was completed within three weeks. Two participants were scheduled to be interviewed in one week. The interviews were transcribed by me, the researcher right after the interviews. One reason for doing so was because I could have a vivid picture of the interviews and could understand the tapes easily by remembering what they had just said. Each of six participants was individually interviewed only once, but I emailed the individual interview transcripts to each student for member-check.

Since I was the researcher who was familiar with the research setting, I might overlook certain ambiguities of data because of my implicit understanding of the participants. Being familiar with the setting, the participants and the processes, was advantageous and problematic for me. It was useful in getting authenticating responses and findings, but the familiarity might also obscure some issues that others might question.

Chapter Four: Introduction of Interview

Participants

I interviewed six students: five female and one male. Let us meet them.

Sarah: A Talented First-Year Student

Sarah was a “pure Canadian” as she described herself in the interview. Moreover, she was a talented and versatile Canadian girl. She could sing Chinese songs and play Kongfu. I noticed her because she always made loud sounds during language lab class when I was a TA there. She talked loudly with her good friend and laughed loudly. At first I was quite annoyed by her laughter since it disturbed other students. My fondness for her came when she asked me questions and said “thank you” in Chinese. There were only a few words she could speak when she started the introductory Chinese course, from which I could see her eagerness to use Chinese. Another thing that changed my opinion of her was her seriousness about learning the Chinese language. She recorded Chinese on the computer many times until she was satisfied with her pronunciation. When recording, she spoke very loudly and very slowly and tried to sound like exactly what she heard. She did every assignment very carefully, using a colour pen to mark where she did not understand and brought the questions to class. When the first term ended, she was the student who had made the most progress. Her final presentation stunned everyone as she sang a very beautiful Chinese love song

that touched everyone's heart. I was so impressed by her talents and her eagerness to learn Chinese.

When I was a TA, I did not know why Sarah was so motivated to learn Chinese until I had the chance to interview her. I was touched by her honesty as she told me about her Chinese boyfriend. It was he who took her into the Chinese culture and she became fascinated with it. I never met a person like Sarah who was so crazy about the Chinese culture. She cooked Chinese food at home, watched Chinese movies and did everything related to Chinese culture, like playing Taiji during free time and accepted acupuncture when she got sick. Even during the interview, she asked me how to cook a Chinese dish. After finding out that we Chinese people use the wok to cook, she decided to buy one for cooking Chinese food. Unfortunately, she broke up with her boyfriend after eight months but her fondness towards Chinese culture never waned.

Angela: A Beautiful First-Year Student

Angela was a beautiful lady. She impressed me by her Chinese-style dressing during my first TA class. She even wore high-heeled leather shoes in class like Chinese girls usually do. She could speak quite a bit of Chinese but could not write it. She enrolled in the class hoping to learn some characters. Lab recording was quite easy for her. She did not miss a class and asked me many questions in Chinese. I was amazed by her fluent Chinese when I knew she had been in China for only one year. My curiosity to know her increased. What motivated her to speak

Chinese like that? I knew it was hard for me to learn English in Canada even when I was in an English-speaking environment.

Fortunately, Angela emailed me to do the interview and I had the chance to get to know her further. The first question I asked her was how she could speak such fluent Chinese. She told me she spoke Chinese everyday because she had a Chinese boyfriend in China. They talked via long distance phone calls almost every day. As she learned new Chinese vocabulary, she practiced with her boyfriend and asked him to correct her. She wanted to complete her degree first and then go to China to stay there. During the interview, we also talked a lot about Chinese culture. Angela did not mention whether she liked or disliked China, but she did mention many things she was not comfortable with, such as one of her students' father taking her to a five-star restaurant for dinner. One thing for sure was her motivation to learn Chinese was much stronger as she planned to go to China to meet with her boyfriend.

Kori: A Japanese Second-Year Student

Kori was a Japanese girl. While I knew she was from Japan, I thought she took the Chinese course because of the similarity between Chinese characters and Japanese characters. Writing characters was easier for her since she already knew how to write Japanese characters. This was quite an easy course for her. To my surprise, Chinese language was challenging for her as speaking it was quite difficult. Because of the similarity between Chinese and Japanese, her pronunciation was affected a lot by her Japanese. She could not pronounce certain

sounds as clearly as other English-speaking students. Also to my big surprise, Kori was the student who studied Chinese the hardest and most diligently. She did her assignments beautifully with good handwriting which was almost perfectly correct. She made great progress in the second year. Her efforts to learn Chinese and her strong motivation contributed to her success in the program. Kori, like Angela and Sarah, had a Chinese boyfriend who was in Canada. But her boyfriend did not have a big influence on her. She told me they even spoke English with each other. Kori's motivation came from her interest in the Chinese culture while she was in Japan. She even decided to major in Chinese. Unfortunately, the university did not offer this but Kori went on to major in Asian studies. She took all the courses related to China, like Asian civilization and Asian film.

During the interview, we talked a lot about the Chinese and Japanese cultures. We found out there were a lot of common things between us. When we talked about cartoons or movies, we watched many of the same ones. She even brought me a little bag with a familiar cartoon on it as a gift. It was used to keep one's hands warm. It made me feel so warm in my heart, and I am the one who should thank Kori for her willingness to be part of my interview.

Travis: A Serious Second-Year Student

Travis was the only male participant in my study. He was originally from Jamaica. In the first language lab, I was impressed by his flip cards with Chinese characters on it. He took them out from his back pack and read them frequently. I was also amazed by his nearly perfect pronunciation, which I want to achieve for

my English and my ideal goal of learning a language. I thought he was the person who had language aptitude. However, as I got to know him, I realized his successful language learning came from hard work. In a notebook he wrote Chinese characters many times in order to remember them. Travis told me he never had a fixed time to learn Chinese because of his busy schedule with five courses each semester. Instead he used his free time to remember the characters, like the interval between two classes or on the bus. He reminded me of the days when I was crazy about learning English while in China. I learned English the same way as he has learned Chinese.

I was interested to know where Travis' motivation came from or what Chinese ties he had. A person learning Chinese in such a hard way must have a story. He told me his mother had a close friend from Hong Kong whom he called Auntie. They got together quite often since he was a little boy and he learned some words from her and fell in love with Chinese food. Also, his family hosted Chinese international students and he became good friends with them. It seemed all the people around him were mostly Chinese people. So in order to understand some Chinese and talk with the Chinese people around him, he started to learn Chinese.

Susan: A Shy Third-Year Student

Susan was a "CBC", or Canadian-born Chinese. Her parents came from the southern part of China. When I first saw her, I thought she was a Chinese international student like myself. When she talked to me in English, I immediately knew she was raised in Canada because of her native English accent. She was a

shy girl, speaking in a low voice with kind smiles. She told me her family kept all the Chinese traditions. They talked in Cantonese and had Chinese-style meals. Her parents taught her to behave in a Chinese way which is why she was more like a Chinese girl. She studied hard and went home after class. Because the Cantonese she spoke was very different from Mandarin, she was learning through writing. Cantonese has traditional characters while Mandarin has simplified characters, and so writing Mandarin was not a challenge for Susan. Her only problem with Mandarin was the pronunciation due to the big differences between oral Cantonese and oral Mandarin. So most of time, she asked how to pronounce the characters in Mandarin.

During the interview, Susan told me she had never been to China, which surprised me. Her impression of China was from the stories her parents told her. She wanted to find a job and make enough money to go to China. With her major in finance, she intended to find a job in a bank and thought her Chinese could bring some job opportunities.

Amber: A Smart Third-Year Student

Amber was also a Chinese girl born in Canada. Her parents were from Hong Kong. She was not a student who studied very hard but she was smart. She always scored the highest in exams and presentations. Most of the time I saw her she was with a bunch of friends. They came to the lab together and studied together. However, her Chinese was the best in terms of speaking and writing. Her

major was political studies and she wanted to find a job in government or something related to China.

Amber was the last person I interviewed. Unexpectedly, she was not a person who talked a lot. She answered my question in a few words. As a result, her interview was the shortest. But her points were very clear and I received the answers I needed.

Chapter Five: Findings

There are two parts in this section. The first part is my discoveries about motivations; the second part is my discoveries regarding beliefs. In the motivation section, there are three emerging themes: 1) motivations for Chinese language learning; 2) stories behind Chinese language learning; and, 3) motivations and Chinese economic growth.

Motivations

My six participants had six different dominant motivations to learn the Chinese language. In theme one I will introduce the six motivations, as the reasons and stories behind these motivations are interesting and essential to know. When it comes to the individual, the same motivation can have different stories. For example, three of my participants had Chinese boyfriends, but they had different stories. So in theme two I will relate my findings about their stories. My study also tells us there are many Chinese students studying overseas and they do have an impact on their host society and country. China's rapid economic growth is the reason many students can afford to study overseas. Theme three talks about this motivation in relation to China's economic growth.

Theme One: Motivations for Chinese Language Learning

I asked the six students this question: "Why do you choose to learn Chinese?" They had different answers and different stories. Thus motivation means different

things to them. I will generalize that there are six different dominant motivations to learn Chinese according to my research. The motivations are cultural interest, communication, travel, friendship, job opportunities and heritage language advantage.

Cultural interest. Wen (1997) found in her study that the motivation of learning Chinese culture is a significant predictor for students to decide to learn the Chinese language. In my interview with Sarah, she had a strong motivation that came from inside of her. Her decision to learn Chinese was from her personal interest in the Chinese culture. She had the strongest motivation to learn Chinese among my six interviewees, and she achieved the most progress during her first year of Chinese language learning. She was the first one to respond to my email to participate in the interview. She was excited when I interviewed her and her answers to my questions were the longest. Through the following excerpt we could feel her fondness towards the Chinese culture.

I really enjoyed the hospitality I got and received (from my boyfriend's parents). They are very warm. They really welcomed me and they really want me to come around often. I love the food. It's something I don't really find at home. My parents are so strict when it comes to school. I appreciate Chinese parents who really want their children to succeed and things like that. Our relationship ended a while ago but it did not ruin my interest in Chinese culture. I love it so much. I try to figure out why. I guess the cultural aspect has so many meanings, the deep meanings. The culture has so many relationships to what I believe in. So that's why I found the culture fascinating. (Transcript, P 3, Lines 35-42)

Communication. Communication is the basic and first stage when people choose to learn a language. Language is to be used for communication. Research shows that most students learn a language to communicate. Angela was the student who needed Chinese strongly in order to live in China. She told me she felt frustrated when she did not know any Chinese.

In 2006 I was in Nanjing. I was living there and teaching English. I was getting really frustrated, because the taxi drivers were talking to me and I couldn't understand them. Finally I said okay. I went to my boss at the company that I worked for. I said you need to teach me how to say "I come from Canada. I am teaching here." Because I know the taxi driver is asking me these things, but I don't know the answers. That's the first time I said I have to learn Chinese. (Transcript, P 1, Lines 6-10)

Angela also needed to learn Chinese when she made a Chinese boyfriend.

One big reason was that my boyfriend's parents don't speak English, so I want to talk to them. I have to speak Chinese with them. (Transcript, P 1, Lines 29-30)

Whether to talk to the taxi driver or speak with her boyfriend's parents, Angela needed Chinese to communicate in her daily life.

Travel. As a university student in his second year, Travis was learning Chinese for travelling, and this is no surprise. As he knows more about the world, going around the world is a dream of most university students. For Travis, travelling to get to know more people was especially important to him because he

was majoring in psychology. He studied people. This is what he said in the interview:

I want to travel a lot. In psychology during the first year you learn more about everyone, everyone around the world. I want to travel every place to learn how they are. (Transcript, P 6, Lines 27-29)

Friendship. Being a Japanese girl who studied in a Canadian university, friendship was of great importance to Kori.

I like to study languages. I know Japanese anyway. I think in the world, except for English, the second most important language is Chinese. The first reason is because of the amount of Chinese people there are. Second, I am a university student. I meet so many Chinese students. I think if I know Chinese and can speak Chinese, it would be good for my friends in Canada. (Transcript, P 7, Lines 42-45)

Heritage language advantage. Susan was a Chinese heritage language learner. In a formal language-learning setting, students who were motivated to receive a high achievement score also highly valued the acquisition of language skills. As a result, they were likely to be actively engaged in their learning and to achieve their goals. Susan was this kind of student.

To be honest, first I think it will be easier. I am of Chinese background. Second is I want to learn it so I can understand more language on TV shows, news, and dramas. I want to know what they are saying without relying on English subtitles. (Transcript, P 9, Lines 9-12)

Job opportunities. Amber was the other Chinese heritage language learner. However, she did not mention her advantage in Chinese language leaning. She was thinking more about her career since she was to graduate soon.

Because of my Chinese friends, if I want to work later, China is becoming very much bigger. I want to do internationally, and Mandarin will be helpful. (Transcript, P 10, Lines 28-30)

Chinese language learners enrolled in Chinese class for a variety of reasons. These motivations are not necessarily characterized as either integrative motivation or instrumental motivation. They could overlap. A student with an integrative motivation of being interested in Chinese culture could have an instrumental motivation of finding a good job by learning Chinese. As mentioned above, six major motivations were found: cultural interest, communication, travel, friendship, heritage language advantage and job opportunities.

Theme Two: Stories behind Chinese Language Learning

Even when people had the same motivation to learn a language, I believe they have different stories or different motives that motivate them to do so. So my first research question was to ask about their motivation and experience. Among my six participants, some of their motivations overlapped. When it came to their individual accounts, they had personal stories that came from their real lives and become part of their lives. Through these life stories, I could feel their different motivations, goals and hopes that guided their lives in different ways.

I found it interesting that my six participants' decisions to learn Chinese had to some degree something to do with the Chinese people around them. The three non-heritage Canadian participants had Chinese boyfriends. The only male student had Chinese friends and hosted Chinese international students. Two heritage students came from families with Chinese parents.

Angela met her musician boyfriend in China. She said she was not impressed by him at first, but gradually she found he was a “good behaviour” musician, not a crazy one. He just liked music and got well educated. So their relationship started, which prompted her into Chinese language learning.

The biggest thing is probably having a Chinese boyfriend. If I did not have him, then I would not need to speak with his parents, I would not need to worry about going to live and work there again. I want to go there, because I want to be closer to where he is. He is probably the biggest reason. (Transcript, P 1, Lines 35-38)

Sarah had a Chinese boyfriend but unfortunately their relationship ended after eight months. This boyfriend opened the door of Chinese culture to her. After that she continued to get to know Chinese people.

I will continue with this story. In August I go see a Chinese doctor. I have some problems with my joints. I want to try Chinese traditional medicine, like acupuncture. It is a little painful but it is okay. I also got herbs. I started to feel a lot better, taking the herbs for a few days. I know the herbs took a long time to use. I

continued to go, then I stopped. Still I did not lose my interest in Chinese culture. I am going to try Taiji. In September I started to do Taiji at the university, oh my god, unbelievable! It is exactly what I thought it was going to be. Again, amazing. Even Taiji changed who I am. It really helps me focus and understand why I am the way I am. Just amazing how much I am gaining from this culture that I never realized four or five years ago. That's also why I decided to take the Chinese language course. (Transcript, P 3-4, Lines 43-44, 1-9)

Kori was a Japanese girl with a Chinese boyfriend too. Interestingly, they talked with each other in English.

I have a Chinese boyfriend. But we don't usually speak Chinese. We usually speak English. (Transcript, P 8, Lines 2-3)

Even she emphasized that they did not speak Chinese with each other. Her boyfriend still had an impact on her Chinese language learning though, as seen from my interview with her.

My boyfriend has some DVDs, like Japanese animation translated in Chinese. When I watch them, I listen to it and I read the translation. (Transcript, P 8, Lines 10-11)

Travis, the male student, had Chinese friends who had a great impact on his decision to learn Chinese.

My mother has a bunch of Chinese friends. They taught me how to use chopsticks when I was five years old. One of my aunts, she is not my real aunt. She is from Hong Kong. I always talk to her. She is trying to learn Chinese; she has forgotten how to speak (Chinese). And my Mom is trying to learn (Chinese). She has a lot of Chinese friends. When she first came here, one of them, the one from Hong Kong, became her roommate. She has become one of my aunts. Also, my family has taken in about four Chinese students. In my house there is the home-stay program. Four Chinese students lived with us. The first one is the one I went to China with. She took me back to visit his family for a couple of weeks. She stayed there and came back again. She got married there. (Transcript, P 6, Lines 5-14)

Susan and Amber were two heritage students raised in the Chinese culture. They speak Cantonese at home. Cantonese uses traditional characters instead of simplified characters, and the pronunciations are quite different. Both families celebrate Chinese New Year and cook Chinese food.

All the participants had Chinese people around them. The three non-heritage Canadian participants had Chinese boyfriends. The only male student had Chinese friends and hosted Chinese international students. Two heritage students came from families with Chinese parents. And these people played an important role in their decisions to learn Chinese.

Theme Three: Motivations and Chinese Economic Growth

We all know that China is growing economically, but do people learn Chinese because of this growth? My findings say “yes”. Their Chinese language learning decisions had something to do with China itself. As a Chinese person, I could feel the growth. Because of its growth, more people like me, the international Chinese student, could afford to come to Canada to study. Therefore, more people like Sarah and Kori had the chance to get to know their Chinese boyfriends here in Canada. And Travis had the chance to host Chinese students and then come into Chinese language learning. Because of the opening-up policy, China is growing, and people like Angela had the chance to go to China and met their Chinese boyfriends. All six participants mentioned the growth in China and the fact that more Chinese people are overseas.

Angela:

The Chinese language is becoming important. Chinese are becoming popular. Chinese are becoming more and more important. I never heard that more and more people are learning Chinese. (Transcript, P 3, Lines 22-23)

Sarah:

I made a lot of Chinese friends. I like to watch world news. I am very interested in news about the Chinese. The economy and the growth, I can see it. You guys grow very fast, which is very interesting. The whole world is trying to catch up with the growth. (Transcript, P 4, Lines 26-28)

Travis:

A lot of my friends are trying to learn Chinese right now. Because - I don't know - it is a growing language. It is very much the way French has grown already. Because there are a lot of Chinese people in Canada and the US and Europe too. (Transcript, P 7, Lines 26-28)

Kori:

A lot of Chinese go abroad, go to other countries. There are more and more opportunities to talk to them. (Transcript, P 8, Lines 38-39)

Susan:

Because China is expanding, getting stronger. Economic change. It is becoming greater. (Transcript, P 10, Lines 14-15)

Amber:

China is getting so big, I think it will definitely be a very important language. (Transcript, P 11, Line 16)

Beliefs

My second objective of this study was to find out about Chinese language learners' beliefs toward this language: their personal feelings and thoughts about Chinese language, and Chinese language learning. People have different language beliefs according to their different language backgrounds, language

learning experience and language skill level. I did not want to generalize their beliefs since I interpreted their feelings and the reader may have his/her own judgment. I simply put my participants' thoughts here and give my comments and thoughts about their beliefs.

There are five themes: 1) difficulty of the Chinese language, 2) speaking versus writing, 3) learning strategies, 4) language use opportunities, and 5) learning goals.

Theme One: Difficulty of the Chinese Language

When it comes to Chinese, most people think the language is very difficult. So my first concern when I designed this research was: do you think Chinese is a difficult language? To my big surprise, not all people thought Chinese was difficult. Let's see how my two first-year students answered this question.

Angela:

I guess some parts are really difficult. Some parts are easy. One of the things that I think is really hard about learning Chinese is that you cannot look it up in a dictionary. You see a sign but you cannot look it up in a dictionary very easily. When you learn another language with letters and alphabets, it is easy to look it up in a dictionary. This is what the sign means. But in Chinese, that's a pretty picture. I don't know, I think it is really hard when it comes to read and write Chinese, because you can't just figure it out by how the words sound. You cannot guess. Either you know it or you don't know it. You can't make it up. But I think learning to

speak Chinese, it is not actually so hard. Chinese doesn't have such a complicated grammar - things with verbs as English or Spanish or French or something. You can say I eat apple. You know "I" and you know the verb and you know the noun. You can make a sentence and people would understand you. But if you did that in English, nobody would understand you and it would be very strange. I eat an apple, I ate or I will. People figure it out but in English, it's when and why, give me more information. With verbs, Chinese is much easier. (Transcript, P 2, Lines 25-37)

Sarah:

Before, hard. I look at these characters, what the world is going on here? Everybody is telling me it is so hard and so hard. That was my feeling before. I don't think it is difficult anymore. The feeling disappeared. But it is not easy. It is challenging but not difficult. I don't know why people say it is so hard. It is simpler than the English language, because the English language has so many grammar things in it. English has too many verbs. English is so hard. (Transcript, P 4-5, Lines 41-44, 1)

To Angela and Sarah, the Chinese language was not that difficult as they thought before they started learning it. My understanding is that since they expected the Chinese language to be difficult and the introductory course was easy to learn, that is why they had this feeling. Did the intermediate students have the same feeling?

Travis:

It is getting tougher. There are a lot of characters to remember. Last year I cannot remember how many. Getting to be a lot. You really practice. You forgot the old one. If there is Pinyin, I can read them. You only remember the new one. I need to practice. Not really. The only reason that it is hard is there are more characters. (Transcript, P 6, Lines 38-42)

Kori:

The first year, not very difficult. Cannot say easy but not difficult. Second year is more difficult. (Transcript, P 8, Lines 17-18)

As the Chinese language level increased, the Chinese language learners felt the Chinese language was getting difficult. Was this true for the advance level students?

Susan:

I think actually it is difficult. I would say it is the most difficult language to learn. Because it is not everything when you learn the character. The actions are that you memorize the character. It is not like English where you can sound out the letter together about the word and figure it out. You actually have to memorize everything. If you were taught 2000 words, I can only know 2000. (Transcript, P 9, Lines 37-41)

Amber:

MOTIVATIONS, BELIEFS, AND CHINESE LANGUAGE LEARNING 55

Maybe because I speak Cantonese, it is easier for me to learn. But I think in general, Chinese is very difficult because there are so many words, so many characters, and grammar and stuff like that. (Transcript, P 10, Lines 39-41)

As mentioned by my interviewees, I agree that as the level increases, people's beliefs toward the difficulty of the language changed, from not difficult to getting difficult to very difficult.

I also asked them how much effort they had put into learning Chinese, which was followed by the difficulty of Chinese. I wanted to see if they made efforts to learn this language. I found that people with stronger motivations would make more effort in the Chinese language learning. Sarah and Travis were the students with strong motivations.

Sarah:

I tried to practice as much as I can. Read my textbook, I do anything that will help me engage in the language. (Transcript, P 5, Lines 3-5)

Travis:

Between the classes. I don't have time. I make schedules all the time. About an hour and a half a day. (Transcript, P 6, Lines 43-44).

But students with a not-as-strong motivation said:

I don't have that kind of opportunity to watch a movie to learn Chinese. Or: I have been busy with my other courses. (Transcript, P8, Lines 17, 19)

Theme Two: Speaking Versus Writing

I asked this question because when I learned English in China, reading and writing was more important to me as we had to pass every English exam which consisted of reading, comprehension and essay writing. All my effort was put into memorizing all the words and grammar. I was afraid to talk in English. Here I noticed many Chinese learners could speak good Chinese but they could not read well. Was it because the Chinese characters are so difficult or people had different beliefs towards learning a foreign language? Five of my six interviewees agreed that speaking was more important than reading and writing. Language is a tool to communicate; that was their reason to think so.

Angela:

I used to think that speaking was the most important. And I still think speaking is more important than reading and writing. Because you can communicate with people. (Transcript, P 2, Lines 42-43)

Sarah:

Maybe when I go to China, speaking would be important first. Because you are going to face the people and you are going to want to know what they say. Reading and writing, kind of secondary. (Transcript, P 5, Lines 9-11)

Travis:

Reading is easier than speaking, I find. When I speak and someone talks in Chinese, I think a lot of what to say. Now when it comes to reading, I can just read very quickly. (Transcript, P 7, Lines 3-4)

Kori:

I think reading and speaking are important. When we try to learn from the book, reading is important. Speaking is very important to communicate. Everything is important. (Transcript, P 8, Lines 22-23)

Susan:

I think speaking first. At least you can communicate with someone. And then comes reading and writing. (Transcript, P 9-10, Lines 44, 1)

Amber:

Maybe speaking is more important. Then you can communicate. Reading and writing are definitely important. Speaking is a place to start. (Transcript, P 110-11, Lines 44, 1)

Theme Three: Learning Strategies

How do people learn Chinese? We memorize every character. Do individuals have other ways?

Angela:

I think it is important to practice. Actually try to use whatever I learned. But try to use it as much as possible. Also, you heard Chinese pie? I used to listen to that on the bus. Practicing probably is really important. You can hear, you can hear different things, different words used in different ways. Having a language feeling is very important. You get it from a book, you don't speak it. It really did help me. When you were listening, even though I was not focusing on what I learn, being in the environment, when you hear it, it is really helpful. (Transcript, P 3, Lines 4-10)

Sarah:

First, I would watch Chinese movies. Second, I will try to cook Chinese food and go to the restaurant, because you can get familiar with the characters that are on the menu. Going on the internet. I tried to change my email language setting. I try to guess what it says but I don't know what it says. Putting much of language in your way. Just try to make it come to you. I try to get Chinese medicine. Started to read the bottom. Reading especially is a good one. Just practicing reading. Just take a lot of practice. (Transcript, P 5, Lines 15-20)

Travis:

What I usually do is just write characters a lot. I look it up in a dictionary or on the internet. (Transcript, P 7, Line 7)

Kori:

First reading from the class. Talk with a Chinese native speaker. They have correct pronunciation. Watch a video or DVD. (Transcript, P 8, Lines 25-26)

Susan:

I think memorizing. There are no strategies really. But sometime because I have a Cantonese background, we say things in Cantonese. When I look at the textbook, I noticed "do not say it that way". I have to memorize, do not like Cantonese, you know what I mean. (Transcript, P 10, Lines 3-5)

Amber:

You need a lot of practice. Speak to someone who already knows how to speak. Because you can learn a bunch of stuff from a textbook, but it is not always what they are saying. I think it is important to speak it. We could have an oral class, that would be good. Maybe watching a movie. Trying to read a newspaper. Something like that. (Transcript, P 11, Lines 3-6)

Overall my participants used different strategies to learn the Chinese language. When it came to listening and speaking, some learned Chinese through watching Chinese movies, others by talking with Chinese people. When it came to reading and writing, they read textbooks or newspapers and tried to memorize characters. These are good ways to learn a language. However, learning a language is not just learning characters or words. It, to most degree, is learning a culture. Culture and thought are embodied in a language. When you know the culture, it helps you know deeply the meaning of a word. Some of the strategies my

participants used, interaction with Chinese people, making friends with international Chinese friends, and joining celebrations of Chinese festivals, is learning a culture, which will help them better understand Chinese and better learn Chinese. In my study, Sarah, one of my participants, learned Chinese by practicing Kong Fu with Chinese people.

Theme Four: Language use Opportunities

In China, learning English means good job opportunities. You could work in world-famous companies. How are the job opportunities here in Canada, and specifically Manitoba? Job opportunities include working in the immigration office or banks. Do students have the chance to use the Chinese they are learning?

Angela:

I am interested in working, but have not decided. One of my things when I finish my degree is to work at immigration with refugees getting settled in Canada. There are not as many immigrants, as I think a lot of Chinese immigrants don't have Chinese refugee status and are not coming anymore. There are immigrants coming. (Transcript, P 3, Lines 12-15)

Susan:

I think I might have an opportunity, because I am trying to actually apply for a bank job. Hopefully. (Transcript, P 10, Lines 7-8)

Where do they use Chinese? At the Chinese store, restaurant and community gatherings or celebrations, or family dinners with Chinese friends.

Sarah:

Everywhere. When I go to the shopping store, there is a grocery shop just 5 minutes away from my house. And I am so upset because all that food, half of them don't have the English translation. I need to learn what they say. Chinese students everywhere you go, it is a good way to engage and make friends. If you are surrounded by students all the time, you might as well get to know some here and be comfortable with them being here. I want to be in a room with hundreds of Chinese students. To get comfortable by opening yourself. (Transcript, P 5, Lines 23-28)

Travis:

Just with family friends. Because I always speak to them. We go for dinner with them. They try to talk to me in Chinese so I can understand them. (Transcript, P 7, Lines 8-9)

Kori:

Maybe join some Chinese community. I went to the spring festival. In the university, in the class, we find some Chinese students. I can hear to communicate in Chinese. (Transcript, P 8, Lines 28-29)

Amber:

I think it depends. Like where you hang out. Where you work. If you are close to Chinatown, maybe you have more opportunities. Where there are a lot of Chinese people, most everything is in English. Even in Chinese restaurants, they have English services. (Transcript, P 11, Lines 8-10)

Theme Five: Learning Goals

My ultimate goal was to speak fluent English as I hoped that English could change my life. I came to live in Canada. What are the students' goals? Do they want to go to China and live there? For my four non-heritage Canadian students, speaking fluent Chinese was their goal. The two heritage Canadian students wanted to be fluent in reading and writing.

Angela:

Be able to actually work in Chinese. Go to China. Live there more easily. (Transcript, P 3, Lines 21-22)

Sarah:

I'd like to become fluent. Language is important in general. Chinese has so much to it. I don't think I will be able to learn all of the language in my entire lifetime. I would like to become fairly fluent. (Transcript, P 5, Lines 30-35)

Travis:

MOTIVATIONS, BELIEFS, AND CHINESE LANGUAGE LEARNING 63

I want to be able to, if I can, read fluently for sure. And to understand fluently, to be able to speak a little bit. Write a letter. I need to practice with some of my friends in China, maybe try to think of some email to see if it is good. To be able to understand what people are talking randomly. Go to China and be able to talk to my friend's family without thinking about the language all the time. (Transcript, P 7, Lines 16-23)

Kori:

If I can, I want to be like a native speaker. At least I want to communicate. I want to understand what they are talking about and express myself. [Goal] I want to get a job communicating with Chinese people. I will go back to Japan after graduating from the university. There are Japanese companies in China, maybe sometimes I can communicate with them. If I can go to China, I want to go. It depends which level my Chinese is. (Transcript, P 8, Lines 31-36)

Susan:

To learn to read and write, and speak Mandarin specifically. I know Mandarin is a national language. An official language in China. Also, hope for job opportunities. To be able to go back to China to get around more comfortably. And to read new articles, to watch drama without subtitles. (Transcript, P 10, Lines 10-12)

Amber:

I want to be fluent. More fluent in reading and writing. [Goal] I want to be able to watch Chinese movies and understand everything. (Transcript, P 11, Lines 12-13)

Chapter Six: Discussion

The results showed that Chinese language learners had a variety of reasons to learn Chinese. These reasons could not be simply characterized as either instrumental or integrative motivations. They could overlap. One person could have many reasons to learn Chinese. For example, people with communication motivation could want to travel easily with this language. These motivations came from their lived experiences. Chinese people around them played important roles in their decision to learn Chinese. The results also showed that Chinese language learners had different beliefs towards Chinese language. As for the difficulty of this language, they did not think Chinese was difficult as most people think. They thought speaking was more important than writing. In the following pages I will talk about these motivations and beliefs. There will be two parts: motivation and belief. In the motivation section, I will mainly talk about integrative and instrumental motivation, dynamics of motivation, heritage students' motivation, and Chinese international students' influence. In the belief section, I will talk about dynamics of language beliefs, speaking versus writing, Chinese language learning strategies and the use of Chinese.

Motivation

Integrative and Instrumental Motivation

The results showed that Chinese language learners decided to learn Chinese for a variety of reasons. Six different motivations were found in this study. They were cultural interest, communication, friendship, travel, job opportunities and heritage language advantage. These six motivations could not be categorized as either instrumental or integrative motivation. For example, friendship and travel could be instrumental and integrative depending on different situations. Oller (1977) noted that having friends who speak English could be classified in either instrumental or integrative motivation depending on the intent and purpose of the English language learner. In this study, friendship was an integrative motivation. Kori made friends who spoke Chinese in order to communicate with them and be a member of that particular group of Chinese friends. Travel, contrary to friendship, was classified to be instrumental motivation in this study. Travis travelled in order to study people around the world, which would be helpful for his major psychology study. These findings in my study - that friendship and travel could not fit into the instrumental or integrative motivation - were not new. Hussinali (2006) had classified travel abroad as a different motivation from instrumental and integrative motivation in his study. He said travel shared the concept of openness to a new culture and a desire to meet its people (p. 406). Clement (1983) also suggested that friendship and travel should be considered as independent orientations.

Also, instrumental and integrative motivation could be overlapped and coexist. One person could have many reasons. Angela wanted to communicate with her boyfriend's parents and at the same time wanted to live in China to survive and find a job. Travis wanted to communicate with Chinese international students who lived with his family, and he also wants to travel to China to meet different people. A Chinese language learner could have both instrumental motivation and integrative motivation. This finding was consistent with Hussinali's (2006) study. Arabic learners with a strong motivation to learn Arabic for keeping their identification are also motivated to learn it for instrumental motivations.

Dynamics of Motivation

Motivations change. In my study, Angela wanted to survive first and when she made a Chinese boyfriend, she wanted to communicate with her boyfriend's mother. And she wants to find a job when she moves to China. Travis wanted to communicate and became friends with one of his hosted Chinese international students. He took him to China and now Travis wanted to travel by using Chinese. Dörnyei (1992) said that learners tend to demonstrate a fluctuating level of commitment even with a single lesson, and the variation in their motivation over a longer period (e.g., a whole academic term) can be dramatic (p. 17).

Although this study was not a longitudinal study (there are three levels and two students from each level), their motivations could still tell us that as levels of instruction advanced, students' motivations changed. The first-year students had a stronger motivation as they started this program with excitement. The differences

among students at different levels were that the first-year students were much more interested in the culture. They intended to use Chinese as a way to know Chinese people and learn about the Chinese culture. They were highly intrinsically motivated to learn more about Chinese culture, whereas the second-year students had broader motivations. They were more language oriented. They thought much of their major and future career related to the Chinese language. What were they going to do with the Chinese language? Third-year students had the least strong motivation. They were thinking of what kind of job could they find by using the Chinese language they had learned. What advantage could the Chinese language bring them in their job hunting? The first year was integrative motivation. The second year was friendship and travelling. The third year was instrumental-like job motivation. As I found in the literature review, motivation could change over time. Although these were six different students, there was no comparison. As the levels advanced, their motivations changed.

Heritage Student Motivation

It was not my purpose to interview heritage students since I know they study this language mostly because of their self-concept or cultural roots. However, during the recruitment process, two students from the advance class responded to me. There was only one non-heritage student in that class and she seldom came to that class. However, my heritage participants wanted job opportunities and to take heritage language advantage to learn Chinese well. This finding is not consistent with Wen's (1997) study. Her study indicated that an intrinsic interest in Chinese culture and the desire to understand one's own cultural heritage are the

initial motivations for Asian or Asian-American background students to start learning the Chinese language. This difference has reasons. My participants came from an advanced level while Wen's participants came from the beginning class. As levels changed, their motivations changed too.

International Chinese Students' Influence on Motivation

This study revealed that life experiences with Chinese people had aroused their interest in Chinese language learning. In this study, all participants' decisions to learn Chinese were indirectly influenced by China's rapidly growing economy. Because of the rapid economic growth, more parents in China could afford to send their only child to study overseas, like in Canada. According to statistics, there are currently more than 42,000 Chinese students studying in Canada (Office of the Prime Minister, October 28, 2009). Li (2004) studied the challenges four Chinese international students faced during their living and studying in a Canadian university. She also noticed the dramatic increase in the number of Chinese international students in Canada. Although there were many problems they may encounter during their adjustment to a culturally different social milieu, there were benefits they could bring to Canadians. Because of the huge population of international Chinese students in Canada, university students in Canada have more opportunities to connect with Chinese people, thus using the Chinese language. In my study, two of the six participants have Chinese international students as their boyfriends, which definitely affected their decision to learn Chinese. Whether it was a heart- broken experience with a Chinese boyfriend like

Sarah, or living a happy life with a Chinese boyfriend like Kori, Chinese boyfriends played an important role in their decision to learn Chinese.

Language Belief

Dynamics of Language Beliefs

My research results showed that Chinese language learners at the first year level held beliefs different from those held by learners at the more advanced levels. This finding was consistent with Rifkin (2000), who surveyed 1000 students at different levels. After comparing beliefs held by different levels, he concluded that people cannot assume that beliefs held by learners at the first-year level are similar to beliefs held by learners at other levels.

Before my study, I thought all students' answers to my question of how difficult you think Chinese is would be "difficult". To my big surprise, in my study Chinese language learners in the first year of Chinese language course did not think the Chinese language was difficult. However, learners in the second year thought the Chinese language was getting difficult and learners in the third year thought it was very difficult. As far as I know, for English-speaking students, studying Chinese language may be difficult. It takes English-speaking students four times longer to reach the same level of language proficiency achieved by learning French or Spanish. The beginner students may have little or no idea of the language of Chinese. When they were introduced to the simple and relatively easy basics of Chinese language in the introductory course, they might think Chinese was not as

hard as they thought. As students received different instructions at different levels, their beliefs towards the difficulty of Chinese changed.

Speaking Versus Writing

In this study, the Chinese language learners showed a strong desire to learn speaking and listening rather than reading and writing. They all thought that speaking was more important than writing. This result confirms the results of a study by Yang (2003), who found that East Asian language students showed a stronger desire for learning speaking and listening than they did for reading and writing. Although students are fascinated by the orthographic calligraphy writing system of Chinese, my study suggests that Chinese should be taught not only as a written language but also a spoken language in a multitude of contexts. Speaking skills should be introduced earlier than reading and writing skills. As a matter of fact, many Chinese instructors begin their introductory language classes with a focus on orthography, because they believe that Chinese characters are difficult and writing systems should be taught as early as possible. However, I am not saying that learning writing Chinese characters is an inefficient use of time for the students as proposed by Allen (2008). Sarah was fond of Chinese characters. She said writing characters was like drawing. It was fun and interesting. Many English-speaking students chose the Chinese course because of the beautiful orthography. Further research on the optimal timing of introducing writing systems and whether current curricula meet students' desires to learn speaking and listening skill is recommended.

Learning Strategies

My participants adopted many learning strategies to learn Chinese. When it came to listening and speaking, some learned Chinese through watching Chinese movies, others by talking with Chinese people. When it came to reading and writing, they read textbooks or newspapers and tried to memorize characters. These findings are consistent with Winke & Abbuhl (2008). In their study of nine learners of Chinese, they indicated that output-based strategies (speaking with native speakers; creating and maintaining a vocabulary notebook), cognition-based strategies (using association to remember words; guessing from context), and input-based strategies (listening to native speakers of the target language; listening to various media) were fundamental to the study of Chinese as a second language. Travis said, "What I usually do is just write characters a lot" (Transcript, P 7, Line 7). His writing down of characters in class or outside of class to practice was an output-based strategy. Sarah imagined characters as pictures. This was coded as a cognition-based strategy, because she made pictures in her mind of the words or phrases to aid recall. Angela tried out her new vocabulary on the long-distance calls with her boyfriend who was a native speaker of Chinese, because she believed it was important to practice new words with a native speaker in order to get correct pronunciation. No matter which strategies my participants adopted, they all helped them with their acquisition of the Chinese language. All the participants indicated that the Chinese writing system made unique demands on their memories, and thus they made conscious efforts to learn Chinese characters. As how to learn Chinese, besides the strategies mentioned above, I

also agree with the statement, “attitude and motivation were in many instances the best overall predictors of success in second language learning” (p. 66).

The Use of Chinese

My study showed that students used Chinese at the Chinese store, restaurant, Chinese community gatherings or celebrations, or family dinners with Chinese friends. There are job opportunities including working in the immigration office or banks. Most participants agreed there were not so many opportunities for them to use Chinese. Since the university where I conducted my study is located in mid-western Canada, there are not as many Chinese immigrants or Chinese international students as in Vancouver or Toronto. Therefore, the chance of using Chinese is relatively limited. However, I believe the chance to use Chinese will increase. As the Chinese open-up policy continues, Canadian people will get more chances to travel to China or do business with Chinese people. In 2010 the Canadian travel market opened to Chinese visitors, and so there will be more job opportunities in the travel industry and consumer market in Canada. Canadian people will have more chances to use Chinese. Besides, knowledge of a language other than English will be even more important in the globalized world.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion and Implications

Learning motivation and language belief have been widely discussed in the late 1980s and 1990s. Those discussions were based on learning English as a foreign or second language. As more and more people around the world were learning Chinese as a foreign or second language, the relationship between motivations, beliefs and Chinese language learning became the researchers' new topic, which will add a new perspective to second language acquisition and the field of learning motivation. This study is an initial project to examine Chinese language learners' motivations to learn Chinese, their beliefs about Chinese language and Chinese language learning in a Canadian context. This research derived from Chinese language phenomenon around the world, Chinese being my mother tongue, my personal experiences of learning English in China and Canada, my teaching experiences in Asian Studies at the University of Manitoba, my interest to know Canadian university students' motivation to learn Chinese, and the pilot project I conducted during my second year study of my Master's program. It is my hope this study will provide Chinese language teachers with a basic understanding of Chinese language students' motivations and beliefs, thus enabling them to teach more effectively and efficiently. I hope my study will benefit students, helping them to understand this language well and learn it in a better way. It is also my big hope that Chinese people in China become informed of those who

are learning this language and their motivations and beliefs about the Chinese language. My six participants were students who are learning Chinese in a Canadian university. They are from Japan, an Asian background, Caribbean background, heritage language background, and a Canadian family. They were in some way representative of the diversity of students in a Canadian university.

The motivations for Chinese language learners to enrol in Chinese language courses included a variety of reasons: cultural interest, communication, travel, friendship, job opportunities and heritage language advantage. These motivations came from the students' real life experiences with Chinese people around them. The three female students have or had Chinese boyfriends, the one male student hosted Chinese international students, and the two heritage students came from families with a Chinese background. No big differences were found between the heritage and non-heritage students on their motivations to learn Chinese. One's motivation could change as the level of instruction changed. Cultural interest came from the beginning level students, while the advanced level students had more practical motivations with two students hoping to find good jobs by knowing Chinese.

Chinese language learners held a variety of beliefs towards the Chinese language and Chinese language learning. For the participants from the beginning level, they did not think the Chinese language was difficult. For all six participants, speaking and listening were more important than reading and writing. They adopted different learning strategies; for example, learning by watching movies, memorizing Chinese characters, reading newspapers and surfing internets. They

used Chinese at Chinese supermarkets, restaurants and banks. All my participants believed they would be able to speak Chinese fluently one day. It was encouraging that many students believed they would ultimately learn Chinese well. Clearly we teachers should continue to provide strong encouragement to our students, and we should also help them meet their expectations by presenting specific course objectives. By listening closely to them, it may be possible to significantly motivate our students to achieve their goals.

Limitations of the Study

The first limitation had to do with the generalization of the findings. Since I interviewed only six students, the results reported here were not representative of all Chinese language learners. In some way, these six participants were good Chinese language learners in my view. Some of them had a strong motivation to learn Chinese and made fast progress in a short period, like the two students from the beginning class. Some of them were good students with good learning habits and good self-discipline, like the two students from the intermediate level class. And some of them were good students with good marks on every exam, like the two from the advanced level class. My definition of good language learners was based on the following: their control of a wider variety of linguistic forms or meaning or their speed in acquiring linguistic forms and meaning was greater than their peers, rather than their access to a variety of conversations in their communities as defined by Norton & Toohey (2001). Therefore, my bias towards

good language learners no doubt cropped up in my study. The opinions and beliefs expressed here are not applicable to other students who are learning Chinese.

The second limitation had to do with my own personal stance. As the researcher, I brought too many personal feelings into this study. The longest time I had known some of the participants had been three years. During those three years, I was their TA, their substitute instructor and their friend after class. I know some of them very well. Although my interviews lasted only about one hour, I knew more about them beyond the interview. However, when I was interviewing them, I did not know who I was in their perspective. Even though the interview was conducted after teaching hours, I believe the participants to some extent still regarded me as their instructor. This power relationship influenced their answers. My last interviewee answered in a very fast way and gave brief answers. My intention to talk with her in openness failed during the interview.

The third limitation was this study only examined a few language beliefs designed in Horwitz's BALLI (Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory). More interesting concepts remained unexplored, such as "it is better to learn a foreign language in the foreign country", or "learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of vocabulary words". I hope further research on Chinese language beliefs will be conducted in the future.

Implications

The findings of this study present three implications.

The first implication is for recruiters of Chinese language programs. The results showed that the Chinese language was not as difficult as many people think. A recruitment approach should be reconsidered when attracting students to register. Instead of using culture to attract students, they should indicate that learning Chinese is not as difficult as people might think, which astounded many students who registered for this language program.

The second implication is for students as to how to motivate themselves. First, for students without the heritage background, they dream of being able to speak the language in a few weeks. They are generally unaware of the demands that will be placed on them. The Chinese writing system is very different from English. It is possible that many Chinese language beginners are fascinated by the writing system but are not aware of the amount of time required to learn Chinese. Quite often, they are excited about learning Chinese and begin their studies with enthusiasm. But this excitement and enthusiasm do not last very long. Many teachers made the observation that although the students are initially very enthusiastic about learning the language, their enthusiasm wanes before the end of the first year. Students who study Chinese for one year gradually understand the importance of memorizing the characters and develop certain strategies to memorize them. At this stage, strategies and effort become the important factors to language achievement. Language learners should adjust their goals and develop new expectations and make more effort.

For students with an Asian background, such as Japanese, Korean or a Chinese person who speaks Cantonese, they enrol in the Chinese language

course for two main reasons. First, they are interested in their own Asian culture. Second, they expect this course may be less demanding than other courses because they know how to write characters. However, they may find a big difference between what they know and what a formal university Chinese course requires. Students should realize the great commitment the course requires and should be willing to make considerable effort in the time-consuming process of Chinese language learning.

The third implication is for teachers as to how to motivate students. For non-heritage students, maintaining their interest in the Chinese culture motivates them to learn the language. Teach them the basic spoken Chinese language and protocol and encourage them to use it by actively interacting with Chinese people around them. Make learning Chinese characters more fun and easy to remember, and encourage students to write and practice more often as there is no easy way to remember these characters except by memorizing. Create a more authentic Chinese learning environment such as students speaking Chinese when eating Chinese food at lunch time. For heritage students, provide them with more challenging homework. Rather than memorizing characters, they should be assigned to make sentences with new words or even write small essays or diaries in Chinese. Put higher expectations on their performance since too-easy classes will cause them to lose their motivation. Ask them to adjust their learning goals to higher levels, such as the academic goal of learning Chinese. Let them know that learning Chinese is not just for communication but can be for a professional career.

Conclusion

In the Chinese language learning program, the different motivations of Chinese learners formed by their different cultural backgrounds and different life experiences should be understood. Keeping these learners motivated will help them achieve high levels of proficiency in Chinese in shorter periods of time. I suggest offering different content to different levels of learners. However, further research is needed to determine the most appropriate type of content that will ensure high levels of motivation among heritage learners and non-heritage learners. Their own personal interest and cultural interest are important factors for the non-heritage students. Thus maintaining the students' interest in the Chinese culture is especially important in motivating them to learn Chinese. Teachers should consider student interest when developing curricula and instruction methods.

In conclusion, this study provided certain information about Chinese language learners' motivations for studying Chinese and their beliefs about Chinese language learning, including the difficulty of Chinese language, the importance of speaking, learning strategies and learning goals. Although some motivations and beliefs are obvious, there are surprising findings. Motivations and beliefs changed as students moved from one level to another. International students in Canada played important roles in Canadian students' decisions to enrol in Chinese classes. And the Chinese language is not that difficult for the beginning students. These

findings are beneficial for curriculum designers, language instructors and recruiters.

References

- Allen, J. R. (2008). Why learning to write Chinese is a waste of time: A modest proposal. *Foreign Language Annals*, 41(2), 237-251.
- Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (2007). *Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theory and Methods* (5th edn). Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Bolton, N. (1979). Phenomenology and education. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 27(3), 245-258.
- Brown, J. S. (1953). Problems presented by the concept of acquired drives. In Levine, F. M. (Ed.). *Theoretical Readings in Motivation: Perspectives on Human Behavior* (pp.37-53). Chicago: Rand McNally College Publishing Company.
- Chen, J.F., Warden, C. A., & Chang, H. T. (2005). Motivators that do not motivate: The case of Chinese EFL learners and the influence of Culture on Motivation. *TESOL Quarterly*, 39(4), 609-633.
- Clement, R., & Kruidenier, B. (1983). Orientations on second language acquisition: 1. The effects of ethnicity, milieu and their target language on their emergence. *Language Learning*, 33, 273–291.
- Crookes, G., & Schmidt R. W. (1991). Motivation: Reopening the research agenda. *Language Learning*, 41(4), 469-512.
- Davis, A. (2003). Teachers' and students' beliefs regarding aspects of language learning. *Evaluation & Research in Education*, 17(4), 207-222.

- Dörnyei, Z. (1990). Conceptualizing motivation in foreign language learning. *Language Learning*, 40, 46–78.
- Dörnyei, Z. (1994). Understanding L2 Motivation: On with the Challenge! *Modern Language Journal*, 78, 515-523.
- Dörnyei, Z., & Otto, I. (1998). Motivation in action: A process model of L2 motivation. In C. Roberts (Ed.), *Working papers in applied linguistics*, 4, 43–69.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2001b). *Motivational Strategies in the Language Classroom*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2001c). New themes and approaches in L2 motivation research. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 21, 43–59.
- Ely, C.M. (1986). Language learning motivation: A descriptive and causal analysis. *The Modern Language Journal*, 70, 28-35.
- Fan, M. Y. (2003). Frequency of use, perceived usefulness, and actual usefulness of second language vocabulary strategies: A study of Hong Kong learners. *Modern Language Journal*, 87(2), 222–241.
- Fathman, A. K. (1976). Variables affecting the successful learning of English as a second language. *TESOL Quarterly*, 10(4), 433-441.
- Festinger, L. (1957). A theory of social comparison processes. In Levine, F. M. (Ed.). *Theoretical Readings in Motivation: Perspectives on Human Behavior* (pp.238-262). Chicago: Rand McNally College Publishing Company.
- Freud, S. (1949). Instincts and Their Vicissitudes. In Levine, F. M. (Ed.). *Theoretical Readings in Motivation: Perspectives on Human Behavior* (pp.4-11). Chicago: Rand McNally College Publishing Company.

- Gardner, R. C., & Lambert, W.E. (1959). Motivational variables in second-language acquisition. *Canadian Journal of Psychology*, 13, 266-272.
- Gardner, R. C. (1968). Attitudes and motivation: Their role in second-language acquisition. *TESOL Quarterly*, 2(3), 141-150.
- Gardner, R.C., & Lambert, W.E. (1972). *Attitudes and Motivation in Second Language Learning*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
- Gardner, R. C., & Tremblay, P. F. (1994). On motivation: Measurement and conceptual considerations. *Modern Language Journal*, 78, 524–527.
- Gardner, R. C., & Masgoret, A. (1999). Home background characteristics and second language learning. *Journal of Language & Social Psychology*, 18(4), 419.
- Gardner, R., Masgoret, A. M., Tennant, J., & Mihic, L. (2004). Integrative motivation: Changes during a year-long intermediate-level language course. *Language Learning*, 54, 1–34.
- Gu, Y., & Johnson, R. K. (1996). Vocabulary learning strategies and language learning outcomes. *Language Learning*, 46(4), 643–697.
- Henrandez, T. (2006). Integrative motivation as a predictor of success in the intermediate foreign language classroom. *Foreign Language Annals*, 39(4), 605- 617.
- Horwitz, E. K. (1988). The Beliefs about language learning of beginning university foreign language students. *Modern Language Journal*, 72(3), 283-294.
- Horwitz, E. K. (1985). Using student beliefs about language learning and teaching in the foreign language methods course. *Foreign Language Annals*, 18, 333-340.

- Husseinali, G. (2006). Who is studying Arabic and why? A survey of Arabic students' orientations at a major university. *Foreign Language Annals*, 39(3), 395-412.
- Kern, R.G. (1995) Students' and teachers' beliefs about language learning. *Foreign Language Annals*, 28 (1), 71_92.
- Krashen, S. (1982). *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Pergamon.
- Kouritzin, S. (1999). *Facets of First Language Loss*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Kouritzin, S. (2000). A mother's tongue. *TESOL Quarterly*, 34(2), 311-324.
- Kouritzin, S. (2002). The "Half-Baked" concept of "Raw" data in ethnographic observation. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 27(1), 119-138.
- Kouritzin, S., Piquemal, N., & Nakagawa, S. (2007). Pre-service teacher beliefs about foreign language teaching and learning. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 28(3), 220-237.
- Laine, E. (1984). Variations in FL Learning Motivation: Some Theoretical Consideration Paper presented at AILA, Brussels, Belgium.
- Lamb, M. (2007). The impact of school on EFL learning motivation: an Indonesian Case study. *TESOL Quarterly*, 41(4), 757-780.
- Li, Y. (2004). Learning to live and study in Canada: Stories of four EFL learners from China. *TESL Canada*, 22(1), 25-43.
- Lukmani, Y.M. (1972). Motivation to learn and learning proficiency. *Language Learning*, 22, 261-273.

- Mandell, P. B. (2002). On the background and motivation of students in a beginning Spanish program. *Foreign Language Annals*, 35(5), 530-542.
- Maslow, A. H. (1970). *Motivation and Personality* (2nd edn). New York: Harper & Row, Publishers.
- McDuffie, M. (1996). Phenomenology. In J.J.Chambliss (ed.), *Philosophy of Education: An Encyclopedia* (pp.450-455). New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc.
- McMillan, J. H. (2004). *Educational Research: Fundamentals for the Consumer* (4th edn). Pearson Education, Inc.
- Noels, K.A. (2005). Orientations to learning German: Heritage language learning and motivational substrates. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 62(2). 285-312.
- Noels, K. A., Cle´ment, R., & Pelletier, L. G. (1999). Perceptions of teacher communicative style and students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. *Modern Language Journal*, 83, 23–34.
- Norton, B., & Toohey, K. (2001). Changing perspectives on good language learners. *TESOL Quarterly*, 35(2), 307-322.
- Norton, B. (2000). *Identity and language learning: Social processes and educational practice*. London: Longman.
- Oller, J., Baca, L., & Vigil, F. (1977). Attitudes and attained proficiency in ESL: a sociolinguistic study of Mexican Americans in the southwest. *TESOL Quarterly*, 11(2), 173-183.
- Ossipov, H. (2000). Who is taking French and why? *Foreign Language Annals*, 33(2), 157-167.

- Oxford, R. (1993). Japanese by satellite: Effects of motivation, language learning styles and strategies, gender, course level, and previous language learning experience on Japanese language achievement. *Foreign Language Annals*, 26(3), 359.
- Oxford, R., & Shearin, J. (1994). Language learning motivation: expanding the theoretical framework. *Modern Language Journal*, 78, 12-28.
- Rifkin, B. (2000) Revisiting beliefs about foreign language learning. *Foreign Language Annals* 33 (4), 394_420.
- Strong, M. (1984). Integrative motivation: Cause or effect of successful second language learning. *Language Learning*, 34, 1-14.
- Svanes, B. (1987). Motivation and cultural distance in second language acquisition. *Language Learning*, 37, 341-359.
- Schumann, J. H. (1975b). Affective factors and the problem of age in second language acquisition. *Language Learning*, 25, 209-236.
- Schumann, J. (1978). The acculturation model for second language acquisition. In R. Gingras (Ed.), *Second language acquisition and foreign language teaching* (pp.27–50). Arlington, VA: Center for Applied Linguistics.
- Spolsky, B. (1969). Attitudinal aspects of second language learning. *Language Learning*, 19, 271-183.
- Ushioda, E. (1996). Developing a dynamic concept of L2 motivation. In T. Hickey & J. Williams (Eds.), *Language, education and society in a changing world* (pp. 239–245). Dublin, Ireland: IRAAL/Multilingual Matters.

- Ushioda, E. (2006). Language motivation in a reconfigured Europe: Access, identity, autonomy. *Journal of Multicultural and Multilingual Development*, 27, 148–161.
- Van Lier, L. (1996). *Interaction in the language curriculum: Awareness, autonomy, and authenticity*. London: Longman.
- Van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching lived experience: Human Science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. London, Ontario: The Althouse Press.
- Warden, C. A., & Lin, H. J. (2000). Existence of integrative motivation in an Asian EFL setting. *Foreign Language Annals*, 33(5), 535–547.
- Wen, X. (1997). Motivation and Language Learning with Students of Chinese. *Foreign Language Annals*, 30(2), 235-245.
- White, R. V. (1971). Activating advanced ESL students: A problem and a solution. *TESOL Quarterly*, 5(3), 231-238.
- Williams, M. & Burden, R. (1999). Students' developing conceptions of themselves as language learners. *Modern Language Journal*, 83(2), 193-201.
- Winke, P. M. & Abbuhl, R. (2007). Taking a closer look at vocabulary learning strategies: A study of a Chinese foreign language class. *Foreign Language Annals*, 40(4), 697-712.
- Yang, J. S. R. (2003). Motivational orientations and selected learner variables of East Asian language learners in the United States. *Foreign Language Annals*, 36(1), 44-56.

Appendices

Appendix A

Informed Consent

(To be copied on University of Manitoba letterhead)

Research Project Title: Motivations, Beliefs, and Chinese Language Learning: A Phenomenological Study in a Canadian University

Researcher(s): Xuping Sun, Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

My name is Xuping Sun. I am a master's student of the faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba. I am conducting a study on motivations, beliefs, and Chinese language learning. This project is to fulfill my Master's thesis requirements. My thesis advisor is Dr. Sandra Kouritzin from Faculty of Education at the

MOTIVATIONS, BELIEFS, AND CHINESE LANGUAGE LEARNING 90

University to Manitoba. The purpose of this study is to investigate the phenomenon of Chinese language learning in the Canadian context. There are two objectives. One is to examine the motivations of students who are learning Chinese in a Canadian university. The other is to describe these student's beliefs about Chinese language, such as the difficulty of Chinese language and the learning strategies you used for learning this language.

This project will be conducted from April to August 2010. It will involve one interview of no longer than 60 minutes at a mutually convenient time and location on campus. Questions such as why you chose learning Chinese and what learning strategies you used to learn this language will be asked. The interview will be audio-taped and transcribed verbatim. At the beginning of the interview, you will be offered the opportunity to select a pseudonym to protect your identity. During the interview, you may refuse to answer any question and can withdraw from the interview at any time. It will be my goal to listen carefully to your lived experiences. All the interviews afterward will be transcribed into text data by me and the audio-taped interviews will be deleted from the recorder immediately after the transcribing. All the transcribed data will be locked in a filing cabinet of mine located in my study room at my house. No one except me can get access to the cabinet and the transcribed text data can only be accessible by me and my supervisor, Dr. Sandra Kouritzin. You will be asked to check the transcription to ensure the accuracy of the content. I will contact you by phone or email after the transcribing in May or June and hand you a copy of transcription on campus or mail to you if you prefer. If you have any questions after your check, please contact

me by phone or email to let me know. The text data will be analyzed and collected into my Master's thesis project and they will be shredded immediately after I successfully defended my thesis. This thesis project may be presented at national or international conferences, and it may be published in academic journals. There will be some direct quotations (with pseudonym) used in the final report. However, subject's names will not appear anywhere in the transcribed data or final paper to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of participants. All data will be carefully protected by using a pseudonym instead of your name and no identifying information will be included in the description of the participants or in the written research findings.

I would like to assure you that there is no risk for participating in this study. The potential benefit for you might be a better understanding of your motivations and beliefs on Chinese language learning and thus might help you better learn this language. Participation in the study is entirely voluntary. There is no compensation for participation. You can withdraw at any time without any consequence by indicating this decision to me and I will clear the interview recording right away. The informed consent sheet containing your name will not be kept with the data, avoiding the possibility of connecting your name to any information that you have given. If you are interested in the final research results, I will send you a copy of the final results once the study is completed.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project

I would like to receive a summary report of the findings:

YES

NO

If you choose "Yes", please include your postal or electronic address where the researcher can send you a summary of the results.

Via e-mail:

Via mail: :

Appendix B

Permission Letter

(To be copied on University of Manitoba letterhead)

February 21, 2010

Dear Professor,

I am writing to request your permission to recruit your students to participate in my research project. This project is to fulfill my Master's thesis requirements. The research title is **motivations, beliefs, and Chinese Language Learning: A Phenomenological study in a Canadian University**. My thesis advisor is Dr. Sandra Kouritzin from Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba. The purpose of this study is to investigate the phenomenon of Chinese language learning in the Canadian context. There are two objectives: one is to examine the motivations of students who are learning Chinese in a Canadian university; the other is to describe these student's beliefs about Chinese language, such as the difficulty of Chinese language and the learning strategies they adopted to learn Chinese.

The study will be conducted from April 2010 to August 2010. It will involve an audio-taped interview of no longer than 60 minutes at a mutually convenient time on campus. Questions such as why you chose learning Chinese and what learning strategies you used to learn Chinese, etc. will be asked. The interview will be audio-taped and transcribed verbatim. All information will be kept confidential. Interviewees' real names and any identifying information will not appear anywhere in the results or the final report. In order for you to better understand the purpose and process of the study, and the ethical issues under consideration, I have attached a copy of the informed consent letter that will be signed by all participants.

I would like to request your permission and assistance to recruit participants for my study. Basically, I would ask a friend of mine to go to your classes in March 2010 to invite students to participate in my study. She will introduce herself, explain why she is there and hand out the invitation letters to the students, which will need approximately 5 minutes. A copy of the script and invitation letter has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

I would like to assure you that there is no risk for participating in this study. The potential benefit for participant might be a better understanding of their motivations and beliefs on Chinese language learning thus help them better learn this language. Participation in the study will be entirely voluntary. Participants can withdraw at any time without any consequences. I would also like to assure you that this research has been approved by the Education/Nursing Research Ethics

Board in the University of Manitoba. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact Human Ethics Secretary. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

If you would like more information regarding this study, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you.

Yours Sincerely,

Xuping Sun

Appendix C

Invitation letter for voluntary participation

(To be copied on University of Manitoba letterhead)

February 21, 2010

Dear students,

I am Xuping Sun. I am conducting a study on motivations, beliefs, and Chinese language learning. This project is to fulfill my Master's thesis requirements. The purpose of this study is to investigate the phenomenon of Chinese language learning in the Canadian context. There are two objectives: one is to examine the motivations of students who are learning Chinese in a Canadian university; the other is to describe these student's beliefs about Chinese language, such as the difficulty of Chinese language and the learning strategies they adopted to learn Chinese.

This project will be conducted from April to August 2010. It will involve an interview of no longer than 60 minutes at a mutually convenient time on campus. Questions such as why you chose learning Chinese and what learning strategies you used to

learn this language will be asked. The interview will be audio-taped and transcribed verbatim. At the beginning of the interview, you will be offered the opportunity to select a pseudonym to protect your identity. During the interview, you may refuse to answer any question and can withdraw from the interview at any time. It will be my goal to listen carefully to your lived experiences. All the interviews afterward will be transcribed into text data and the audio-taped interviews will be deleted from the recorder immediately after the transcribing. All the transcribed data will be locked in a filing cabinet of mine located in my study room. No one except me can get accessed to the cabinet and the transcribed text data can only be accessible by me and my supervisor, Dr. Sandra Kouritzin. You will be asked to check the transcription to ensure the accuracy of the content. I will contact you by phone or email after the transcribing in May or June and hand you a copy of transcription on campus or mail to you if you prefer. If you have any questions after your check, please contact me by phone or email to let me know. The text data will be analyzed and collected into my Master's thesis project and they will be shredded immediately after I successfully defended my thesis. This thesis project may be presented at national or international conferences, and it may be published in academic journals. However, all data will be carefully protected by using a pseudonym instead of your name to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of you and no identifying information will be included in the description of the participants or in the written research findings.

I would like to assure you that there is no risk for participating in this study. The potential benefit for you might be a better understanding of your motivations and

beliefs on Chinese language learning and thus might help you better learn this language. Participation in the study is entirely voluntary. You can withdraw at any time without any consequence by indicating this decision to me and I will clear the interview tape right away. The informed consent sheet containing your name will not be kept with the data, avoiding the possibility of connecting your name to any information that you have given. If you are interested in the final research results, I will send me a copy of the final results once the study is completed.

If you are interested in this study, please contact me.

Thank you and look forward to your participation.

Sincerely yours,

Xuping Sun

Appendix D

A letter to Director of Asian Studies Centre

(To be copied on University of Manitoba letterhead)

February 21, 2010

Dear Professor,

I am writing to request your permission to contact a professor to recruit her students to participate in my research project. This project is to fulfill my Master's thesis requirements. The research title is **motivations, beliefs, and Chinese Language Learning: A Phenomenological study in a Canadian University**. My thesis advisor is Dr. Sandra Kouritzin from the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba. The purpose of this study is to investigate the phenomenon of Chinese language learning in the Canadian context. There are two objectives: one is to examine the motivations of students who are learning Chinese in a Canadian university; the other is to describe these student's beliefs about Chinese language, such as the difficulty of Chinese language and the learning strategies they adopted to learn Chinese.

MOTIVATIONS, BELIEFS, AND CHINESE LANGUAGE LEARNING 101

The study will be conducted from April 2010 to August 2010. If you grant me permission, I will contact Professor Zhu in March 2010 and ask a friend of mine to go to her class to recruit students for me. Basically, My friend will go to Professor Zhu' classes to introduce herself, explain why she is there and hand out the invitation letters to the students, which will need approximately 5 minutes. A copy of the script and invitation letter has been given to you to keep for your records and reference. The participants will have an interview of no longer than 60 minutes at a convenient time on campus. Questions such as why you chose learning Chinese and what learning strategies you used to learn Chinese, etc. will be asked. The interview will be audio taped and transcribed verbatim. All information will be kept confidential. Interviewees' real names and any identifying information will not appear anywhere in the results or the final report. In order for you to better understand the purpose and process of the study, and the ethical issues under consideration, I have attached a copy of the informed consent letter that will be signed by all participants.

I would like to assure you that there is no risk for participating in this study. The potential benefit for participants might be a better understanding of their motivations and beliefs on Chinese language learning thus help them better learn this language. Participation in the study will be entirely voluntary. Participants can withdraw at any time without any consequences. I would also like to assure you that this research has been approved by the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board in the University of Manitoba. If you have any concerns or complaints

MOTIVATIONS, BELIEFS, AND CHINESE LANGUAGE LEARNING 102

about this project you may contact Human Ethics Secretary. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

If you would like more information regarding this study, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Xuping Sun

Appendix E

Research Questions

A. Questions on Learning Motivation

- Why did you choose to learn Chinese?
- When you decided to learn Chinese, were there any advantages in doing so?
- Is there any event or media that affects your choice to learn Chinese?
- What are you experiencing in this study that encourages you to study Chinese?

B. Questions on Chinese Language Beliefs

- How difficult do you think the Chinese language is? How much do you put yourself into learning this language?
- Which do you think is important, speaking Chinese or reading Chinese? Where did that belief come from?
- What are the good ways do you think to learn this language in class and after class?
- What opportunities do you think you have to use Chinese in Canada?
- What is your current level of your Chinese? In the future what is the proficiency level do you think you could reach?
- What is your ultimate goal for learning Chinese? Do you want to go to

China?

- Do you think Chinese will be the most influential language in next decades?
- Could you name out three Chinese people and cities in China?